

**PROUD  
PAST  
BRIGHT  
FUTURE**



# **National Policy Guide**

2017



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## KEY

**GMB@WORK** symbol signifies where a CEC Statement or CEC Special Report has been agreed by Congress. Please refer to those documents for more detail.

(2016: C1) where references are given, the first part represents the Congress year and the latter the motion or composite (so this refers to Composite 1 from GMB Congress 2016)

All Congress documents from 2005 can be found on the GMB website on [www.gmb.org.uk/congress](http://www.gmb.org.uk/congress)

# Background

GMB Annual Congress is the supreme policy making authority of GMB. It deals with motions and rule amendments from GMB Branches, Regional Committees and the Central Executive Council (CEC). In addition, other issues such as CEC special reports, CEC Statements and Financial Reports are debated and voted on. Once these have been endorsed, they become GMB Policy for the union as a whole. In alternative years, Motions debated and carried at Section Conferences are advisory to the CEC.

Following the endorsement of the CEC Special Report 'Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward' at Congress 2007, it was agreed that Congress will not debate motions which are determined to be existing union policy. At its meetings prior to Congress, the CEC identifies those Congress motions which are in line with existing GMB policy. These recommendations are reported to Congress in SOC Report No 1 at the start of Congress. Delegates will be asked to endorse these motions and if agreed, the motions will not be debated. However following Congress progress on these motions will continue to be reported.

The following guide is an indication of GMB policy but is not a definitive list. It aims to summarise policies under broad key themes and it will be kept up to date especially after Congress.

I am sure you will find this to be a useful guide for GMB members, activists and officers and I would like to thank Ida Clemo, our Executive Policy Officer for her enormous work in putting this together.

It will be made available online and circulated to all members of the CEC, Regional and National Committees.

If you need specific advice on a particular policy area, please contact Ida on [policy@gmb.org.uk](mailto:policy@gmb.org.uk) Information on most of these policy areas can also be found on the GMB National website.

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May 2017

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GMB strives to ensure that all our activities are in line with our aims and purposes as outlined in the GMB rulebook.

# Our purpose

(as defined in the Union Rule Book)

We work to improve the quality of life and provide new opportunities for all our members and their families. We aim to improve the lives of GMB members and make sure that their achievements lead the way for working people in Britain and across the world.

Every GMB member should have the opportunity to discover and develop their talents. All our members should enjoy work that is fulfilling and rewarding.

- We will work with employers who are aware of future possibilities, and negotiate useful and beneficial agreements that help to achieve our purpose.
- We will work to widen the understanding of employers whose experiences, knowledge and aims are more limited. We will aim to end exploitation, discrimination and injustice.
- We will persuade non-members to join, encourage members to become active, and help active members to take full part in the life of the GMB. In particular, we will recruit and help develop young people so that we improve their lives and protect the future of the GMB and our values.
- We will train local representatives to represent GMB members in a skilled and professional way, so that they win respect for their members, us and themselves.
- We will recruit members through providing an outstanding service to working people and their families, encouraging people to stay with us for their whole lives. We aim to achieve the reputation as the best trade union in Europe.
- We will create an atmosphere of teamwork in which every GMB office holder and employee will feel personally responsible for achieving our purpose.
- We will strive to ensure that GMB's profile reflects all equality strands in the union at all levels of the lay and employee National, Regional, Branch and Workplace structures


# Core aims of the GMB

(as defined in the Union Rule Book)

1. To recruit, organise and represent all workers.
2. To regulate relations between employees and employers and between employees themselves.
3. To maintain and improve wages and conditions, and make employment as secure as possible and promote industrial democracy.
4. To achieve and maintain equal pay for women, promote equal opportunities within the union, the workplace and society in general, and end discrimination against people because of their sex, race, nationality, religious beliefs, disability, age, marital status or sexuality.
5. To provide benefits (including legal assistance) to members
6. To promote training and educating members in relation to the activities they carry out on our behalf, and to provide scholarships to educational institutions for members, in line with conditions set out by the Central Executive Council.
7. To promote or support legislation in the interests of members, especially those laws relating to the legal rights of trade unions, industrial health, safety and welfare, social and economic welfare and environmental protection.
8. To help elect members to Parliament and public authorities who promote our policies and the interests of members through political methods, providing the candidates are pledged to collective ownership, under democratic control, of the means of production, distribution and exchange.
9. To promote the social, moral and intellectual interests of our members.

# Union Organisation: GMB Internal Matters


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 **2005** CEC Special Report: A Framework for the Future of the GMB

 **2006** CEC Special Report: The Sections of the Union

 **2006** CEC Special Report: Progress Update A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward

 **2006** CEC Statement: Proposed Merger.

 **2007** CEC Special Report: Framework For The Future: Moving Forward

 **2010** CEC Special Report: Stability & Accountability

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## Congress

 **2009** CEC Special Report: Congress Future Arrangements

 **2010** CEC Special Report: Bigger Better More inclusive Congress

The 2010 Report opened up Congress to a broader range of GMB members by increasing delegation sizes (1 delegate per 1500 regional financial members) and seeking ways to ensure delegations best represented the diversity in all Regions of the Union.

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## Congress Arrangements

- GMB is a Fairtrade Union, and GMB seeks to ensure that we adopt fair trade practices in all we do. In 2008, it was agreed that Congress and other national conferences should offer provide fair trade products wherever possible.
- There should be greater transparency and accountability of union policy and GMB members are kept informed on the progress of congress motions. Congress 2010 decided that the Section Conference motions should be treated in the same way


- A report on the progress of all carried motions will be made available to GMB members (2015:7)
- Congress documents to be available on the GMB website during Congress (member-only access) (2011:1)
- Following Regional delegation meetings in March, all branches should receive a list of decisions made on all Regional motions (2012:2)
- If requested by delegates, Congress can choose to vote on CEC reports and congress motions by section or paragraph (1993:144)
- At Regional delegation meetings, Regions can determine an attitude to motions from other regions (1999:9)
- Voting procedures should be explained at the start of Congress (2003:11)
- Congress 2013 agreed a Rule Amendment that the National equality conference has the ability to select one motion from their Conference to go to annual Congress

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## Diversity within GMB

GMB supports programmes and activities to ensure greater participation and representation of women and minority ethnic people within its workforce, organisation and branch structure (2013:C1).

All GMB structures, committees and training (2016:66) should aim to progress women through the organisation and represent both the gender balance of the union and be balanced between male and female members.

For more information please consult the  GMB National Women's TaskForce Reports to Congress. The Women's Taskforce Report to Congress 2015 agreed changes to the GMB appointments process to ensure fairness, transparency and equality proofed.

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## CEC Elections

We need to ensure that our internal election procedures are fit for purpose and that we have processes in place to maximise active participation. Congress 2016 called for a review of General Secretary and CEC Elections so that GMB members are engaged and recognise the importance and significance of voting in these elections. (2016:C2)

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## Central Executive Council (CEC)

The Central Executive Council (CEC) is the lay member governing body of GMB. The CEC meets at least seven times a year and consists of about 55 lay members of the Union plus the General Secretary.

It is elected by secret ballot of GMB members every four years.

The CEC is headed by the lay member President Mary Turner (GMB London Region) and Vice President Malcolm Sage (GMB Midland & East Coast Region).

For practical reasons its business is run by three committees, Finance & General Purposes, Organisation, Political, European and International.

- CEC Minutes are available to members in the secure area of the GMB website (2010:5)

Following a request carried at Congress 2014 for young members seats on the CEC (2014:15), young member observers were appointed and regularly attend CEC Meetings.

Congress 2016 called for the formation of an Equality Action Group to look into representation on the CEC for all the equality Strands represented by the Union (2016:C3). This group will report to Congress 2017.

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## Online Balloting

GMB support alternative voting methods and call for a change in legislation to allow for electronic voting in industrial action ballots. Once there is a change in the legislation to allow for this, GMB would be able to use this method for internal and statutory elections.

GMB supports workplace ballots for the purpose of industrial action in line with GMB@Work principles of organising every workplace as if a ballot for action was imminent.

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## GMB Regions

GMB have achieved financial stability over the years but due to the threats posed by the Trade Union Act, GMB needs to ensure that we have a sound structure in order to maintain a strong union. We are organised through our 9 Regions and National Office.

Congress 2016 committed to an examination of GMB's financial, operational and organisational structures including regional boundaries to ensure that we retain the ability to recruit, organise and retain members. (2016: C1)

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## National Office

The General Secretary is based at our National Office in London. Also based there are the National Secretaries and National Officers for each of the three industrial sections, Commercial Services, Manufacturing, and Public Services. There are also specialist Departments who provide expert advice on rights at work, industry specific issues, pensions, health and safety, equality, international solidarity and employment law.

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## GMB Sections

 2006 CEC Special Report: The Sections of the Union

Congress 2006 established the current Industrial Sections we have now: Commercial Services, Manufacturing and Public Services.

Each Section is headed by a National Secretary and in addition there are National Officers working in the various sectors within the Section.

Every alternate year, Sectional motions are debated in dedicated Section National Conferences held during Congress week.

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## Branches

-  2013 CEC Special Report: GMB Branches: A Future That Works
-  2014 CEC Special Report: GMB Branches: A Future That Works (containing Rule Amendments)
-  2015 CEC Special Report: GMB Branches: A Future that Works Progress Report (containing Rule Amendments to Rule 26,35,37,47)

GMB functions as a strong independent union because of our dedicated lay member's organisation built around workplace and branch activity.

The Congress 2013 CEC Special Report recognised the pivotal role branches play in terms of our internal democracy and noted that branch activity and involvement was inconsistent across our Regions. The Report set up a Branch Working Party to look at best practice to wide lay member participation in union activities and democracy. This reported to Congress in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and will report in 2017.

Other policy applicable to branches has been outlined as follows:

- All branches should have a branch development plan where they show strategies to recruit and retain members (2010:10)
- Branches to support York Disabled Workers Co-operative
- We recognise the positive role played by Trades Union Councils in supporting the labour and trade union movement and urge GMB branches to join/ support their local Trades Council
- GMB welcomes improvements to revised online branch accounting and reporting systems and we ensure all branch post holders are aware of (and are trained in) their responsibilities and care of members funds (2011:32, 2012:22)
- GMB to develop procedures so that Branches can easily create their own websites and linked through the national site (2013:13)
- Branches should be allowed access to GMB membership records (2014:14) Note: this is being investigated by the National Administration Unit and is being assessed under new Data Protection guidelines.

- A Branch Activity Fund should be developed to undertake community organising (2015:C18). This is still being considered by the National Equality Forum.
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## Workplaces

It is our goal to ensure effective, active and strong workplace organisation, led and sustained by GMB Workplace Representatives. Therefore we would seek to endorse projects and campaigns to ensure membership growth, recruitment, representation and retention of members. Such programmes include training to equip our activists with the skills they need for a 21st century union.

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## Recruitment & Organising

 **2006** CEC Special Report: GMB@Work  
 **2007** CEC Special Report: GMB@WORK:  
Workplace Organisation

**GMB@Work** is the core principle used throughout the Union for recruitment and organisation and this was endorsed and rolled out following Congress 2007.

GMB recognises falling trade union membership levels across all sectors and urges all trade unions to work together to build union membership and fight social injustice. We should promote the benefits and advantages of trade union membership.

In addition, motions have called to

- Use retired GMB members as a resource to recruit and retain members (2010:12)
- Organise a national recruitment drive and Strategy targeted at young workers (2012:12, 2014:12, 2015:C1) domestic workers (2013:20) agency workers (2015:32) and street traders (2016:36)
- Gather equality data on our members to enable us to better recruit and organise workers (2014:13)
- Ensure that National officials send out clear guidelines to assist Regions where our membership in a company spans across a number of GMB Regions (2010:13)



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## Finance, Contributions & Membership Services

The CEC keeps benefits and GMB Membership Services under review any proposals for change come to Congress:

- The union should always keep revenue spending within current income. In other words it should make an operating surplus every year.
- Contribution rates should keep up with the rate of inflation.
- We will campaign for trade union contributions to be exempt from tax (2013:59)

A number of carried motions have addressed new subscription rates such as:

- youth membership rate and recruitment initiatives for those under 21(2009:26)
- community membership rates (2013:52)
- Motions have been submitted calling for Family membership (2009:27). This was brought up again at Congress 2012 (m29). The CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee agreed that family membership was unlikely to add to total membership numbers, and would be more likely to reduce income by discounting existing members' contributions. It would be complex to administer and deciding on the level of service appropriate to family members would be fraught with difficulty. Therefore having considered family membership, the union has rejected it.
- Introduce a special rate for working students and apprentices (2012:27) Note: Rules were introduced in the CEC Finance Report to Congress 2013 to implement this
- It is our policy to provide Long service awards to members with 25 years of unbroken GMB membership.
- The Union will continue to review all financial investments to ensure we do not support unethical employers and ensure that we do not inappropriately invest.
- Look into the GMB's national affiliation to the TUC (2016:48)

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## Requests For Financial Affiliations

If agreed, any Motion seeking that GMB affiliates to named organisations are normally referred in the first instance to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee for discussion and to check whether the organisation meets the aims and values of GMB. If agreed, this is reported to the CEC.

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## GMB Member Services: UNIONLINE

At the end of May 2014, in conjunction with CWU, GMB set up its own Trade Union Law firm to offer free legal advice and services to our members on employment rights. UNIONLINE also provides representation to members on cases of personal injury, criminal injury, industrial diseases, conveyancing and motor legal service. [www.gmb.org.uk/unionline](http://www.gmb.org.uk/unionline) or [www.unionline.co.uk](http://www.unionline.co.uk)

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## GMB Communications

The current GMB national website was launched in March 2013 together with a GMB App for mobile phones. Our National Communications Department are looking at a new version.


Our GMB@Work policy calls for the Union to send frequent and informative communications to members. In order to do so, we need to ensure that our membership records are kept updated.

- All GMB communications should be fully accessible to all members regardless of any disability or impairment. All video messages should be professionally sub-titled to ensure this.(2016:27)
- All branch, regional and national GMB communications should be “fit” for the 21st century and we need to ensure training is available (2012:6,7)
- GMB members should be informed by a regular YouTube broadcast (2014:9)
- All Regions should promote ethical financial services that the Thorne Credit Union offers (2011:16) and this will be rebranded as “GMB Money Ltd” (2015:C2)

- There should be a Young members section on the National website (2012:10)
- A list of common abbreviations and acronyms used within GMB should be available to members (2013:11) Note this is on the GMB website and available in the “Congress Explained” document
- GMB to develop procedures so that Branches can easily create their own websites and linked through the national site (2013:13)
- Allow branches access to GMB membership records (2014:14) Note: this is being investigated under the new data protection guidelines and together with the launch of a new website
- GMB to develop procedures so that Branches can easily create their own websites and linked through the national site (2013:13)

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## **GMB General**

- GMB has been a growing and financially independent union and therefore we do not require a merger for financial or commercial reasons. GMB continues to work closely with other unions as our memberships have common enemies.
- All regions and branches are encouraged to buy shares in Wortley Hall (2012:11) and use this for regional and national training events (2015:72)
- All regions and branches to promote and support the annual Durham Miners Gala (2013:16, 2016:32)
- Wherever possible, GMB should consider and provide fairtrade food and drink within its offices and at meetings (2013:17: WORK 2008 Green Agenda Report, 2016:30)
- GMB should ensure that all contractors supplying services to the GMB pay the living wage (2015:69) and we need to review the Union’s carbon footprint (2016:31)
- Look into adopting a national mascot for the Union (2012:4), consider a memorial or monument to Will Thorne especially at the Union’s 125th anniversary (2015:14)

- Contact details for the Retired Members Association (RMA) should be put into GMB diaries (2015:17) as well as marking International Women’s Day
- Recognise the contribution made by Eleanor Marx and establish an annual Eleanor Marx Day (January 16th). Congress 2016 saw the first Eleanor Marx Award for outstanding achievement from a woman
- GMB to support women in sport and ensure equal parity between GMB sponsorship of male and female teams (2016: 50)

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## Training & Education: GMB Members, Reps and Officers

 2016 CEC Special Report GMB Training and Education

GMB supports fully informed activists therefore our reps should be equipped with training to enable them to better inform and represent members in the workplace.

The role of the trade union learning representative has been embedded in statutory legislation since 2002. GMB aims to encourage members to become Union Learning Reps.

Due to Government cuts in funding for trade union education, Congress 2016 agreed a Special Report to look into a review of Training and Education within GMB.

This review would also consider a number of motions which had been agreed on GMB training:

We need to ensure GMB reps are trained in

- The importance of voting in elections (2012:36)
- Equality and Diversity (2012:37)
- Social Welfare law (2012:38)
- Law and rights at work (2014:26)
- Basic language skills (2014:27)
- Domestic violence: awareness and support (2014:28)
- Use of covert surveillance (2014:29)

- Mental Health awareness (2015:78)
- Bullying in the Workplace/ Respect at Work (2015:80)
- Training for Branch Secretaries (2016:65)

An updated CEC Training Report will be brought to Congress 2017.

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## Training materials

GMB@Work is built on the principle of self-organisation of all sections of our membership and those workers we seek to help organise. Workplace Organisers should first seek to identify potential leaders among migrant workers communities themselves who are able and willing to recruit and retain GMB membership within their language group.

GMB produce union leaflets in 20+ languages and there are many GMB staff and officers with foreign language skills. Regions should explore local provision in the first instance.

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## Union Learning Fund

GMB opposes any cuts to the Union Learning Fund and projects. We see this Fund as a vital resource to enable GMB and other trade unions to assist our members obtain key skills. (2014:30, 2015:73)

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## Lifelong Learning





All workers need access to education and training which not only assists them to carry out their jobs but also provides skills for securing future employment.

GMB is committed to campaign for all employees to be given reasonable time off work in pursuit of lifelong learning courses in addition to courses for continuous professional development.

GMB Regions should develop lifelong learning strategies, Regional Learning Committees and lifelong training programmes to ensure that our members have access to not only workplace learning opportunities but also to lifelong learning (2015:74, 2016:61).

# Equality & Inclusion

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-  **2006** CEC Special Report: For Justice and Equality
  -  **2007** CEC Special Report: Progressing Equality Issues In The GMB
  -  **2008** Equality through inclusion: GMB Strategy
  -  **2010** CEC Special Report: Review of National Equality Forum Structure
- 

## GMB Commitment to Equality

Everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. The ability to live and work without prejudice is a fundamental right, regardless of your background, colour or sexual orientation.

One of GMB's main aims is to help workers fight for fairness and equality in the workplace and beyond. Challenging discrimination and winning equality is at the heart of GMB.

Besides the right not to be discriminated against or bullied, fair treatment also includes equal working conditions and pay and social life such as equality of marriage.

GMB strives to attain full and equal employment rights from day one for all, and where necessary, through mandatory pay audits and strict enforcement of the national minimum wage.

GMB is inclusive and supportive to the needs of all members, and their families, at the core of their activities.

Diversity and equality will always be at the heart GMB's strategic planning. GMB believes that to be relevant to its members it needs to be able to connect with the broad range of different backgrounds that they represent.

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## GMB Equality Structures

A presentation and associated leaflet to GMB Congress 2008 set up the National Equality Forum structure to ensure fair representation from Regions and Equality Strands.

GMB have robust equality structures within their 9 regions and also at national level whose role is to organise equality into the following strands;

- Women
- Black , minority and ethnic (BAME/BME)
- Disabled people
- Migrant workers
- Those who hold religious views
- Young and older members
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

GMB has a proud record of aiding and assisting self-organised groups within each of their strands.

GMB supports the mapping of its membership into these various equality strands, in order to know exactly how its membership is broken down.

GMB aims to develop and recommend policies, actions and structures that will ensure that the diversity of membership is reflected in our representation across the union.

GMB continue to address and combat hate crime.

GMB develop training programmes and educational materials to foster social inclusion of groups who are at risk and challenge cultures of discrimination and violence in British communities


We are in favour of equality reps and continue to campaign for statutory rights for time off for equality representatives to be the same as time off for shop stewards/ safety reps and union learning reps and for this to be paid.

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## Zero Tolerance

We are opposed to all forms of bullying or harassment in the workplace whether sexual or racial. The GMB Respect @ Work Policy is designed to challenge harassment in the workplace, whether against women or otherwise and advocates that workers should be treated with basic dignity and respect.

We have undertaken a number of targeted campaigns highlighting bullying or attacks within some sectors such as ambulance staff, retail staff. "Abuse" should never be part of any job.

The  Women's Report to Congress 2014 agreed a Zero Tolerance Statement which should be used throughout the Union.

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## Discrimination


- GMB is opposed to all forms of discrimination whether in society or in the workplace
- GMB recognises that our members may face indirect discrimination whether due to age, disability, race, gender or religious beliefs and we strive to educate and campaign to highlight this
- We have highlighted that hidden discrimination is a particular problem in employment situations and call for employers not using disability as a criteria in selecting job applicants (2016:93)

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## GMB Women

 **2013** CEC Special Report: GMB Women's Project

 **2014** CEC Special Report: GMB Women's Project

 **2015** CEC Special Report: GMB Womens Project Progress Report (containing Rule Amendments to Rule 17a,17d,17e)

GMB have a National Women's Taskforce set up after Congress 2013 whose aims are to develop and recommend policies, actions and structures that will ensure that the GMB's profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the union.



GMB hold annual Regional Women's Conferences. These Conferences are a place for women to network and work towards the same goals. Nurturing and developing women into Activism and Leadership positions within our union. It is our aim to hold a National Women's Conference once all Regions have held a Regional one. (2016:78). However, it was agreed to ensure this takes place as soon as possible and a National Women's Conference will be held later in 2017.

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## Women's Issues

- GMB recognise that women are subjected to inequality within the workplace the home and society. Every day GMB challenges workplace inequalities such as equal pay.
- GMB ran a successful Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) campaign in the early 1990's. Despite the progress made in highlighting and raising awareness of this issue at the time, there are still cases of TSS in the UK each year, of which two to three are fatal. Congress 2008 asked for this campaign to be re-run
- GMB is against the taxation of sanitary products and our policy is to campaign and lobby against them being classed as "luxurious items" and are thus taxed at 5% VAT. It is unfair to class these products as "luxury".
- GMB believe that domestic violence at any level is abhorrent and have a history of campaigning and educating its members to aid them in combating domestic violence. The GMB calls on the reversal of cuts in Local Authority funding that adversely impacts against dealing with the perpetrators of domestic violence,. In addition, the GMB calls on all policy makers to bring agencies together more effectively so that the causes and effects of domestic violence can be understood and dealt with.
- GMB are also challenging the three month time limit on domestic violence cases.
- GMB will defend a woman's right to choose abortion (2008:168) and we continue to oppose restrictions on access to abortion services (2009:35). A decision was made to affiliate to Abortion Rights Campaign
- Support the Charter for Women initiated by UCU (2011:C24)

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## Black, Minority and Ethnic members

GMB recognise that Black members have the same concerns as any other members about jobs, fair pay and conditions of service, promotion and progression, but their experience of the workplace is too often also marked by racism and discrimination. Racial discrimination can prevent Black workers from having equal access to good-quality jobs and pay. Equality legislation gives trade unions a way of holding employers to account – but equality can only become a reality in our workplaces if we organise.

GMB are aware that structures and processes can also disadvantage Black workers. Patterns of discrimination that highlight the over-concentration of Black workers in the lowest rungs of organisations, as well as over-representation in disciplinaries, grievances and redundancies, might not be immediately visible. But appropriate information-gathering and monitoring can help to reveal the issue.

GMB believe there is a direct link between racism, fear of immigration and the deregulation of our labour markets and will work with and support the campaigns by 'Hope Not Hate' and 'Show Racism the Red Card,' to explain and oppose racism, and xenophobia.

We recognise the past struggles of Asian and immigrant workers and supported a Grunwick 40 Exhibition celebrating 40 years since the Grunwick dispute.

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## Disabled People

The 2010 Equality Act offers a range of protections to disabled people but workplace discrimination still affects many people in England, Scotland and Wales.

GMB's priorities on disability are led by the union's own disabled members. We help disabled members by fighting discrimination and campaigning and organising at workplace, regional and national levels.

There are more than 10 million disabled people in the UK. Cuts to public services and benefits have had a disproportionate effect on disabled people, especially as over one and a half million of them live in relative poverty because of low benefit levels and the lack of suitable accessible jobs.

GMB continues to campaign for, a more inclusive and supportive approach to members with disabilities. GMB works towards achieving their full inclusion in society and in the workplace and we continue to campaign against any government attacks which impact on the disabled or any vulnerable group of workers.

GMB strive to ensure our vulnerable and disabled members are provided with training to gain skills and opportunities of supported employment to earn a living and contribute to the economy in order to make a difference and be fully inclusive in society.

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## Migrant Workers

Migrant workers and asylum seekers are making an important and growing contribution to the UK economy. Many are highly skilled individuals whose knowledge and abilities means that they can play an important role in the economy.

However gangmasters and unscrupulous employers are attempting to exploit many migrant workers and asylum seekers paying them appallingly low wages, often illegally, and using them to undercut the wages of the local workforce. GMB is opposed to the exploitation of vulnerable migrant workers to undercut local labour.

GMB supports positive actions to address concerns of migrant workers. GMB is committed to strengthening the rights of migrant workers in the UK, to ensure that companies do not undermine the local employment market and to ensure that company's employing migrant workers provide employment policies and health & safety policies in their own languages

GMB should be prepared to defend migrant and asylum workers and champion their rights as well as pressing for government action to stamp out exploitation and improve training and language support.

GMB believe the Government should allocate adequate funding for educational initiatives designed to integrate migrant workers and their families into our society whilst respecting and valuing their own cultural identity

- GMB should be seeking to recruit and organise migrant workers and asylum seekers. We recognise the importance of migrant workers and should adopt a National Strategy for recruiting and organising Migrant Workers (2009:C1)

- GMB to lobby Government to consider an amnesty for unregistered workers in the context of improving workplace conditions. (2009:75)
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## Immigration

- GMB should continue to confront prejudices around migration and immigration and work with other organisations to dispel any myths around migrant workers and we call on the Labour Party to develop a constructive policy on immigration. We note that immigration was a key deciding factor in the European Referendum of June 2016.
  - GMB demands the Government stop peddling misinformation when official statistics show that immigration would be beneficial to the UK and calls on leading politicians of all parties not to whip up racial tensions by pandering to anti-immigration sentiment in the false hope of winning support of voters away from UKIP.
  - GMB is concerned over the rapid growth of UKIP and urges campaigns to highlight and stand up to their right wing, racist and anti-trade union policies (2015:C10)
  - GMB recognises that there is support across the union to offer aid to refugees and we will continue to work with likeminded migrant and anti-racist organisations. We welcome solidarity with refugees
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## Younger and Older Members

Internally GMB has a national and regional network for our young members below the age of 30 where young trade unionists fight for better rights and opportunities for young people. They have led active campaigns on housing, low pay, zero hours and mental health.

GMB recognises that the toll the workplace exacts on the mental health of young workers is growing greater every day. Low pay, a precarious future, bullying, and attacks on mental health spending have left young workers vulnerable to stress and the effects of mental health conditions.

GMB resolves to:

- Seek to establish a strategy for Workplace Organisers to support young workers who experience mental health issues.

- Provide training for Branch Youth Officers to become Mental Health First Aiders.
- Work with the GMB Young Members Network and the TUC Young Workers Forum on the issue of mental health with young workers.
- Work with other young members network to promote the importance and role of trade unions for young workers (2015:79) and promote the impact of austerity on young workers (2015:322)
- Work with GMB regions and other trade unions on the “employment journey” to move young members from education to employment (2015:325,326)

GMB opposes the inequality within the payment of the National Living Wage and are challenging the exclusion of workers under the age of 25 from this payment.

GMB believe their retired members have a wealth of experience and knowledge that make them a valuable part of GMB campaigns. GMB have a Regional and National structure to ensure our retired members have the opportunity to campaign to improve, legislation on pension provision, action against discrimination, inclusive of age discrimination.

- GMB notes growing youth unemployment and urges the Government to work with the union movement to address this. Furthermore we oppose all cuts to services targeted for getting young people into jobs.
- We are in favour of young people being involved in Youth Councils and have taken this discussion to the GMB Councillors Network (2012:184)

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## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

- GMB recognise and condemn the discrimination, abuse and violence lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people can be subjected to.
- GMB fights discrimination and prejudice in the workplace and in society on behalf of its lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members. We do this by building local and national groups of LGBT members, negotiating with employers and offering individual support to anyone experiencing discrimination. We also provide access to practical advice and legal information.

- All GMB Regions should have a GMB SHOUT! Group to support LGBTi members
- GMB should hold a national event to mark 'Transgender Day of Remembrance,' to honour those who have lost their lives as a result of discrimination.
- GMB supports and works with 'Rainbow International' in their efforts to enable activists working in many countries across the world where LGBT people continue to face persecution and in some cases, death.

GMB have published a Transgender Equality Toolkit which is available on the National website

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## Equal Pay

 2009 CEC Special Report: Equal Pay

GMB is at the forefront of challenging many restrictive rules that apply to comparators and continues to fight for equal pay regardless of gender or the other key comparators.

GMB won the first ever equal pay for work of equal value case when Julie Hayward achieved her famous victory against Cammell Laird. Julie was a cook working in the shipyards who proved that her work was as demanding as the work of a male painter. For too long women have been paid less purely because they are women.

Women are disproportionately affected by low pay, part time women workers in particular.

Closing the gender pay gap by obliging employers to run equal pay audits should be the beginning of a major Government initiative to end low pay among women workers in the UK.

As part of a comprehensive move to stamp out low pay once and for all the GMB calls on Government to compel employers to use equal pay questionnaires to find out whether they have an equal pay problem. Equal pay audits can be used to show up inequalities in women's pay and resolve problems by ensuring equality of pay.

GMB continues to challenge employers and campaign to deliver Equal Pay in the workplace under the framework of collective negotiation (2009:74) and lobby the Government to fully fund the equal pay bill (2010:112)

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## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

GMB condemns and supports campaigns to stop the inhuman practice women and young girls have to endure when they are forced to go through the traumatic and horrendous procedure of Female Genital Mutilation (2007:292) We also call for funding to be made available to eradicate this from the UK (2016:C7)

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## Domestic Violence & abuse

GMB has clear policy on domestic violence following on from the Daphne Project in 2003.

We support organisations working to prevent such abuse and recognise that this practice is not just targeted at women. (2013:71). We have also called for policies to be developed and for awareness and training to take place for our representatives. We recognise the importance of the role of trade unions and workplace organisers have in responding to domestic abuse, both in campaigning for adequately resourced prevention, protection and provision for victims, and in negotiating workplace policies that ensure employers and reps respond appropriately to workers who have been abused.

In addition we recognise that the proposed single means tested benefit, the Universal Credit (UC), will result in women losing their financial independence and their ability to support themselves and require one partner to be dependent on the other as the monthly UC payment will be paid to one person. This might lead to increased domestic violence especially where there is an abusive partner (2013:302)

GMB recognises that government austerity measures and cuts have impacted on loss of local services offered to protect victims against gender based violence and support refuges (2014:103, 259) and we call for continued funding to be made available.

Congress 2014 highlighted the increasing numbers of BME and LGBT hate crimes and in 2015, we recognised the problem of domestic abuse in the LGBT Community.

The GMB "Respect at Work" Policy has been updated to include domestic violence in same sex relationships. We are urged to ensure that information on domestic violence is on the GMB website giving details of support networks (2015:100)

Note: GMB have a Model Domestic Violence and Abuse Agreement which members can use in their workplaces. Please contact your Regional Equality Officer

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## Rape

We resolve to support the work of Sexual Assault Referral Centres for the work they do victims of abuse and rape and look to campaign to more support from employers to support rape victims (2016:86). We also want to raise awareness for victims of sexual assaults and look for specialist training for the police (2015:C16).

GMB also campaign for employers to support rape victim employees by:

- Being sympathetic to the need for sick leave
- Allow flexible working where needed
- Allowing time off to see solicitors and advisors.



# Rights at Work

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## Trade Union and Employment Rights

The union's policy extends to campaigning against any further weakening of employment and trade union rights and to engage with its Parliamentary group to ensure their support for these policies. Furthermore, we oppose any Government proposals to opt out of EU regulations and social and employment protections for workers

Within this framework, GMB policy includes:

- The right to organise industrial action, including solidarity action, without the threat of legal proceedings by employers and for workers taking lawful industrial action to be protected from dismissal;
- Full employment rights from day one of employment;
- Rights for every worker to be represented individually and collectively by a trade union on any issue;
- Extend paid time off for all family - friendly leave provided by statute;
- Allow unions to trigger statutory equal pay audits and appoint equality reps with statutory rights on a par with these for workplace, safety and learning reps;
- Allow unions to choose to conduct workplace ballots;
- Support the abolition of restrictive balloting and industrial action notice procedures;
- Support the right to strike and the right to automatic reinstatement for taking lawful industrial action;
- Strengthen unfair dismissal legislation, ensuring an enforceable right to reinstatement;
- Improve time off and facilities for union reps and lay officials;
- Strengthen protection against exploitation and discrimination of migrant, agency, temporary workers, women, black, disabled, young and LGBT workers and those in smaller firms;

- Ensure workers receive proper compensation when their employer is declared bankrupt;
  - Ensure pensions, training and equality are included as issues on which collective bargaining must take place when statutory recognition is awarded, and
  - Statutory sectoral forums to establish minimum terms and conditions.
  - GMB is opposed to the onslaught on workplace justice and supports a commitment to deliver fair rights at work, starting with protection against unfair dismissal from day one of employment. We want rights that are consistent with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, ILO Conventions and the Council of Europe's Social Charter.
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## Union Recognition & Balloting

- All workers in the UK to have the right to have a union recognised in their workplace for the purposes of collective bargaining on their behalf on pay, hours and holidays. The 20 worker threshold, which excludes millions of individuals working in small firms from these rights, should be removed.
- The requirement that 40% of the workers in a bargaining unit must vote in favour for recognition to be awarded should be removed. Recognition should be awarded if unions win a simple majority in a ballot.
- Trade unions should have a right to direct access to the workforce within the proposed bargaining unit.
- The Rules relating to notices and ballots should be substantially simplified thereby reducing the overly bureaucratic restrictions on unions, while retaining the need for a ballot.
- Look into electronic voting. The policy of GMB@Work is for workplace ballots to take place and for GMB to be ballot-ready at all times. We recognise that the use of electronic voting may be worth considering and note current government proposals for changes.

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## Trade Union Act

GMB is opposed to the Trade Union Act and other anti- trade union legislation that have the clear intention to weaken trade unions by restricting the right to strike, placing financial constraints on our ability to campaign politically, removing check-off facilities and reducing time off arrangements for undertaking union duties.

Our policy is to call for the repeal of the Trade Union Act 2016 at our first opportunity.

 **WORK** 2016 CEC Statement: Trade Union Act

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## Employment Tribunals

In July 2013, the Government introduced fees for using employment tribunals. GMB has always campaigned against the introduction of fees on the grounds that the move would limit access to justice, deter merited claims and mean that employers would be able to flout the law with impunity. GMB:

- Call for a review of the current system.
- Condemn the removal of the ability of employment tribunals to make recommendations in discrimination claims (2013:113)
- Oppose the unfair practice of employment tribunals hearing unfair dismissal cases with a sole judge and no panel members (2013:115)
- Oppose the impact the introduction of fees have had in discrimination claims (2014:92)

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## Dismissal and absence

- We support a campaign for qualifying period for unfair dismissal to be reduced in line with GMB policy of rights from day one (2012:C4) Note that from 6 April 2012, the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims increased from one year to two years, as part of the Government's drive to streamline the employment tribunal process. We had a number of motions in 2012 opposing this move.

- We support a campaign to prevent the use of the employer tactic of dismissal/re-engagement on reduced terms. The process is widespread in both the private and increasingly the public sectors (particularly local authorities). (2012:87)
  - GMB are concerned over the use of sickness absence systems forcing employees back to work when they are unfit and call to lobby to seek changes in the law to protect workers (2012:92)
  - We support the call for statutory disciplinary & grievance procedures to be re-introduced into legislation as it was removed in 2009 (2012:93)
  - We welcome protection for whistleblowers (2012:95)
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## Redundancy

In general, the Union calls for improved statutory consultation rights in redundancy situations;

- The minimum period of consultation on mass redundancies involving 100 or more employees should be increased from 45 days to 90 days. The Government has cut the minimum period for collective consultation (which will include the selection process) in larger scale redundancies from 90 to 45 days.
- Campaign for fair redundancy selection process. Guidance already exists across the union and via Regional Solicitors on fair redundancy selection procedures based on European and UK law and case decisions.

Union policy seeks a level playing field to protect UK workers from being the easy option when it comes to company re-organisation and closures and seeks to outlaw the outsourcing of redundant posts.

In redundancy situations, GMB calls for administrators to be placed under a legal obligation to ensure that the business and jobs are put before those of the shareholders and creditors

The union also demands legislation to give enhanced information, consultation and negotiation rights to workplace representatives regarding business re- structuring and, in particular, on decisions likely to lead to business closures or workplace redundancies.

The union is in favour of improvements in the current statutory redundancy payments scheme. Such improvements to include:

- an increase in the statutory redundancy payments
  - improvements in the statutory redundancy pay so that a “weeks’ pay” should mean “a week’s actual pay” inclusive of shift premium, bonus and overtime earnings with no monetary limits, and remove the limit on service;
  - consideration to be made to long serving employees where payments are limited by length of service (2016:138)
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## TUPE

Changes to the TUPE Regulations came into force in 2014 and GMB continues to highlight the injustices that continue to exist.

- New employers (transferees) in TUPE transfers should be required to consult with worker representatives before the transfer takes place. GMB supports protections of terms and conditions to be extended (2015:136)
  - We support a call to strengthen TUPE Regulations with relation to retention of union recognition where a transfer takes place (2012:85) and for there to be a clearer approach
  - In the Public Sector, GMB has been a supporter of the Code of Practice in Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts (the two tier workforce code) and the equivalent Code in central Government. The Codes aimed to prevent the development of a two tier workforce as a result of public sector outsourcing by deterring employers from taking on new employees on less favourable terms. The Code was scrapped by the last Government and replaced by a series of “principles” which have done little to address the issue. (2016:137)
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## Strikes and Strike Action

- GMB supports to maintain the right to take strike action and continue to seek to improve the protection for workers participating in official action.


- We call for legal protections for the right to strike (2010:65)
- GMB has concerns over calls for a general strike as this would involve calling all unions in both private and public sectors to co-ordinate action and GMB notes the real differences in opinions between a number of unions on the legality of a general strike. It is clear no immunity on grounds of a trade dispute would apply. GMB has many members who would be exempt from industrial action as they provide emergency cover or are in caring professions. Furthermore, GMB would not call our members to action without a democratic ballot.
- GMB recognises that effective campaigns to defend public services and living standards may require acts of peaceful civil disobedience and protest (2013:222)

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## Temporary & Agency Workers

GMB is opposed to the exploitation of short term and agency labour to undermine the terms and conditions that trade unions are trying to improve in workplaces.

GMB is in favour of agency workers having the same terms and conditions and rates of pay as directly employed workers in the workplace, including holiday entitlement (2015:155).

In addition there should be equal treatment in access for jobs within the UK and European labour movement (See 2009  WORK CEC Statement on the Economy & Manufacturing)

We support an amendment to the UK Agency Worker Regulations and we call for an end to the use of the “Swedish” derogation which is widely used as a loophole in UK regulations to avoid equal treatment for agency workers and allows pay between assignment contracts. This is in line with policy carried at Congress 2012 Motions 76-79, Congress 2013 Motions 130 and 131, and Congress 2014, Composite 7, and ongoing campaign action by GMB at both national and EU level.

Although GMB welcomed the transposition of the Agency Workers Regulations into UK legislation as a positive step, we are increasingly concerned at the number of employers who are using the so-called ‘Swedish Derogation’ to avoid giving agency workers parity of pay and terms of conditions of their full time counterparts. This circumventing of the legislation is in addition to the fact that agency workers do not qualify

for equal treatment until they have worked at least 12 weeks in the user enterprise – already a considerable obstacle to exercising the right to equal treatment.

We believe that the Swedish Derogation is contrary to the spirit and intent of the European Directive and will seek to bring about changes.

- We call for a campaign to change the laws regulating **employment agencies**, call for them to be properly regulated (2015:153)
- We are opposed to the spread of exploitative **umbrella companies** which are being used to undercut terms and conditions, national agreements and for tax avoidance purposes. Although primarily used in construction, these are spreading to other sectors. Umbrella companies act as employers to agency workers and are involved in subcontracting work. (2015:157, 2016:136)

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## Other Workers

- We call for a review of the rights and employment status of volunteers (2009:70) and will campaign for tax allowances for voluntary work
- Legislate to ensure workers are not denied their rights through casualisation and self-employment arrangements (2010:61)

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## Self-employed Workers

GMB is opposed to workers being forced to become self-employed (bogus self-employed) and subsequently lose their employment rights as workers. We have campaigned against this practice across a number of our sectors

At the end of 2016, GMB won a monumental tribunal case against Uber which meant that these drivers who the company classified as “self-employed” were actually workers and therefore entitled to basic employment rights. GMB will give evidence to the new Taylor review on terms and conditions within the sectors of the economy offering precarious employment. We will make the case that average hours worked over the past 12 weeks should be deemed to be the contracted hours of work for those on zero hours as it already is for maximum hours of work under the Working Time Directive.

GMB continues to review similar contracts masquerading as bogus self-employment, particularly prevalent in the so called ‘gig economy’.

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## Internships

GMB opposes unpaid internships, we believe they should be paid at least the National Minimum Wage and should not be used as a substitute for cheap labour (2012:83,84). As with apprenticeships, internships should be proper schemes and not exploited. This is in line with our policy on apprenticeships where we have longstanding policy of campaigning for good quality bona fide apprenticeship to ensure that apprentices are not used to replace or undermine existing staff.

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## Blacklisting

GMB were at the forefront on highlighting the operation of a blacklist in the construction industry by the Consulting Association. We were aware of the companies who were using the blacklist, which contained the names of over 3000 construction workers. In addition, GMB recognises that workers in other sectors have also experienced the destructive effects of victimisation and blacklisting.

We continue to be the lead union in highlighting the illegal corporate bullying that takes place due to blacklisting and exposing the companies. In addition:

- GMB calls for local councillors and local government to ensure that any company involved in blacklisting is excluded from local and central government contracts (2013:C3)
- GMB have led on highlighting Carillion's involvement in blacklisting (2013:99)

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## Local Enterprise Partnerships

We call for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to fully engage with trade unions as part of their decision-making and lobbying process. Their core remit is economic growth, and they are expected to play a wide ranging role, taking in planning, housing, local transport, infrastructure, employment, enterprise and the transition to the new low carbon economy. We should press for trade unions to be involved in their processes to ensure real community involvement. (2011:103)



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## Hours

### Working time

The Working Time Regulations set out statutory minimum holiday entitlements. GMB continues to seek to ensure that any additional benefits and entitlements are not eroded.

We support a campaign for additional public holidays in line with the rest of Europe but we have no specific policy as to which date is preferred as there are differing views from across our membership and nations.

The UK has an individual opt out from the Working Time Directive which results in many workers working more than 48 hours per week. The 35 hour week is a long term goal, but the immediate priority for the GMB is to remove the individual opt out and reduce the maximum working week to 48 hours for everybody.

GMB is opposed to the opt out from the working time directive by the UK government and is committed to campaign for the ending of the opt out.

GMB calls for a review of the implementation of Road Transport Working Time Regulations into law

GMB is opposed to the removal or relaxation of Sunday trading hours as we believe that retail workers deserve proper work life balance. In addition, no worker should be forced or bullied into working extra hours.

### Zero Hours

 2014 GMB/CLASS pamphlet: "How unions can make work pay"

GMB is committed to an end of the use and abuse of zero hours contracts. We remain opposed to all forms of insecure work (2016:129) but have especially highlighted exploitative Zero Hours contracts.

We continue to fight minimum hours contracts which are rapidly replacing zero hours contracts. Motions calling for GMB's opposition to Zero Hours Contracts were carried at Congress 2013 (m129) Congress 2014 (Comps 5,6 and m63) and Congress 2015 m138. We are working with the Labour Party on ending/ banning zero hours contracts and working with employers on security of employment agreements.

For workers on zero hours or minimal hours contracts, GMB believes that exclusivity clauses should be outlawed and that all contracts should contain a set minimum number of working hours.

Despite rules to ban exclusivity clauses, which prevented workers from accepting work with another employer, coming into force in May 2015, 'effective' exclusivity clauses are remaining, allowing employers to penalise workers for accepting hours elsewhere. This Government must not just sit and watch this happen.

As well as this workers should be able to secure contractual hours based on a calculation of the hours they have actually worked in the previous 12 weeks - exactly as holiday pay is calculated. Those forced into taking a zero or minimal hours contract rightly expect and aspire for this to develop into a full-time permanent position within a few months of starting work.

GMB has been fighting for the rights of agency workers for decades and there is still much that needs to be done.

For workers employed by agencies or Gangmasters, GMB believes legislation should be changed to create a presumption of direct employment after 12 weeks – so employers can no longer dodge fair practice through legal loopholes

GMB opposes using zero hours contracts in place of permanent employment and calls for zero hours/casual contracts to be abolished. We support a campaign to call on the Government to end zero hours contracts.

GMB has been at the forefront of campaigning to end the use of zero hours contracts – and other forms of precarious work such as agency contracts being used as a business model and bogus self-employment – and will continue to do so

We call for:

- All workers to be guaranteed normal, paid working hours
- All workers to have the right to be paid an hourly rate of pay if they are required to be available for work
- All workers to have the same floor of employment rights, including unfair dismissal protection, statutory redundancy pay, rights to paid time off for trade union duties and family-friendly rights such as maternity leave and paternity leave, and the right to request flexible work

- All workers to have access to effective enforcement of their workplace rights
- All agency workers to receive equal pay and equal holidays and working hours after 12 weeks in a job
- An end to bogus self-employment and the use of tax avoidance schemes by employers

We continue to highlight the abuses and name and shame bad employers using this practice.

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## Leave

- Increase paternity leave by a further 2 weeks (2009:63)
- Statutory Shared Parental Pay is paid at £139.58 or 90% of your average weekly earnings. GMB supports the principle of 'equal pay for equal value' and therefore fathers are penalised by 10% of their average wage if they take Shared Paternity Leave, we call for an end to this practice
- We support a call for paid bereavement leave for all workers with the minimum of one weeks paid leave (2010:75) up to 2 weeks for close family and for this to be paid at average earnings (2014:C8)
- We support a call for improvements in maternity leave and look to tackle pregnancy discrimination in the workplace (2013:80)

Note: GMB have a Model Maternity and Paternity Agreement which members can use in their workplaces. Please contact your Regional Equality Officer

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## Pay

### Low Pay, Minimum Wage and Living Wage

 **2005** CEC Report Quality Jobs, Quality Lives: new deal for the low paid

GMB is in favour of a National Minimum Wage which should equate to a living wage and be paid to all adult workers from the age of 18.

The National Minimum Wage was an important first step in tackling the problem of low pay, but in many cases it has now become the maximum wage millions of workers can hope to earn. In many sectors, the minimum wage has become a ceiling on pay settlements, rather than a base level from which employees could secure better pay.

GMB is opposed to workers having to rely on top ups from family tax credits and housing benefits so as to make ends meet. Our policy is to quickly move the National Minimum Wage rates towards those rates needed for a living wage, to live without being reliant on benefits.

Minimum wage employers are often also state-subsidised employers. Whilst we appreciate that the minimum wage is not a living wage, if NMW rates were to move towards Living Wage, this would save the Treasury billions as workers earning more would receive fewer benefits while employers pay more in payroll taxes.

GMB makes an annual submission to the Low Pay Commission on the subject of the effect, implementation and enforcement of the national minimum wage and we also give oral evidence at the Commission's hearings to support our submission.

GMB's current campaigns are to "Make Work Pay", through an economy that supports a higher skilled, better paid and more productive workforce. This is the key to cutting the social security bill and thereby improving government finances.

**GMB policy is to move towards a true "living" wage which would be needed for workers to live on without being reliant on benefits and this should be negotiated at £10 an hour in line with our "£10Now" Campaign.**

A move to a Living Wage would benefit families, providing them with an acceptable standard of living especially with high food, transport costs and fuel inflation and takes into account regional variations. We call for the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage to be made statutory.

Congress 2016 called for all workers (regardless of age) to receive a real Living Wage of £10 an hour in line with our campaign and asks us to adopt £10 per hour as the minimum and that all future pay negotiations include this as a priority (Comp 10).

**National Minimum Wage**

- GMB continues to push for the removal of age related rates. Workers should receive the same rate where they are doing the same job, regardless of age.
- GMB continue to call for the adult rate to be paid from the age of 18 instead of 21
- All National Minimum Wage rates should increase at least in line with RPI inflation
- Congress agreed for all GMB branches to implement a £10 an hour negotiating strategy in their Branch Development Plans.
- Employers should not be able to make unlawful deductions for accommodation and there should be minimum standards of accommodation as we have experiences of poor quality accommodation especially in relation to migrant workers.
- There should be a requirement for employers to state clearly on payslips what is being deducted
- There should be greater funding and resources to ensure effective enforcement
- The Low Pay Commission should remain independent
- There should be greater involvement of trade unions in reporting minimum wage abuses. Trade Unions are ideally placed to help promote and support a robust and efficient system by monitoring throughout the UK and highlighting issues in all medium to large businesses and organisations where we have representation and recognition, and would need to do so without falling foul of whistle-blowing policies.

**National Living Wage**

The Government's new tier of the national minimum wage called the "National Living Wage" (NLW) only applies to workers aged over 25.

Young workers under 25 have the same living costs as those over 25, and this lower level would lead them to become trapped in in-work poverty and struggle to afford living in a home of their own.

GMB want a fair deal for young workers. Our policy is:

- The Government's National Living Wage should not be age related
- GMB continues to push for the removal of age related rates and as a start the National Living Wage should be paid at 18 in line with the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage. This will protect all young workers from discrimination.
- Increase the apprentice minimum wage at least in line with inflation and with the same percentage increase as the adult rate

### **Apprentice Rate**

- GMB has longstanding policy of campaigning for good quality bona fide apprenticeships to ensure that apprentices are not used to replace or undermine existing staff.
- Whilst we welcomed the introduction of apprentice pay being covered by the National Minimum Wage framework, the rate has now been in force for over 5 years and is too low, at the very least it should rise in line with RPI inflation.
- GMB wish to see this rate increased each year of the apprenticeship and not just be a single rate. We believe that there still continues to be a gender pay gap for apprentices.
- The rate should only apply to those undertaking intermediate level apprentices who are aged 16-18 and to 19-20 year olds in the first year of their apprenticeship.
- GMB continues to be concerned at a lack of clarity with the position of older apprentices especially those 25 and over.

### **Tips**

- Tipping is a direct relationship between the customer and the employee and tips are left by customers to reward good service. They should not be a subsidy for bad employers.
- Employers shouldn't rely on tips to top up wages. Wages and tips are two separate issues.
- GMB support a fair and transparent system for tips and gratuities for both our members and consumers
- Legislation is required to protect employees and support good employers, explicitly designed 'to ensure tips go to whom they should' and protect employee access to the national living wage.

- Workers and consumers should be fully informed as to what happens to their tips
- Tips should be in addition to a decent living wage. Employees should be paid decent wages instead of their salaries being decided upon by the proportion of tips paid in cash rather than by credit cards.
- Service charges shouldn't be used to cover staff costs or bring up wages
- There needs to be more consumer awareness as the public are probably not aware of where their money goes.
- Employers should clearly display their tipping policy, either on menus or point of payment, showing how much of the tip is passed to the employees or on what basis a tip is divided up.

### **Executive Pay/ High Pay**

- GMB is opposed to the unfairness demonstrated by the increasing gap between rich and poor in society. GMB will continue to challenge wage inequality and campaign for fair wages, fair pay and a move to a national living wage to help to narrow the gap.
- We are concerned at this growing inequality (2014:C10, C11) and support the notion of a national maximum wage. Motion 108 carried at Congress 2014 called for a campaign for the same maximum pay differential as the Swiss have adopted and for training materials to be provided to stewards.
- GMB believes that the failure of government to adequately address the excessive bonus culture in the banking sector for senior employees and executives is a significant contributing factor to the undermining of fair pay in British society.
- GMB believes that trade unions and collective bargaining have a key role to play in tackling high pay.
- GMB supports greater scrutiny of executive pay through worker participation on remuneration committees as one means of ensuring that pay transparency plays its part in highlighting excess and bringing public pressure to bear both on recipients and those in government with the power to regulate.
- The only way to tackle excessive executive pay would be for worker representation on remuneration committees and help companies take

into account employee pay and conditions within their company when setting directors' pay.

- GMB also believes that whilst pay ratios have a role to play in helping to promote fairness as a tool it does not address the problems of low pay and could be seen to hold down pay at the lowest level. We have considered pay ratios of 1:10 (2010:87)
- GMB believes that there is an inevitable conclusion that voluntary methods for addressing excessive high pay are unlikely to work. The role of government and regulatory bodies are key to placing some restraint on excess and contributing to the establishment of a fair pay regime and addressing the pay poverty faced by so many workers.

### **Regional Pay**

GMB are opposed to Regional Pay and subsequently any attempt of implementing regional NMW.

Around 2012, the government considered plans to end national pay bargaining for the public sector and introduce a system of regional or local pay rates. Academics warned that any new system could widen inequalities between different parts of the UK and they claimed that there was "no convincing evidence" that regional pay would boost local economies, and that it could reduce consumer spending. They argued that would depress pay for public sector workers outside London and the South East of England.

This followed a campaign by unions to stop any introduction of regional pay rates for public sector workers. GMB was part of this campaign. In our opinion, national pay structures allow for flexibility to react to local conditions. For example, the single status pay arrangements in councils and universities have built a degree of local pay determination on to national frameworks.

Some time back regional NMW was raised by an academic but this was resisted again for the same reasons and for that we would need regional inflation rates which are not provided.

The better solution, which is our policy is to move to a Living Wage which would benefit families, providing them with an acceptable standard of living especially with high food, transport costs and fuel inflation and takes into account regional variations.



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## Surveillance & Monitoring

GMB opposes the use of covert surveillance (2014:29) and monitoring in the workplace. Our policy is to develop guidance on the use of surveillance methods in the workplace (2009:72) and campaign against any abuses of this (2015:160).

Our on-going campaign in ASOS has highlighted invasive monitoring and surveillance being used causing increased workplace stress and affecting productivity. This unjustified surveillance by employers is usually a symptom of wider abuse and exploitation in the workplace.

We have also campaigned vigorously on hidden cameras being used in care homes and the care sector and our members have helped shape the guidance which the Care Quality Commission eventually issued to the Care Sector.

Note: GMB have a Model Monitoring and Surveillance Agreement which members can use in their workplaces. Please contact your Regional Equality Officer.

# Social Policy: Justice & Legal

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## Criminal Justice

It is our policy to oppose measures that lead to the erosion of civil liberties

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## Justice Campaigns

GMB has supported the following justice campaigns which have fought to highlight injustice to victims and most have called for independent public inquiries

- Orgreave Truth & Justice campaign for miners victimised in 1984 (2013:C17,2014:C19)
  - GMB continues to support the Cammell Laird 1984 campaign in its fight for compensation from the Government for all members involved in the 1984 strike at the shipyard
  - Hillsborough inquiry
  - Protections for victims of modern slavery
- 

## Justice System

- GMB is committed to a justice system which represents all levels of society and supports the removal of elitism in the judiciary system (2008:148)
- All those on jury service should receive adequate expenses
- We call for amendments to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme which was a safety net of many victims of crime (2012:176, 2013:270)

- We call to introduce tougher laws for knife crime
- Look at the question of arming police and training armed police in the light of a number of police shootings
- We welcome a review of the release of papers under the 30 year rule (2014:C19)

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## **Legal Aid**

We are deeply concerned at the reforms to Legal Aid which came about at the end of 2010.

This reduction and contraction of the service will severely impact on people on low incomes and women in particular.

GMB is in favour of retaining a properly funded legal aid system as we have a wider social responsibility to the poorest and most vulnerable in society. (2010:142, 2011:212, 2012:175).

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## **GMB Member Services: UNIONLINE**

At the end of May 2014, in conjunction with CWU, GMB set up its own Trade Union Law firm to offer free legal advice and services to members on employment rights. UNIONLINE also provides representation to members on cases of personal injury, criminal injury, industrial diseases, conveyancing and motor legal service.

# **UNIONLINE**



**YOUR TRADE UNION LAW FIRM**

**0300 333 0303**

**www.unionline.co.uk**

# Pensions & Retirement

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## 2006 CEC Statement on Pensions

Pensioners have a right to live in dignity in a retirement free from poverty.

GMB are committed to pursuing a fair state pension that provides a minimum decent income for living in retirement.

GMB is against all forms of discrimination and supports equality through pensions. We will campaign against any pension provision that causes any inequality whether by age, gender or sexuality.

GMB are aware of the inequality that exists for women and support the work of WASPI (Women against State Pension Inequality). We will continue to support this campaign and work with local WASPI groups to speak on GMB platforms and raise awareness of this issue.

We are committed to a State Pension Age that reflects the needs of our members taking in to consideration the type of work our members do and regional longevity inequality

GMB will continue to fight closure of Defined Benefit pension schemes both to new starters and to future accrual as these represent the most secure workplace pension arrangement and provide the best pension outcomes for our members.

GMB strives to improve Defined Contribution pensions, so that employer contributions levels reflect what is needed by our members in retirement. We want to map Defined Contribution and look to improve it wherever possible.

GMB believes that there is a culture of excessive and hidden charges within the pension and investment industry. GMB doesn't tolerate this culture and will do all it can to stop fat-cats dining out on workers retirement savings.

GMB believes that Ill Health cover should play a prominent part in pensions and therefore provisions for Ill Health cover should be within both Defined Contribution and Defined Benefit pensions.

GMB believes that transfers out of Public Sector employers should all be covered by Fair Deal avoiding a race to the bottom on pensions to improve contractor's profits. TUPE should go further to protect pension benefits upon any transfer.

GMB supports auto-enrolment and will seek improve to Auto-Enrolment pension provision, we do not accept minimum wages and will not accept minimum pensions. This includes eradication of Lower Earning Limits deductions from pensionable pay, age limits and earnings limits on eligibility as well as overall improvements to contribution levels.

GMB are committed to improving pension awareness throughout our lay structures to enhance our capabilities of improving pensions for workers.

The future of company pension schemes need to be higher on the political agenda

There should be no discrimination for part time workers. They should be able to aggregate their part time earnings across different employments, for the purposes of qualifying for National Insurance benefits in order to help maximise qualification for state pension.

We support the portability of Pensions a so called "pension passport" so that when workers change jobs their pension is pooled into one pot rather than having several small pots.

# Health, Safety & Environment

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**GMB@WORK 2007** CEC Special Report: Green agenda and GMB: Climate Change, Global warming, sustainable development

**GMB@WORK 2007** CEC Special Report: Corporate Manslaughter and Homicide Bill

**GMB@WORK 2008** CEC Special Report: The Green Agenda and GMB: Climate Change, Global Warming, Sustainable Development

**GMB@WORK 2015** CEC Special Report: Your Health, Your Safety

GMB recognises the valuable role health and safety reps have in the workplace and we have fought hard to establish workplace rights and protections despite constant attacks from successive Governments.

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## Internal

- All GMB Regions should have full time regional health & Safety Officers
- GMB supports the introduction of Roving workplace Safety Representatives and their legal rights and protection
- We support the promotion of health awareness in the workplace

Our members have died at work due to the failings of their employers, seriously hurt at work, suffering life-changing illnesses and injuries that drastically impact their quality of life. GMB aims to stop these accidents, remove hazards and promote better health and safety for all.

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## Health & Safety in the Workplace

We seek to:

- campaign for environmental workplace reps
- campaign against bullying and harassment at work

- campaign for penalties against employers who do not form health and safety committees upon request
  - oppose 'resilience' in the workplace
  - campaign against employers sub-contracting the cost of injury and illness to the state
  - campaign for better management of lone working
  - campaign for better management of substance misuse issues by employers
  - campaign for improved protection against musculoskeletal disorders, especially those caused by manual handling
  - campaign to ensure that 'fit notes' are correctly issued
  - pressurise employers to formally risk assess the work activities of new and expectant mothers.
  - campaign for better protection for workers from extreme temperatures
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## Sector specific

GMB seeks to:

- promote health and safety for casino workers
  - extend the Display Screen Equipment Regulations to cover checkouts and mobile/peripatetic workers
  - campaign for all call centre workers to be provided with their own headset, classified as personal protective equipment
  - campaign for all public buildings to have sprinkler systems
  - campaign against Local Authorities switching street lighting off at night
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## Health & Safety Executive (HSE), Enforcement & Accountability

GMB policy is opposed to the deregulation of UK health and safety law and any privatisation of the H&S inspection regime. Furthermore, it is

opposed to any reduction in the funding of the enforcement agencies. We are committed to:

- campaign for increased resources for HSE
- campaign for HSE to take greater action on work-related violence
- campaign for legal duties on directors to hold them personally accountable under health and safety law for their failings
- campaign for the reinstatement of the HSE Infoline
- support the introduction of Provisional Improvement Notices
- support increased penalties for poor H&S performers, and financial rewards for good H&S performers
- oppose HSE commercialisation but support the Fee for Intervention scheme

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## Asbestos/ Pleural Plaques/ Occupational diseases & Injuries

GMB have had a number of campaigns over the years in particular those related to industrial diseases.

 **2008** CEC Statement on Pleural Plaques

 **2010** CEC Statement on Pleural Plaques

GMB are concerned with the use of carcinogenic substances being used in workplaces and will lobby the Government and employers for the removal or to ensure that any exposure is managed and controlled. We are committed to:

- campaign vigorously for compensation and justice for those suffering from Pleural Plaques or pleural thickening
- promote Asbestos Victim Groups
- lobby for an equitable approach to asbestos compensation across the whole UK (ie the same arrangements for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)
- create Asbestos Registers in all GMB Regions



- campaign for asbestos awareness and training
  - campaign for 100% compensation to be provided for all mesothelioma sufferers
  - campaign for prosecution of those who illegally dump asbestos waste
  - campaign for a greater resources from Government to combat occupational cancer
  - campaign for increased awareness of legionella
  - lobby for lower exposure limits for Lead
  - campaign for Industrial Injury Disablement Benefit (IIDB) to be extended to osteoarthritis in certain specified industries
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## Violence at Work

GMB notes the increase in cases of violence in the workplace against workers and ask that the HSE work with employers, trade unions and other stakeholders. We support all campaigns against verbal & physical abuse and violence.

We have an on-going campaign for our workers in the Security sector: "SafeGuard" and we have been in discussions with the Security Industry Association (SIA) to look at the extent of violence and the sort of violence that takes place in the industry.

Our recent national campaign is for Zero Tolerance of violence against staff in schools as we recognise the growing instances of Teachers and support staff facing physical violence in the classroom, with pupils kicking, punching, spitting and even using weapons in school.

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## Stress

We are committed to campaign for action on work-related stress, particular on specific individual stress risk assessment and for work-related stress to be reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)

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## Education & Training

We are committed to campaign for:

- health and safety to added to the national curriculum
- more frequent First Aid refresher training
- better awareness, guidance and training on mental health at work
- all migrant workers to be able to understand written and verbal English

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## Changes in Legislation

We are committed to lobby for a maximum of 4 hours works without a break for all safety critical workers and we support a campaign for International Workers' Memorial Day to become a Bank Holiday.

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## Climate Change

- GMB notes the on-going threat of Climate Change, we resolve to campaign for reduction in emissions in both the UK and internationally.
- We welcome raising awareness of the vital role trade unions play in awareness of and tackling climate change.
- GMB supports the legal protection of environmental reps and the importance of their role in reducing the carbon footprint t(2008, 2009)
- Global warming should be high priority and GMB supports all steps to cut greenhouse gases and meet UK and World targets
- We support all forms of recycling and call for funding from central Government to ensure that Recycling services are protected (2009:146)
- To encourage participation in the Campaign Against Climate Change
- To campaign for alternatives to landfill
- To support rigorous monitoring of the EU-ETS carbon trading scheme
- To campaign for restriction and substitution of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals

- To campaign for green manufacturing in the UK – especially wind turbines
  - To promote renewable technologies
  - To campaign for information on the health and environmental risks of low energy light bulbs
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## Floods

GMB recognises that recent severe floods in the UK are due to climate change and will be a recurrent hazard for many years to come (2016:C13).

GMB has lobbied Governments on these issues through the Trade Union Sustainable Development Committee (TUSDAC).

It is clear that a lack of long-term, joined up flood defence and planning policy has resulted in almost no mitigation of flooding when extreme rainfall has occurred. We call on the Government to invest in effective programmes for flood defences and flood avoidance measures:

- Campaign for protection from floods and coastal erosion
  - Rivers should be maintained
  - Flood plains should be correctly managed
  - Greater control of housing planning in flood risk areas
  - Fully fund the Environment Agency
  - Fully fund new flood defences
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## Environment

- We support a campaign for environmental workplace reps
- Food waste is damaging to the environment and we need to highlight this problem. GMB calls for a campaign looking at the food waste in supermarkets
- To campaign for greater business recycling

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## Social Health

- We support a lobby for government to investigate the health effects of aspartame
- We support smoking cessation activity

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## Mental Health

We recognise that Mental Health is a difficult issue for Workplace representatives and even with training we appreciate that our reps cannot be experts.

A GMB “Mental Health @ Work” Guide was launched at the 2016 National Equality Conference.

This guide enables our reps to signpost GMB members to the specialist support they need, or to negotiate with employers to protect our members.


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## Women’s Health & Safety

As women make up roughly half of the UK workforce, GMB recognises that all working women and our women members should be informed to ensure they are healthy and safe at work.

A “GMB Guide to Women’s Health and Safety @ Work” Guide was launched at the 2017 National Equality Conference.

# Economy

 **2009** CEC Statement on the Economy & Manufacturing

 **2011** CEC Special Report: A Fresh Way Forward for the UK Economy (looks at the financial crisis, banks and bonuses and recommends economic and tax policies)

In our first statement on the Economy at Congress 2009, GMB recognised the effects of the UK recession on jobs, house prices and public finances.

We need long term investment in manufacturing, housing, public works and the public sector to lift the UK out of the recession. We condemn the greed and irresponsibility of the banks and financial institutions and call for investment into improving services and stimulating local economies.

Whilst we understand the need to bail out banks, we ask for government financial assistance to apply to other companies in financial difficulty in order to support UK industry. (2010:90,96)

- GMB opposes the short selling of shares and equities on the stock market and hedge fund insider trading and urges for GMB to campaign to stop this illegal practice

GMB agrees that the Government should


- take direct control of the banks already in state hands to ensure that financial support is channelled to where it is needed.
- Set up a national watchdog to control the banking industry
- Call for restraint in bankers bonuses and in the case of state run institutions, for all public money to be paid before bonuses are paid out
- Re-establish mutuality of the banking sector
- Outlaw/put a cap on unreasonable interest rates and regulate loan companies (2010:C8, 2012:197)

GMB deplores the excessive interest rates charged by payday lending industry and supports calls for regulation and the promotion of alternative sources of credit. (2014:C16) and look at how payday loans are advertised

GMB are in favour of promoting and supporting the use of Credit Unions as alternatives to pay day loans (2011:16, 2014:172,173)

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## Tax

 **2007** CEC Special Report: Private Equity and Venture Capitalists

GMB have been at the forefront of exposing scandals involving companies being sold to private equity Companies and then asset stripped.

We call for an end to the Government providing tax relief for interest payments on loans used by venture capitalists to buy companies like the Automobile Association, Birds Eye and Sainsbury's. This relief costs the Exchequer hundreds of millions per annum, while giving debt unfair tax advantages over equity.

We oppose the unregulated and unaccountable activities of venture capitalists, their ability to get tax relief on loans, and the effect they have on companies, jobs, pensions and the economy.

GMB consider that the private status of the venture capitalists is an abuse of company law and abuse of the privilege of limited liability status. The growth in this industry is leading to increased merger and takeover activity thus generating huge bonuses for the City while the management team who run the industry levy very steep charges and commissions.

- GMB continues to fight for a fair tax system, we recognise that in the absence of a wealth tax, inequalities continue to persist
- GMB recognises that offshore and tax havens cost the Treasury billions and urge for their abolition (2009:140). We support a campaign to bring these tax havens under UK regulation (2011:160)
- We are in favour of a return to progressive taxation (2014:115) and an end to tax evasion and call for an examination and revisions of tax law to address the avoidance of tax which is costing the UK exchequer billions of pounds.(2011:C12)
- We are opposed to corporate tax dodgers and especially those using tax havens to move their money to avoid UK taxation (2010:C5, 2011:154,C12)

- There should be a 50% tax rate on bonuses above £50,000 and 80% on bonuses above £150,000 (2009:131, 2010:84)
- GMB condemns private equity companies who pay little or no tax in the UK on profits made from UK businesses
- We support the call for a reduction in the current rate of VAT to benefit the UK economy(2012:C10)

Other tax related policy is:

- In support of a chewing gum tax and for this to be passed directly onto local authorities to spend on cleaning up the streets (2015:281)
- To call for a campaign and lobby against the taxation on sanitary products (2016:158)

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## Austerity

GMB and the trade union movement continue to campaign and defend the rights of working people against employer and government attacks on their wages and conditions and continual austerity measures and cuts in public services.

GMB is committed to fighting austerity and public sector cuts and believes the Government's economic strategy is having a disproportionate impact on working class women through the cuts to benefits, services and public sector jobs and cuts to the funding of vital community groups. Our campaigns have also highlighted the effects austerity has had on pensioners, the disabled and other vulnerable groups.

Government initiatives such as the "Big Society" were a smokescreen for an ideological commitment to drive a full market and full competition approach through the whole public sector, regardless of any evidence about whether competition works in particular fields. This is demonstrated by a government which claims to support the Big Society at the same time as it created the conditions that resulted in the closure of libraries, children's centres, and Citizens Advice Bureau services.

GMB does not support the transfer of public services to Social Enterprises which are a form of back door privatisation.

As a key campaigning union, GMB are happy to support TUC co-ordinated campaigns and work with other unions nationally to build opposition to the austerity cuts and work with other unions and take joint action where agreed.

On the Peoples Charter, we would largely support their aims and objectives but have some difficulty with their call for a general strike as this would involve calling all unions in both private and public sectors to co-ordinate action and GMB notes the real differences in opinions between a number of unions on the legality of a general strike.

It is clear no immunity on grounds of a trade dispute would apply. GMB has many members who would be exempt from industrial action as they provide emergency cover or are in caring professions. Furthermore, GMB would not call our members to action without a democratic ballot.

On our support for the People's Assembly, many of the aims of the organisation are in line with our campaigns. GMB and our members have been actively supporting and participating in regional and local anti-austerity marches and demonstrations much before the formation of the "People's Assembly".


GMB has nationally affiliated to the Peoples Charter for Change in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Rather than campaign with the People's Assembly we tend to support TUC anti austerity marches and lobbies.



# Political & Labour Party

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 2010 CEC Political Statement

 2011 CEC Statement: GMB's Political Organisation

 2012 CEC Political Report

The 2012 CEC Special Report looked at GMB relationship with the Labour party and political campaigning. It made a number of recommendations in order to organise GMB regional and national Political structures to bring about greater accountability to members and set up political training. We will effectively campaign on key issues that matter to our members and we will work with the Labour Party and others to advance our members interests.

(see  Congress 2016 CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act for changes to political fund arrangements)

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## Labour Party Structure/ Internal

- GMB reaffirms its support to the Labour Party (2010:101) we encourage our members to join the Party (2007:181) and urge our members to distribute labour materials (2014:135). However we are conscious that we should keep our relationship under constant review (2012:146)
- The Labour Party should continue to improve welfare provisions which support the most vulnerable in society to prevent the gap between rich and poor.
- Our policy is to ensure that the Labour Party fully connects with its grass roots activists and works politically and industrially with its trade union links
- We are conscious of the costs of internal leadership elections and contests and urges the Labour Party to look at introducing financial spending limits for any future elections (2008) and rules for conduct for Labour Party elections (2014:154)

- General Election and bye-election ballot papers should include candidates business interests (2015:236)
  - Motions have highlighted the divisions that have resulted as a result of the rise of “Progress” within the Labour Party. GMB will work to maintain unity within the Labour party (2012:154) We are concerned over factions within the Party and over the past year or so, we have called for unity within the Labour Party (2016:174,176)
  - We call for the Labour Party to reform its Parliamentary candidate selection process (2013:C15)
  - Motions calling for de-affiliation from the Labour Party are normally ruled out of order in the absence of a Rule Change. Funding to the Labour Party is always under review. We encourage the Labour Party to adopt the policies that we can encourage our members to campaign on.
  - Whilst we agree for calls for a new Clause IV of the Labour Party Constitution, there are other more pressing issues to campaign on (2014:153)
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## **Labour Party Conference**

- All affiliated unions should have the right to submit motions to the Conference (2011:187) and we urge our members to become active within their constituency labour party branches (2014:151)
  - We call for the removal of restrictive contemporary criteria and call to ensure CLPs can submit four motions for debate in addition to 4 motions for unions (2012:155)
  - We are in favour of constitutional amendments which allow unions to freely choose what motions and amendments are to be submitted and debated at Conference (2010:108,109) to ensure to maximise support for GMB key policies
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## **MPs**

- The Labour Party and parliamentary candidates should represent the interests of working people and our members. (2012:C12, also GMB Rule 2.8)

- GMB to have a mentoring scheme to provide training and support to members who wish to stand for election as a prospective candidate (2010:121)
- GMB have constantly called for more working class MPs (2010:C10) and have set up programmes to assist GMB members wishing to run for public office
- In particular, any individual GMB supported MP who fails to support working people or pursue GMB policies should have their funding and support withdrawn (2005, 2008). In addition this also applies to those MPs who engage in paid work, consultancy work or hold positions on boards for companies who go against GMB policies and principles (e.g private equity).
- The GMB National Political Department should monitor the voting records of our supported MPs and report back (2011:C19)
- We have called for the abolition of the House of Lords and for it to be replaced with an elected second chamber (2009:157)
- We have called to create a “Story of Work” historical publication detailing the struggles of our members (2010:122)
- We call for the repeal of s141 of the Mental Health Act that strips MPs from their seat (2010:124)
- GMB is opposed to unpaid MP internships
- MPs pay should be brought in line with other public sector pay increases

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## Political General

- On the funding of political parties, we call on the Government to restrict the donations that businesses and rich individuals give
- We need to ensure our reps are trained and understand the importance of voting in all elections (2012:36)
- We call for a dedicated Minister for the Elderly (2012:116)
- GMB opposes the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 known as the “Lobbying” Act which imposes limits on the activities of organisations such as

trade unions, charities and anti-racism campaigners. It will also slash the amount organisations can spend on initiatives such as newspaper advertising. (2014:C14).

- GMB calls for Labour Government commitment to keep the Human Rights Act in favour of the proposed British Bill of Rights (2016:C12)

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## Regional Government

- We condemn the scrapping of regional Development Agencies and call for a proper framework of regional governance (2011:201)
- We oppose the constituency boundary review (2012:156)
- We call on the Labour Government to commit to a Commission for regional governance for English Regions as part of a process leading to regional devolution of powers (2015:C11)
- Motions have called for an English Parliament because the current arrangements of UK MPs voting on English only issues in Westminster, when devolved institutions exist, seems unfair. There are a number of issues with an English Parliament; each devolved parliament and assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for different policies, there are no consistent policies. The impact of how an English Parliament might determine the future of the UK must not be under estimated. The sheer size of an English Parliament could potentially rival and potentially undermine Westminster and an English parliament could mark the end of the union of the four nations which would not be in the interests of GMB members. Finally, the future of the UK and the union is under threat by the SNP campaign for Scottish independence. (2012:157,159).
- GMB is opposed to unaccountable elected mayors (2001:319, 2013:250) who are elected for a fixed period with control of local service budgets, but are only held to account by the electorate at election times. There are examples of Mayors cutting local services without reference to the Local Authority. GMB opposes cabinet and executive structures as they exclude trade unions in many local authorities.

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## Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS)

GMB together with other unions, MPs and academics have formed a new think tank – the Centre for Labour and Social Studies (CLASS), to develop and popularise ideas needed to shape a renewed socialist agenda for the 21st Century. We urge members to promote the organisation and its publications (2014:134)

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## Democracy & Constitutional Reform

The Union has debated and carried motions asking for the following changes in legislation:

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### ID Cards

Whilst we recognise the importance of ID cards in the security sector, we are opposed to the general introduction of ID Cards as it infringes on human rights (2008:141)

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### Voting

- Call to introduce compulsory voting at local, general and European elections for all over 18 (2009:160,161). This motion was referred and it was determined that falling election turnouts reflect disillusionment with politicians and the political process and this must be reversed. However, there are concerns and inherent danger in forcing people to vote. It also raises concerns over an individual's democratic right to withdraw from the political process. There are also compulsion issues with regards to what the sanctions would be. On further analysis, we therefore would advise that if this motion is placed before congress again that the recommendation would be to oppose it.
- Lobby for the voting age to be reduced to 16 (2012:162,248, 2013:248, 2015:257) we note that 16 year olds were allowed to vote in the Scottish Referendum
- Our policy is in favour of First Past the Post voting system as opposed to proportional representation (2010:125)

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## Titles, Honours and the Monarchy

- We support the nomination of those people who are committed to serving the public over and above their normal work which includes service to the trade union movement and charities
- GMB welcomes honours being bestowed on ordinary working people and highlights the inequality of hereditary titles and that this has no place in modern society.
- We call for a campaign to include members of the public who have shown outstanding bravery or acts of heroism during disasters and attacks (2008:171)
- Honours should be awarded for appropriate reasons. There needs to be impartial scrutiny of the Honours List to ensure that it is not being used to award for political financial donors or toadyism, or to people with criminal convictions for offences such as fraud
- There are strong views amongst our members regarding the abolition of the Monarchy on both sides of the argument. We have had motions asking us to affiliate to Republic which campaigns for an elected head of state but we had no regional support. There is a great deal of respect for the current monarch. In the current economic climate, campaigning for the abolition of the monarchy is not the best use of GMB resources or time.
- GMB supports the armed Forces and has called for wounded servicemen to be recognised in some way (2013:251)

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## Racism & Fascism

Racism and Fascism divides workers and has no place in the trade union movement. GMB is opposed to all forms of racism and fascism.

We have some reservations about the tactics of some organisations but we are prepared to work with anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations provided their aims match those of the GMB.

We recognise the growth of the far right parties and movements across the EU and an increase in anti-islamic and anti-immigration propaganda.

In our fight to unite against fascism, we have longstanding policy to campaign against the fascist organisation, the BNP and its increased activity in communities (2009:166,167)

GMB is opposed to affiliating or donating money to any organisation whose members are affiliated to parties other than Labour or whose values do not match those of GMB

# Industrial: Commercial Services Section

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## Energy and Utilities

### A central role for public ownership

GMB believes that public utilities including energy, gas, electric and associated distribution and generating network, water and the postal system should brought back into full public ownership.

GMB is committed to:

- A balanced sustainable energy policy which includes coal, gas, renewables and nuclear.
- Support the retention of the nuclear industry within government control. It supports the renationalisation of the power generation industry and the national grid as well as support for investment in clean coal and carbon capture plants.

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## Fuel poverty

- GMB is concerned that Pensioners across the nations have to make choices whether to heat or eat due to rising Fuel Poverty. There are millions of households in fuel poverty and we call on the Government to address this issue. We have highlighted the failing energy market and called for suppliers to genuinely offer low cost social tariffs, levying a windfall tax on energy companies and using this revenue to provide financial assistance to the neediest households
- GMB policy is to lobby government to ensure that fuel poverty is eradicated.
- Energy regulators such as OFGEM and OFGAS should be made more accountable to consumers (2008: 175) and work in the public interest (2009:C5)



- OFGEM is a flawed Regulator which has failed to regulate the energy market and should be replaced with a more accountable enforcement authority (2009:80)
- GMB calls on the Government to curb the large profits made by energy companies and cap future prices (2009:81,82)
- We call on utility companies to ensure those on pre-payment meters or tariffs pay the same as those on direct debit (2009:84)
- Domestic fuel to be subject to zero rated VAT (2009:213)
- GMB's Emergency motion carried at TUC Congress 2008 outlined the failing energy market and called for suppliers to genuinely offer low cost social tariffs, levying a windfall tax on energy companies and using this revenue to provide financial assistance to the neediest households.
- Our Retired Members Association (RMA) also called for the Government to commit to free bus passes, retaining the Winter Fuel Allowance, free TV Licences and other Pensioner "benefits"

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## Fracking

### 2015 CEC Statement on Fracking

GMB notes growing national and international opposition to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) from both local communities and unions and that the Government continues to aggressively pursue a policy designed to promote hydraulic fracturing.

Our policy has always been towards a balanced energy policy.

The strategic importance of fracking within the UK's balanced energy mix must not be ignored. Along with nuclear, renewables, green coal, oil and gas, fracking could be absolutely essential to achieving near self-sufficiency which will benefit domestic and business need.

Given the fragility of the oil and gas sector due to price pressures, diversification through shale gas could well become a key employer within the energy sector.

We call for GMB to organise the sector to ensure the protection of jobs and maintain a safe environment.

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## Energy Market

GMB notes with concern, the increasing energy process and payment of huge bonuses to executives in power companies. We call for a fundamental review into the Energy Market to investigate practices, infrastructure, pricing, energy supply and policy. In addition, there should be an independent body overseeing these companies (not OFGEM)

- GMB is committed to ensuring that jobs in the energy sector are highly skilled and that the UK has a secure and affordable energy mix.
  - GMB supports investments in offshore windfarms so vital manufacturing and construction jobs are created
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## Coal Industry

We call for investment in the development of deep mined coal and carbon capture and storage (2015:334)

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## Gas Industry

- GMB supports the recruitment of apprentices in the Gas industry (2011:106)
  - We support the inclusion of gas fired power stations in Carbon Capture and Sequestration (CCS) projects (2011)
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## Security Sector

 **2005** CEC Special Report Organising in Security: Opportunity and Change

- GMB condemns violent attacks on GMB members in the Security Industry: GMB have a targeted campaign "SafeGuard" aimed at tackling violence. (2015:162)
- GMB supports the Government introducing legislation that exempts Cash in Transit vehicles from parking restrictions (2009:87)
- We continue to campaign to ban zero Hours contracts in the Security Sector (2009: 89)

- We support the call to abolish Section 127 which prohibits certain workers from taking industrial action
  - We support a proper licensing regime for security workers and call for a refund of unexpired SIA licence fees where workers leave the industry
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## Retail

- GMB is committed to fighting for jobs in the retail sector in the face of automation, and that these are living wage jobs (CS 2016).
  - GMB is also committed to improving the working conditions for workers in distribution warehouses for supermarkets, and online retailers as well. This includes campaigning for full recognition rights in large online retail distribution sites (CS 2016).
  - GMB has a zero tolerance policy for attacks against workers in the retail sector, which includes physical and verbal abuse from customers (CS 2014)
  - We seek to establish a bargaining structure within Asda Stores for joint working (2011:104)
  - We continue to highlight unethical practices of companies such as M&S who are signed up to the Ethical Trading Initiative (2015:169)
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## Transport

GMB recognises the important role an integrated transport policy can play in society today and into the future.

GMB policy recognises the need for improved public transport to meet the needs of our members and their communities, especially those in rural areas.

We oppose deregulation of transport services as these policies have led to increased fares, less frequent and less reliable services, and far fewer passengers using public transport for local journeys. We also oppose any attacks on public transport staff

With ever increasing concerns about the environment, pollution and the pressing need for “green” solutions, there was never a more important time to finance and develop a fully integrated public transport system

offering cheap and reliable interconnecting services as an alternative to the private car.

GMB believes that extending public ownership throughout the rail and bus industry can create the conditions to begin to develop an integrated, accountable transport system and strongly opposes any attempts to privatise public transport further.

Buses should be brought back under local authority control with adequate funds to be run as a service for people. The union supports:

- free bus passes for the over 60s and UK wide concessionary fares
- the retention of freedom passes
- public ownership of the public transport system, its expansion, full integration and rational planning.

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## Road

GMB supports:

- Measures to ensure better road safety and for us to campaign with other like-minded organisations for 20mph zones around schools, improved pavements and cycle paths, compulsory road safety lessons in schools (2008: 186) keeping cyclists off the pavements
- Looking into the increased use of controlled parking zones, not for the protection of the environment but for financial benefit to Councils (2008:187)
- Increased penalties for using mobiles while driving
- the use of car speed boxes as an alternative to speed cameras
- Addressing the misuse of disabled parking spaces by the non-disabled (2010:196)
- The provision and eligibility of blue badges (2016:294) including people with temporary disabilities (2016:295)
- A ban on car clamping

- We are opposed to parking on pavements as this poses a hazard for our disabled members
  - We support raising awareness to pass horses wide and slowly on roads
  - Campaigns to support our workers in the private hire industry and raise our profile in the industry
  - Legislate to stop the illegal plying for hire from illegal private hire vehicles
  - Call for a reduction in VAT on petrol and diesel
  - More investment in road building schemes to boost regional economies
  - Measures to ensure the protection and safety of our members working on roadside breakdowns
  - Lobby for uniform charges for medicals for HGV drivers at GP practices (2015:365)
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## **Rail**

- GMB supports the immediate lobbying of the Government for the need for trains and buses to be brought back into the public domain;
- We campaign for the Labour Party to commit to bring the railway industry and bus transport back into public ownership; and for the next Labour Government to re-nationalise railways and the rest of the transport system (2015:C7)
- GMB are in favour of the provision of a high speed rail network to connect all regions (2012:210)
- GMB opposes the closure of London Underground ticket offices (2014:250) and the removal of guards on trains (2014:251)
- GMB supports a freeze on rail fares

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## Aviation

- GMB welcomes and supports the expansion of a third runway at Heathrow. The construction of a third runway and new terminal buildings will have a massive impact on the UK steel production industry and create much needed construction jobs and apprenticeships.
- Although GMB supports the expansion of Heathrow, this is not incompatible with calling for a 2nd runway at Gatwick to expand overall capacity in the South East, particularly as no work could begin on any new runway at Gatwick until after 2019 at the earliest
- GMB supports investment and expansion of regional airports
- GMB calls for investment in disabled facilities at Stansted airport (2015:368)

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## Other Transport

- GMB supports the replacement of harmful diesel fuels with low sulphur alternatives as part of a just transition to a low carbon economy and the use of green cleaner fuel in shipping (2015:366)

# Industrial: Manufacturing Section

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**GMB@WORK 1994** CEC Statement “full employment and a fair society”  
– considered shorter working hours, job sharing and investment in industry and skills.

**GMB@WORK 2005** CEC Statement: Manufacturing

**GMB@WORK 2009** CEC Statement on Manufacturing and the Economy

GMB is committed to campaigning in support of UK manufacturing and has demanded that government provides more pro-active support and interventionist action. It is in favour of a Minister being appointed with responsibility to support the sector and to introduce tighter controls to prevent high tech and high skilled jobs being exported at the expense of UK workers.

Our policy includes campaigning for government procurement to be used as a mechanism for supporting UK manufacturing jobs and for sustained investment in the UK Defence industry and support for the engineering as the shipbuilding, mechanical and electrical design industry and many other jobs within the supply chain of civil and naval nuclear industry.

GMB seeks to remove obstacles to reserved contracts to enable organisations such as Remploy to more easily bid for work.

GMB will campaign across the trade union movement, and by using its political influence, in defence of UK manufacturing jobs.

GMB has been campaigning for skilled apprenticeships in manufacturing, in addition to working to campaign for the retention and development of high skilled and high tech jobs in the UK.

GMB submitted a motion to TUC Congress 2016 in support of R&D investment and for the Government to increase incentives, funding and investment in R&D. This policy is recognised as vital to the future sustainability of manufacturing in the UK.

### The Union:

- Urges the Government to support UK manufacturing and call on nationalisation of key parts of British industry (2012:120)
- Calls on the Government to commit to public works programmes that support public services and grow the economy (2012:123)
- Calls for a campaign for a return to full employment
- Calls for a proper active UK industrial strategy and safeguard the national infrastructure to ensure we have the manufacturing capacity that makes the country fit for a strong and prosperous economic future. In addition we need to develop a highly skilled workforce through proper training (2013:216)
- Without a proper manufacturing strategy linked to procurement, energy, transport, and climate change policy. Manufacturing in the UK will continue to be seen as a poor relation. GMB calls for a Public Procurement policy to safeguard jobs and skills and encourage contracts to be awarded to Companies who manufacture in the UK.
- Call on Government to use public procurement as a means of developing a positive boost to Manufacturing, ensuring the legal obligation in contracting Authorities to consider social, employment, disability, and environmental issues when awarding public contracts
- We need funding for research and development into environmentally friendly new technology for the motor industry.
- We welcome any campaign or initiative to highlight the under presentation of women workers in manufacturing and take action to find ways to attract more women into the sector.(2015:172)

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## Defence

GMB recognises that the Government's strategic Defence Review has made cuts in defence investment and left gaps in our maritime capability.

- GMB opposes defence cuts and the privatisation and outsourcing of MOD bases
- All personnel serving in armed forces should be equipped with the latest equipment (2008:140)



- Government to support British companies, British jobs and British skills
  - Safeguarding of our dockyards and shipyards
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## Trident

We acknowledge the skilled manufacturing jobs and recognises the wide-ranging views on both sides of the debate over the Trident Successor Programme.

GMB has always been multilateralist in its approach to nuclear weapons and disarmament. Whilst acknowledging that the issue of the Trident Successor programme generates legitimate emotions on both sides of the debate, the longstanding multilateralist position of GMB is reaffirmed by the CEC.

In the absence of any credible, costed alternative that guarantees the jobs, pay and conditions of these workers, the GMB position remains to continue to campaign robustly to protect the future of thousands of workers in the defence manufacturing industries and the many direct and indirect jobs in the shipyards and in the logistics and supply chain associated with these industries across the UK and Scotland.


GMB are in no doubt that failure to progress the Trident Successor Programme will have devastating consequences for GMB members across the country. Therefore the CEC position is to ensure that we remain in favour of the renewal of the Trident Programme and guarantee that we are protected by a properly functioning defence capability.(2016:C11, 164)

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## Construction

GMB deplores the loss of private sector construction jobs as a result of cuts in public expenditure, including the Building Schools for the Future programme and this is causing regional economies to be damaged.

We call for the funding that was originally provided for the refurbishment of schools and other public buildings to be re-instated. We believe that money spent on public sector infrastructure expenditure will create construction

jobs. GMB supports an extensive housebuilding programme (see  **WORK 2014** GMB Special Report on Housing)

All infrastructure projects such as Energy from Waste (EfW), Combine Cycle Gas Turbine CCGT and other forms of combined heat and power generation, renewable energy and Nuclear construction should be built at a very minimum standard utilising National Agreements such as the National Agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI) for mechanical construction and the Construction Industry Joint Council (CIJC) for civil construction.

These agreements as a very base line should be a prerequisite at the tendering stages to ensure a level playing field for UK construction companies and all workers on the sites to be on equal pay choose wherever you come from, this would also eradicate the vicious form of exploitation of posted workers and social dumping which is now common place in the UK.

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## Wood

We support fair wages for the skilled workers in the Wood Industry (2015:174)

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## Shipbuilding

GMB notes with concern successive government's downsizing of the capacity of the Royal Navy; including surface fleet, submarine fleet and fleet air arm. This is in addition to the general decline in UK shipbuilding. GMB calls on the Government for urgent action to retain the ability to build warships in the UK and place orders to British ship building dockyards across the UK, not only for new builds but also for maintenance and repair work

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## Steel

It is our longstanding policy to call for the renationalisation of the steel industry and we urge the Government to intervene to invest in the industry. We acknowledge that this will also impact jobs and communities in other companies in the distribution and supply chain.

We work with other unions on joint campaigns to "Save Our Steel" and defend the British Steel industry. (2013:156)

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## Coal

It is our longstanding policy to call for the renationalisation of the coal industry and we urge the Government to intervene to invest in the industry and to formulate a strategy for coal in line with other energy policies. (2013:157,158)

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## Windfarms

GMB recognises the value of offshore windfarms in making a positive contribution in reducing carbon emissions and is mindful of the potential for manufacturing in providing quality added value employment in those former UK shipbuilding areas or other regional economies.

We call on increased funding for Research and Development and further investment in full size plants and public procurement in new Green technologies manufactured in the UK (2009:99,2011:119)

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## Remploy

We have actively campaigned against the closure of Remploy factories and in particular the remaining 54 factories when the funding ran out in 2011.

 **WORK** 2009 CEC Statement on Remploy

GMB Supports


- Equality for disabled workers to seek meaningful work on the same terms as the rest of society and especially where members have invisible impairments or disabilities
- Encouraging and supporting continued supported Employment for disabled workers with proper funding
- The provision of decent well-paid employment, self-respect and independence for disabled people who would never have secured work outside Remploy
- Instead of closure, the factories becoming efficient manufacturing sites, working with local communities, and with an enhanced role in providing training through modern apprenticeships, Unfortunately due

to lack of government support, and despite a hard fought battle from the membership, Remploy factories have closed

- The establishment of a York Workers Co-operative and supports using this not for profit Co-op/ social enterprise model as framework for disabled workers.
- DWP to have a bigger say in the running and future of Remploy and a parliamentary sub group be established.
- Using EU provisions on reserved contracts status for awarding contracts to supported employment workplaces for people with disabilities whilst Britain is in the EU.
- A commitment from the Labour Party to include supported employment in their manifesto and for them to consult with GMB and other unions
- Labour Party to review the employment of disabled people which also includes proposals for a profitable and sustainable factory and skill based employment
- Fight to support and defend remaining Remploy workers and oppose any further attacks on vulnerable people
- Calls on local councils to provide meaningful employment for disabled people and ring fence budgets to support these
- The Government and trade unions working together to make disabled workplaces more viable and profitable and all profits returned back into the business to improve the workplace and employ more disabled people.
- We encourage GMB branches to donate funds to the York Workers Co-Operative

# Industrial: Public Services Section

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 **2011** CEC Statement: In Defence of Public Services

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## Public Services

Public services are a social necessity and should not be a vehicle for private profit.

The fight for public provision and continued investment of public services is fundamental to the industrial strategy of GMB. To this aim, we call for increased funding to Local Authorities

Our policy is to support workers in their struggle to protect and provide the public provision of public services. Union policy is focussed on the defence of the public sector and opposition to privatisation and outsourcing in any form.

We oppose the contracting out/ outsourcing of public services to the private sector, the use of PFI to fund such services, social enterprise, and "marketisation" and fragmentation in the public sector, recognising that this agenda leads directly to worse public services and undermines universal access.

Working people and their families face growing disadvantage and poverty through job loss, pay cuts, and the loss of decent pensions.

GMB will campaign to defend the weakest and most vulnerable in society from suffering from cuts in the NHS, education, housing provision and maintenance, and care and welfare for the young, the elderly, and mentally and physically handicapped. This stands in contrast to the bankers who will continue to be paid huge bonuses.

Our policy is to defend members' conditions of employment, regarding pay and pensions, and to press for further investment in training the workforce to meet the needs of the future.

GMB is opposed to public sector pay freezes and fully committed to full implementation of single status.

Policy in the public sector will highlight and oppose the unacceptable inequalities within our society, taking every possible step to fight for social justice. This will include defending the jobs, pay and pensions of our members.

We support the creation of more high quality apprenticeships within the public sector (2009:111)

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## Local Government

GMB believes in grassroots democracy. At the local level, this means representative municipal government expressed through high quality public services.

However, local councils have been at the forefront of government cut-backs since 2010; that have seen public assets (land, parklands, former museum and library buildings) sold into private hands, and in-house services privatised. This includes the privatisation of schools, such as academies and free schools.

Council workers are increasingly seeing their jobs out-sourced and the introduction of zero hour contracts and precarious contracts. GMB believes that all workers should receive the Living wage, set at £10 an hour, and that all municipal services should be brought back in-house as soon as possible.

A Living Wage of at least £10 an hour not only makes good sense, in terms of social justice, but good economic sense; as it reduces the need for our members to fall back upon tax credits and welfare, but it also serves to curb the spiralling amounts of profit that private companies are making from the public purse, via the Community Charge.

### Current campaign to end the Public Sector Pay pinch

Our vital public sector workers are facing 10 years of pay cuts in real terms. Nurses, midwives and refuse collectors have had an average of £9,000 pinched from their pay packets since 2010 and they face losing £4,000 more in the next three years.



**PUBLIC SECT R**  
**PAY PINCH**

Since 2010 public sector workers' wages have been frozen, or have increased below inflation, which means their cost of living is rising faster than their pay, leaving them out of pocket.

The average public sector worker has lost £8,953 in real terms since 2010, and with the Government planning to pursue this pay freeze policy until 2020 they stand to lose £4,073 more (a total of just over £13,000!).

The financial crash wasn't caused by teaching assistants, council officers or hospital porters. And it's outrageous that they are still expected to pay the price for the banking crisis over a decade later.

What's more, real terms cuts to public sector pay aren't just failing our members. They're failing everyone who relies on our vital public services.

Visit our GMB campaign website to get involved, calculate how much different public sector workers are having pinched and to read the full report: [www.paypinch.org](http://www.paypinch.org)

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## GMB in Schools

GMB is the union for School Support Staff and Teaching Assistants: the hidden professionals, who underpin the education of all our children.

GMB seeks for an end to zero hour contracts and casual employment within the sector. GMB also believes that it is in the best interest of schools, teachers, parents and – above all – children, that Teaching Assistants and School Support Staff should be paid no less than the Living Wage, and should have access to good quality training and clear routes of professional development available to them.

GMB is committed to School Support Staff and TAs being paid for all of the hours they work, especially when they are often expected to come in to work early and to stay late in order to get the job done.

It is high time that the professional status of our members is recognised; that they are paid at an appropriate level for the skilled professional jobs they do, and that national terms and conditions apply to them.

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## Academies

GMB has longstanding opposition to the introduction and spread of academies and free schools. The current government policy of offering Academy Status to schools destroys public accountability in education and the maintenance of equal opportunity for all children. We continue to be concerned when schools leave the local authority system. (Congress 2006, C31 "Education", 2007: Motion 211 Congress 2007 "Academies", Congress 2011 Composite 23 "Opposition to Academies"; Congress 2012 Motion 185 "Education Sabotage", Congress 2013 Motion 178 "Academies").

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## School Support Staff

GMB is the lead union for School Support Staff and we have been opposed to the abolition of the SSSNB: Schools Support Staff Negotiating Board (Congress 2009 C10 "School Support Staff, Congress 2011 Motion 137 "Abolition of the SSSNB", PS22,PS23, PS24 to 2014 Public Services Section Conference). We believe that our teaching assistants and all support staff should be covered by a national structure and a national agreement to ensure minimum national terms and conditions in line with teachers.

Some Congress decisions have been to:

- Highlight the inequality of School Support Staff and ensure that these workers are not bullied or harassed
- End term time contracts
- Support the provision of universal Free School Meals in primary Schools and for the provision of breakfasts in schools (2013:183)
- Re-introduce a national agreement for school support workers and national negotiations through the Schools Support Staff Negotiating body (SSSNB)
- Ensure that school support staff only administer medicines if they volunteer and if they do, that we there are agreed policies for risk assessments and training (2011:138)
- We support investment in schools sports facilities and call for the end of compulsory worship in schools (2015:104)



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## Training & Education: General Social Policy

- GMB policy is committed to the provision of access to education being open to all. The withdrawal of Student Maintenance Grants is a further attack on students and many are being priced out of education. We call on the Labour Government to re-introduce these grants (2016:259)
- We are opposed to the fragmentation of our education system i.e sale of schools to the private sector and the increasing programme of academisation of schools
- GMB is in favour of equality of access to education and oppose measures which prevent this.
- We are opposed to the introduction of student tuition fees and oppose any further increases. We are in favour of a return to grants as an alternative method of funding education. (see 2010:C13, 2011:225)

We have had a number of motions calling for specific courses to be taught in schools:

- The history and role of trade unions, social and political education
- First aid
- Basic life support
- Relationships (to include domestic violence) (2014:222)

In order for the UK to remain competitive, there needs to be substantial investment in lifelong learning starting in the early years (2008:150)

In addition employers should give employees paid time off to attend basic skills courses

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## Apprentices

Apprenticeships are a vital plank in the Government's policies to foster credible vocational alternatives to sit alongside expanding higher education initiatives. They provide the chance to 'earn and learn' in a wide range of jobs and sectors and give people the chance to develop skills, experience and qualifications and the opportunity to address skills shortages.

GMB Supports fair pay and equal treatment in the workplace and assist our members to ensure that Apprenticeships are high quality and that apprentices are properly supported in the workplace

GMB are aware that despite there being many excellent apprenticeship schemes, some people find themselves on sub-standard schemes where employers simply employ apprentices as a cheap source of labour using the National Minimum Wage apprentice rate of pay.

In order to assist apprentices and encourage them to join GMB, we introduced a special reduced contribution rate for apprentices and students (C2012:m27)

GMB supports

- high quality bona fide apprenticeship programmes that offer progression, realistic job opportunities, a progressive wage, built-in Union support, and are accessible to all. These high quality apprenticeship programs should be run by sectoral bodies made up of employers and employees representatives and training run by established by training providers (C2006:C32)
- All apprentices to be monitored to ensure they are trained appropriately and issued with indentures on completion of the full term of the scheme (C2012:c17) and that they lead to realistic job opportunities (C2014:m225). We need to stop businesses abusing the apprenticeship system (2016:C5) and we welcome the apprenticeship levy coming in from April 2017
- Properly funded apprenticeship schemes to combat skill shortages (C2001: m260, C2008:m150) and the Government should provide tax incentives for businesses to employ apprentices (C2011:m222,223)
- Increased use of apprentices in the workplace: we need to ensure that all future GMB induction courses include information on supporting apprentices and young workers
- Employers investing in training, we call for at least 5 days of training per worker
- Lobby Government to have a statutory right for all workers to be trained and have paid time off for training to attend basic skills courses (C2008:C8)

- Raising the profile of apprenticeships within the companies we represent (C2006:C32)
- Removal of any barriers to people becoming an apprentice: offer concessionary travel for apprentices (C2011:m253) and free childcare to those in training programmes (C2014:m176)

GMB opposes

- Bogus apprenticeship schemes or Apprentices being used to replace or undermine existing or redundant staff (C2012:c16,C2014:m225)
- Apprenticeships that are designed to deliver labour for unscrupulous employers and exploit young workers by paying less than the legal minimum wage and do not deliver a full apprenticeship programme

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## NHS

GMB are opposed to any form of postcode determined treatment and provision of drugs to those suffer from cancer or any illness.

This unjust discrimination has been highlighted and debated at Congress 2006,2007, and 2013 and contained in a CEC Statement on the NHS

 **2011** CEC Statement on the Future of the NHS

 **2014** CEC Statement on the NHS

GMB notes with concern the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which resulted in an extensive reorganisation of the structure of the NHS System.

Other policy on NHS and Health include:

- GMB supports the founding principles of the NHS and we oppose any break up of universal care in the UK
- We call for a halt of the break-up of NHS terms and conditions and welcome a return to national pay bargaining
- GMB supports a campaign for the abolition of prescription charges for those with disabilities or debilitating illnesses (2008:164)
- We need to address the decline in NHS dentists (2006:C33, 2008:183) and offer free provision for NHS dentists to all (2006:C33)

- We recognise the increases in waiting times to see doctors and in hospitals. Campaign for more resources for the NHS in particular a fair funding settlement.
- GMB opposes the abuse of all health workers. In line with our policy of zero tolerance of violence, we need to protect all healthcare workers from violent attacks in their workplaces and instil a zero tolerance approach.
- GMB champions the rights of all NHS workers to training and continuing personal development under Agenda for Change and the NHS Constitution, so that the NHS always has “a professional and respected workforce” (Congress 2014 CEC Updated Statement on the Future of the NHS). We have also called on government and NHS leaders to ensure that support staff are not forgotten when training budgets are allocated and that all frontline staff are trained in dealing with patients with mental health conditions.
- GMB urges the Government to fund NHS professional registration costs instead of the onus falling on low paid nursing staff.
- We continue to campaign for fair and consistent charges for NHS staff using hospital car parks (2009:199) and call for parking fees to be abolished in hospital car parks and at NHS properties (2009:C20) or at least for the first hour to be free (2014:217)
- We support dignity and respect for those with terminal illnesses (2014:93)
- We support the provision of defibrillators in hospices
- Sign language interpreters should be provided in hospitals
- We support the ability of ambulances to use bus lanes
- We welcome Ambulance staff having proper breaks
- We will campaign to prevent senior managers in the NHS from getting large enhanced pay-offs then being re-instated (2001:C24, 2015:199)



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## NHS and Mental Health

- We should ensure that there is adequate provision and funding for Mental Health facilities within the NHS system. We support addressing staffing levels for specialist Mental Health and Learning Disability Nurses, best to fill posts and create career pathways than to use NHS banked staff (2009:126)
- We call for a review of all funding cuts targeted at mental health services for young people (2015:C17)
- More funding and support for those with Alzheimers or dementia and those caring for people with this condition. We welcome working with the Alzheimer's Society for awareness and better understanding (2016:230)

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## Care Sector/ Social Care

-  **2011** The Gullible and the Greedy (report on Southern Cross)
-  **2016** CEC Special Report on GMB in the Care Sector- Campaigning to Prevent the Collapse of Social Care

GMB has long campaigned for a universal national social care service free at the point of delivery, fully funded through general taxation, not from service-users.

### Care Workers

- Low pay and understaffing is rife in the Care Sector. We seek to improve pay and conditions in private sector care homes (2009:124) and ensure care workers are paid at least a living wage (2013:202)
- Fair pay (and improved terms and conditions) for private sector care workers (2009:124) who should receive proper training to a minimum level of NVQ2 (2013:12)
- Carers should earn a living wage (2016:304).
- GMB calls for improvements to increase carers allowance and also that carers allowance should be in line with public Sector workers (2008:192)

- GMB continues to campaign for changes to the minimum standards of staffing levels for care homes in the Care Standards Act 2000. (2013:12) and staffing levels should be published for all residential homes (2006:175)
- We look to stop the exploitation of foreign care workers employed through agencies (they are on minimum wage and have accommodation charges deducted) The Gangmasters Licensing Authority should cover Care Homes (2011:144)
- We seek to protect our members working in the care sector in cases of assisted dying (2015:294)

Note: GMB have a Model Carers Agreement which members can use in their workplaces. Please contact your Regional Equality Officer

### **Social Care Sector**

GMB supports funding for the care of the elderly and infirm throughout the UK to be uniform.

We oppose the widespread closing of local authority care homes which totally disregards the detrimental effects this has on communities' most vulnerable people. The union seeks to have such closures reversed and the necessary financial resources put into this sector to provide good quality care, free at the point of need.

- All care should be free at the point of delivery from cradle to grave, the elderly should not have to sell their homes to pay for care. (2009:C21)
- GMB campaigns for a universal national social care service funded from the public purse through taxation (2011:EM3, 2012:C18)
- Campaign for a different social care model, the Government should introduce a standard of care, sufficiently funded and resourced, so that our elderly and vulnerable are cared for with dignity, respect and in safety. (2011:EM3)
- We support the implementation of legally enforceable safeguards for private sector care for the elderly or return to local authority control
- GMB opposes private companies running local authority Care Homes (2007:262) especially private equity companies (2012:C18)

- GMB are opposed to the sale and transfer of care homes from the public to the private sector and call for them to be brought back in house (2005: 317, 2007: 263,2009:123, 2012:C18)
  - There should be a policy for free care for the elderly in care homes (2006: 251)
  - There should be more Government funding to feed elderly people in nursing & care homes (2007:260)
  - There should be better standards of care and Inspections in all residential/ nursing homes to ensure proper administration of medication, adequate staffing ratios, good hygiene, ensuite bedrooms (2007:C28)
  - We call for an increase in the limit of the personal wealth allowance for those who go into care homes (2009:C21,2010:203)
  - Increase the personal expense allowance provided by the Government to cover the cost of personal items to £40 a week (2008:191)
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## **Social Policy: Health**

### **Cancer & Terminal Illness**

GMB supports initiatives that raise awareness of all forms of cancer and encourage our members to take part in screening programmes. We are opposed to privatisation of any NHS Cancer Care programme and will lobby for a return to the NHS.

We will lobby the Government to ensure that the best cancer screening programmes are available to all who might benefit from them regardless of where they live in the UK and targeted action to be taken to improve the numbers of people attending screening sessions.

We recognise that early detection is important for all forms of cancer. We have particular policy on some forms of cancer

- we support cervical cancer screening for women under the age 25
- We seek to raise awareness for prostate cancer and call for a national prostate screening programme for all men over 50. We urge our activists and members to encourage their employers to include prostate screening in any well-being or in house programme

- The Age of breast screening should be lowered (2014:215) and GMB supports campaigns for paid time off for cancer screening.


In our workplaces, we aim to tackle exposures to carcinogens and focus on prevention and precaution. Whilst we recognise that many forms of occupational and environmental cancers go unreported, we will work with like-minded organisations, occupational disease victims' organisations to review occupational cancer strategy and support workplace campaigns

GMB calls for a campaign for terminal illness to be protected under the Equality Act 2010 and for an inclusion of a clause for absolute protection of employment status and rights for anyone diagnosed with a terminal illness. (Note following Congress 2014, GMB and TUC have set up a Dying to Work Campaign and as an organisation, GMB supports and is committed to the 'Dying to Work Campaign.'



# Housing

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 **2005** CEC Special Report – “A Fair Deal on Housing- quality affordable housing for all”

 **2014** CEC Special Report- Housing

We are in favour of more social housing and for local authorities to undertake new build and refurbishment strategies. We recognise that many young people have been priced out of access to housing and are forced into the high priced privately rented housing. GMB supports the campaigns of Defend Council Housing.

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## Housing Supply

- There is a serious lack of affordable social housing. We need capital investment to build social housing which will boost the economy and create much needed manufacturing jobs as uses directly employed workers
- Housing supply has failed to meet demand & regional imbalances. There is a need to look at geographical pattern of housing provision and stop government prioritising in South East over the North.
- The proposed changes to planning laws in favour of “ a presumption in favour of sustainable development” will lead to unregulated urban sprawl
- Call for increases in housing stock: GMB requests that Councils build more council houses for rent in areas where house prices are more than 4 times average annual wages
- GMB condemns the selling off of social housing by foreign investors or being demolished for redevelopment (2015:347,350)
- New homes bonus scheme failure of Coalition Government
- In 2014, GMB asked for a target for new build homes of 250,000 per year plus a minimum of 30,000 empty homes brought back into use;

- At least 80,000 of the target need to be in the social housing sector. This cannot be done without a major programme of Council house building
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## Quality Of Housing

- Existing housing stock must be brought up to a decent living standard
  - We need to build high quality but affordable social housing to meet the needs of those on low income
  - Build houses to the highest standards, environmentally and sustainable and subject to National Code for sustainable homes
  - We need housebuilding with strong commitment to the environment with priority to brownfield sites
  - We need the renovation of existing properties and look at empty properties with a view to compulsory acquisition of empty homes
  - We should introduce legislation to give Local authorities a new power to impose penal Council Tax and to acquire compulsorily and refurbish homes that have been empty for more than six months continuously, including office blocks suitable for conversion and second homes that are continuously empty.
  - Increase support for improved housing design enhance Building Regs and Planning Regulations for new build and significant improvements on design, building fabric space provision, energy efficiency and safety.
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## Housing Controls

- There should be one Government Department responsible for Housing Policy and Control for England
- Council housing should be kept under local authority control and control and management should be returned to local authorities and they should keep the revenue from rents
- We call for a return of all capital receipts to allow investment and building of Local Authority homes.

- GMB are opposed to outsourcing social housing stock by Local Authorities. We note that there is a lack of emergency accommodation for serious emergencies experienced by tenants. Councils have a social responsibility to ensure landlords have emergency procedures in place for such events.
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## Right To Buy

- GMB condemn Tory policy of Right to Buy which resulted in a shortage of housing stock
  - We seek the introduction of legislation to ensure that all future Right To Buy sales are replaced like for like and done for one by new social housing; and that all sales and discount offers have to be judged by the local authority against the housing needs of the area; and adjust criteria of eligibility.
  - GMB supports the fourth option (direct investment ) as house ownership should be as a home not an investment
  - We call to redirect Schemes from Help to Buy to Help to Build
  - People owning second homes mean that homes are beyond reach of GMB members
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## Rents/ Landlords

- GMB deplores those private landlords who put profit before need. House ownership should be for a home and not as an investment
- Key public sector workers can't afford to live near workplace, they need extra support. GMB call for key worker status definition widened, too restrictive should include key public sector jobs/ frontline workers and utility workers
- Rents need to be affordable- there needs to be a fundamental review of Social Housings "affordable rents" policy
- GMB supports the regulation of the Private Rented Sector: "rent control"

- We seek to introduce legislation requiring local authorities to introduce registration of private landlords with rules requiring minimum quality of premises and protecting tenants from arbitrary rent increases and eviction with reserve powers to regulate rents.
  - We support the Right to Rent and if owner occupier defaults on mortgage/ falls into arrears, they should be given chance to rent/ right to remain
  - Private landlords need to commit to minimum standards of provision, charges and services to tenants in particular the care and maintenance
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## **Housing Benefit**

- We call for the halt of the integration of Housing Benefit into Universal Credit
- We oppose caps on housing benefits and deplore any attempts to end housing support payments for young people

# Social Policy: General

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## Animal

- We oppose all cruelty to animals and have opposed the culling of badgers (2013:267), called for a ban on animals performing in circuses (2008:158) and called for regulation to improve the welfare of intensively reared poultry (2008:159)
  - We support responsible dog ownership and seek to amend the Dangerous Dog Act to “deed not breed” (2012:200)
  - We look to campaign for legislation to protect the trading of endangered species (2015:282)
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## Food

GMB supports the greater regulation of the Food industry and we have been at the forefront of calling for clear labelling of food products.

- GMB are opposed to the use of aspartame sweetener
  - GMB seeks to protect the small suppliers to supermarkets being forced out of business
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## Media

- We support a fair and independent press and urge for a replacement of the Press complaints Commission with a genuinely independent body with a right of reply for individuals and organisation
- GMB supports an independent BBC with a remit for quality public service broadcasting and supported by a mandatory licence fee.
- Analogue radio should be preserved
- We support the Morning Star
- We call for a ban on unsolicited telesales calls (2008)

- We oppose exorbitant call charges for help lines
  - We aim to publicise the use of the international phone programme ICE (in case of Emergency)
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## Families

- Access to affordable childcare remains one of the key barriers to women's and low income families participation in the workplace therefore leading to reduced life chances. Government support for childcare could lead to greater participation of women and low income families and add to economic growth (2013:263)
  - GMB opposes cuts to children's centres such as Sure Start
  - We call for affordable childcare and free childcare for all those on low income (2014:C17)
  - There should be fair funding for Adult and Children's hospices (2008:162)
  - GMB are against overpriced holiday costs especially during school holidays and we support regulating holiday firm pricing (2014:178) and ending fines for parents
  - GMB recognises the undervalued role of voluntary carers and asks for investment and support (2008:161) also for grandparents who act as carers (2009:211)
  - Grandparents have a key role in raising grandchildren, GMB calls for their status to be recognised and for support (2008:160)
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## Health

- We support the retention of chaplaincy services in hospitals
- There should be a review of National Insurance contributions which should be fair and progressive
- We support an opt-out donor system for human organ donation (2008:166)

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## Environment

- GMB opposes the sale of state owned forests
- We condemn the reduction of coastguards
- GMB opposes the sale of chinese lanterns (due to their damage to the environment)
- We welcome the extension and provision of allotments using derelict land (2010:149)

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## Society (general)

- GMB supports public and specialist libraries and library services and we are against further closures(2015:C15)
- GMB looks to save local pubs and campaign to save high street shops
- GMB are opposed to the privatisation of the Royal Mail and the closure of crown post offices (2009:C18, 2011:230) and support CWU campaigns, return the Royal Mail to public ownership
- GMB are opposed to the closure of police stations
- GMB are opposed to cuts to the Fire Service and the removal of the national standards of fire cover and their subsequent replacement with local integrated risk management plans.
- We see to review the role of regulators of privatised industries and make them more accountable to consumers
- GMB are opposed to the withdrawal of cheques
- We seek tougher regulation and review of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals in Betting Shops (2013:C16)
- We call for a ban on drinking in open spaces and town centres (2008:165)
- We call for the reduction of licencing hours to cut street crime
- We call for the introduction of a Royal Commission on drug use (2011:236, 2013:262)

- Funding should be available to provide refuges and safe houses
- GMB support the free introduction and installation of community alarms for all vulnerable residents
- Recognise the positive role played by Trades Union Councils in supporting the labour and trade union movement and allow them to take part in TUC Congresses and urge branches to join their local Trades Council
- GMB opposes all forms of trafficking and any forms of modern slavery (2015:293)
- Support the decriminalisation and legalisation of prostitution, protect the rights and safety of sex workers or those working in the sex industry (2009:183)
- GMB opposes the introduction of the use of Water Cannons as a deterrent



# Welfare Rights & Services

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**GMB@WORK** 2014 GMB/CLASS pamphlet “How unions can make work pay”

The welfare state provides an essential safety net for many working class people – particularly at times of illness, unemployment, in retirement, or during disability. Ultimately, GMB will defend universal benefits to ensure reasonable benefits for all.

GMB condemns all forms of government attacks on the welfare system and calls on central and local governments to review policies that make life-threatening cuts to vital care packages for severely disabled and elderly people and ensure that no disabled people are denied essential care.

We are appalled at the continuing attacks on benefit claimants and migrants. The working class is not to blame for the crisis and there is an alternative to austerity, supporting public services, necessary welfare spending, and respecting migrants.

The union is committed to campaign vigorously in defence of the welfare system and against any welfare cuts and to work with other broad-based organisations that share our campaign objectives.

GMB is committed to calling on a future Labour government to stop the endless round of assessments that currently confront disabled people and to introduce a single assessment that is transparent, fair, portable and covers all aspects of disability needs from employment through to social care and support;

- GMB seeks a repeal of the Welfare Reform Act
- GMB is opposed to Work capability assessments being used to determine eligibility for the new Employment Support Allowance (ESA). The process is fundamentally flawed and in need for an overhaul (2014:C28). We are also opposed to the PIP assessment process as this is equally flawed. (2014:272)
- Universal benefits should not be means tested

- GMB opposes cuts in benefit payments to the disabled and most vulnerable in society. Only a qualified doctor not contracted or employed by DWP, or private companies such as ATOS, should carry out medical assessments of benefit claimants' capability to find and sustain work.
- GMB is committed to support disabled people in campaigning against cuts in benefits and changes to benefit legislation that will worsen the position of disabled people (2016:C8);
- Winter fuel allowances should be linked to fuel price increases not inflation as this is a truer measure. Pensioners have already suffered when Pensions were based on CPI not RPI.
- GMB call for free TV licences for all who reach state retirement age (2009:219)
- We call for a campaign to offer benefits advice at GPs surgeries (2008:194)
- Oppose unrealistic benefit caps and instead ensure that benefits are linked to RPI inflation and reflect the actual cost of living.
- Campaign for an end to unfair housing benefit caps and other draconian benefits cuts especially the Bedroom Tax.(2013:C23,305, 2014:168,241, C27).
- GMB is opposed to "workfare" programmes- forcing the long term unemployed into mandatory work placements. This is merely a form of cheap labour which undermines real jobs and subsidises employers to exploit vulnerable people for profit. (2011:259, 2013:128,308-310, 2014:262)
- GMB is concerned at the increased poverty and homelessness of all but especially for young people. We call on branches to support the Labour Campaign to end homelessness (2016:177)
- We are opposed to cuts in benefits for those under 25. (2014:263,264), all workers should have equal access to benefits.
- GMB recognises that budget cuts are leading to significant cuts in local services aimed at preventing and protecting victims against gender-based violence, we call for the ring fencing of money to ensure the future of vital services such as refuges. (2014:259)

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## Fit notes/ Work Capability Assessments

GMB is concerned at the unjustified attacks on vulnerable people on benefits. In particular Work Capability assessment as the policy is based on the false notion that the high levels of claimants in some areas is due to the fact that these people do not want to work. There is a failure to see the full picture of the labour market. The problem is a lack of access to jobs that they could perform with their health problems and disabilities

Our policy is concerned about the impact of the introduction of fit notes and the union will monitor this and pursue improvements where employee protection has been undermined. (2011:60)

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## Universal Basic Income/ Citizens Income

GMB notes the growing crisis of low pay and in-work poverty in the labour market. We believe that a Universal Basic Income has the potential to offer genuine social security to all while boosting the economy and creating jobs. GMB is committed to campaign for a Universal Basic income for all citizens (2016:303)

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## Foodbanks & Food Poverty

Although we have seen an unprecedented rise in those reliant on foodbanks due mainly to the Government's austerity measures, GMB policy is for an adequate social security system paid in cash not in kind. (2014:C15)

There are increasing numbers of children living in food poverty and whilst we campaign for free school meals, we are concerned with what happens to children during school holidays when they don't have this provision hence we call on the Government to end this "Holiday Hunger" (2016:226)

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## Child Poverty

GMB in conjunction with the CPAG (Child Poverty Action Group) had a joint campaign to end Child Poverty. Child poverty is everyone's business and the Government should be serious about eradicating Child Poverty in the UK.

We recognised that hard-pressed families bore the brunt of the recession which was not of their making. The recession highlighted the inequality in the UK. Paid work is the best route out of poverty but for many working parents on low pay this is not the case.

GMB demands a change of direction on employment policy: one that tackles in-work poverty and puts fairness first.

Some welcome protections have been put in place in the past decade (tax credits and the national minimum wage), but too often the promise that 'work is a route out of poverty' has been false. Employment, in itself, does not provide a safe way out of poverty: pay, hours and family size are also important.

GMB have called for:

- Increases in the National Minimum Wage
- Provision of a decent minimum income for all
- Extend adult rate of the minimum wage to young workers
- Investment in training targeted at those with low skills
- End pay discrimination
- Tackle low pay in the public sector

# Europe

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## **WORK** 2016 CEC Statement: EU Referendum

Following the decision of the EU Referendum, GMB calls for urgent action to protect our jobs and workplace rights. The vote to leave the EU may put at risk all rights guaranteed by EU legislation, as the country heads into uncharted waters. The 2016 CEC Statement details the importance of Britain remaining in the EU and the consequence on jobs, social and employment rights if we leave

The European Union has been a positive force in enshrining Trade Union values giving members wide ranging social and employment rights through the Social Chapter. Many of the workplace rights and protections GMB members currently enjoy in the UK come from European legislation.

GMB works tirelessly to redress the imbalances in the economic and social dimensions of Europe and to develop further rights and protections for GMB members, their families, and for workers around the world.

Through our European Office, GMB seeks to promote and protect the social and employment rights dimensions of Europe:

- **Temporary Agency Workers** are given equal treatment rights comparable with permanent staff and are protected from exploitation
- **Working time rights**, so that workers do not have to work excessive hours, and have adequate holidays and rest periods. The potential health and safety hazards of working excessively long hours are clear and GMB and other trade unions have long campaigned for a reasonable limit to working hours
- **The Charter for Fundamental Rights** – which sets out EU citizens' civil, political and social rights – applies to all EU workers in its entirety
- **Equal treatment in pay and conditions**, including strong protections for posted workers and measures to prevent social dumping
- **Public procurement** maximises the scope to ensure good social, employment and environmental outcomes, not the lowest price only. GMB has been at the forefront of emphasising that public authorities have the right to deliver services in-house, but that when they do we

would expect tax-payers' money to be used to promote good jobs, pay and conditions, ensure compliance with social and labour standards and environmental protections, promote the living wage, ensure the quality of public services, works and supplies, and recognise that the lowest price rarely delivers this. GMB also emphasises that blacklisting is a clear grounds for exclusion to public contracts.

- **Blacklisting** is banned across the EU – a criminal act which has robbed thousands of trade union and health and safety reps of work, dignity and a secure family life
- **Collective bargaining & industrial action** – fundamental trade union rights – are not undermined by the EU's free movement, internal market rules, and austerity measures
- **Decent work & quality jobs** – globalisation must not be used as a vehicle to erode labour standards, rights, pay and conditions within and outside the EU
- **Fair wages** – workers must be paid a living wage for their work, and enjoy a fair share of the fruits of growth when company profits rise
- **Equal rights**, to guarantee disabled people have access to quality jobs, that women have equal pay and that workers are protected from discrimination due to their age, disability, gender, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or caring responsibilities
- **Health & Safety at work** – workers must be properly protected in all respects, for example by treating third party violence as a health & safety issue
- **Information & consultation rights**, so that workers are informed about and have a say in the decisions that affect their jobs and working conditions, for example through effective European Works Councils
- **International solidarity** and that the EU plays its part in guaranteeing respect for labour standards and trade union rights around the world
- **Private Equity** and proper regulation to prevent asset stripping and the erosion of workers' terms and conditions and jobs
- **Public & health services** of a high quality and accessible to all irrespective of income or means

- **Reconciliation of work and family life**, to allow all workers to successfully combine their family and private life with their work commitments
  - **Victims and their families** receive the support no matter where in the EU they fall victim, and that they are assured a voice in getting justice
  - **Aid and Funds** GMB support and protect the continuing of Regional aid and Funds which stem from Europe and have been used to help UK economy (2014:167)
  - **Anti-cuts** GMB resolves to work jointly with European trade unions and allies globally in an anti-cuts campaign which builds solidarity at all levels including branches and in the workplace
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## EU Tax Action issues

GMB is actively campaigning for greater tax justice, demanding urgent action against tax dodgers and avoiders, as well as just taxation of financial transactions. We are demanding an EU strategy of fair taxation, with big business and multinational corporations made to pay their fair share, and binding EU action plans against corporate tax avoidance and tax havens

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## Posted Workers

Workers who are transferred on a temporary basis from one EU state to another, or from outside the EU into an EU country- 'posted workers'. Posted workers must have equal treatment in working conditions- **equal pay for equal work in the same place** to prevent their exploitation and stop under-cutting of industry standards and collectively agreed terms and conditions. (2012:172)

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## EU Trade Agreements and Ethical Trading

GMB is one of the UK's most active trade unions in opposing corporate free trade agreements.

The EU is currently negotiating a number of major international trade deals, from the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** with the US and the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement**

(CETA) with Canada, to the global Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) and bilateral agreements with Singapore, India and Japan. Opposition to these major EU trade agreements is growing. GMB has major concerns about these deals, which will affect us all directly, from our rights and freedoms at work to the NHS and public services. GMB continue to campaign and highlight our oppositions to these detrimental EU Trade agreements. (2015:C4,2016:208) We are also campaigning against the development of already established agreements (such as with Colombia and Peru) which lack a trade union voice and fail to adhere to basic human rights.

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## European Works Councils (EWC)

Well-functioning and effective EWCs provide employees with high quality, useful and relevant information and genuine consultation in a timely and meaningful manner. They can be a positive and valuable tool during company restructuring, and in the process of a merger or take-over.

GMB European and National Officers offer ongoing support, advice and information to new and existing EWC reps and help and support in negotiating EWC agreements, in cooperation with our EU trade union industry federations.



# International

Trade unionism does not stop at international borders and in today's globalised economy it is essential that GMB plays a role on the world stage. The UK is part of the European Union and its economy is interdependent with Europe and beyond. Many GMB members work for multi-national companies with a global reach and strategic parts of the UK's economy are controlled by companies from overseas or owned by foreign capital.

GMB's international work takes many different forms. In common with other trade unions, GMB is affiliated to the TUC which in turn affiliates to the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) as well as a number of global union federations representing different sectors. European legislation and regulation are still important and GMB has an office at the heart of the European Union in Brussels.

These are the focal point of many industrial initiatives to hold multinational companies to account, to develop global organising initiatives, to develop social dialogue, to lobby the European institutions, and to coordinate collective bargaining. As such they have a critical role to play and GMB will continue to participate in their activities.

Solidarity with others is the essence of trade unionism and the maxim that an injury to one is an injury to all is demonstrated by GMB supporting people in struggle around the globe. Sometimes that support comes via participation in campaigning groups such as Cuba Solidarity, Justice for Colombia, Venezuela Solidarity and Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Which campaigns are supported is largely decided at the Union's annual Congress where GMB branches can move motions recommending affiliation.

GMB's international work is not bound or constrained by a distinct political philosophy that would shape its policy on any given matter. Rather, there is an understanding and a belief that a global economic system based on the unfettered exploitation of people and planet is unacceptable and unsustainable. GMB endorses the fight for a more equitable society and considers itself to be part of a wider movement for economic and social justice with an emphasis on equality for women and for those that are persecuted for their sexuality or religious beliefs.

This includes the fight against the corporate takeover of the public realm and the privatisation of public services against the backdrop of the wider issue of holding corporations to account by the introduction of binding international legislation. Without the participation of independent trade unions, none of this can be achieved.

## GMB congress policy on various international issues

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### Global Mining

GMB is concerned that whilst UK companies post large profits this is often at the expense of doing so by damaging communities in developing countries and forcing people off their land. Armed groups have often enriched themselves through mineral extraction, doing deals with companies and using the revenues to fuel civil wars. Human rights violations have occurred where security forces paid to protect mining assets have attacked local communities and anti-mining activists. We call for corporate accountability for all UK companies (2010:214)

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### Textile Workers

GMB are affiliated to a number of international organisations in the textile industry where workers are exploited.

We welcome companies signing up to the Bangladesh accord - a union-backed agreement - designed to improve workplace safety in the country, following the Rana Plaza factory collapse which killed over 1,000 textile workers earlier this year.

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### Child Labour & Fair Trade

GMB agrees that child and sweatshop labour is a scandal and although virtually eradicated in this country, it is still a growing problem for our international movement.

Many high street companies have been exposed by the newspapers, and TV programmes as sweatshop employers.

GMB notes that despite many organisations signing up to voluntary codes to protect workers producing goods or services for their company, many

continue to profit from a low wage workforce working in sweatshop conditions. These voluntary codes do not work and GMB supports a binding framework of regulation that stops UK companies and their suppliers continuing the abuse of workers overseas

GMB agrees to highlight this injustice and campaign against sweatshop labour and exploitation, in solidarity with our sisters and brothers all over the world and publicise the work other campaigning organisations against child and sweated labour such as NoSweat. Furthermore, our members should ensure that our purchases and investments are “sweat-free” and “union-made” and the Union can put pressure on high street retailers to stop this practice through our collective agreements.

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## Human Trafficking

GMB is appalled that trafficking of men, women and children into Europe country is still on the increase.

Traffickers take advantage of the poorest and most vulnerable in our society and GMB calls for a campaign with similar organisations to increase awareness of the issues related to human trafficking particularly with relation to sexual exploitation and support campaigns to ensure the strongest possible legal sanctions against those responsible for human trafficking.

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## Torture

GMB are opposed to the use of torture or allowing rendition or torture to be used in any jurisdiction or territories. The use of torture is against the Geneva Convention and undermines a free society (2011:277)

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## Arms Trade

GMB is concerned at the use of UK money to fund companies selling arms to be used against civilians and we urge all institutions to publish full details of any support to the arms trade (2009:226, 2010:216)

GMB opposes the use of land mines under any circumstances (2008:218)

## GMB congress policy on individual countries

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### Afghanistan

GMB are concerned that many women in Afghanistan are being murdered for being educated and we call for international movements to safeguard and protect them

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### Colombia

GMB recognises that Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world to be a trade unionist, and condemns the murder, imprisonment and intimidation of Trade Unionists in Colombia.

GMB congratulates the good work of organisations like Justice for Colombia who give voice to the citizens of Colombia, and to bring about positive change by amplifying the difficulties faced by our Trade Union Colleagues on the International stage. Furthermore GMB condemns the fact that despite this situation the European Parliament recently voted to approve an EU Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

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### Cuba

GMB urges urge branches to affiliate to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and raise awareness of their fight for self-determination in the face of sustained US aggression over decades. Furthermore GMB is opposed to the incarceration of detainees in Guantanamo Bay and support campaigns calling for the closure of the camp, the release of all detainees and the return of the territory to Cuba. (2007:285)

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### Latin America

GMB is directly involved with projects and partner organisations abroad, notably in Latin America. GMB has a long-standing association with trade unions representing workers on tropical fruit plantations, grouped in COLSIBA, which in turn is part of the International Union of Food Workers (IUF). GMB also works with Banana Link to encourage supermarkets to ensure that labour standards are respected throughout their national and international supply chains. GMB and Banana Link have a joint international solidarity fund to support these activities to which all branches can support.

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## Venezuela

GMB welcomes the achievements of the Chavez Government and agrees to work to defend Venezuela's right to international sovereignty and oppose US intervention. GMB affiliates to and supports the work of the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign.

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## Syria

GMB condemns the devastation and destruction caused by the war that has led to an enormous worldwide humanitarian refugee crisis with huge impacts on neighbouring countries. The escalation of the bombing of Syria by Britain and other countries has failed to resolve the situation or to ensure the safety of the people.

We are opposed to imperialism, terrorism and fundamentalism and seek a genuine socialist solution to the problems to the Middle East, based on the unity of working people.

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## Iraq

GMB condemns all atrocities committed against workers in Iraq where trade unions are still illegal (2005:333, C31, 2008:207)

GMB supports the work of Iraqi trade unions struggling to rebuild trade unionism in Iraq and fighting for restoration of trade union rights and we welcome international solidarity from the labour movement.

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## Yazidi/ Kurdish Community

GMB supports a campaign against the repression, killings and torture of Yazidi people.

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## Freedom for Ocalan Campaign

GMB and UNITE launched the Freedom for Ocalan campaign at the House of Commons on April 25th, 2016

Kurdish leader, Abdullah Ocalan, has been imprisoned in total isolation on the Turkish prison island of Imrali since 1999. Despite his ill-treatment

by the Turkish authorities, Mr Ocalan has fought consistently to bring about a peaceful reconciliation to the Kurdish question. GMB believes that his freedom is essential to end conflict not only in Turkey but also in the wider Middle East.

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## Palestine

GMB notes with concern the continued inhumane actions against Palestinian people. GMB urges our branches to affiliate to and support the work of the Palestine Solidarity Fund and encourage employers and pension funds to disinvest from, and boycott goods of, companies who profit from illegal settlements, the Occupation and the construction of the Wall. (2011:276).

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## Gaza

GMB supports the humanitarian aid programme for the victims of war whether in Gaza or Iraq. GMB condemns the conflicts in Gaza and the slaughter of innocent men, women and children.

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## Western Sahara

GMB notes the struggles of the Saharawi people to assert their rights to self-determination and independence in their own homeland of Western Sahara which has been occupied by Morocco. We continue to work with the Western Sahara Campaign (WSC) and will lobby the European Commission and Parliament to amend the Fisheries Agreement to explicitly exclude Saharawi waters from the Treaty.

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## China

We note that Chinese workers have little or no access to trade unions and are subject to exploitation.

We are opposed to forced Organ harvesting by Chinese doctors from prisoners of conscience (2016:311)

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## Nicaragua

GMB notes that progress has been made in Nicaragua despite the unfavourable circumstances and we recognise the “pivotal role” that the Nicaraguan trade union campaign has played in raising awareness and deepening relations between their unions and their UK counterparts. GMB promotes the work of the Nicaraguan Solidarity Action Group (NSAG) and is affiliated to it.

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## Zimbabwe

GMB is concerned by the desperate political and economic situation in Zimbabwe and condemns the actions committed by the Zanu – PF regime led by President Robert Mugabe. GMB expresses its solidarity with other international affiliates and the trade union movement to apply pressure to restore full and free democratic rights to Zimbabwe. (2006:273)

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