

GMB

CONGRESS 2016

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SIS. MARY TURNER MBE
(President)
(In the Chair)
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Held in:

Bournemouth International Centre,
Bournemouth

on:

Sunday, 5th June 2016
Monday, 6th June 2016
Tuesday, 7th June 2016
(Sectional Conferences)
Wednesday, 8th June 2016
and
Thursday, 9th June 2016

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PROCEEDINGS
DAY THREE
(Wednesday, 8th June 2016)
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THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY, 8TH JUNE 2016
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, please come to order.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: I know you all had a good time last night. I am sorry I couldn't make them all, but my helicopter crashed. I have some announcements to make. First of all, I have an announcement from the Stroke Association. Will you all go and have your blood pressure taken. Please take action to prevent strokes. The stall is outside. Steve and Duncan have visited the stall and they are here. That's what you have got to do this morning.

I have an announcement from the RMA. The raffle has been won by Donovan from Southern Region and by Anne Leader from GMB Wales & South West Region.

GMB Credit Union would like you to visit their stand in the Exhibition Hall. There are plenty of loans. Today is the final day to enter the prize draw. This gives all delegates and opportunity to win a Credit Union Savings Account. The first prize is £150; second prize, £100, and the third prize, £75. Although this was one of the best-kept secrets. It is now shouted from the rooftops that the GMB Credit Union is for every GMB member. Join us and spread the word. It is your credit union. Thank you.

After seeing Elvis last night in all his glory, Southern Region is planning a cheeky calendar for 2017. We have filled January and December. I think Paul Maloney is doing January. I really want to see that one. I don't know who is doing December, but I have now been instructed to tell all the other officers that they have got to fill in the other months, and I want to see the calendar done. They are going to do it for charity, not for laughs. Those are all of my announcements.

Congress, later this morning you will be hearing from Luciana Burger MP and will be speaking on Composite 6. She is on a very tight schedule. If you see any commotion up here, you will know that I am clearing the platform so we can deal with her to accommodate her. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

I want us to thank Gary Smith for the little bottles. Those whisky bottles are from GMB Scotland. (*Applause*)

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 4

THE PRESIDENT: At this stage, I call Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 4.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 4. The SOC has been advised that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 132 — Zero Hour Contracts — standing in the name of North

West & Irish Region, which was withdrawn on the Monday session of Congress; Motion 202 — Support the Yes Campaign — standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region, and Motion 205 — European Union Referendum — standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

Emergency Motions. The SOC has accepted an emergency motion as being in order for debate. This is Emergency Motion 1: the Trade Union Act, standing in the name of London Region. President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 4.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Does Congress agree Helen's report? Anyone against? That is carried.

SOC Report No. 4 was ADOPTED.

ADDRESS BY STEVE GILLAN, POA GENERAL SECRETARY

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to the agenda. It gives me great pleasure to welcome Steve Gillan, General Secretary of the Prison Officers Association to Congress. Steve is the son of a shipyard worker from Greenock, Scotland. Since leaving school in 1979 he has had a variety of jobs, including working in a bank and for Fords. He joined the Prison Service in 1989 as a prison officer in Chelmsford. He has held branch positions and finally was a senior officer in Pentonville Prison. From the year 2000 he rose within the ranks of the Prison Officers Association, and was elected as General Secretary in 2010. Steve, welcome. I'd like to invite you to address Congress. (*Applause*)

BRO. S. GILLAN (POA General Secretary): President and Executive Congress, it is a great privilege to be invited, as a first-time speaker, to a GMB Congress. (*Applause*) Thank you. I have to say that last night's hospitality was absolutely fantastic. I went to the Southern and Yorkshire Region meal. Thank you for that lovely introduction from your President about my background. I do come from Greenock. I am absolutely steeped in the trade union tradition from the shipyards where my grandfather, my father and uncles all worked. I remember going to mass meetings as a youngster where a show of hands took people out on strike or industrial action and so forth. Unfortunately, Thatcher is responsible for closing down the shipyards. I think we have to move on from there. The shipyards have a great tradition.

I want to talk about your President, because Mary Turner has been your President for some 19 or 20 years. I think she is everything that the trade union Movement stands for, quite frankly. (*Applause*) I remember a very proud moment when Mary received the Gold Badge from the TUC in 2012. Your then General Secretary was actually the President of the TUC as well, Paul Kenny, so it was a good thing for the GMB. I also remember it was a nice day for myself as well, because I remember moving a motion on that particular day, which was not controversial at all. It was about calling for the practicalities in consideration of a general strike. I make no apology on behalf of my union for calling for that. My good friend, who has sadly died, Bob Crow, from the RMT, seconded that particular motion. It was one of the best debates that we have had at Congress in many years for the TUC, and it was

carried. But, sadly, it has been kicked into the long grass. I will come back to that in a moment.

My trade union in 1994 had its trade union rights taken away from us by the then Conservative government under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act of 1994, section 127, which made it a criminal offence to induce a prison officer to take any form of industrial action. So we have been in and out of the courts since 1994 because, prior to that, we had only ever taken action in the police and prison officers' strike in 1919, funnily enough. We have taken more action since we were banned from taking action. I will come on to that in a second, because I think it is important in relation to the Trade Union Act, which has just been passed and received Royal Assent. Since it has passed Royal Assent, I can't get too excited about it, because my philosophy is very simple. They put my union outside of the law, so if conditions for my members are wrong we are back outside that law. If it means taking unlawful industrial action to defend our members, that is exactly what we will do. *(Applause)* In fact, we did that in 2007. Under a Labour government, Jack Straw was the Justice Secretary at the time and he had to come back from France because we took national strike action on 29th August 2007. They were treating our members with disrespect. They had not given us proper pay rises and they hadn't given us safety at work, so we phoned every branch in the country on that day and it happened to be a very sunny day. Lots of people were having barbeques outside the prisons. Do you know what, they injuncted us and we ignored the injunction. They injuncted us at 1 o'clock in the afternoon and we ignored the injunction until Jack Straw agreed to have talks with us, which he did. Do you know what? It is not as frightening as everybody makes out, because I don't think that any government wants to make martyrs of any trade union.

So when they raised the thresholds for ballots, you need not be afraid, because what I would like to say to the whole trade union Movement is this. We've got a pay cap, haven't we, that this Government have put on of 1% until 2020? The only way we are going to break that pay cap is not by the GMB taking action by itself, not by junior doctors taking action by themselves, not by Unite or any other trade union taking action by themselves, but for everyone to come together. You can call it a general strike, if you want, or we just happen to take action on the same day together. *(Applause)*

We've got Michael Gove as our Justice Secretary. Unfortunately, Michael Gove, who made some schools into academies, thinks that that is the way forward for prisons. He wants to model prisons on academy schools and foundation hospitals, and both have failed, and there's always an "is". It's a Trojan Horse for privatisation. That is what it is, and my union, when the Prisons White Paper is produced, will fight it tooth and nail. I am very proud of some of our branches, because you will have read in the newspapers the horror stories that are coming out of prisons on health and safety.

If you look at the legislation we have, on the one hand it is saying that my union is forbidden to take any industrial action under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act. On the other hand, they are saying that my union must adhere to health and safety legislation, so I know what legislation we will rely on. It's the health and safety legislation. If it means taking prisons out under that legislation, that is what we will do. *(Applause)* I am very proud to say that Wormwood Scrubs and a variety of other prisons have said in recent weeks, "It is unsafe in this gaol, and we are withdrawing,

not just for our protection but for the protection of prisoners as well, to a safe place". They have done it on numerous occasions. I am talking about Wormwood Scrubs, Holme House and various other prisons throughout the country. Every time it has happened, I get a letter from the Treasury Solicitors asking me to repudiate the action, and each time I have politely declined. They have threatened to injunct us in the High Court but, do you know what, not once have they actually got through the court doors because we have demonstrated that it is not an industrial relations problem but it is a health and safety issue. So there is more than one way to skin a cat. I say to the trade union Movement, take inspiration from people like your President, who has made many sacrifices. I am sure that the GMB, which is a big union, will protect its members.

I am sure you know that we've got struggles ahead. We have just had our conference, the Prison Officers Association. I was very proud to share a platform with Justice for Orgreave, the blacklisted workers, and the Shrewsbury 24. *(Applause)* We have got to strive as a trade union Movement to get justice for those individuals because, quite frankly, what has happened to them is a disgrace. I know that the GMB has been very active in promoting and assisting blacklisted workers, and that is a massive credit to your union and other unions. Those individuals who had their lives destroyed by unscrupulous employers and the police is just the tip of the iceberg. If you, probably, delve down, some of you activists in this hall will have secret files and God knows what about you, concerning having been overlooked for promotion and different things.

I want a future for our children, for our grandchildren, and the only way we can do that is not to keep running away from this Government, or any government for that matter, because, in reality, they will only stop chasing us when we stop running. I think the time has come for every affiliated trade union in the trade union Movement to stand as one and say that enough is enough, because there are six million trade unionists. I think we are the voice for the elderly, for the disabled, for the unemployed, for our children and for our grandchildren, because, if we don't stand up and fight this Government, we will have nothing to fight with. The reality, as I say to you, is enjoy your Congress, let's unite as one trade union Movement and take this Government on and make it a thing of the past. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, thank you for addressing Congress. I have had a long association with the POA and I have always been proud of it. Sometimes it was in the van and out of the van. *(Laughter)* I had the keys to Holloway sometimes, and I got in and out when I wanted to. You stand by your principles, and we have a lot more in common than people realise. All we want to do is to protect our workers and their families. Would you accept this gift with our pleasure. It is great to see you, Steve. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

BRO. S. GILLAN: It's great to have been invited. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on item 2: Industrial & Economic Policy: Taxation & General. This section includes Motions 153, to be moved by Southern; 156, to be moved by London; 157 to be moved by Northern and 158 to be moved by Wales & South Western. Then I will be calling Gordon Gibbs to respond on behalf of the CEC.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION & GENERAL
LOBBY FOR A WEALTH TAX FOR ALL WEALTH OVER £500,000
MOTION 153**

153. LOBBY FOR A WEALTH TAX FOR ALL WEALTH OVER £500,000

This Conference agrees that economic inequality is continuing to grow and shows little sign of slowing down. This level of inequality - combined with the reluctance of the wealthy and over-privileged to redress it – causes so many social problems, as documented in Wilkinson and Pickett’s groundbreaking work ‘The Spirit Level’. Economic inequality is unfair, unnecessary and could easily be remedied, partly by simple re-distributive taxation. Conference agrees that GMB should lobby for the introduction of a wealth tax with the aim of reducing economic equality and improving the overall quality of life in our country for all.

N10 BERKSHIRE & NORTH HAMPSHIRE BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 153 for a wealth tax on all wealth over half-a-million quid. Comrades, when I started to write this speech, I looked around the web a little bit — I did a Google search — to refresh my memory to see what the press have been saying about wealth tax. What I found were a load of articles damning this concept, but do you know where I found those articles, where they were printed, in the *Daily Mail*, the *Torygraph*, a rag called *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, which is an American very neo-conservative-type rag. Basically, everyone who I hate absolutely hates the idea of a wealth tax, hence why it is such a good idea. At the moment, our primary source of taxation is, of course, income tax. That means that not only is it very easy for the rich to find loopholes, offshore tax accounts, etc., to get their huge sums paid into, but it is also that the old rich, the super rich, who don’t need to work any more, who don’t necessarily have that much income coming in, just get to sail around the world in their yachts or party it up in their mansions without paying a penny in proper tax.

This motion proposes that GMB takes a firm stand on wealth inequality and backs the notion of lobbying for a tax to tax all capital assets. That means that anyone who owns half-a-million quids worth of property, land and so on, will pay tax on everything they have above the value of half-a-million.

When we look at wealth in this country, and understand that most people’s wealth, if they’ve got any, is in property, the average house price in the UK is £189,000. For that average person, you would not only have to own your own home outright, something that many of us, especially young members here, can’t even imagine, but you would also then have to have another £311,000 worth of assets on top to be taxed at all.

I tried to work out what the CEC Statement for this is. I know that they have got a statement coming, and my guess is that, possibly, it is about London house prices. If you look at the average London house price, it is a dizzying £534,000, so the figure that I have chosen for this motion may encompass some of those people. Of course, that is not the intention. If they were to pay any tax on that, it would only be on the £34,000 above it. Of course, this is an idea that would be effected in the future by

inflation, by house-price rises, etc. So I am hoping that that is what the statement is about and that I have addressed it. Fundamentally, we always need to remember that the wealth inequality we see at the moment is absolutely deliberate. The rich need us to be unequally poor. Greedy landlords need inequality to profit from our most basic need of housing. All the elite need us to struggle on on exploitation wages for them to keep the sickening lifestyles that they have become accustomed to.

What should our reaction be to the *Daily Mail* and the *Torygraph* and the stinking rich who they represent, who hate this idea? I think our reaction should be, happily, to stick two fingers up to the lot of them and support this motion now. I move.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. R. GALLAGHER (Southern): Thank you, President. Greetings, Congress. I am seconding the motion on a wealth tax because I think the principle is flawless. A common criticism of the principle of a wealth tax is that if you tax wealth people will move their money overseas, they will put it into tax havens and hide it. I think that explanation is not good enough. I will tell you why. There are countries around the world that successfully tackled tax evasion. There is something called extra-territoriality, and what that means is that if the citizens of some countries decided to hide their wealth in tax havens, they will go after them and bill them for the difference they would have paid had they been in their home country. Believe it or not, this is something that the United States does, not that you will find me very often praising the United States, but they actually do receive a lot of money. So it can be done. If it was extended to corporations, it would be even more successful. What it takes is political will. It takes political will to tackle tax evasion to make a wealth tax viable, just as the Tories had political will in cutting back on HMRC investigators and employing DWP investigators, which actually target disabled people and the unemployed.

I call on you, Congress, to support this motion, to support the principle of a wealth tax. Let it be GMB policy and let it be the policy of the next Labour Government. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: We come to Motion 156, London to move.

NATIONAL INSURANCE MOTION 156

156. NATIONAL INSURANCE

This Congress notes that National Insurance is a complicated and emotionally charged subject. However, one thing it cannot be deemed is a progressive form of taxation. Someone earning £100,000 will pay less National Insurance as a proportion of their income than someone earning £40,000. Also, if you can afford to retire early you will cease paying National Insurance while if you cannot afford to retire early you will pay until state pension age.

This Congress calls for:

- A review into National Insurance contribution levels to see if there is a more progressive way of achieving National Insurance revenue.

- Look into how a more progressive National Insurance could provide extra funding for the NHS, State Pension and other contributory benefits.
- Use this research to influence debate within the wider political context.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. GOODSON (London): Congress, I move Motion 156: National Insurance. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* As the motion states, “National Insurance is a complicated and emotionally charged subject”, although it need not be. One of the reasons why it is so complicated is the different classes of National Insurance and how much you earn. This is then compounded by the terminology and abbreviations. We are all, most likely, aware of the thresholds; the lower earning limits and the upper earning limit. But how many people know about those terms in between the lower and the upper earning limits? There is a primary threshold, a secondary threshold, the upper-accrual point, the upper-secondary threshold. Do you know how many Class 1 National Insurance rates there are? Three or four, perhaps. No. There are 11. That’s right. There are 11 different Class 1 rates. Do you know, for example, that there is Class 1A, Class 1B National Insurance with different percentage rates based on the threshold? Confused? I am!

Enough about the complicate system, but what about the fairness? Is it fair that someone earning, say, £100,000 or £200,000 will pay less National Insurance for a proportion of income than a person with £40,000? Is it fair to pay more National Insurance than a self-employed person, when someone who is self-employed is earning over £100,000? This disparity allows them to save thousands of pounds. Congress, it is wrong.

So there is a need for a review going all the way through the system in order to look at and come up with alternatives, whether this could be a consumption tax based on how much an individual spends, or some other system. A fairer system will be just that; fair on the individual and fair to society. Just think what can be achieved if the top earners started to pay their fair share? We would have a better Health Service, properly and fully funded; a better educational system, better pensions and council homes for all. Is this just too much to ask, Congress? Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mary. Secunder.

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I second Motion 156: National Insurance. National Insurance deduction is a tax, and morally tax should be based on earnings. How can it be moral or fair for the low and medium-paid to pay a larger proportion of their pay in National Insurance than the Prime Minister? That cannot be right. The National Insurance system is no better than the discredited Poll Tax. Multi-millionaires paid the same amount of Poll Tax as unemployed council-house tenants. Colleagues, let’s bring fairness to all forms of tax. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ewart. I call Motion 157.

REVENUE SUPPORT GRANTS AND BUSINESS RATES MOTION 157

157. REVENUE SUPPORT GRANTS AND BUSINESS RATES

This Conference notes that this Tory Government is ideologically bent on replacing Revenue Support Grants with Business Rates as its preferred model of local government financing going forward. Congress believes that this disproportionately discriminates against areas of relative deprivation and with few current or medium term opportunities to bridge the gap in funding to bring in large business rate income. Congress believes that this is yet another attempt by the Tories to create a two tier Britain and calls on local government funding to be reaffirmed as being on needs basis. Congress calls on the Labour Party to commit to repeal this Government's direction of travel as part of its manifesto for the 2020 general election.

Z46 STOCKTON NO.3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. A. BRYAN (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 157: Revenue Support Grants and Business Rates. The fact that the Tories just want to protect areas that vote Tory should be no surprise to any of us. They have always done that and they always will. However, what they are doing is a pet project of George Osborne's, which is to remove the traditional form of local government funding through the method of the Revenue Support Grant, known as RSG. They say they are doing this so that they can devolve the Business Rate to local councils. Congress, this is a blatant attack on those communities that need the help most. It will help Tory areas in the south, but where I live, in Sunderland, yes, Congress and friends, this is not an ordinary northern accent but a Premiership accent, not to be confused with a Championship Geordie accent. Where I live in Sunderland, where we are just trying to get on our feet, after industries were thrown on the scrapheap, it will take millions of pounds out of local government spending.

Let's be clear, Congress. The Tories want to hive everything off. For them, they would just have one council meeting per year to set the business rate and to give out contracts. That is the Tory Government's version of local services. Commissioners for everything. Congress, what we need is a much better deal for local government, for local people and for local services. Getting rid of the Revenue Support Grant and replacing it with Business Rates will cut funding, and that is the real Tory agenda. It is to pass on the responsibility for austerity from a Tory government to local councils, which in our area are mainly Labour. Labour should stop playing the Tory game and singing their tune. We want Labour to give a clear signal and direction to repeal this form of local government funding, which demonises the needy and rewards the most wealthy communities. *(Applause and cheers)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. B. DONALDSON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 157: Revenue Support Grants and Business Rates. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, as the mover of this motion has already said, the northern regions will suffer most due to this Tory Government's policy. The northern regions are trying to regenerate our communities across the sector. The problem is that we have no organised regional policy. What we have is a free-for-all. It's a free market,

Tory solution to a community problem. As more people are setting up businesses on their own, they are immediately covered by business rates. It means that the system is set up for them to fail. Also, taking away the current form of council funding will make the cuts that we have seen in the last six years a lot worse. On top of this, we have to withstand four more years of cuts that have now already been announced. This is a Tory dogma, protecting Tory areas and hitting Labour ones. It is as cruel as that.

Congress, in our region, we want Labour MPs to stop dusting off their CVs and start fighting for our regions in Westminster. We need them to do the jobs that they were selected to do, to advocate for our people, to support our people and to have nothing to do with this Tory project. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Motion 158.

TAXATION ON SANITARY PRODUCTS MOTION 158

158. TAXATION ON SANITARY PRODUCTS

This Conference calls on the GMB to campaign and lobby against the taxation on sanitary products, as they are currently classed as "luxurious items" and are thus taxed at 5% VAT. The fact that cake and men's shaving razors are considered "a necessity", whilst fundamentally important intimate products such as tampons, are not, goes against all ideas of social equality. Conference, please support a campaign aimed at revoking these sexist taxes.

BRITISH GAS ENERGY BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. FERGUSON (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 158. President and Congress, at present in the UK sanitary products are currently classed as "luxurious items" and are thus taxed at 5% VAT. This is because they are considered a non-essential or luxury item. Incidentally, if you were to crocodile steak, some edible flowers or a helicopter, you would not have to pay such a tax. One thing that does appear on the tax exempt list is incontinence pads, but both maternity pads and sanitary products do not. There needs to be an end to the marginalisation of issues traditionally associated with women. The use of them is not a lifestyle choice but, rather, completely necessary.

In 2014 the chief of the UN Human Rights Office for Economic and Social Justice called the stigma and unfairness around menstrual hygiene a violation of several human rights, but most importantly the right to human dignity. There is not only deep-rooted gender inequality and gross unfairness surrounding the purchase of sanitary products in the UK, but in the USA food stamps do not cover sanitary products but they do cover men's razors. As with the example of our own tax system, this amounts to nothing more than gender-based taxation and government-sanctioned sexism. The patriarchal society we live in does not just harm our pockets. According to one study, a third of south-east Asian girls have no knowledge of periods before getting their first, and 48% of girls in Iran believe menstruation to be a disease and, most shockingly of all, only 12% of girls and women around the world have access to sanitary products. When one in 10 girls in Africa miss school due to their period

because of a lack of information and resources, the stigma that we as females face stops being mildly annoying and starts being an integral part of the institutionalised discrimination of women and girls the world over.

It also strikes me as unfair that sexual health clinics hand out free condoms but not sanitary products. One-tenth of homeless people in the UK are women. These women use socks, rags and newspapers when, surely, we can afford to give them a tampon and some dignity? Back in March of this year it was promised to us that the tax would disappear but, despite George Osborne's apparently new-found freedom from EU red tape, he still hasn't followed through with his pledge. At best, this is Conservative rhetoric that we all know to be as reliable as the *Daily Mail*, but at worst it is the brandishing of female equality rights being used as a carrot to dangle to give favour and acclaim. We need to let this Government know that the issue is still present and important. We must continue as activists and as a union to support the end of the tampon tax. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. D. FRENCH (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 158: Taxation on Sanitary Products. I am a first-time delegate and third time speaking. President and Congress, I've been thinking of a one-liner to describe how this 5% levy is so outrageously unfair and biased against women. The best that I can come up with is that it's a bleedin' scandal. Pardon the awful pun, colleagues. Can I just reassure all of our sisters in the hall today that all our male delegate colleagues are fully supportive of the objective of consigning this discriminatory Tory tax to the dustbin of legislative history. (*Applause*) It is, perhaps, sound fact that no progress has been made for over 15 years in Parliament, given that the majority of members of the House of Commons do not have to endure the monthly inconveniences of menstruation. The tampon tax revolt of last October in the Commons was seen off by David Cameron by a princely 18 votes, but the concession made by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, to raise the matter in Brussels, was a positive step forward. The Government have argued that they do not have the authority to extend unilaterally zero VAT ratings to new products, and that any change to European VAT law would require a proposal from the Commission, together with the support of all 28 states. The fight against this tax on women has been going on for ages, based solely upon biological need. It is time now to change things. The licence given to Britons to do that is clear and unequivocal, and Cameron and his band of merry men particularly need to seize the opportunity to go solo, to offset the European regulations and abolish the levy that is as absurd as it is unfair.

As Holly has said, let's try to ensure that both of these crucial campaign objectives are realised. I am proud and now a little relieved to second this motion. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Unless anyone is desperate to come in, we are a bit short of time. I think the movers and seconders have been..... Come on, then, if you want to. You are wasting time standing back there. You are desperate. Come on, then.

BRO. W. CONWAY (London): Just to qualify the issues on the tampon tax, I talked to both SNP and Labour MPs on their respective finance benches. It is just a matter of being careful what you wish for. It could be cheaper by having the 5% VAT imposed on tampons than not, purely because you can then reclaim all the VAT that you have spent out on the way in. I am not saying anything against it. I am just asking that we must be careful as to how it is phrased. Removing all tax on tampons might be a way forward, but removing that VAT could actually make the products more expensive. Just be careful.

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Gordon Gibbs to respond on behalf of the CEC on Motion 153.

BRO. G. GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 153: Lobby for a Wealth Tax for all wealth over £500,000, which we are supporting, with a qualification. GMB continues to fight for a fair system, and we appreciate the sentiments of the motion, but in the absence of a wealth tax, the rich are getting richer while the poorer workers are tightening their belts. However, although we agree on taxation to tackle the extremes of wealth, the qualification is in the title that indicates that we would tie our policy to wealth over £500,000. With the average house price in London around £514,000, this would impact people that the motion does not intend to affect. So support Motion 153 with the qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does Southern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) I now put Motions 153, 156, 157 and 158 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Those are carried.

Motion 153 was CARRIED.

Motion 156 was CARRIED.

Motion 157 was CARRIED.

Motion 158 was CARRIED.

MARGARET ASPINALL, HILLSBOROUGH FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now move to something that is very dear to my heart and to this union and the region that this comes from. It gives me great pleasure to welcome Margaret Aspinall, Chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group to Congress, and Sue Roberts. Margaret and Sue, would you like to come forward with John McDonnell. (*A standing ovation*)

BRO. J. McDONNELL (North West & Irish): Congress, I am John McDonnell from the North West & Irish Region, proud and privileged to welcome Margaret and Sue Roberts who represent the 96 Hillsborough families to Congress, who for 27 years suffered a living hell fighting for truth and justice for their loved ones who went to a football match and 96 never returned home. I have a statement before me from Paul Richards, who is in our delegation, and he wants me to read it out. Paul was at the match that day and he was on the terraces at Hillsborough on that tragic day. He has asked me to provide you with details behind the 96 fans who lost their lives. Thirty-seven were teenagers, most still at school; three pairs of brothers and one pair of sisters; a father and a son who, together, lost their lives. Twenty-six who died were

parents, and the victims ranged from aged 10 to 67 years old. Paul says, maybe now, they can rest in peace. With that, Congress, I would ask Margaret to address Congress. (*Applause*)

ADDRESS BY MARGARET ASPINALL

SIS. M. ASPINALL: Thank you so much for that lovely welcome. It is really appreciated. Yes, I stand here before you with victory, victory in beating the establishment that covered up what happened for all those years! (*Applause and cheers*) I feel more nervous when I speak to the likes of the ordinary people, because to me the ordinary people are celebrities. The ordinary people are the ones who stood by us for all of these years when the establishment was trying to bring us down and down and down, and we were determined to make sure that we got the truth, the truth, the truth! (*Applause*) It is not an easy thing to do, because there have been many a time over these past 27 years that we have wanted to give up because they have a great way of wearing you down. They have a great way of brainwashing the ordinary people, because we had some nasty, nasty things said to us along the journey. We have had letters, emails and phone calls to say “It’s a pity that another 96,000 scousers didn’t die with yours”. We have had to put up with all of that, and whose fault was that? It was a certain newspaper that was allowed in our city, a certain newspaper that printed lie after lie after lie. But what people forget is that it wasn’t the only newspapers. They did the headlines but other media put it inside their pages. We had to fight against all of that. We had to fight against the likes of Margaret Thatcher, Bernard Ingham and people like that. We are still trying to get her brought into it, because we knew from day one that she owed a police force, South Yorkshire Police Force. We knew that from day one. Her payback to them was Hillsborough for what they did to Orgreave. It was the same police force investigating a police force — West Midlands Police — and they were all part and parcel of a massive, massive cover up.

It went beyond that. What was the biggest shock of all was the medical service. That goes for the ambulance service and the fire service. They were all part and parcel on that day of a cover up, and no-one was going to be blamed, only the fans, the 96 and the fans who were there that day! We were determined, absolutely determined, because we knew that our fans did nothing wrong. They were the heroes. They were the ones who did all of the help. They were helping each other, while the police stood on and did nothing.

I will go into a story, if I may, and I hope that Sue will be saying something as well shortly. I have always supported all of the 96. 96 people should have been saved, not 10, not 12, not 14 but 96 should have been saved. The only way I can describe anything to you is by giving you the story of James, my son, who was just 18, just three weeks into being 18. It was his first away game. He had never been to Sheffield before. He was in the ground at a quarter-past-1. He went by coach with his friend. There was just him and his friend. I didn’t find out that James had died until 6 o’clock the following morning, yet James had all his ID on him. He had his bus pass with his picture and with his telephone number, and nobody got in touch with me. I was always led to believe that my son was helped, because that is the first thing that any mum, any father, any brother, any sister, any grandmother wants to know, that their child was helped on that day. I wrote straightaway to the steering committee that

was set up, and they told me that people did help James, but they don't know who the names are, but that he was definitely helped. That was a little bit of relief for me, that at least somebody tried to help my son. I asked again if there was any video coverage of James. "Could you, please, give me any video coverage of James in the pen or when he was brought out?" The answer was "No, there's no video coverage". After 27 years, after two years sitting in a court, James's inquest came up and there was a lot of video coverage of James. A lot! So they had lied to me from day one. Also James was left on his back, not even in the recovery position, and a policeman steps over him and puts a coat over his face. Then the pathologist get up, and you are listening to the pathology, and they said that James could have been saved. As a parent, as a family member, that is the worst news that anybody needs to hear after all of them years of fighting just for the truth. But we got the truth, because we knew, as we have always known, that they were lying. But it was not easy to get to that truth. We had to go through so many channels, so many doors slamming in our faces, with so many people saying "You've had this, you've had that. What more do you want?" We wanted the truth. "We want everything that you've got. We want freedom of information, freedom of documentation. Give us it all. If there are any warts there, give us them. We don't mind the warts, if there are warts. Give us that, just to give us the truth." We were told, "No more information. There's nothing else. There's nothing else." They tried to wear the families down. It did not work. The hardcore of the families, not all the families but the hardcore, and some of them have passed away now, I am afraid, stuck together and kept knocking on doors and knocking on doors and knocking on doors. As they tried to wear us down, we damn well made sure that we got on their nerves and we wore them down by sticking together. (*Applause*)

But we knew we were still getting nowhere, and some decisions had to be made. I think the turning point for Hillsborough was when Andy Burnham stood in front of the Kop at the memorial service. I took a lot of stick over that, because we 'd never allowed an MP to speak at the memorial service ever, because we never had trust in any one of them after what we had gone through. But I knew that things couldn't get any worse. We had to take a chance. Thank God we took that chance and that worked. Within a matter of weeks the executive committee from the group were having meetings, really strictly confidential, with the Ministry of Justice, and we were telling them, "No more tea and sympathy. Do something. Get somebody in independent to have a full investigation into this". That's how the HIP was set up. From there it went on and on. After all of those years, people were saying "You'll never get 96 verdicts quashed. That will never happen". But we did achieve that. We got them quashed. (*Applause*) We got the verdict that we should have had 27 years ago. What I am asking for now, and I have been into Parliament and asked for the same thing, because this opens up avenues now — thank God — and I think it is going to open it for everybody, for the likes of Orgeave, for the likes of Rotherham. You just look at what is happening now since Hillsborough. The changes that are going to be made. Hopefully, we are going to try and get a Hillsborough law, and to me that is going to be so important because it has got to be a level playing field for everybody who has gone through anything like we have. There should not be payouts for certain police officers, and they get all the funding from the Police Federation, and the ordinary people like ourselves, who haven't got any money, have to go out begging and borrowing. That is not right. The ordinary people need to have legal aid brought back to help them, and that is what I will be asking for. (*Applause*)

Sue will vouch for this. She was there when I was in Parliament talking not only to some MPs but with some people from the House of Lords, and I let them know that they are no better than the people out on the streets. The only difference between them and those poor people on the streets is that they've got more money, they get paid more money, yet those on the streets get nothing, and they are the ones who need the help. That's what we have got to be fighting for. You can beat the Government. We have won against the establishment. They don't like it but we've done it. That can be achieved by everybody sticking together by demanding, demanding and demanding. You cannot go away. You cannot let them win. It is up to everybody sitting in this room now to fight for what you believe in, especially when you know it is right, it's proper and it's just. What we have gone through as families has been tremendous.

I'll give you another story, if I may, and then I'm going to hand over to Sue, because I am sure that she would like to say a few words. When James died, people thought "The family's got millions". We were getting insulted left, right and centre. We were getting told, "You must be loaded now. You've got millions". It was the fund that was set up. That is not true. I tried to explain to people. I will tell you what happened. I took it to Parliament and I read it out in Parliament the original letter that I got concerning James. On it, it said: "We have dealt with James's assets and everything else. Because your son was just 18, we are offering you £1,222.37p. for the death of your son to help to bury him". Nobody knows this. I said that I was going to come out and say an awful lot of things. I had four children besides James, and my youngest was only six. The next one was seven. The other one was nine, going on 10. My eldest was 15 going on 16, and James was just 18. My husband was out of work, I didn't have any money and, as I said to them in Parliament, I didn't need money. I was rich with my five children. I was rich with love. (*Applause*)

What shames me now, and it still shames me to this day, is that I had to accept it, and why did I have to accept it? It was because we had to pay for our own inquest, for our individuals. Forty-two of the families had to look for £3,000. I didn't have any money, so I borrowed. I accepted that £1,000-odd and put that towards my son for a generic inquest. That wasn't enough. Our chairman at the time, Trevor Hicks, bless him, had to come back and ask the same families who gave for another £500. That's the same on the Government. I had to borrow, and people were saying that I'd got millions. I didn't get millions. That's what I got to this day, and people think that we got all kinds. It's the goodness of the people of this country, of the ordinary people of our city, who helped us to get where we are today. Without them, our fans and survivors, we wouldn't have got this victory that we have had, but that shames the system. The system must change. People should never have to beg and borrow and accept. I told them in Parliament that I wanted to tell them to shove that cheque where the sun don't shine. I told them straight. (*Applause*) But I couldn't because I had no help. The only time we got help was this time in the courts. How do you feel as a mother accepting that? It was an awful thing. My children heard that for the first time. They understood, and they said "Mum, we understand. How hard it must have been for you".

But my children didn't get the same mum and dad back that they knew. Every time they would go to school and I would come home from the office — I still work voluntarily for the group. People think I must get paid, but I don't get a penny. I have

worked on a voluntary basis for 20-odd years for this group, and I will do it until I get the accountability that we should have had... (*Applause*) My job will not be done until I see the accountability. As I said, those policemen, 14 of them, got over a million pounds because they were traumatised. We got nothing. The families got nothing for suffering trauma. Apparently, we weren't traumatised because we weren't there. So I didn't go through anything all night waiting for my son to come home or a phone call! Things have got to change. If they've been paid as hush money, it's got to go back. A chief constable should never be allowed to resign, never on ill-health, no matter what, until an investigation is done on them and they are proved innocent. If they are guilty, you take that bloody pension back and put it back into the system to help the ordinary people. (*Applause and cheers*) That's what has got to happen, and that is what I will be fighting for. If they think they can keep me quiet, I am more nervous talking to the likes of you than I am to the likes of the people in Parliament, because I will tell them straight, and that's what we will be fighting for. Things have got to change. As I said, we must get the legal aid back to start helping the ordinary people of this country, and help Orgreave and everybody else. We must get the truth and justice, and make them bloody well be accountable. Thank you. (*A standing ovation*)

SIS. SUE ROBERTS: How you follow that? Margaret has just told you her story. Ninety-six lives were lost that day, as you know, and there are 95 other stories just as sad as the story that Margaret has told you. Ninety-five other families had their lives torn apart. Parents have passed away, who have died prematurely, because of the injustices and the torment of knowing what was going on behind the scenes, the second disaster of Hillsborough, the cover up. It crucified my parents. My dad never worked again. He retired at 54 years of age. As Margaret said, her children said that their parents were never the same. Well, my parents were never the same. They just wanted to wrap me in cotton wool, and I am sure that lots of other siblings will tell you the same. I would like to thank Margaret for being brave enough for all of these years to tell her story. (*Applause*)

The Hillsborough Family Support Group has only had three chairmen over 27 years, and that is just absolutely amazing. What a record! Trevor Hicks, who lost his two beautiful daughters, lost his future that day. He said that in his pen portrait. Then Phil Hammond, who had been vice chair to Trevor for a number of years. He stood in. I think he only served about five or six years because, then, unfortunately, he was taken very ill. Phil Hammond is still very ill today, but at least he was with us in court when we got the new conclusions of the inquest this time round. I was so pleased to see him there. Margaret has led us as Chair for seven years now. I think she has done a fantastic job. Thank you, and thank you all for your support as well. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, no words of mine can ever explain or understand what these wonderful people have had to go through for 27 years. By listening to Margaret, I believe it is still going on. The insults from people who don't even know them. If justice has to come, someone, be it Government ministers if they are still alive, Tory ministers who decided that day that collusion was going to happen, nothing can ever shake that view, they should all be doing prison, hard labour. Justice will only be seen to be done when somebody pays the price. (*Applause*) They paid the price of their children, brothers, sisters and uncles. It was a big price, and a price

that they should never have to be doing what they are doing today. I'm proud to know them, I am proud that they are standing on my union's platform, and I am extremely proud of the region which has kept this going — Paul McCarthy and the North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)* Many of us have been aware. It is not only this case that we are fighting. Every single person who an injustice has been done to — be it at Cammell Laird, Orgreave, all the miners, the Shrewsbury 24 — and the other injustice is what they are doing to us now. They are trying to bring us to our knees but we will not bow to you or anybody else. We will fight for what we believe in, and that is justice, justice for them and justice for those who have gone before.

Margaret and Sue, it gives me.... Margaret, you want to say something.

SIS. MARGARET ASPINELL: I would like to say that when we were getting called "The Whinging Scousers" and "Self-Pity City", I'm proud to be a Scouser, because there's nobody stronger than the Scousers. They stick together when we need the truth. I will say to those same people now: Look what these Scousers achieved, not only for the good of their city but for the good of this nation. We have to change things. That is what I am most proud of being a Scouser for. Thank you so much for listening. I wanted to mention that last bit. We do get called everything because we are Liverpool people. I would like to say that this is the good side of Liverpool people. This is the side where the people stick together. No matter what club you support, you have got to support everybody else within this country. I am so proud that the scousers have achieved their victory. It shows that if we can do it, anyone can do it. Stay together, fight for your rights and it will be achieved in the end. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Margaret and Sue, it gives me the greatest honour, on behalf of my union, and this Congress to award to you and the Hillsborough families our highest honour, and that is our Gold Medal from this Congress, so it will remind you that we believed in your from the very first day. I would like you both to accept it between you. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

Congress, I have composed myself. Wasn't that both dreadful and lovely to see them all looking so well. I will be joining them in a little while.

ADDRESS BY LUCIANA BERGER MP

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Luciana Berger MP to address Congress. Luciana is the Shadow Minister for Mental Health and MP for Liverpool Wavertree. She is a long-standing supporter of trade unions and addressed delegates at our National Equalities Conference in Cardiff where she launched our new GMB Mental Health Guide. In her current role, Luciana works to ensure that Labour's approach to mental health is not just confined to the NHS. She has also highlighted the need for earlier interventions and prevention. One of her key priorities is to tackle the stigma and prejudice often faced by those experiencing mental health problems. Luciana, welcome. I would like to invite you to address Congress. *(Applause)*

LUCIANA BERGER MP: Thank you very much. Before I begin, I want to honour the bravery and courage of Margaret Aspinell and Sue Roberts for their speeches,

which I had the opportunity to watch from the back. I think that their tenacity in fighting for so many years to achieve truth and justice for the 96 Hillsborough victims and their families and the survivors is awe inspiring. As she said, now we need accountability. It is incredibly humbling to follow their contributions. *(Applause)*

Thank you, Mary, for having me. It really is a privilege to be addressing a GMB event once again, particularly having you in the Chair. We go back a long way. Tim, your presence today proves that you take the issue of mental health incredibly seriously. I know that Malcolm and Eda also have done so much work. I congratulate all of the GMB's work that you have put into this issue, and I will come on to speak a bit more about that in a moment.

As you have just heard, my name is Luciana Berger. I am the Member of Parliament for Liverpool Wavertree. I stand before you as the first ever Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, proudly serving in Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Cabinet. *(Applause)*

I want to thank you so much for having me. I am only sorry that I have to rush back after this, because there is a debate in Parliament on mental health early in the afternoon, and I am going to be speaking from the Front Bench to highlight the injustice of everything that has happened with Southern Health Foundation Trust. That is the debate that I am going to this afternoon.

The motions that I have seen that you have put to Congress throw a light on to a workplace issue that has all too often been left in the dark. Delegates, I know, are today highlighting the stigma and prejudice that is faced by workers with mental illness. You have drawn attention to the poor practice conducted by too many employers in Britain today. So I really welcome this morning's debate. I welcome the GMB's commitment to tackling stigma and discrimination, and I welcome the union's drive towards training for workplace reps and the clear anti-discrimination policies in the workplace, and in the workplaces where you organise. For a major union, such as GMB, it should be core business. I know from the time that I have spent at your Equalities Conference in Cardiff, when you launched your *Guide for Workplace Reps*, from all the work that I have done with your officers, who have contributed to the Labour Party's Policy Commission on Mental Health, and from my time working and meeting young GMB members, who are doing such a fantastic job campaigning on mental health, I know that the GMB is leading the way.

We are facing a major mental-health crisis in the UK. One in four of us will suffer from a mental health condition in any given year, and these can be for a range of different conditions, anything from anxiety to depression, eating disorders, phobias, bi-polar, addictions and schizophrenia. Suicide, particularly amongst men under the age of 9, is the highest it has ever been in our country since 2001, and it is the biggest cause of death amongst young men in our country. We know that too many people are having to travel hundreds of miles across our country just to get a bed. We know that the number of children who are being treated on adult wards — something that the Mental Health Act, quite rightly, says should not happen — has risen again this year. In the past year alone the number of people being detained under the Mental Health Act because they have become so ill has jumped by 10%. After six years of Tory rule, our mental health services are at breaking point.

In the workplace, we still have to fight the oppression that workers with mental illness suffer every single day, workers treated differently because of their mental illness, workers ridiculed and bullied because of their mental illness, workers denied opportunities for promotion because of their mental health condition and workers sacked because of their mental health condition. We know it goes on, but it is wrong and it has to stop.

Workers with mental health conditions have rights that are protected by law. As you know, the Equalities Act means that an employer must not treat a worker less favourably than another worker because of their mental health condition. Nor can a worker be abused or treated badly. Reasonable adjustments must be made. The law says that a worker with a mental health condition must be able to make as full a contribution as their condition allows, yet we know that the law is being flouted or ignored and that workers are often unaware of their rights in this area. This is the gap in awareness that the GMB is filling and other unions must fill, too. It is not just about individual rights, vital though they are, and it is not merely about fairness and justice, essential though these are, and it is not just about the social and the moral reasons to ensure that we are helping as many people as possible to maintain their relationships with their family and friends to hold down a job, to maintain a tendency or to keep paying the mortgage. It is also about our national economy. We cannot afford as a nation to waste the talents and the energy of thousands of people because they are shut out of the economy on the grounds of poor mental health. According to the London School of Economics, the economic costs of poor mental health to our country is estimated at a staggering £105 billion every single year. That is almost as much as we spend on the entire NHS. Of course, the mental health crisis is being exacerbated by the policies of the Tory Government — zero hour contracts, longer hours, precarious employment, money worries, debt, the closure of our children's centres, our libraries, our outdoor spaces, our youth services, stagnant wages, fear of losing our homes, sanctions and the bedroom tax. These are the harsh realities faced by millions of workers under the heavy weight of austerity. These realities can lead to anxiety, sleeplessness, family tensions and depression, and those in turn can lead to mental ill-health. You don't need a degree in psychiatry, just a degree of common sense, to understand the link between austerity and poor mental health.

Since Jeremy Corbyn appointed me as the first ever Shadow Minister for Mental Health, I work really hard to hold Tory Ministers to account for the crisis over which they are presiding, and to campaign on behalf of all the people and their families who deserve and need a world class mental health service, and who are too often let down. The fact is that these Tory ministers are making things worse. They claim to have signed up, under Labour pressures, to the idea of Parity of Esteem between mental health and physical health. This is supposed to be equality between the two. That means that a patient with depression should receive the same quality of care and treatment as a patient with cancer. There should be no second-class services, no matter what your condition. Yet we know, don't we, that this is not happening in too many parts of our country. In fact, only this afternoon, the debate that I am going back to speak about in the House of Commons, addresses this very issue.

Too often services are being denied, treatments are being delayed and symptoms are being missed. A report was out yesterday — this week is Infant Mental Health Week.

It is the first ever week of its kind — and we learnt that too many children are waiting up to 10 years to get the support that they deserve when it comes to their mental health. No matter how hard and how long our brilliant mental health professionals work, they can never meet the full backlog of demand.

As a Shadow Minister I have been doing my best asking, literally, hundreds of Parliamentary questions every single day to hold ministers and the Government to account. I have asked them: “How many GP practices have a mental health specialist?” and “How many GP practice nurses have actually received training in mental health?” I have asked them: “What proportion of people receiving consultant-led mental health treatment have been seen within 18 weeks of referral?” “How many incidents of physical injury following restraint there have been in our mental health services in every year since 2010?” I have asked: “How many men and women have taken their own lives in the first year after the birth of a child?” “How many NHS doctors, nurses and NHS staff have been signed off work due to stress and other mental illness that they have experienced in their workplace?”, and, “How many and what proportion of local authorities have a suicide-prevention group and a suicide-prevention strategy?” I wonder if you know what the answers were in each of these cases. You would have anticipated and hoped that the Government might have an answer to all of those very important and serious questions. Unfortunately, Ministers can’t come up with an answer. They say that they don’t collect the data, or they don’t hold the information centrally within Government, or simply some of the answers tell me that they just don’t know. It is utterly useless and it is not okay. How can Ministers run an effective range of services for mental health if they don’t know the true picture of what is actually happening across our country?

So what needs to change? The simple truth is that if we are to ensure that our services are sustainable into the future, we must do so much more to prevent people from becoming ill in the first place. At the moment, we do far too little to prevent mental ill-health. We know that 75% of people who have a mental health condition in their working life will, at first, have experienced symptoms in childhood or adolescence, yet just 6%, roughly, of the overall mental health budget is spent on our children’s and young people’s services. We need to rebalance this so that a greater proportion is spent on our young people. As a society we need to get better at challenging the stigma and discrimination of talking about mental health, of spotting the symptoms and seeking help early enough to make a difference. Most of us know how to spot meningitis in a child or a stroke in an adult. We understand the importance of getting checks for breast cancer or prostate cancer. We pay attention to our cholesterol and our blood pressure, but how much attention do we all give to our mental health. How articulate are we at describing our mental wellbeing? If we do open up and talk about it, how often are we told to “Get a grip” or “Cheer up”?

We have come a long way from the days when mental illness was a total taboo, a family secret kept behind closed doors, but we still have a long way to go until everyone can feel empowered to talk about their mental health openly. It is going to take some hard campaigning and some dramatic changes in attitudes, particularly for many of Britain’s employers. Maybe that is a challenge for us, too. Can we really say that we understand all the signs and the symptoms? Can we say that we have done everything that we can to support a colleague with a mental health condition?

We know from tackling other forms of discrimination that, no matter how enlightened we are, there is always more education and training that we can all undertake. There is always more listening to the experiences of people with mental illness, more learning from the successes and mistakes of the past. That is why I really, really welcome the resolution that you are about to debate today. The important thing now is to lift the words off your Congress resolutions documents and to make it into a reality, and I know that the GMB is going to do just that. We need a revolution in our mental health services as profound as the change that started on 5th July 1948 with the birth of the and our National Health Service, the best treatment, free at the point of need, regardless of ability to pay. These are the socialist principles which have lasted 70 years in our NHS. They should apply just as strongly to our mental health as they do to our physical health. These should be our demands now and the priority for the next Labour Government: no patient denied care, no mental illness left untreated, no worker facing discrimination and no one's talents wasted.

Congress, thank you very much for having me and I hope you are successful in what you are doing. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I thank you on behalf of our congress. This is a very, very important subject and it is now increasing with the amount of dementia and Alzheimer's patients that we get with the young and old, and as they always seem to be the forgotten group, mental health, we thank you for making it the number one target on behalf of all the families. Good luck this afternoon. If you have time to listen to any of the resolutions, please do so. Well done. Thank you. (*Applause*)

I hope my branch will forgive me but I have to go and say cheerio to Margaret and Sue. I will try and get back to the debate. Yes? (*Agreed*) I won't be branched! Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now go back into the agenda. I will call on Motion 230, London to move and second, please. Can I say we are running a little behind so I will not be taking any extra speakers in debates until we catch up and also if you are unfortunate to get a red light, can you finish there and then; it will be quite helpful. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, INADEQUATE SUPPORT
MOTION 230**

230. ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, INADEQUATE SUPPORT

Congress is aware that Alzheimer's Disease is one of the most aggressive forms of dementia and is extremely debilitating for its sufferers and demanding on their families. Whilst they benefit from the selfless efforts of many carers which in itself is insufficient.

Once the disease begins to take hold and progress it is not long before the sufferers need 24 hour support; which apart from the efforts of individual carers, falls mainly on the families leading in turn to further breakdowns and illness.

Congress is also aware that in general terms, this terrible disease does not only affect the elderly as there are more and more young people being diagnosed on a daily basis and the problem is going to grow.

For this reason if no other, the need for a massive increase in every aspect of support including specialised hospital care is now.

Congress therefore moves that the CEC should enlist the support of the responsible Shadow Ministers for local authorities and health and others who could be involved, to raise the problem in Parliament of the need for immediate action in every way possible and continue to press for action until there is some positive movement in this most demanding area of need.

HENDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. GOODSON (London): First time delegate but now second time speaker. *(Applause)* Caring for someone with Alzheimer's and dementia is both challenging and rewarding, and I speak from experience, with this disease affecting the families as well as the person. I looked after my mother-in-law for three years with this disease whilst working a full-time job and having three young children. The first time we realised this was happening to our family was when the doctor's surgery had called. They said, "Your Mum's here. She's been here for an hour but she's got no appointment." They said with her is her little dog in a shopping wheeler but she was dead. Mum's vets had just been across the road from the doctor's surgery but she was so confused that she had ended up in the doctor's surgery. Weeks went by and every day she would call and say, "Did I tell you my Cindy had died?" This is when we decided that there was something not right. We had to cut the gas supply to the cooker. She was not cooking food; she was eating it raw. Every day we would go there and as soon as we had left she would phone us and say, "When are you coming?" Sometimes we would just get indoors and my kids would say, "Nan's been on the phone. She says when are you coming?" We only live four miles away. It took her that long to forget.

She went into hospital once and after about a year got her diagnosed. That is how long it took. The hospital still insisted in asking her the questions, not us: what is your date of birth, where do you live, what happened to you. They did not listen. They did not realise that she had dementia. She would get lost. She would fall over. Eventually, we got her into day centre for three days a week. That was a relief to know that she could not go wandering. Then she had the stroke and 12 weeks later the staff decided they wanted to send her home alone, again, with one hour carer support. Enough was enough. We found her a home, a good home, but it was not the same so we still cared for her in that home. I think even though the caring support was there then, she was our family and I suppose we felt guilty. We could not care for her at home because there was no support network. The support is not there and, as Mary said yesterday, the support comes too late. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Secunder.

BRO. S. STRATTON (London): First time delegate, second time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, we are aware that Alzheimer's Disease is one of the most

aggressive forms of dementia, extremely debilitating for its sufferers, very demanding on their families. Alzheimer's Disease knows no social, economic, ethnic, or geographical boundaries. It is a chronic neurological disease that usually starts slowly and gets worse over time. Although each person will experience dementia in their own way, eventually those affected are unable to care for themselves and need help with all aspects of daily life. It is not long before sufferers need 24-hour support and apart from the best efforts of carers that support falls mainly on their families.

This terrible disease does not only affect the elderly as there are more and more younger people being diagnosed on a daily basis and the problem is going to grow. Someone somewhere is being diagnosed as I speak. In 2015, there were approximately 48 million people worldwide with Alzheimer's Disease. Although the speed of progression can vary, the average life expectancy following diagnosis is three to nine years. For this reason, if no other, the need for a massive increase in every aspect of support, including specialised hospital care, is now. Congress therefore moves that the CEC should enlist the support of the responsible Shadow Ministers for local authorities and health, and others, who could be involved, to raise the issue in Parliament of the need for immediate action in every possible way and continue to press for action until there are some positive movement in this most demanding area of need. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. I now call on Martin Jackson from Yorkshire to respond on behalf of the CEC. Martin.

BRO. M. JACKSON (CEC, Public Services): Congress, President, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and asking you to support this worthy motion, with a qualification. The motion highlights the social impact of Alzheimer's on the home and support network and that Alzheimer's, one of the most common forms of dementia, is not a natural part of ageing as it can affect young people too. This motion is important as is the work because dementia will touch many of us throughout our lives.

Our own President has movingly spoken about the realities of Alzheimer's, a disease her late husband lived with. She is not alone, Congress. 850,000 people live with dementia in the UK by 2015. 40,000 of them are under the age of 65. Dementia costs the UK £26bn a year. The impact is usually on the NHS and care services. We know that specialised hospital care cannot always be provided as the NHS is already underfunded and under-resourced. Thousands of unpaid carers do the best to care for their loved ones, loved ones who often need care 24 hours a day seven days a week. We know that funding for carers is insufficient.

GMB will use our influence in Parliament and we will work with the Alzheimer's Society to raise awareness and offer support and advice. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Alzheimer's Society who are attending GMB Congress as an exhibitor for the first time this year. We will challenge the negative stigma around dementia by changing the language we use for living with dementia as opposed to suffering from dementia, and highlight that it is possible to live well with dementia. We support this motion with qualification and the language to bring it in line with the fantastic work being done by the organisations like the Alzheimer's Society, and encourage delegates to attend the dementia friends session and become a trained

dementia friend this lunchtime in the Windsor Foyer VIP Lounge. Please support Motion 230 with this qualification. (*Applause*)

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

Motion 230 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call Composite 6, please, North West to move and Birmingham to second.

**UNION ORGANISATION: EDUCATION & TRAINING
COMPOSITE 6**

MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING CENTRAL TO GMB@WORK
(*Covering Motions 69, 71 and 72*)

C6 COVERING MOTIONS:

69	MAKING MENTAL HEALTH CENTRAL TO GMB@WORK	North West & Irish Region
71	MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE	North West & Irish Region
72	MENTAL HEALTH	Birmingham & West Midlands Region

MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING CENTRAL TO GMB@WORK

This Conference recognises the ever increasing amount of people at work suffering with mental health issues varying from mild to extremely serious, much of it caused by the worry and uncertainty facing people trying to cope with austerity measures implemented by this Government. Estimates are that one in six British workers are experiencing some form of depression, anxiety or stress which has caused the major reason for workplace absence. However, given the scale of the problem, Reps are clearly not in a position to assist, only signpost.

Our union has done great work on mental health awareness since last year's Congress in Dublin, particularly through the Young Members Network's campaign on young workers' mental health. Though we always know that more can be done to fully support our members in all workplaces and sectors.

We would like to make relevant training for our Shop Stewards and Safety Reps to be able to gain the knowledge and confidence to enable them to assist the wellbeing mentally of our membership.

This Congress is asked to support two policies that together will further put mental health support at the centre of our GMB@Work organising strategy.

The first is to call on GMB to offer a Mental Health training course to assist all Reps to spot the signs and help with early intervention and aid reps to support members as best they can which would also include support for themselves, as reps are not mental health professionals and already have a demanding role in representing our members.

Building on this, this motion secondly calls for our organising strategy to include encouraging employers in GMB-recognised workplaces to develop a good workplace policy on mental

health and for this to be negotiated with GMB and our reps who have received Mental Health Awareness and Support Training

(Referred)

BRO. R. HOLDEN (North West & Irish): Vice President, Congress, one in four of us in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. Many of you have heard the staggering statistic from Luciana Berger before and I would like to say thank you to Luciana Berger for all the work she has been doing as Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health on this really important matter. *(Applause)*

Thankfully, there has been an unprecedented amount of work being done by charities, politicians, NHS, and trade unions like ours, raising awareness of mental health and tackling stigma that can ruin lives for so many. As we all know, this fight is far from over. There are many who naturally when thinking about mental health do not see it as a workplace issue or the big role trade unions play in raising awareness and tackling the stigma. As one in six workers in Britain are affected by mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and stress, nearly 20% of staff in a recent research done by Mind reported that they felt they could not speak to managers about stress. It is no wonder that we are seeing a big rise in trade union members coming to their union for help with a mental health issue at work.

Congress, our workplace reps are not mental health experts but as mental health is a workplace issue they can play an important role in making the workplace better for mental health and signposting members to that support they so desperately need. However, many reps may feel uncomfortable because they want to help their members as best they can but feel that they do not have the knowledge or training required to help members find the support they need.

The GMB has been doing great work recently on this by publishing a brilliant guide for reps on mental health conditions, representing members with such issues, and organising around mental health as a workplace health and safety issue. But to make sure that mental health is treated with the same degree of care and attention as every issue in the workplace, it is important that our GMB@Work organising strategy places mental health and wellbeing as central to its ultimate aims and practices.

This motion calls for the Union's progress on mental health awareness and support to be strengthened by union-wide action to make such guidance accessible to all GMB reps through mental health awareness and support training, and to make negotiating workplace policies on mental health with employers in recognised workplaces a key target in a GMB@Work organising strategy. This will make great steps to enshrine mental health and wellbeing as a central concern of our organising and our representation in the workplace so that GMB members are never alone in dealing with their issues at work.

In closing, I would like to take an important moment to recognise the work done by GMB members, reps, activists, and in particular my fellow GMB Young Members, sisters and brothers, who do so much to raise awareness of mental health issues and tackle the stigma. *(Applause)*

Congress, fighting for a better workplace and a better world can be stressful, it can be tiring, and it can be time consuming. Many continue to do this whilst experiencing their own personal worries and problems. I just want to say the words on the minds of everyone here, the GMB family is there for them and it is there for all of us. Congress, I move this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ross. Secunder. I will be calling 249 from Yorkshire next.

BRO. C. TAYLOR (Birmingham & West Midlands): First time speaker and delegate. (*Applause*) It has been made clear this morning that mental health is an issue that is becoming more and more prominent in the workplace, and along with the issues is the stigma that is attached to the sufferers. To understand the problems that sufferers go through at work, we firstly have to tackle our own perceptions and attitudes towards the impact that stress and anxiety have on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. We as reps should be able to recognise the common traits, signs, and symptoms of mental health problems.

The estimates have already been mentioned but one in six workers will experience some form of mental health problem during their working life. That means all of us as reps have people all around us suffering from mental health illnesses. These figures are staggering. Then there is the stigma that is attached to mental health illness. There is a big fear factor of the unknown entity that is mental health and with other illnesses early detection can make a lot of difference. My own experience in my own workplace tells me the consequences can be fatal. I have seen many of my work colleagues commit suicide over the last 13 years in the particular workplace where I work, and others suffering from breakdowns and worse.

What we require from this motion is the provision of the tools to assist reps in recognising mental health issues that impact on our members. We need to be able to make a difference where these issues are occurring, including the defined illnesses. We understand that reps cannot be expected to provide a professional service and we do not want to teach or diagnose, or preach, we just need the initial support until professional help is received. If possible, we are striving for training to recognise, understand, and evaluate. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: 249 mover?

**SOCIAL POLICY: NHS, HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE
EXTRA FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
MOTION 249**

249. EXTRA FUNDING FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

This Conference recognises the importance of extra funding for mental health services. Patients with mental health issues spend longer in hospital and take up many resources often given cheap medication which can cause further health problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular problems later on in life. If effective medication was allowed to be prescribed at diagnosis, the NHS would not have beds taken by those patients who possibly could have avoided this. We need to remember, there is no health without mental health.

(Carried)

A DELEGATE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, chronic underfunding of mental health services has led to hundreds and thousands of lives put on hold or ruined and thousands of unnecessary deaths, warned a new report published earlier this year. The five-year forward view of mental health was commissioned by the Chief Executive of NHS, Simon Stevens, and shared by the Chief Executive of Mind, Paul Farmer. More than 20,000 people responded to the consultation. The report shows that three-quarters of mental health problems receive no support at all. There has been a 10% increase in the number of people sanctioned under the Mental Health Act over the past year. More worryingly suicides have risen after many years of decline, most markedly among middle-aged men.

Congress, Katherine Welby-Roberts, a mental health associate at Liveability UK, a Christian disability charity, has said that in 2012 she had waited two years for access to a psychiatrist. There is much talk about mental health at present, she said, but they did not seem to lead to noticeable action or change. Early intervention is key. If you can help people early on when things begin to develop, then in many cases you can probably prevent more serious later illness. Specific goals include helping a million more people with mental health problems to access high-quality care within the next five years at a cost of £1bn and reducing suicides by 10%.

The region believes that it is hard to imagine how much worse things can get when children are being sent far away from their families because of lack of beds and when too many adults harm themselves because they are not receiving the help they desperately need. This report highlights the urgent and immediate need for extra funding to save services. The Prime Minister has so far failed to live up to his pledge to prioritise mental health so, Congress, we are renewing our call to the Government to find new money to ensure that nobody with mental health issues is left to suffer alone. Congress, the truth is this Government with the mental health services need to remember that there is no health without mental health. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder.

BRO. T. CALVERT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Cheers/Applause)* Seconding Motion 249, conference recognising the importance of extra funding for mental health services. The main reason for that is these Tories are making us all unwell, mainly in the head and all that sort of stuff. What is happening is patients with mental health issues spend longer in hospital, are given cheaper medication, and what happens is more physical health problems later on in life, and stuff like that. The cost of it is £130bn a year and that is where they are at. Overall, the mental health service is sub-standard, unsafe. That is where we are linked in with BMA dispute and things like that in our local workplace.

Their answer to it has been to shut 1,700 beds in two years which is 10% of the number of mental health beds and stuff like that. These are adult acute psychiatric wards that I am working in, and that is where the impact of it is, more than anything else. As a consequence of this, people attend from NHS hospitals to private hospitals,

miles away from home, and everything else. As a consequence from that it means the NHS is getting less money and stuff like that. We are saying is stop spending all this sort of money, £2m spent out of area in private hands, using people's health as a way to make money. Cuts and shortages and privatisation, short-term thinking, is not right. Mental health funding needs to improve. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Terence. I now call on Neil Collinson from Northern to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. N. COLLINSON (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, we are seeking to refer Composite 6 and support Motion 249 with a qualification. Firstly, on Composite 6, Congress, with somewhere between one in six and one in four workers suffering from a mental health condition it is inevitable that GMB reps will increasingly be dealing with mental health issues at work.

With the recent focus from the Labour Party on mental health and increasing press coverage on the crisis in funding for mental health care, the time is right for the GMB to look at the provision of training on this issue. This will allow us to be clear on what GMB expects its representatives to do, how they should negotiate on the issues and what the limits of their role should be. However, we need to look at the practicality of training of all reps in this area. The CEC therefore requests that this motion be referred to allow for full consideration of the content and delivery of future training as part of the wider review of training detailed in the CEC Special Report on Training.

Turning to Motion 249 on funding for mental health services, the qualification is that whilst the GMB welcome the Government's recent pledge to invest £1bn a year in the mental health services by 2020, the GMB continues to call for a parity of esteem between the mental and physical health and for a fair funding settlement for the NHS and mental health services. Mental health services have fallen apart, therefore government funds need to be allocated fairly and adequately in mental health services. Congress, to summarise, the CEC ask you to refer Composite 6 and to support Motion 249 with the qualification outlined. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Neil. North West accept reference to Composite 6? *(Agreed)* Birmingham accept reference to Composite 6? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Yorkshire accept the qualification for 249? *(Agreed)* The CEC is supporting all these. I will now take the vote. All those in favour of Composite 6 and Motion 249 please show. Any against? They are carried.

*Composite Motion 6 was REFERRED.
Motion 249 was CARRIED.*

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Rehana Azam to report back from the Public Service Sectional Conference.

SIS. R. AZAM (National Secretary): Congress, Vice President, first time National Secretary, first time speaker to Congress in my new role. *(Applause)* I am

extremely proud to have my position as National Secretary endorsed by the CEC a few days ago and to be moving the first Public Services Section Conference Report to Congress.

Congress, this year the Public Services Conference debated 25 motions of which two were composites. Congress, we received an emergency motion that called for an industrial action campaign to be launched across our schools against the attacks on our schools and the academisation programme this Government has unleashed across England, a programme that will dangerously cut our members' terms and conditions. The Public Services Conference delegates unanimously supported this emergency motion. Congress, the GMB Public Services Section will now organise an urgent meeting of our schools committee, our school lead officers, so we can plan, we can map and launch a timeline and campaign to protect jobs and pay across our schools in England. (*Applause*)

I am pleased to announce 233 delegates attended the Public Services Conference and many visitors joined us. There were 100 delegates representing local government, schools, and academies, 31 NHS members, 13 from our care sector, and 55 from the rest of our public services section. Whilst we had a cross-range of sector motions, our conference focused on the NHS, education, and schools in particular. Our guest speakers were NUT Acting General Secretary, Kevin Courtney, and Shadow Schools Minister Nick Dakin, who was also a GMB member. They both set out the challenges to the Government's programme of deregulation and academisation of schools. Let's not be in any doubt that the Education White Paper will do to schools what the Health & Social Care Act has done to our NHS. Not only should we oppose this, we have to campaign stronger, we have to campaign harder, to stop our schools from being privatised.

Our General Secretary, Tim Roache, received a fantastic welcome from delegates as he set out our priorities in building 21st century campaigns to deliver for our members across the Public Sector. Kathleen, our European Officer, set out the dangers of TTIP, CTA, and how no sector, including the NHS, would be protected from these agreements and why the GMB has been leading the campaign to oppose them. Karen Leonard, our GMB Schools Organiser and Barbara Plant, Chair of our Schools Committee, set out a presentation on Violence in Schools and an interim update on the Violence in Schools survey. The most basic expectation in the workplace must be for our members' physical safety but we have members working across schools who have been physically attacked and verbally abused. We cannot and we will not tolerate this and the GMB Schools Survey is bringing attention to this ever increasing problem.

The GMB Public Services Section will challenge any employer who does not fulfil their obligations to ensure our members are protected at work. Congress, the responsibility given to me to lead the Public Services Section is one I take very, very seriously. I lead the GMB NHS Sector for the past five years, a journey that has been as much a personal journey as a professional one. I have experienced firsthand how our members go above and beyond what they are paid, the hours they work, often at personal sacrifice to their own work-life balance.

Congress, we do not know what trips or hazards are going to cross our path along life's highway but we do know in our Public Sector we have a trusted friend who will catch us when we stumble. We do not see them all and most of them we will never meet, they might be our friends but we do not see those they have helped, whose lives they have made easier, made more secure, more bearable, worth living, our Public Service workers are the backbone of a civilised society.

The NHS sector also taught me that governments will put a price on anything with no care for what it is worth. They tell us we can have better for less, more choice with fewer services, quality through competition, while our members with heads in their hands pick up the pieces. The GMB Public Services Section always has and will continue to serve and support our members as we all take on the challenges at work. We will fight the degradation and decimation of our services. We will challenge the claim that we must all cut our cloth according to our income while inequality deepens and the wealthy enjoy greater wealth.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development has stated that the only way out of this spiralling inequality is if government invest in skills and education, and promote better quality jobs, everything this Government's Education and Trade Union Bill seeks to undermine. We will not allow this Government to lead our workplaces into a race to the bottom. We welcome the concessions won by the union Movement to the Trade Union Bill which made it to the Queen's Speech but we have not killed the will to express our voice at work and that is why we will continue with our campaign to convert existing members from check-off to direct debit across the Public Services.

As the GMB National Secretary for Public Services that will be the platform on which I will lead the section, protecting our voice at work will be the immediate priority for every sector in the Public Services Section. For all the non-members we are going to organise, the GMB will be their voice at work and for all our existing members we will strengthen our collective voice. It is with that voice we will make our members heard across the Public Sector and we will shout down those who attempt to silence them. Congress, Vice President, that concludes my report for Public Services Conference and a full report will be out to regions shortly. Thank you. *(Applause)*

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rehana. I will now take PS8. As agreed by Congress in SOC Report No.1 we will now hear the motion which had been scheduled for Public Services Conference. PS8 can be found on page 206 of your Final Agenda and will be moved and seconded by London Region.

LOCAL COUNCIL BUDGETS MOTION PS8

PS8. LOCAL COUNCIL BUDGETS

This Conference notes that:

- Council workers in their heroic fight against the Tory Government have during their campaign highlighted reserves held by the Council in excess of £300million. English

Councils control £114billion. The combined budgets of the 58 Labour-led Councils come to £32.7billion. They hold around £4.5billion in general fund reserves and another £1.36billion in Housing Revenue Account and capital receipt reserves. This does not include the vast reserves held by Labour controlled Councils in London.

- There is no legal impediment stopping Labour Councils pooling reserves.
- Local Authorities have significant borrowing powers. This includes “Prudential” borrowing (unsupported borrowing) alongside capital borrowing. Local Authorities have and continue to use these powers.
- Under the Localism Act, Local Authorities have a “power of competence” to do “anything apart from that which is prohibited”.
- Even with the above procedural points, a campaign is needed to unite service users, communities and trade unions in a fight against the Tories to protect local government. Otherwise, by the next General Election in 2020, local services – and the jobs of GMB and other local council workers – will be so badly damaged that it will be like we are living in a different country.
- The factors above show that Councillors do in fact have options.

This Conference therefore agrees our position is:

1. To call on Labour Councils to set legal no-cuts budgets, use reserves, capitalise eligible general fund expenditure and borrow prudentially to generate resources so that no Labour Council need make cuts. These are short term measures to buy time to build a national campaign.
2. That the financial measures must be combined with a national campaign, linking Councils, trade unions and communities in a fight against the Tories austerity programme.
3. To call on the GMB’s political officers/department to prepare a concrete strategy to take the points on this motion forward urgently.

GMB@PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): Moving Motion PS8 with the full support of my region. *(Applause)* First of all, I want to say a big thank you to Congress and delegates for supporting the reference back of this motion because it is essential that such an important motion which looks at the very way we can fight austerity is debated on the floor of Congress by us as a member-led union. In that speech I said it was one of the most important votes you will make this week and I continue to believe that. Many motions this week have attacked austerity in its various forms and we have heard over the past couple of days all the different ways that as workers and as users of services in local government that we are suffering. I am not going to repeat that.

What I really want to focus on today is the choices that the Labour councils have in terms of implementing those cuts. Jeremy Corbyn said on Sunday that austerity is a political choice, not an economic necessity. We all know that in this hall, we have

been debating it for years, but the purpose of this motion is to argue that Labour councils also have a choice. This motion demands that they stop hiding behind Tory cuts; they stop hiding, stop implementing them, and start fighting them.

Over the last few years alone over 450,000, half a million council jobs have gone in England since 2010, and it is continuing. What we are saying is we cannot wait till 2020. We want wait for another Labour government, if it comes. There is an alternative. The combined budgets of the 58 Labour-led councils come to £32.7bn. They hold around £4.5bn in general fund reserves and another £1.36bn in housing revenue and capital receipt reserves, and that does not even include the vast reserves of the London councils.

There is no legal impediment stopping them pooling their reserves – I am going to get a bit technical now but we need to because this is obviously a difficult issue – so they have significant borrowing powers as well as the reserves. In addition to the reserves, they can do prudential borrowing, which is unsupported borrowing and this is set out in the motion quite clearly, alongside capital borrowing. They can have and continue to use these powers. Also under the Localism Act they have the power of competence to do anything apart from that which is prohibited, which is a really wide remit. They have options.

What this motion is arguing is calling on Labour councils to set legal – legal – no cuts budgets, use those massive, massive £4.5bn reserves, capitalise general funding expenditure and borrow prudentially and sensibly to generate resources so that when they next set budgets in the next financial year no Labour council in this country makes any cuts. They set legal no cuts budgets. It is doable and it is achievable. These are short-term measures to buy time to build a national campaign.

What we are talking about is building a campaign so that they actually unite with the workers, we talked about industrial action, linking up with service users and other trade unions, similar demands to the ones in this motion that have recently been passed at the Welsh TUC, Unison Local Government, Unite Local Government, so there is an appetite actually to do this. The will is out there.

Steve Gillan this morning said we have to stop running from this Government and if we do not stand up to fight there will be nothing left to fight for. Let's stop running and take this Government on. Let's not wait till 2020, because by 2020 there will be no services left to defend. This motion provides a genuine way to fight the cuts not in 2020, now. Let's put demands on Labour councils doing the Tories' dirty work. Let's demand legal no cuts budgets. Let's build a national campaign uniting GMB workers with other workers, other trade unions, and other communities and defeat austerity. They can be defeated. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kim. Seconder.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): President, Congress, I am a GMB convenor for one of our two branches covering Barking and Dagenham Council. I am also a Branch Secretary. I am supporting this motion because I know from firsthand experience that some Labour councils are hiding behind the Tory cuts to attack GMB members. Labour Barking and Dagenham Council is hostile to trade unions, especially the

GMB. This Labour council has hired expensive officials that implement cuts at the same time as sacking GMB members, and attacking their terms and conditions.

In the drivers' dispute last year the Labour council in Barking and Dagenham cut parts of the drivers' allowances by imposing a £1,000 pay cut. It is just not acceptable. The Labour council has set up ALMOs, or trading companies, which are first steps to privatisation, like PFI types, putting council in hook for generations, and salaries are at market rates for new staff undermining nationally negotiated pay and conditions.

Congress, the Labour council of Barking and Dagenham have around £10m of reserves and instead of spending these reserves on redundancy payments this motion argues the reserves should be spent on keeping these workers and buying time to build a national campaign to win more money for local government. Like Margaret said, you don't give up the fight for an injustice. So we are going to fight for every GMB member from around the country that is a Labour authority. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. I now call on Rehana Azam to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. R. AZAM (National Secretary): The CEC is supporting Motion PS8 but with a qualification. Congress, the CEC fully supports the campaign to oppose austerity and the swingeing cuts to the Public Sector. It is our members who bear the brunt of these cuts, whether it is the removal of essential care services or the closure of libraries impacting on the education and reading pleasure of our children. Congress, we must be clear on the potential issues that this motion raises, both financially and politically.

Congress, we all expect our councils, especially Labour councils, to do all they can to reject the flawed dogma of the imposition of austerity cuts but there are significant risks attached to some of the actions proposed in the motion, in particular the pooling of resources may speed up moves already under way to devolve more powers to joined up authorities. Under the guise of localism this may very well see local authorities effectively combining into a shared services model and, Congress, we know from bitter experience that the end result is a reduction in total funding and job losses for members.

Congress, GMB historically supported the devolution of decision-making power to communities but this must not be at the expense of jobs and real cuts through the back door that the Tory Government can then blame on Labour mayors and councils.

There are also issues with the usage of these reserves held by councils. These reserves are held for a variety of reasons, including emergency situations such as the flash flooding that occurred in the London Borough of Sutton just yesterday. Congress, the simple reality is that these reserves are there for contingency and they can only be utilised to offset cuts once.

We would not want to see authorities unable to respond to future floods or other emergency because the coffers were dry and, Congress, the truth is that councils are already using their reserve to prop up services. Research published by the Local

Government Association in April 2014 said 48% of responding councils were using reserves to smooth the impact of cuts in 2015 and 2016. This is a one-off measure that has already been used as a sticking plaster to cover a grievous wound.

Congress, the qualification is that the GMB can only campaign for pooled funding within the legal framework set by central government with the three-sided attack that comes with it, funding pressures and cuts, costs pressures from failures in care, transport and housing, and the pressure of coping with social security cuts. We must therefore continue to campaign vigorously for a fair funding settlement for all councils to deliver strong public services and to ensure that the Labour Party has this as a central plank of policy from day one on their return to government.

Congress, we cannot allow the Conservatives to subcontract the blame and the pain of these cuts onto our Labour councils. We must use all our effort to campaign to save jobs and oppose further cuts to public services, so please support Motion PS8 with the qualification that the CEC has just set out. Thanks. (*Applause*)

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

Motion PS8 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call 226, Birmingham.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm.

**SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL
ENDING HOLIDAY HUNGER IN THE UK
MOTION 226**

226. ENDING HOLIDAY HUNGER IN THE UK

This Conference notes:

1. That the number of children in the UK living in absolute poverty has increased by 500,000 since 2010
2. That children who are eligible for free school meals during term time do not receive similar provision during the school holidays
3. That there has been increasing anecdotal evidence of children returning to school malnourished after school holidays
4. That existing provision for feeding children over the school holidays receives little if any support from the Government.
5. That food poverty amongst Britain's children is having a serious impact on their health, wellbeing and educational attainment.

Congress believes:

1. That it is the inalienable right of every child to live a life free from hunger and fear
2. That this government is failing our most vulnerable children by failing to support adequate food provision for children outside of term time

3. That it is the historic mission of the Labour Movement to ensure that every child has the opportunity to live the fullest, happiest life possible and that the right to food is a fundamental part of that

Congress resolves:

1. That the GMB should campaign nationally for an end to Holiday Hunger and hold the Conservative government to account for its failing in this area
2. That the GMB will work with partners to promote a Holiday Hunger Commission to determine the scale of the problem
3. That the GMB will work with the Labour Party to ensure that a future Labour Government will commit to fund holiday provision for all children who are eligible for free school meals.

S75 STOKE UNITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. YATES (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, I want to speak today on an issue close to my heart. It is an issue which is having tremendous consequences across the country but one which does not receive the attention it deserves. Across the UK child poverty is on the rise. Over the last six years cuts and pay freezes have devastated families on low pay and children all too often suffer the greatest hardship. Many of these children benefit from free school meals and for many of them that hot meal at lunchtime is the only one that they will receive each day. What happens when school is out and those same children are home on holidays, when families are already struggling to make ends meet and find themselves facing rising costs in food and energy bills.

Six out of ten parents with household incomes of less than £25,000 said they were not always able to afford to buy food outside term time. For households with incomes of less than £15,000 that figure rises to 73%. For these families school holidays are not holidays at all. Right across the country there is growing evidence of children returning to school in September malnourished because their families cannot afford to feed them outside term time.

This is the reality of holiday hunger. It is a growing crisis afflicting thousands of families living on the bread line and it is getting worse. As austerity bites and the Tories continue their vicious attacks on social security families across Britain are finding it harder and harder to get by. I welcome the fact that people like Ruth Smeeth, MP for Stoke on Trent North and Kidsgrove, are working hard to raise awareness of this issue and right across the country volunteers and community groups are working to ensure support is in place for our most vulnerable children and families. These networks are underfunded and their coverage piecemeal and no politician can stand alone in the face of a government which seeks to balance its books on the backs of the poor.

That is why we as a labour movement have the responsibility to join the campaign. We cannot allow this Government to sit idly by while our children starve. This is a national crisis and we need a national solution. We cannot go on like this. Our children's health and their futures are at risk. We have seen firsthand huge difference

that universal free school meals have made to primary schools attainment. Children from all backgrounds, all walks of life, have a chance to fulfil their potential but we need to recognise this problem does not go away when the school bell rings. We need to make sure that our children are happy, well fed all year round, not just in term time. Words are not enough. It is time for action. These innocent children are our future. Congress, let us as a union fight for them. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. C. RHODES (Birmingham & West Midlands): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Holiday hunger is a real problem for families that normally receive free meals. Providing those extra meals during the school holidays can be a real struggle for many families. Social security cuts are reducing income, unemployment remains high, and there are major cuts to youth work and holiday provisions. I did spend most of last night writing a speech but I lost it and just found out where it had gone. Sharon took it! I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Congress, we are supporting resolution 226, and I have given them my backing as this union led the campaign for healthy free school meals. Colleagues, I am going to put it to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried unanimously. (*Applause*) Thank you.

Motion 226 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to 257 and 259 and ask the speakers from London, please, to come forward.

SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION & TRAINING
FIRST AID IN SCHOOLS
MOTION 257

257. FIRST AID IN SCHOOLS

This Congress believes that all children should be taught First Aid in Schools.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. WEST (London): Congress, education in our schools should not just be about academic learning, important as that is, or just tests and exams. It should also be about teaching our children life skills and what better life skill than First Aid. Basic First Aid training saves lives. Basic First Aid training is a skill that our kids can take with them through life to help their families, their friends, and their colleagues. Congress, let's give our children a rounded full education not a narrow one. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. P. BLOCK (London): First Aid is a very useful skill and should be taught in all schools as it can and does save lives. Congress, imagine that you or one of your loved ones were on the bus, on the street, going about your day-to-day business, and

something happens that results in you needing First Aid assistance. This could be a heart attack, a fall, or simply that you fainted. How much safer would we all be if all school children are taught First Aid. Congress, how many of us have children at home or just next door? Most of the time that children are not at school there would be a trained First Aider at home or just next door.

Many of you have studied First Aid and even if you have not you may well have heard of the trainer survival. This basically states there are four things that are key to survival: one, early recognition, in other words recognising someone is having a heart attack, for instance; two, emergency cardio pulmonary resuscitation; three, early defibrillation; these can be carried out by First Aiders, believe it or not using automatic user-friendly kits, or by paramedics if you do not have them; four, post resuscitation care from paramedics and doctors.

If children are taught First Aid it improves anyone's chances if they are having a heart attack through stages one, two, and possibly three. Everyone must surely agree that if you were in your hour of need I would rather have a school child that knows First Aid to help me than no one at all. It is for this reason that I request Congress supports this motion. I second it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. 259, London Region. Then I will be calling 237, 240, and 241. Thank you.

STUDENT MAINTENANCE GRANTS MOTION 259

259. STUDENT MAINTENANCE GRANTS

This Congress is appalled at the Government's decision to withdraw Student Maintenance Grants and the effect this will have on students and the subsequent consequences for parents who are unable to afford to give their child the education they truly deserve.

Many students are being priced out of education by the cutting of the Grant. Students will not be able to attend University even if they work part-time whilst studying as they will still not have enough money to live on.

We are one of the richest nations in the world, stopping the Student Maintenance Grant is going to be catastrophic for many generations to come and having a disproportionate effect on those on the lowest income.

Congress therefore calls upon the next Labour Government to re-introduce the Student Maintenance Grant as part of its first budget when returned to office. Congress also urges all branches to affiliate to like-minded campaign groups to lobby this Government for the immediate reintroduction of the Grant.

BUCKS COUNTY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. CLOUDEN (London): University maintenance grants for lower income students in England and Wales are being scrapped from September 2016 and being replaced by student loans. Chancellor George Osborne, commonly known as Sniffy to his mates, said grants have become unaffordable. Osborne spoke about the

unfairness of asking taxpayers to fund grants for people who are likely to earn a lot more money than them, but it is the same students that, if they do earn more money, will also fall into the higher tax bracket to pay more and more tax. In 2003, Sniffy sent a letter to one of his constituents about university tuition fees. He said, "To my mind this is a tax on learning and is very unfair." Given that grants have been abolished, too, students face leaving university with debts of around £18,000. How ironic that Osborne now thinks it is okay to saddle students with debts of up to £53,000. Enough about Sniffy. The sooner we get rid of him and his kind the better.

Students from families that have household income of £25,000 or less receive the full grant of just over £3,000 per year. These are non repayable grants for the poorer students. They help with the costs such as rent, food, energy bills, and study materials. There are currently over half a million students that receive this grant. The Coalition Government trebled tuition fees in 2010 with assurances that poorer students would still be able to access higher education through the provision of maintenance grants. The majority of universities now charge the maximum tuition fee, whether it is Oxbridge, Leeds, or Falmouth; whether the students receive seven hours of tuition per week or 25, the cost to them is the same.

Student maintenance grants do not make a student better off. They are still only just able to live on grants even if they work part-time while studying. The effect that the removal of these grants will have on students and their parents will be catastrophic. Don't all our children deserve the education they want? Why should young people not have an equal footing just because they are from a disadvantaged background? The Tories are not investing in future generations. They are betraying our students and forcing them to be saddled with these huge debts. Looking to the future will be bleak. Facing the prospect of paying back a loan until you are in your 50s, would you choose to attend university? As I said at the beginning, this will become a reality in September. Therefore, we want the next Labour government to reintroduce the student maintenance grant as soon as possible when they are returned to office. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nicola. Secunder.

BRO. W. OSWICK (London): Congress, it is evident in the Tories second term by scrapping the students' maintenance grant Cameron and Osborne want to out-price university education for families of the lowest income backgrounds. This grant, which has for over 50 years been available to the poorest students to cover living costs whilst at university, has offered a lifeline to generations of students to leave university without a larger debt.

Maintenance grants are non-repayable grants of up to £3,387 per year. They help with costs towards rent, food, and energy bills. An estimated half a million students currently receive this vital support. Under the changes this grant will be scrapped and students from lower income backgrounds will be forced to take out additional loans saddling them with exorbitant levels of debt.

Currently, students can study for up to five years whilst at university with a loan estimated limit of £9,000 per year equating to approximately £45,000 for the full term, that is, without the hidden higher interest rates after they have signed up for this

loan. Cameron has announced that he intends to lift the capping of this university fee leaving the graduates with even more debt. Present statistics show that 58% of graduates are in employment that reflects their education and the average wage of post graduates nationally is £23,500, just above the payback threshold of £21,000.

Colleagues, I therefore urge you to support Jeremy Corbyn's campaign to stop Cameron lifting this cap on fees and the hidden tax on learning to the not so wealthy. By lobbying this Government to reintroduce immediately the maintenance grant let's stop these Etonian bullyboys and kick them where it hurts by not allowing generations of graduates leave university with crippling debts. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wayne. I now put 257 to the vote. We are supporting both 257 and 259. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 257 was CARRIED.

Motion 259 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now have the movers of 237, Dealing with NHS Crisis, 240 and 241. I thank you for your discipline.

SOCIAL POLICY: NHS, HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE DEALING WITH NHS CRISIS MOTION 237

237. DEALING WITH NHS CRISIS

This Conference agrees that as Union, we care deeply about the NHS and know that the move in 1948 to create the National Health Service was one of the most revolutionary, brave and visionary political decisions of the last century.

We believe our NHS has been betrayed and let down by all party's within the political process over the last two decades. With the introduction of the crippling debt Private Finance Initiative (PFI), giving away public buildings to private developers, endangering staff and patients through unsafe and unfair contracts and the downgrading medical training standards. All while allowing American health insurance industry ethics to be embedded into our NHS culture. No party is totally innocent here.

We already have profit-seeking private companies operating behind NHS logo that we all grew up trust as a standard of excellence, equality and world class care. The NHS remains one of most important political issue affecting the public and generations of the future.

In January 2016, the House of Commons discussed a Private Member's Bill proposed by Norman Lamb MP ex-Health Minister in the coalition government which created the Health & Social Care Act (2012). The bill's apparent aim is to take a neutral stance on the NHS and aim for cross party consensus. We see this as far more likely to be a move towards validating calls for charges and co-payments, which the Tory government dare not propose directly.

We, the GMB, urge all Labour MPs who are concerned about the interests of public rather than the private health sector to refuse support this Commission that will rubber stamp moves

towards privatisation and to expose it for what it is, a deceptive con trick that is no more than a devious attempt to move further towards a full privatised the NHS.

It is very well documented that public health systems are cheaper, more cost effective and deliver better care than privately provided ones.

Congress therefore calls on the GMB to lobby its Labour MP's and the party to commit to taking the necessary actions to bringing about a return to a fully publicly funded, owned, managed and accountable comprehensive health service that will restore the public trust in the NHS and our political system.

B10 BANBURY NO.1 BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. DWYERS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress agrees that as a union we care deeply about the NHS and know that the move in 1948 to create the National Health Service was one of the most revolutionary, brave, and visionary political decisions of the last century. We believe our NHS has been betrayed and let down by all parties in the political process over the last two decades, with the introduction of the crippling debt, private finance initiative, PFI, giving away public buildings to private developers, endangering staff and patients through unsafe and unfair contracts, and the downgrading of medical training standards, all the while allowing American health insurance industry ethics to be embedded into our NHS culture. No party is totally innocent here.

In January 2016, the House of Commons discussed a Private Members Bill proposed by Norman Lamb MP, ex Health Minister in the Coalition Government, which created the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The bill's apparent aim is to take a neutral stance on the NHS and aim for cross-party consensus. We see this as far more likely to be a move towards validating calls for charges and co-payments which the Tory Government dare not propose directly. PFI is like buying a house on a credit card, done to evade charges of borrowing to build hospitals and schools. Two-thirds of NHS trusts are in deficit on PHI debt, taking them 25 to 30 years to pay back large financial institutions, paying up to 12 times the original const of construction. Much PFI debt has been sold overseas and taxes is not even paid on the profit being made, bleeding our NHS dry. PFI costs the NHS £1.8bn a year.

Private is not more efficient. Private does not deliver better services. Private is not interested in the messy expensive business of putting people back together. They only want in if they can turn a profit. It is very well documented that public health systems are cheaper, more cost effective, and deliver better care than privately provided ones.

Congress therefore calls on the GMB to lobby its Labour MPs and the party to commit to taking the necessary actions to return to a fully publicly funded, owned, managed, and accountable comprehensive health service that will restore public trust in our NHS and our political system. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder. Is Birmingham formally seconding?
Okay.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to 240, NHS 70TH Anniversary, to be moved by London.

**NHS 70TH ANNIVERSARY
MOTION 240**

240. NHS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

Congress is both aware and concerned that the NHS, the UK's most favourite institution is no longer recognised by a large number of electorate as being a Labour Party creation.

2018 will be its 70th Anniversary which should be proudly celebrated by all Trade Unions, the TUC, the Co-operative movements and the Labour Party as a fitting tribute and could act as a precursor to the 2020 General Election campaign.

Congress therefore agrees the CEC should float this proposal to the aforementioned parties to both celebrate the founding of the NHS and as a boost to the forthcoming Labour Party's election campaign.

FULHAM 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. HURLEY (London): President, Congress, I am here today to share the forgotten story of the birth of our great NHS, which is an amazing one wrapped up in great history, trade unionism, and the Labour Party. So, Congress, it is my privilege to take you on this journey stepping back in time but let's start from the point that we all know.

Congress, we are all aware that our great union was founded in 1889 by Will Thorne and that the Trades Union Movement founded the British Labour Party in the 1900s. There are many more memorable dates relating to the workers struggle from then.

In 1914 we saw the horror of World War I which left us facing an unimaginable struggle and the tragic loss of over eight million people. In 1926 there was a General Strike where a man called Aneurin Bevan, who was often referred to as Nye Bevan, the son of a coal miner who himself was no stranger to poverty or disease, rose as one of the leaders of the South West miners.

In 1929 Bevan was elected as a Labour Member of Parliament but during this time the British Empire was falling and this was compounded by the depression so by 1932 this country had three million unemployed.

Under the Conservative government our country entered into World War II and over 60 million people died by the time the war had ended. This war brought about major leaps in technology and laid the ground work that permitted post-War social change.

In 1945 Labour won a landslide general election as returning soldiers wanted social reforms and had rejected the war leader, Churchill, in favour of the Labour. The post

War years saw the implementation of many reforms and the creation of the welfare state.

Bevan was appointed Minister for Health and was responsible for establishing our great NHS service on 5th July 1948. The government took over responsibility for all medical services so there were free diagnoses and treatment for all. Bevan then went on to be elected as deputy leader of the Labour Party in 1959.

Congress, in 2018 it will be the NHS's 70th anniversary and that must be proudly celebrated by all the trade unions, the TUC, the Cooperative movement, and especially the Labour Party who started it. The need for our great NHS will never go away but, Congress, we must remember never in its 70 years has it been under such attack from this government eating away at it like a disease.

Join with me and instruct our CEC to take this proposal to all the other mentioned parties to celebrate the founding of our great NHS and share this story with the public in the run-up to the next general election. Congress, we must campaign hard. We have a duty to tell this story, the story of our great NHS which was founded by the people's party for the people and it is really the people that must make sure our children and children's children can share this story, a story that I was asked to share by one of my regions and this union's greatest ever trade union legend John Cope. President, Congress, John, I move. (*Applause*)

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

BRO. L. CULHANE (London): President, Congress, as a Labour Party member one of the things that winds me up the most is this notion that we have already lost the general election in 2020 and that we should not even bother and we should concentrate on 2025 or later. You only need to look at the story of Hammersmith & Fulham to realise why that notion is a complete fallacy.

When I first started campaigning in 2012 we in my area at Hammersmith & Fulham had a Conservative council and they had gained the nickname of David Cameron's favourite council because of the policies they were putting through, they believed people in council housing were locked into a dependency culture, and they believed that luxury flats were a better use of land than Charing Cross Hospital.

So, we campaigned hard for the council election in 2014 and it was where I first came across Sharon Holder, who is one of our National Officers, and Dean Gilligan, as the Labour Party, the GMB, and residents stood side by side defending Charing Cross Hospital. It was not without its challenges. People had bad experiences or people referred to other hospitals but campaign we did. On the morning of May 23 the residents at Hammersmith & Fulham woke up to the news that David Cameron's favourite council had just voted Labour. Sharon now leads that fight as a councillor with myself working with colleagues in Brent, Ealing, Harrow, and Hounslow, setting up an independent commission led by Michael Mansfield, and the outcome of that was pretty clear that the plans for the NHS in our area of London are deeply flawed and must be halted and that fight is still goes on.

In the run-up to 2018 we must pound the streets and shout from the rooftops, defending and celebrating our NHS and telling people that it is safe in the hands only of us in the Trades Union Movement and the Labour Party. So there are no no-go areas in the run-up to that general election and every day when we walk into our group office in Hammersmith Town Hall we are reminded by a quote on the wall by Margaret Mead, and it says: Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you, Larry. 241.

NHS MOTION 241

241. NHS

This Conference calls on GMB to campaign to stop the practice of family doctors being offered large cash bonuses by NHS Commissioning Groups to reduce referrals for cancer patients.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. DUDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, what a disgusting insult to those people that may have one of the worst if not the worst killer diseases in this country, cancer, to find out that the clinical commissioning groups are offering financial incentives to GP practices for them not to refer patients to consultants straightaway. First referrals for cancer should be within two weeks. The CCGs want the times to be extended to save money. The Chief Medical Officer and Macmillan Nurses stated it is very worrying that doctors are being put under pressure not to refer people with this terrible disease against their clinical judgments. Cancer survival rates are already amongst the worst in Europe because patients are not being given adequate early treatment. Congress, the bribing of GPs has to stop. The savings, the cuts, should be kicked into touch. The doctors should be there to save lives and not to keep deferring appointments. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

(The motion was formally seconded)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Okay, I now ask London Region to move Composite 14, South Norfolk Clinical, London to move and to second. Then I will be calling 246 and 248, and then Anne Dean to respond on behalf of the CEC.

COMPOSITE 14 SOUTH NORFOLK CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP NHS CUTS (Covering Motions 243 and 244)

C14 Covering Motions

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| 243 | SOUTH NORFOLK CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP NHS CUT | London Region |
| 244 | NHS HEARING AIDS | London Region |

SOUTH NORFOLK CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP NHS CUTS

This Congress is appalled by the proposals being put forward by South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group (S.N.C.C.G) in its bid to save money. This Conference is appalled that:

- The elderly from 50 years plus age group will no longer be able to get an NHS hearing aid, unless it is a necessity for work, have a pre-existing ear condition or suffer from dementia, other disabilities or learning difficulties.
- On cataract operations by only allowing one eye to be operated on, second cataract eye operations will be automatically rejected unless clinicians can demonstrate an exception. The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) are concerned as eyes are a person's valuable asset

Congress notes that the same CCG have cut IVF treatment and gluten free prescription food. What the S.N.C.C.G are proposing can cause further harm and Congress calls on the GMB to campaign against these cuts.

(Carried)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): President, General Secretary, Tim, Congress, this composite motion first came to my attention on reading an item from David Stockwell, the Chief Executive of the British Tinnitus Association, on 8th November. Following that the very next day there was another article, "Health bosses tighten key eye surgery rules." It started in November with patients facing paying for hearing aids. Congress, that resulted in our branch submitting resolutions 243 and 244. As a result of South Norfolk Clinical Commissioning Group as they have a £6.6m deficit and by denying people hearing aids from those aged 50 and over they would save £77,000 per year. The only condition to get a hearing aid would be if they are needed for work, persons with pre-existing hearing conditions, and suffering from dementia, etc.

Congress, I can tell you the SNCCG received a lot of feedback from all various organisations which represent these people from blindness, hearing conditions, and so forth. I researched this through the help of my local GP surgery and I thank Claire, who put me in touch with the persons at the head of each department. Since this was reported and the results that they got, they have reversed their decision.

Can I say, Congress, this can happen to me, it could happen to you; it could happen to one of our families. We need to watch this very carefully because as they said to me when I spoke to each head of these departments, this decision can be reversed. They have to monitor it and see how we go. Congress, please support this motion. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. seconder.

BRO. A. COPSEY (London): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* This group, like many others set up all over the country, was created out of the Health and Social Care Act. The aim of these groups is to plan and purchase healthcare. I have always believed that you, you, you, up the top, you, and I, that is what we pay our National Insurance for. The eyesight of hundreds of thousands of elderly people has

been put in jeopardy as these groups have faced harsh restrictions on cataract surgery, and I am afraid this group is no different. Research carried out by the RNIB have found that these groups have imposed long criteria for cataract surgery, criteria that is far more tougher than national guidelines. Cutting back on cataracts surgery creates a false economy as untreated patients are more likely to suffer falls or need more social care. The cataract operation costs £900, repairing a fractured hip is £9,000. This makes no sense at all. Elderly people increasingly have to wait until their eyesight deteriorates to the point that they can no longer drive before they can have their cataracts removed. Others can only have one eye treated. This is not what we expect from our NHS services.

Mr. David Cameron, did you not promise, yes, promise, not to cut this budget. Well, your promise is clear for all to see, you have cut this budget two years running. Your unnecessary £3bn reorganisation has done nothing but put our wonderful NHS into utter chaos. Nye Bevan would be turning in his grave. With an ageing population where cataracts affect a third of people over 65, where effective surgery is one of the most common procedures in the land should be rising, alas, it is not. From north to south, east to west, statistics released from Freedom of Information reveal that cataract surgery had fallen by a full 25% in many counties in this country, therefore I implore this Congress for the sake of our elderly, for the sake of others who have had darkness overtake their lives, they should not be made to pay with their independence and quality of life, support this motion. I second. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Okay, I now move to 246, European Health Card.

EUROPEAN HEALTH CARD MOTION 246

246. EUROPEAN HEALTH CARD

This Conference asks the CEC to campaign for fairness with website applications for the European Health cards. When applying online the sites that charge come up first this is misleading, unfair and blatant profiteering.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Congress, with the internet, if you pay Google for your place on their site then you can go to the top. Most members of the public do not realise this; they will go to the top but this one will charge for the pleasure of the service. It is supposed to be free. There should be no charge as this is a service that is available as being part of the European Union. Google has recently changed its site, in my view making it more complicated to navigate so we must be vigilant. We would like to see the EC to lobby Parliament to make more people aware of this. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

SIS. W. REIS (London): President, Congress, the European Health Insurance Card is free and will give you free and discounted medical care in 28 EU countries. Over

50% of the UK population does not have one. In the last 12 months a predicted 5.3 million cards have expired. This is something that all UK travellers should have. However, if you do a Google search you will find copycat websites that often look official and offer a fast tracking or reviewing application process for the fee of £20 or more. This is clearly wrong. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. 248, Meningitis, Northern Region to move and second.

MENINGITIS MOTION 248

248. MENINGITIS

This Congress notes that amongst all age groups, that teenagers are the second most at risk group, after babies and toddlers, for contracting meningitis. Congress expresses extreme concern at national statistics revealing that less than half of those eligible for a free new vaccine have received it. Congress calls on the Government to promote and energise the meningitis awareness campaign that could save hundreds of lives.

Z46 STOCKTON NO.3 BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. D. ROBERTSON (Northern): Second time delegate, first time in the big room. *(Applause)* Congress, in the fifth largest economy in the world the fact that meningitis vaccine is not widely available on the NHS is a disgrace. The press stories at the end of last year looked at types of the vaccine and the NHS is promoting the Men ACWY vaccine to overseas and mature students up to the age of 25. The studies show that teenagers and university students are at high risk of the infection because many of this group mix closely with lots of new people, some of whom may not know that they are carrying the bacteria that causes meningitis. We know, Congress, that the highest risk of meningitis is in the first year of university, particularly the first few months.

Causes of meningitis and blood poisoning due to the Men W type have been increasing in England. The number of cases went from 22 in 2009 to 117 in 2014. The increase seems to be speeding up in the last two years caused by an aggressive strain of the bug. With early diagnosis and antibiotics most people make a full recovery but it is fatal in 10% of case and can also lead to long-term health problems. So, Congress, as part of the promoting general awareness among our members and their families and supporting proposals to lobby the government to do more, we think this is the right thing to do. In addition, there has been recent media attention on the meningitis strain B and the need for wider vaccinations to save lives and lifestyles, we should support that also. Value for money is one thing but saving lives and, for instance, preventing someone from having deafness, epilepsy, or amputation, is a price we should all be able to support. I move. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Diane. Well done. Secunder. *(Formally)* Thank you very much, Northern.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now call Anne Dean to give the reply on behalf of the CEC to 237 and 248.

SIS A. DEAN (CEC, Public Services): President Congress, the CEC would like to qualify both Motions 237 and 248 and I will explain the following. Motion 237 outlines the NHS crisis and asks Congress to call for a lobby of our parliamentary group of MPs to return to a fully funded publicly owned health service. In 2014 Congress agreed a CEC Statement on the NHS which set out objections to a range of NHS reforms undertaken by the Coalition Government through the Health and Social Care Act 2012. We know that the destruction of the NHS continues despite this.

The motion covers much of the ground that is already GMB policy as carried out by the 2014 CEC NHS statements. However, the motion raises new developments on NHS reform which were tabled in Parliament by LibDem MP, Norman Lamb, in a Private Members Bill. The National Health Service and Social Care Commission Bill seeks to establish an independent commission on the future of the NHS and social care system but has only had its first reading in Parliament in January 2016. The bill has not been included in bills being carried over and so will not progress further in this parliamentary session so basically it is now in the long grass.

GMB will note the concerns raised and will make our parliamentary group aware should similar debates or bills be introduced in the NHS on social care. Our policy position remains that we continue to be opposed to any privatisation of the NHS as endorsed by Congress 2014.

Turning to Motion 248, on Meningitis, the motion wording relates to one strain of Meningitis W, which had press attention last year as students were not taking up the vaccine. The CEC fully supports the campaign to promote free vaccinations for all at risk groups. This illness can be fatal and those who recover often find that their lives are significantly altered due to the lasting effects of the infection. Our qualification is that our activity would not be focused on one particular type of meningitis or one particular group, but rather a broad campaign calling for an NHS programme to inoculate all those indentified as being at risk. Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 237 and 248 with the qualifications I have set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. Birmingham Region, do you accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Northern Region, do you accept? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. I now move 237, 240, and 241, Composite 14, 246, and 248 to the vote. All those in favour please show. All those against? That is carried.

Motion 237 was CARRIED.

Motion 240 was CARRIED.

Motion 241 was CARRIED.

Composite 14 was CARRIED.

Motion 246 was CARRIED.

Motion 248 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to finish this debate with 234, Compensation for Thalidomide Victims and with your consent, Congress, could I move to the Statement on the Trade Union Act before we go to lunch. I promise those other resolutions will

be called after lunch. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I call the mover of 234 and the seconder, please.

SOCIAL POLICY: JUSTICE
COMPENSATION FOR THALIDOMIDE VICTIMS
MOTION 234

234. COMPENSATION FOR THALIDOMIDE VICTIMS

This Conference notes that the campaign to persuade the German Government to provide adequate compensation for victims of Thalidomide is at a crucial stage. Congress recognises that this compensation is needed to cover the medical costs of their condition, which occurred as a result of the drug manufactured by the German company Grünenthal. Congress urges the Government to assist the victims' on-going fight for justice.

T25 NEWCASTLE & NORTH TYNE GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. L. SERRECHIA (Northern): Congress, the victims of thalidomide and their families still suffer today. We know that as medical advances take place even the drug that caused the suffering in the first place is now used on older people as part of treatment for things such as cancer. However, Congress, it is not to run away from the fact that when this drug first came on the market it was not properly tested. Results were buried. It led to pregnant women taking the drug. They thought they were doing the right thing on the advice available then. The result was the thalidomide scandal. The victims, although many have adapted to their circumstances, deserve support in their ongoing fight for justice.

Congress, we know there are British victims supported in our communities. We also fully appreciate that it is difficult to see how we can put pressure on the German government directly. Congress, if we took that approach to everything we would get nothing done. All this motion is seeking is to recognise the fight for justice goes on. All we are asking is for the GMB to be able to join the others to support pressure that can be brought to bear for justice. If the British Government can pay up and then go after the German government, then, fine. If pressure can be brought to bear for the German government to provide remedy then at least justice is being served for decades of disability caused by a man-made drug. Please support. I move.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder. Formally? Thank you very much.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Ken Daniels.

BRO. K. DANIELS (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 234, which the CEC is supporting with a qualification. Congress, the CEC fully supports the campaign for compensation for all those affected by thalidomide both at home and abroad. It is only right that the negligent manufacturers who knowingly allowed mothers to take medication that would harm their unborn children are held to account and make proper restitution. The

qualification is that whilst we can lobby the Foreign Office on this matter, the ultimate responsibility lays with the German government. Our lobbying on Europe is conducted at EU level through our GMB Brussels office and a vote to leave the EU on 23rd June will significantly impact on our ability to lobby effectively. We therefore need to adapt our approach to campaigning on this issue, dependent on the outcome of the EU referendum, so Congress, please support the motion with this qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ken. Does Northern accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I put 234 to the vote. All those in favour please show. That is carried. Anyone against, I should say. No. That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 234 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move to the next debate, I have had a request from the Birmingham Region, from Alan Dudson, the Birmingham & West Midlands Region ask the CEC to make a large donation to the Hillsborough Family Support Group to help and support – (*Applause*) – the injustice that they have suffered for the last 27 years. Tim?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I think in true traditional activist General Secretary style we ought to put it to Congress. Probably the fairest way I would recommend is that if each region puts a grand in then the National Office will do the same. What does Congress think? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. I now move to the next debate, the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act. Congress, you will recall the SOC Report No. 3 informed you that the regions have withdrawn motions in favour of the CEC Statement. Those regions will have a chance to come in on the debate first. I will call the movers and seconders. I will then ask Andy Irving and June Minnery to reply. To move the CEC Statement, Andy you are finished before you got up to move and second!

CEC STATEMENT ON THE TRADE UNION ACT

Introduction

On May 4th, 2016 the Trade Union Bill was given Royal Assent and became the Trade Union Act – that means it has become law.

The Bill was designed for no other reason than to make it more difficult for trade unions to organise industrially and politically – to remove power from working people and hand it to employers and those who believe they were born to rule. Within its scope, the Bill attempted to dictate how unions could collect their subs, meddling in contractual arrangements and fundamentally attacking our right to freedom of association. It has also systematically ignored the disproportionate impact on women because of the proportion of the public sector workforce who are female.

CEC condemns the Trade Union Act as an ideological, unnecessary and spiteful attack on working people by a Tory Government that knows little and cares even less for the lives of working people. It was apparent at every stage of the Bill that Conservative MPs and Ministers do not understand what trade unions do, how we work or what we contribute to the economy and society as a whole.

GMB has campaigned against the Act since it was first introduced to Parliament. We have worked with the TUC and TULO to take on every aspect of this Bill, and the CEC thanks both organisations for their efforts. We have worked across regions, lobbied Parliament, thousands of GMB members have contacted their MPs, MSPs and AMs.

CEC recognises that the work done by our Political and Legal teams, with our Labour front benches in the House of Commons and House of Lords, has been instrumental in diluting some of the worst aspects of the Act, but now the Act has been passed, we must adapt to the new industrial and political climate that it creates, while fighting ultimately not just to repeal it, but for workers' rights that are fit for the 21st century.

Changes to the Bill

CEC applauds the work done to force changes to the Trade Union Act as it passed through Parliament. The changes we helped to bring about include:

- **Stopping the ban on check off in public services:** the Government backed down on this ideological and spiteful policy, instead choosing only to make unions pay 'reasonable' costs for the service being provided.
- **Changes to the political fund opt in:** the Government had planned to give unions three months to change from a system of opting out of the political fund, to opting in. It had been planned that all opt-ins would need to be done in writing, to a union office and that every five years we would be required to ask members again if they wanted to stay opted in. CEC recognises the significant ground we made here, in making sure that instead, the Act means: only new members will have to opt-in, not existing ones; we will have a 12 month transition period; there is no need to renew the opt-in every five years and members can opt in by methods other than 'in writing'. Unions will now also be required to abide by a new Code of Conduct from the Certification Officer.
- **Removing the cap on facility time:** the Government wanted to award itself powers to cap facility time as it felt like. The Government conceded that no action regarding any cap will be taken for three years. However, employers in the public sector (and some employers that provide public services) will be required to publish information on facility time levels and pay (to be specified further by regulations

which must be debated in Parliament). The Act provides for a requirement of two years of data on facility time levels to have been collected, along with compliance with certain other procedural steps, before any cap may be imposed.

- **A review of electronic balloting:** while the Government have forced through new ballot thresholds for members taking industrial action, they were not planning to allow any modernisation of voting methods. Changes to the Bill as it passed mean that there will at least be a review and pilot process for electronic balloting in industrial disputes. This does not mean electronic balloting will definitely happen but if security concerns can be addressed in the pilots, it makes it more likely.
- **Rolling back on plans for pickets to wear arm bands and to report on all activity 14 days before a picket:** many of the Government's ideas on picketing were removed or diluted after outcry not just from our movement, but from civil liberties and human rights organisations. Among the proposals that were dropped were practices such as making all pickets wear an armband and give their personal details to police. The idea of giving employers very detailed campaign plans, even down to the level of what social media communications would be included, 14 days in advance of a picket – with fines for breaching the plan – were also dropped. There will, however, be an updated Code of Practice for Picketing that will include the use of social media in disputes.
- **Ancillary workers:** the Government decided not to include ancillary workers in the double strike thresholds they are imposing on much of the public sector.
- **Role and cost of the Certification officer:** the appointment of the Certification Officer will be free from ministerial direction and appointed by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Appointments (OCPA), and that the levy on unions will only pay for part of the costs of the CO, excluding the more expensive costs of any external investigators.

There is also a different landscape in Wales, where we see the impact of politics in action: the Labour Welsh Assembly have refused to implement the Act because of its far reaching implications for areas which are reserved. The SNP Government in Scotland has not acted in the same way.

Secondary legislation

One of the most pernicious aspects of the Government's changes was not on the face of the Trade Union Act, it was to be proposed through secondary legislation.

The Government plan to introduce new measures which will allow agency workers to replace workers taking industrial action. This undermines our fundamental right to strike. As of writing this Statement, the legislation has not been introduced. GMB will continue to oppose its introduction.

What the Act means for GMB

The CEC is strident in saying that this is not good legislation.

The Trade Union Act is a direct attack on the ability of GMB to organise politically and industrially.

The Trade Union Act will require GMB to change how we work and what our internal processes are to meet the changed legislative environment.

GMB will practically need to address:

- Information that we put on the ballot paper – there are new rules on what we need to include on the ballot paper when we ballot for industrial action
- Political funds – we will be required to move to an opt-in, rather than opt-out of the political fund for new members. Any member who choose not to opt-in must receive 'relief' equal to the value of the political fund contribution – essentially, if GMB maintained the current system, then a new member who opted in to the fund would have to pay a different rate of subs to one who opted out.
- Industrial action ballot thresholds – to take lawful industrial action, we must have a minimum of 50% turnout. In some 'important' public services, at least 40% of those entitled to vote must also vote in favour of industrial action.
- Complying with and funding the new powers of the Certification Officer – the Certification Officer has sweeping new powers to investigate unions without a complaint being made by a member. The Certification Officer will also be funded by a levy on trade unions.
- Cost of check-off - the new costs associated with providing check-off and the recognition that we can never rely on GMB membership being enabled solely by an employer or government mechanism.

Conclusion

CEC recommends to Congress that:

GMB continues and steps up our efforts to convert check-off members to direct debit payments – we cannot be beholden to employers or the Government for the right of our members to pay their subs

GMB conducts a full audit of data to ensure we have the most up to date information possible, alongside modern communication methods of contact for our membership

GMB constructs different models of political funding to determine the best way to ensure that the union remains on a strong financial footing, while retaining our members' right to have a say in politics.

GMB continue to adhere to GMB@Work policy, adapting and updating our practices to ensure that under this new legislation, each workplace is organised as if a ballot for action was due.

GMB will not only work to repeal this Act, but to put forward a real vision for 21st century trade union rights. Because what we had before this Act, while better than what we have now, was not perfect.

BRO. A. IRVING (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, it is quite right that we received a number of motions on the Trade Union Bill which led to this CEC Statement. Branches are right to be concerned and to oppose this ideological and spiteful attack on the very right of trade union members to organise, be it politically or industrially. Alas, the bill has now passed through Parliament and will be implemented, but not without a fight on our side and not without significant concessions from the Government.

Thanks to the efforts of our Movement we beat the Government on check-off. They wanted to ban check-off in Public Services. That will no longer be the case albeit we will now have to pay admin costs for the service. They wanted to cap facility time, time that we know leads to better health and safety and a better educated workforce and better employment relations. That cap will now not happen.

They wanted to remove within three months of the legislation passing our political fund, attacking the very right of this Congress to decide how we organise politically. We did not get everything we wanted but we fought off some of the worst aspects of their plans. The CEC want to pay tribute to each and every member across our union and across our regions who joined the fight against this pernicious legislation, and we want to thank the TUC, Unions Together, and our political and legal teams who have spent the last year campaigning. (*Applause*) But we cannot kid ourselves. The concessions we fought for did make a difference but they did not make this a good bill. They made it a bit less bad. That is why, Congress, we cannot give up the fight.

What we want as a 21st century union is not a return to the past. As our General Secretary has said, as the world at work changes, we must change with it. So we are not just fighting to repeal this Act but fighting for our rights that are fit for the 21st century. Our union must lead that change while adapting to the practical changes that come our way.

On check-off our CEC says today we cannot or at any time in the future allow union membership of our Public Sectors members to be at the mercy of the employer. We cannot take our foot off the gas on the conversion to direct debit because we have seen that many times with the Tories, they might not get what they want the first time, they might not get it the second time, but they keep coming. They simply do not like our existence. It is that simple. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andy. Secunder.

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, proud to be seconding the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act. Andy has summed up the attack this Act presents on the rights of working people and he is quite right, but it is also an attack on women. The Government published an impact assessment which basically said, this bill is not discriminatory because it is equally rubbish for everyone. Well, it is rubbish. We can all agree on that. But it completely fails to recognise the disproportionate impact on women. Public Sector workers are predominantly women. This bill predominantly attacks the rights of Public Sector workers. How the Tories managed to see it otherwise with a straight face is beyond me but we all know they live in a different world. Their moon is purple and they want to keep it that way.

This Act is about power. It is about rebalancing power from working people to the bosses. I kid you not that the CBI actually penned half this Act years earlier. It is about diminishing the power of working people in politics, attacking the few pence a week we give to our political funds while doing nothing to tackle the millionaire bankers who fund their chums all the way to public office.

It is about trying to tie us up in bureaucratic knots so we are not focusing on exercising our collective power against them. It is funny how regulations and reporting requirements are red tape but we are talking about health and safety. Somehow those onerous requirements are fine for trade union members. But, Congress, nothing we have as working people was ever given to us. Nothing was handed down by benevolent forces of the political establishment. We have fought for every right so they may make a play for power to diminish our voices and our rights but we will not let them. I commend this Statement because it states exactly where we stand, we will adapt, continue to fight this Act, but even more than that we will continue to fight for something better than we had before. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. I now ask Midland & East Coast Region, do you wish to come in on the debate? Yes, you do. Come on then. Then it will be Northern, Wales & South West, North West & Irish, Southern, and Yorkshire.

SIS. S. BLADES (Midland & East Coast): Speaking in support of the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act. President, Congress, this Congress heard Jeremy Corbyn say the next Labour government will repeal the Trade Union Act. I say we cannot afford to wait for that day to come. Tory dogma is oppressing people's choices. Most politicians are not activists and not passionate enough about listening to employees' rights at work. We have had six years of austerity and are told we are all in this together. We are not. Employers do not want us to organise or have a voice. They just want maximum profits for minimum wages, poor health and safety practices, and zero-hours contracts.

This is the 21st century. We should not be afraid to stand up and say it is wrong. Workers' rights still need fighting for. Don't let down those people who have gone before us. Congress, please support this Statement. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Northern Region? Formally? Thank you. Wales & South Western Region?

SIS. A. LEADER (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, this Act is a cynical and partisan piece of law which is clearly designed to weaken the basic rights of millions of workers and to emasculate the ability of trade unions to organise and campaign industrially and politically on behalf of their members. Our opposition to the Act received support from some unlikely partners, revealing clear concerns about the attack upon unions and worker democracy too. This just served to show wider opinion that it was unfair, unnecessary, and undemocratic.

We should not forget that despite the welcome concessions made, the Act remains a bad Act for us and our members. Despite our ability to force the removal of the more excessive parts of the bill, we should in no way reduce our resolve to oppose this legislation. Now is not the time to just sit back and congratulate ourselves on what we have achieved. Now is the time to expose the dangers that lie ahead. Now is the time to fight his disgraceful Act with all the collective will and energy that we can muster.

The Statement reminds us of what remains in the Act on industrial action, political funding, check-off, facility time, and the powers of the certification officer. Congress is rightly concerned too that removing the ban on the use of agency workers during industrial action will prove to be socially divisive, lead to more confrontational relationships between the employers and the workers, and undermine our economy and public services.

This Act, when considered alongside the UK Government's wider agenda, amounts to a curbing of democratic rights, a suppression of civil liberties, and a blatant attempt to silence the voice of ordinary working people. Congress, we must continue to be organised in our opposition to this Act including in Wales where we have secured a renewed commitment from Welsh Government not to apply it. The Statement sets out a robust but pragmatic position in response, including a review of our methods, structures, and models to ensure that we are in the best position to retain the GMB's ability to campaign for and defend the interests of our members both industrially and politically.

Congress, let's not be grateful for the Government's climb down but continue to seek its repeal and replacement by legislation that provides for enhanced trade union rights in keeping with the modern and civilised society that Britain is. Colleagues, Wales & South West Region supports the CEC Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. North West & Irish Region?

BRO. S. BUTTERWORTH (North West & Irish): First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) This Trade Union Bill is not only an attack on Trade Union members' rights. It is also an attack on the democratic rights of this country. We want some changes to the bill but this Government is doing everything it can to make sure that the deck is well and truly stacked in their favour by attempting to silence any opposition to their plans. David Cameron claims his party is the party for the working people. Let me tell you, comrades, his party is coming after the working class people. They are coming after us in a big way.

These people are not going to go away. We must be ready to fight them on all fronts. Our rights as trade unionists have been hard fought for over generations and we will continue that fight and we must not let this obnoxious bill demean those hard earned rights. We support the Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Southern?

BRO. G. LEWIS (Southern): President, brothers and sisters, first time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, what does a 21st century union look like? With the Trade Union Bill now law surely there can be no greater question facing our Movement. Last week I was chatting to a mate of mine about coming to Congress and he was surprised. He did not know I was a trade unionist and he does not see the good work unions do. For him, as for so many others around this country, unions are unheard of or remote, tagged by this Government as a threat to working Britain. I could so easily have fallen into that trap too. There is no escaping the Murdoch press and for me it was a long journey from sceptic to trade union member.

We here in this room listening to the blacklisted workers and to Margaret Aspinall, we here know the truth, we know the fight for justice and fairness that keeps unions on the shop floor every day for all the working people of this country. Even though our brothers and sisters in the BMA have recently challenged the prejudices about what unions do with their principled strike for too many working people in this country we are still seen as the cause and not the victim.

Our historic union is under attack and the Government holds too many of the cards so we need to think differently if we are to survive when they come back for more. Thanks to this vicious Trade Union Act we will not have the money and we have fewer and fewer resources, but we do have our members and we have our rights guaranteed under EU law. The Tories are trying to undermine our right to strike through drafting in agency workers. Well, we still have fundamental rights in Europe and we can and should take this unlawful government to court for our right to organise.

So, as a 21st century union we need to focus on our strengths. We need to be a campaign of people, process, and persuasion. The people we have right here as well as every new member we recruit, the process is EU law, our fundamental right to organise, to paid leave, to acquired rights and to equality, and persuasion, we need the public to see that their causes are our causes. This Government will not stop until a trade union for any century is history. So we need to make ours fit for the fight. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gareth. Yorkshire?

SIS. C. PINDER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): (*Cheers*) President, Congress, a recent class publication commented that in 1970 58% of workers were trade union members and 82% of wages were set by collective bargaining. By 2012 26% of workers were trade union members and 23% of workers were covered by collective bargaining. This decline is in no small part due to anti-trade union legislation which inhibits trade union recruitment activity and collective bargaining. The detail of the

Trade Union Act is, in essence, a restriction on the rights to take industrial action, an attack on facility time, an attempt to restrict the Labour Party's ability to campaign by limiting funding from the only clean money in British politics. Now unfettered by the LibDems with Labour unable to stop the worst excesses, and the only effective opposition being the House of Lords, it is now more than ever unions such as ours must take on the Tory Government and fight this vicious Act.

The introduction of tribunal costs signalled the Tory intent together with the attack on funding which was epitomised by plans to remove check-off. The special conditions reserved for the Public Sector have a disproportionate effect on women as TU data reveals that almost three-quarters of the union members affected by those most oppressive rules are women. Government analysis of the effects of the TU Act states that the majority of people affected will be women but concludes the Act's measures are not adverse to anyone. There are therefore no adverse effects on women. They continue, the Tory changes actually benefit the whole country, especially users of the public services who will be less inconvenienced by strikes. There is no mention of the ideologically driven austerity agenda. Without unions to fight austerity, and the creeping privatisation decimating these organisations, they will be lost for ever and we will be heavily impacted.

Outside of the workplace unions have been at the forefront of women's rights for over a century with women supporting the suffragettes, the post-War unions have recruited millions of newly working women, the Dagenham Strikers, who changed the law on equal pay, the lobbyists and campaigners who have pressed for policies like flexible working and shared parental leave, all using the political funds now likely to be smashed by this Act.

Researching this bill has been a personal journey for me. People who know me realise with some frustration I am not a supporter of positive discrimination, do not consider myself a feminist. I come from a background with a Mum who passed for grammar school but was unable to go because the family needed the money she could earn in the mills. She accepted this but vowed we would have an education and courage to achieve. Because of her influence I have lived my life fighting but just for me. The GMB has made me realise that my personal fight is everyone's fight and the fight for equality should not be a generational struggle but a fundamental right.

Congress, we must expose the Tories for what they are and campaign in every city and town against this aggressive Act. Congress, I support the CEC Statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Do any of the other regions that have not spoken wish to speak? You are not compelled.

BRO. W. JUSS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Speaking in support of the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act. Congress, President, I do not propose to repeat what my brothers and sisters have said very eloquently before me but what struck me right from the beginning is that this Government is doing to trade unions what it would never do to any business. This Government would say that the state should not interfere and we would think what business is it of any government to interfere with how trade union manages its membership, collects its members' subscriptions and funds its political activities. It is because it is an ideological attack on working

people. Yes, we should not be complacent about the concessions that have been made on political fund and facility time and check-off, amongst others, but what it has shown is that we are able to campaign vigorously and fight with our political friends to make concessions in proposed legislation. We must continue to do that and look forward to a Labour government to repeal the Act.

In the meantime, what we must do is to protect ourselves in the best way that we can and to control our own destiny. At the beginning of Congress you would have been given a leaflet asking your membership to switch from check-off to direct debit in the payment of GMB contributions. In Birmingham & West Midlands Region we have already done that, since January, with all new Public Service members. We have switched from check-off to direct debit. The fight must continue. The Government will come at us again and again and again and we know that those who attack us will not stop attacking us but we have managed to show them in the past that we have succeeded and we will succeed in the future. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Okay, colleagues. I have not seen anyone else. GMB Scotland? Come on, then. Quick! One minute. Don't take bloody liberties.

BRO. T. CARR-POLLOCK (GMB Scotland): Congress, GMB Scotland welcomes and supports the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act. We must never forget despite repeated assaults on the trade union rights, despite enormous changes to the world of the work, and despite constant attacks on trade unions in some sections of the media, that over six million people across the UK are trade union members. That makes our trade union Movement the largest democratic organisation in the UK. It is this strength that allows the GMB and our sister unions the resources to represent members individually when they have a problem at work. It is this strength that allows us to work collectively to improve pay and conditions. It is this strength that allows us to fight for social justice and for a society where no one else is left behind.

Trade unions are the champions of all working people as witnessed by our campaigns against blacklisting, a fight for a living wage, and to tackle the scourge of zero-hours contracts. That is why we are and will always be the target of Tories for whom the rights of working people are a barrier to the pursuit of their profit. One thing you can bet on the Tories will always seek to shift the balance of power from the employee to the employer. Congress, this battle may be over but the war goes on.

The CEC Statement confirms something we all know, that is a fact, this is an awful piece of legislation. However, it provides an excellent statement of intent of how we and the GMB will meet the challenges of the new environment we find ourselves in. Congress, the GMB must continue to campaign, to organise, and to grow and to emerge from the latest attack more determined to protect the working people of this country. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Tom. I now put the Statement on the Trade Union Act to the vote, please. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? You wouldn't dare! Thank you.

CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: I will now finish this debate with Emergency Motion EM1, Trade Union Act; London to move.

**EMERGENCY MOTION
TRADE UNION ACT
MOTION E1**

EMERGENCY MOTION NO. 1

TRADE UNION ACT

CONGRESS WELCOMES THE CEC STATEMENT ON THE TRADE UNION ACT AND REINFORCES OUR COMMITMENT TO FIGHT THE IMPACT AND EFFECTS THE ACT WILL HAVE ON OUR WIDER AIMS AND ULTIMATELY OUR MEMBERS.

CONGRESS BELIEVES THAT THE UNION'S RIGHT TO PROTECT BOTH OUR INCOME AND OUR POLITICAL ORGANISATION AND EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES IS PARAMOUNT.

CONGRESS SOME YEARS AGO GAVE AUTHORITY TO THE CEC TO VARY THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS. CONGRESS NOW BELIEVES THAT GIVEN THE VINDICTIVE ATTACK ON OUR POLITICAL FUND WHICH WILL BEGIN WITHIN 12 MONTHS BY THE INTRODUCTION OF AN "OPT-IN" REQUIREMENT FOR NEW MEMBERS TO THE POLITICAL FUND, OUR VERY PURPOSE IS IN DANGER.

CONGRESS INSTRUCTS THE CEC TO TAKE WHATEVER FURTHER STEPS ARE REQUIRED TO PROTECT THE UNION AND OUR RIGHT TO REPRESENT MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ON ANY POLITICAL MATTER WHICH AFFECTS OUR MEMBERSHIP.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS AND NO ANTI-UNION LEGISLATION SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO INTERFERE WITH OUR LEGITIMATE WIDER OBJECTIVES.

HOME COUNTIES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. FRASER (London): President, Congress, the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act is comprehensive and nothing in this Emergency Motion seeks to criticise or undermine that statement in any way, a statement London Region fully supports and has just voted for. The Trade Union Act is vindictive and is a real threat to our finances and our ability to represent our members and their families. As I said, the CEC Statement is comprehensive but it fails to ask for extra emergency powers to act swiftly to protect us from the dangers of this Act between now and next June.

Colleagues, it is difficult with the democracy of this union that the call to give the CEC extra emergency powers comes from the elected lay delegates in this hall. It is

time for grown-up and mature thinking and GMB does that. The GMB does smart. Our GMB will not be outsmarted, out based, out fought, or out classed by Dave the Dodgy, Boris the Buffoon, and Osborne the Horrible. If the GMB can stand up to the collective might of McAlpine, Carillion, Skanska and the rest, and secure millions for our members, then the CEC should have no problem dealing with these clowns.

Congress, the effect on our finances and our political organisation is real and unprecedented. Sound tactics and strategy must be our response. This motion instructs the CEC to act swiftly and wisely on our behalf. We give them our trust to ensure no political interference stops our union fighting for all our aims and all our members. Colleagues, I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. George, is it seconded? Is it formally? Congress, it is formally seconded.

Emergency Motion E1 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Tim?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks very much, President. Good afternoon, Congress. I just wanted to say a few words about this Emergency Motion No.1 because I cannot stress how important it is and how helpful it is. The part of the Trade Union Act that aims at our political funding is with one intention only, and that is to end the link between the Trades Union Movement and the Labour Party once and for all.

What this Emergency Motion does, it gives your National Executive, the CEC, all people who are like you, activists, not people like me who are employed by the union, activists like yourselves, the authority to move swiftly and nimbly to ensure that the income that we get as a national union, both in our political fund and our general fund, remains at the same level as it is today. The Tories would like nothing more than for us to start losing that funding and then that we cannot pay our way in terms of our political and our campaigning influence.

The other bit that you need to know is that our political fund is kind of misnamed because some people want to dress it up and *The Daily Mail* and *The Suns* of this world will want to dress it up as that's the money that trade unions like the GMB hand to the Labour Party hook, line and sinker. That is nonsense. When you see the successes up here that you saw on Sunday and Monday, and you hear about people like the two lads from Greenco, that two-year dispute, that comes out of our political fund. That is our campaigning fund and if we start reducing the amount of money in that fund then we start reducing our ability to fight back on behalf of our members. Not only is this Emergency Motion wholly welcome and I thank London Region, I would like your full support of it, please. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. I now put Emergency Motion 1 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? You wouldn't dare! That is carried.

Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. I now move on so you can all have your lunch. I have the last of the announcements which I must give.

If the following people have not already done so, please go to the National Women's Taskforce stall and collect your prize: Jan Smith, Taranjit Chana, Alison Cousin, Margaret Boyd, Fiona Hepburn, Wendy Ramsey, Paul Ramsey, it is like Ramsey's fish & chip shop, and Linda Mercer. Would you please go to the stall?

The Ethical Threads T-Shirts stall has five T-shirts signed by Jeremy Corbyn, which they are raffling for charity. Visit the stall for your chance to win Jeremy Corbyn! Okay.

Could all delegates complete the questionnaire? If you need another copy, they are available from the Information Desk. Hand them in to the box in the tea and coffee area by the end of today's session so you will be eligible for the free prize draw which we will make tomorrow. We have four prizes, £1,000 each. I am lying. It is £100. Sorry, I missed the "0".

Congress, this concludes Congress business for this morning. As reported by the SOC there will be a bucket collection as you leave the hall in aid of the Belfast Children's Hospital, a very worthy cause. Please give generously. Could the regional organisers please inform the SOC of the total amount raised?

A slide is now shown on screen. See you promptly at 2 o'clock. Thank you.

Conference adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress re-assembled at 2 p.m.)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I have some announcements. The RMA Prize draw closes at 3.30 today, and prizes can be collected from 4pm. Check if you have won and collect your prize by 10:30 tomorrow.

The Remploy York Disabled Workers Co-operative have raffle tickets available from their stand in the exhibition hall.

I now call on Helen Johnson to Move Report No. 5.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 5

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 5. Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motion has been withdrawn: no. 253 – Social Care – standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

On the subject of bucket collections, the collection on Monday, which was organised by Southern Region, for the Rainbow International Fund, raised £573.24p. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Do you agree that report? *(Agreed)*

SOC Report No. 5 was ADOPTED.

We will now take the business carried over from this morning. I call on Motions 148, 151 and 145.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: THE ECONOMY
BUDGET PREJUDICE
MOTION 148**

148. BUDGET PREJUDICE

This Congress notes that yet again, Osborne's austerity economics and his Local Authority funding cuts fall most harshly on predominantly working-class boroughs.

Whilst this has often been noted in the past, there needs to be a thorough audit of the punitive effects this has had on essentially working-class areas in recent years.

To this end, Congress agrees the Labour Party should be approached to compile and publish such an audit and as an on-going critique of Osborne's economics.

BARKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. STREET (London): Congress, I move Motion 148 on Budget Prejudice. Every Tory government in history has always demonstrated that their primary object is to look after their own, governing for the few and not the many, favouring the rich and not the poor. They may say, during an election campaign, that they are the "One Nation Party" and that they intend to govern for the whole nation, but once in power their promises and words are soon forgotten and their actions soon demonstrate that the only people they govern for are their natural supporters and their financial backers. They have demonstrated this behaviour on so many occasions since they came to power in 2010, but at least in their first five years, until 2015, some of their worst excesses were stopped by their Coalition partners, the Lib-Dems. However, since the last general election in 2015, when they achieved a majority of 12 in their own right, their true colours have been exposed for all to see, and without any brakes that the Liberal-Democrats very occasionally applied.

Cameron and his party have reverted to type, and they, clearly, now govern for their own and nobody else. This can be seen quite clearly in their austerity policies, policies which have put back this country's economic recovery, policies which continue to devastate industry and commerce and policies that continue to hit the poorest communities in Britain. No where is this more demonstrated more clearly than in the way which local governments have faced cuts after cuts since 2010. Local government has and continues to bear the brunt of public spending cuts. Local government is being cut to the bone, and these cuts are not about cutting out waste and inefficiency, but they are about cutting vital services that the most vulnerable in our society rely on. These cuts are about the jobs of our members, but they are also about our children's education, our ageing parents who need care and support, our neighbours who cannot afford fine and decent housing, and our young people who have no prospects of a decent job or training.

Every local authority has had to face these dilemmas. Cameron's own local authority in Oxfordshire has faced cuts in children and Sure Start Children's Centres, which even his own family campaigned against. But even worse has been the effect on the local Labour authorities. The Tories, as they always do, have moved the goalposts. They have changed the funding formula to favour the leafy shires and suburbs, the authorities that regularly return Tory councils, and all this has been done at the expense of inner-city authorities that return Labour-controlled councils. This is an act of vengeance and retribution, not the act of a one-nation government.

We, therefore, call on the Labour Party to undertake an full audit of the effects of this Government's austerity policies to highlight the way in which austerity is being used as an excuse to punish communities that vote Labour. This country needs a funding formula for local government that is based on need and not favours. This country needs a funding formula that recognises the vital services that local authorities provide in protecting the most vulnerable in our country. This country needs a funding formula that is committed to building affordable housing, schools and providing other vital services. In short, this country needs a funding formula that is not rigged by the Tories. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steven. Secunder.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): President, Congress and visitors, I second Motion 148 on Budget Prejudice. The Tories govern this country as they always do, in favour of their friends, and not fairly or for the benefit of the whole country. Nowhere can this prejudice be seen more starkly than in the ways in which the funding of local authorities is skewed in favour of Tory-voting councils and away from Labour-voting councils. This country needs a fair funding formula for all local authorities, a formula based on needs and not on prejudice and favour. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Motion 151.

CO-OPERATIVE BANK MOTION 151

151. CO-OPERATIVE BANK

Congress condemns the decision in 2015 of the Co-Op Bank to unilaterally close down existing accounts of several progressive organisations including the Palestine and Cuba Solidarity Campaigns to which GMB are affiliated.

Congress agrees GMB were correct in withdrawing funds from the Co-Op after the de-recognition of GMB from the Co-Op Funeral Care and believes the bank has now lost all credibility in branding itself an ethical bank.

Congress requests the CEC maximise awareness of this action to its membership and to encourage support for any local demonstrations and leafleting outside Co-Op branches and for any individual account holder to register complaints with the Co-Op to close such accounts if possible.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. POLE (London): Congress, I move Motion 151 on the Co-operative Bank, which is covered in the centre-page spread today in today's *Morning Star*, which is well worth reading.

I am aware that, technically speaking, the Co-Op Bank and the Co-Op Funeral Care are separate organisations, and I must apologise for any misunderstanding in the second paragraph of this motion. When you think of the Co-Op you do think of its ethical policies, and indeed the company still regards itself as an ethical bank. You may also think of a previous chairman who, in 2013, featured rather prominently in somewhat scandalous headlines following an exposé by a Sunday rag. However, during the aforementioned's period of office, the bank reported losses of £600 million. It was then that the Co-Op group felt forced to negotiate the bank's rescue with a series of American hedge-fund groups, which, let's face it, hardly have a reputation for supporting progressive causes. In 2015 they unilaterally closed existing accounts of many progressive organisations, including those listed in the resolution, to which we, the GMB, are affiliated to, along with the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, several charity accounts and some companies and organisations providing vital medical, educational and humanitarian assistance to places like Palestine. The original reason given was that these organisations were not meeting the company's risk appetite, whatever that means. It is now quite clear that this decision was taken to follow the US Government's blockade policy on Cuba.

Needless to say, this has caused considerable inconvenience to those organisations concerned and those that relied on them. It appears that the ethics and the hedge-fund management in this case are being dictated by the hedge-fund management, with scant regard to the bank's previous policies. Sadly, despite thousands of complaints that the bank received, it appeared to be a done deal, and that is why I, after 30 years banking with them, closed my account, which was actually a lot easier than I thought.

However, last week I received an email from the Save-the-Co-Op-Bank Group, advising that this ill-judged closure of accounts is having repercussions at the highest level, with Cuba's Permanent Mission to the United Nations believing this action to be illegal. This is currently being challenged. The matter has also been raised in the Scottish, UK and Irish Parliaments. Whilst the policy is still in existence, it is now being renewed by a cross-bank committee, including staff from the bank's Values and Ethics Team. So it does appear that the situation is at least being reviewed.

My original speech concluded by urging those of you with Co-Op accounts to close them. I now suggest, perhaps, saying you will close them unless they change their policies. Whilst I would urge you to support this resolution, this situation may change. I have, however, great doubts that they will be changed and, at the moment, I feel that we must regard the bank as one that has lost its ethics, and its actions have really caused severe problems and have betrayed those of us who have supported it over the years. I urge you to support this resolution. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick. Secunder.

BRO. A. CHOLERTON (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 151: Co-Operative Bank. President and Congress, the history of the Co-Operative movement

in the UK can be traced back to the Rochdale Pioneers of 1844 and beyond. The origins of the modern Co-Operatives owe their beginnings to the extreme poverty faced by many in the 18th and 19th centuries, the rapid social changes of urbanisation and from a lack of political representation for the working class during this period.

In 2007 the Co-Operative board de-recognised GMB, terminating a relationship that went back to the 19th century Victorian era. This was a sad day for democracy, for trade union rights and ethics, given the background of the Co-Operative movement, a group owned by its members. The Co-operative found itself banned from the TUC and Labour Party conferences, and a whole host of other events and activities where they had previously been welcomed. In the following years, appalling management led to the Co-Op Bank instigating a rescue plan to address a capital shortfall of £1.9 billion. The bank raised most of the equity to cover the shortfall from American hedge funds. In late 2015 the Co-Op Bank closed the accounts of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign and the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and its associates. This was no coincidence, given the bank's takeover by a US hedge fund. Yet, even today, the Co-Op Bank markets itself as an ethical bank. On 24th November the Palestine Solidarity Campaign launched a legal case against the Co-Op on the grounds of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. Please support them in this struggle and please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. I call Motion 145.

**BRIDGING THE FUNDING GAP TO ALLEVIATE LONELINESS AND ISOLATION IN THE ELDERLY
MOTION 145**

145. BRIDGING THE FUNDING GAP TO ALLEVIATE LONELINESS AND ISOLATION IN THE ELDERLY

This Congress is asking for this Government to review the effects of austerity cuts to local authorities and the knock on effects of decreased funding to charities and voluntary organisations.

Austerity cuts to local authorities have resulted in a domino effect to charities and voluntary sector organisations. Councils have been forced by their financial constraints to commission these providers (e.g. Charities and voluntary groups) to provide services on their behalf.

The on-going cuts in funding now means that these are also being affected and only those in greatest need can access them.

This results in many elderly and vulnerable adults (and children) remaining at home and becoming increasingly lonely and isolated.

We ask the GMB to work with the charities, voluntary organisations and the government to review the effects of austerity cuts on the elderly and to ensure that funding is re-instated to alleviate loneliness and isolation in the elderly.

HAVERING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. E. MARTIN (London): Congress, I move Motion 145. Mother Teresa once said: “The greatest disease in the west is not TB or leprosy. It is being unwanted, unloved and uncared for”. This was said many years ago but it is still relevant today. Loneliness is a terrible curse because it goes against our most basic human need, which is the need for socialising, the need to be known, the need of others and the need to have someone to understand who we are. Sometimes it is simply the need just to hear someone call your name.

AGE UK’s most recent document — *Loneliness is Isolation: Evidence Review* — tells us that loneliness and isolation are not the same. The cause of loneliness is not just physical isolation and a lack of companionship, but it can also be the feeling of having no useful role in society. Social isolation, on the other hand, which is also related to loneliness, tends to be more due to the absence of social contact, whether this is family, friends or even missing work colleagues.

Many studies have found that it is hard to measure the exact levels of loneliness and isolation as they can vary in each individual. One person may, following a lifetime of work and raising a family, relish the peace, quiet and the calm that the later years bring. For others, this time of life brings a feeling of incredible loneliness and a feeling of useless and no place in society. Many older and vulnerable people who have previously accessed services, whoever it had been run by, have seen those services discontinued due to the escalation of the effects of austerity cuts have suffered feelings of anger, similar to bereavement, hopelessness and being plunged back into loneliness and isolation. With the financial position that the country still finds itself in, many clubs, projects and social gatherings have been closed even due to lack of finance, so venues have been closed and sold off.

What needs to be done? As our motion states, only the most vulnerable are currently able to access what is left of the service, but we feel that this is a false economy. People who are suffering from social isolation and loneliness are unable to access the services remaining due to a variety of reasons. Those people will become increasingly dependent upon other services. Again, this situation is well documented. These services need to be escalated for people with no social network and limited contact. We are asking that more evidence is gathered and that the GMB works with charities and voluntary organisations to review the effects of austerity cuts on the elderly and vulnerable in society, and in relations to the feelings of isolation and loneliness, thereby justifying the need to re-evaluate, reinstate and even increase the amount of funding needed to combat this situation. This would be in tune with today’s situation. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Evelyn. Secunder.

SIS. S. WILLSON (London): Congress, I second Motion 145: Bridging the Funding Gap to Alleviate Loneliness and Isolation in the Elderly. This motion isn’t just about the knock-on effects to the elderly. This is also the reality of our future. As we all grow older, we are more likely to lose loved ones and experience health problems that could restrict our ability to be active, causing us to become more vulnerable and isolated. We have to remember that loneliness is not the same as being alone. It is the quality of social contact that makes all the difference. As a union, we pride ourselves on protecting the vulnerable. We have to act now and work with the

charities and voluntary organisations and start pushing for this Government to look at the effects that these austerity cuts are having on our most vulnerable. Congress, support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. I now call on Gordon Gibbs of Birmingham Region to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. G. GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 151: The Co-Operative Bank, which we are supporting with a qualification. The Co-Op Bank is part of the Co-Op Group, with whom we are still in dispute, over the de-recognition of GMB in Funeral Care. However, the motion is correct to point out that, having fallen into the hands of US hedge funds, the Co-Op has no claim to ethical status. The union's own bank, Unity Trust, has now successfully fought to free itself from the Co-Op control and is well positioned to pick up accounts from the Co-Op Bank. The qualification is that we should make our views on the Co-Op Bank plain, but not to expand on our campaigning efforts, which is outside of our core organising work. Please support Motion 151 with this qualification.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. We will now go to the vote. The CEC is supporting 145, 148 and 151. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 148 was CARRIED.

Motion 151 was CARRIED.

Motion 145 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I have now been joined on the platform by Jude Brimble, who is the National Secretary for the Manufacturing Section, and beside her is Ian Smith of Four Seasons Healthcare. *(Applause)*

It now gives me great pleasure to welcome Ian to Congress. Ian is a special adviser to the Board of Four Seasons Healthcare who operate 500 care centres. He has worked in partnership with GMB. Ian has written a booklet on the need for health and social care reform in the UK and is here today to outline the crisis in this sector. Ian, welcome, and I'd like now to invite you to address Congress.

ADDRESS BY IAN SMITH, FOUR SEASONS HEALTHCARE:

IAN SMITH: Congress, thank you. It is very good to be here with you in Bournemouth this afternoon. It is very appropriate that I am going to speak to you after two of those motions, because we are facing in this country a severe crisis in social care funding. As you just heard, Four Seasons Healthcare is the biggest care-home operator in the country with over 500 care centres. We look after more than 20,000 residents in our care homes and another 1,500 patients in our mental hospitals, in the Huntercombe Group. We employ nearly 35,000 people in our homes and hospitals. We are right at the eye of the storm. Over the last six years, starting with the Coalition government and continuing with the Conservative Government, we have seen swingeing and vicious cuts in social care funding. I can tell you that 40% fewer

people in the population are receiving social care now compared with six years ago. Some local authority budgets, especially in the north, as you have just heard, have been cut by as much as 40% or 50%. Our fee rates in the local authority-funded care sector have been reduced by 5% in real terms over the last three years at a time of increasing need as our population ages, as our compliance costs increase and, especially, as we work through the problem of a chronic nurse shortage, which is the result of massive incompetence in training sufficient nurses and clinicians over the last 10 or 15 years. This vicious circle is just shocking to behold. As we take money out of social care at a time of rising need and cost, so we create huge pressure on the NHS. I can tell you that 85% of our residents are living with dementia. Elderly people, inevitably, are turning up at GP surgeries, are calling the blue-light service, the ambulance, are arriving at A&E and by being admitted to acute wards is putting uncontrolled pressure on our NHS. The Government, instead of solving the problem at its source — that is the lack of social care funding — pumps money into an increasingly overwhelmed and embattled NHS. It takes that money from social care and local authorities to stem, but not solve, a symptom of the problem but not the cause of the problem.

We have heard a lot recently about bed blocking. This is scandalous. As I speak to you now, I have 2,000 empty beds in my care homes throughout the country. This is not only a cost to the taxpayer — it costs about £2,000 a week for an elderly person to be in a hospital bed compared to about £1,000 a week for better and more directive care in our care homes with our specialist dementia care — but it is also hugely debilitating for the people, particularly the frail and elderly, who are in hospital inappropriately. On average, an elderly person in an acute ward loses 10% of their muscle strength in five days. These people die sooner as a result of our broken health and social care system.

Of course, it is not only the cost to the taxpayer, it is not only the distress that this situation is visiting upon our elderly relatives, but we also have an incredibly committed workforce. The distress that this is causing throughout the country is overwhelming and it has to stop.

As I said, we employ 35,000 people in our care homes. There are about half-a-million workers in this sector who put in a huge amount of care, hours and attention to look after about 350,000 elderly people in care homes, and almost that number as well in domiciliary care. We invest very heavily in training. We are very proud at Four Seasons Healthcare of our dementia-care capability. We invest heavily in training. We would love to pay our workers more than £7.20 an hour. These are people who put in huge dedication. Many of you probably have been to care homes, work in care homes or have relatives in care homes. The dedication of somebody working for £7.20 an hour to look after very, very acutely ill patients, physically ill and often living with dementia, is enormous. We are so fortunate in this country that we have half-a-million people who are prepared to do that. *(Applause)*

I am very proud that we have joined with the GMB to address, fight and campaign to get this Government to do the right thing by its elderly people. Don't forget, these are the people who fought the Second World War for us. These are the people who built the economy after the Second World War. Our treatment of them is just shabby! The position is the same for the people working in our care homes.

I want to tell you a little anecdote just to highlight what I believe we need to do — you in this hall and we in the sector — which is to be determined and resolute in fighting the misguided policies of this Government. I want to tell you a little story, which people say is true, and some of you might have heard this before. It is the transcript of a radio conversation of an American US Naval ship with Canadian authorities off the coast of Newfoundland in October 1995. The radio conversation was released by the Chief of Naval Operations. The Americans come over the radio and say to the Canadians: “Please divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision”. The Canadians reply: “Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees to the south to avoid a collision”. The Americans: “This is the captain of a US Navy ship. I say, again, divert your course”. The Canadians: “No, I say, again, you divert your course”. The Americans: “This is the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States. We are accompanied by three destroyers, three cruisers and numerous support vessels. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north. That is 1-5 degrees north, or countermeasures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of this ship”. The Canadians: “This is a light house. Your call!”. *(Applause)* We have to be that light house. This is not funny. These are not party-political points. This is about the wellbeing of our parents, the people who fought a war for us and who have built this economy. It is absolutely vital that we, like that light house, do not move and that we win this campaign. Thank you very much. *(Applause) (Presentation made amidst applause)*

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: GMB IN THE CARE SECTOR — CAMPAIGNING TO PREVENT THE COLLAPSE OF SOCIAL CARE

1. Introduction

- 1.1. GMB is the largest trade union for care workers in the UK. The adult social care sector is under unprecedented strain and it is care workers and service users that are bearing the brunt of disastrous and wholly unacceptable trends in the way that care is funded, commissioned and provided. Over the last several years, GMB has worked closely with our members working in care, care home providers, independent think tanks and other key industry figures to highlight the problem and to provide government with recommendations out of the present crisis.
- 1.2. GMB represents tens of thousands of staff employed by hundreds of employers in the care sector and it is GMB members who are keep this vital public service going in increasingly difficult circumstances, GMB is very proud of the work our care sector members do.
- 1.3. There are an estimated 1,475,000 workers (1,185,000 FTE) in adult social care servicing 1,550,000 jobs in 39,500 local authority and private adult social care establishments in England.¹ Since the 1990's the workforce has continued to shift away from local authority jobs towards the independent sector. There are approximately 18,000 adult social care organisations in England, 7,700 involved in residential services and 10,300 in non-residential services.²

¹ Skills for Care National Minimum Dataset for Social Care: www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/Get.aspx?id=934949

² Ibid.

- 1.4. The people delivering this top-priority service deserve decent employment standards. A highly motivated, well-skilled and fairly rewarded workforce is integral to service quality. GMB members, doing their level best to maintain standards, need a lot more support from the government and other public bodies like the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- 1.5. Years of chronic underfunding in social care mean today's safety net for our vulnerable and elderly is 'cradle to care home door', betraying those who paid national insurance and tax all their lives, and causing the slow motion collapse of the care sector; underfunding social care costs the NHS hundreds of millions of pounds from avoidable admissions and bed-blocking.
- 1.6. The last few years have seen the collapse of the largest care home operator in the sector, Southern Cross, government austerity impacting on Local Authority fees and tougher CQC rules and regulations in the wake of highly publicised care scandals. The November 2015 Autumn Statement saw central government pass the buck to local authorities by giving them the ability to raise a 2% council tax precept from April 2016. 144 out of 152 authorities with adult social care responsibilities in England have utilised all or most of the 2% precept when setting their council tax levels for 2016-17 raising £382m, but it is not enough.
- 1.7. GMB had been warning for many years now that the business model used in the private care sector was unsustainable. Debt was cheap, private equity ownership was increasing and the care home business was transforming from small, family run firms to large and complex multi-level chains with holding companies based in tax havens.
- 1.8. Southern Cross should still serve as a warning of what happens when we forget our basic approach to economic policy and the role of the state. GMB will keep fighting for better regulation, more transparency and to make sure all companies pay taxes in the UK, not through registered off shore tax havens.

2. Low Fees paid by councils

- 2.1. The residential Care sector remains chronically underfunded. Without fundamental changes the situation will only get worse. Politicians of all parties must accept their responsibility, face up to the funding crisis and act on the integration of health and care.
- 2.2. Laing & Buisson found local authority fees for care home residents had fallen on average almost 5 per cent, in real terms, over the past five years (Laing and Buisson, 2015b). At the same time reports abound of major care home operators selling off homes or soon running out of cash. In commentary following the Autumn Statement, Laing & Buisson warned that the introduction of a 2 per cent Council Tax levy precept for adult social care, simply transferred responsibility for addressing the gap in care funding rather than resolving it.
- 2.3. GMB highlighted that pay levels in social care, which had always been low, were now being squeezed by public spending cuts. This squeeze on funding, combined with privatisation and outsourcing, had negatively affected social care workers and the services they deliver: pay, travel time, reasonable mileage allowances, shift premiums for night and weekend working have all been eroded, even as workloads have increased.

- 2.4. GMB has led the campaign for proper funding for the care sector for the last 5 years. GMB has agreements with several of the large care home companies that they will pass on fee increases for improved pay and terms and conditions direct to their staff on a transparent, 'open book' basis.
- 2.5. Greater funding, in addition to the Better Care Fund and 2% Council Tax precept is required. As noted by the National Audit Office '*greater spending on social care is related to lower delayed hospital-discharge rates and fewer emergency admissions.*'³ While the additional £382m raised from the 2% council tax precept is welcome there is the potential for a social care postcode lottery to be established, with the already wealthier councils being able to raise the most money. Councils that charge lower levels of council tax are likely to suffer significant shortfalls in care funding with resulting regional inequalities.
- 2.6. GMB and other stake holders must monitor and make sure that all the money raised from the council tax rises is spent on social care and not diverted to pay for other services. As a senior research economist at The Institute of Fiscal Studies has pointed out '*it is almost impossible to verify how much of this money will go on social care. You have to go on trust.*'
- 2.7. Economic Analysis by Integrated Health Partners for the GMB funded report '*The Care Collapse: The imminent crisis in residential care and its impact on the NHS*' revealed the scale of the crisis and the potential impact on the NHS: within five years, care homes will be underfunded by £1.1 billion per year for the level of need that is being demanded by a growing aged population. If nothing changes in the next five years this is a projected loss of 37,000 care beds, with residents flowing through to the NHS as a provider of last resort – with a potential cost of £3 billion a year to the NHS.

3. Profit and Privatisation

- 3.1. The Southern Cross collapse in 2011 crystallised some of the long standing concerns about financial structures in the private care sector.
- 3.2. US private equity firm Blackstone acquired Southern Cross from West Private Equity in 2004 and reorganized the business under the lethal '*sale and leaseback*' model. Blackstone separated ownership of the homes from the daily provision of care by arranging a complicated system, known as OpCo/PropCo, in which the homes themselves were owned by other companies that then rented the buildings back to Southern Cross. In 2010, when Southern Cross told us they couldn't afford to pay GMB members decent terms and conditions, we investigated their operational costs and found that huge amounts of mainly public money intended to pay for the proper care of the elderly was being siphoned off to pay sky high rents instead. In total, we estimated the company was paying £100m per year more to rent its care homes than it should have been.
- 3.3. The combination of artificially high rents at a time when income from local councils was falling forced Southern Cross into administration in early 2011 with its care homes and residents being sold on to 44 other providers, including HC-One and Four Seasons.

³ National Audit Office, Adult social care in England: overview: www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Adult-social-care-in-England-overview.pdf

- 3.4. When Southern Cross collapsed, GMB made a virtue of adversity, fighting our way into Four Seasons and other companies to become the lead trade union in the adult social care sector. GMB gained recognition with 39 of the 44 companies that took over from Southern Cross including Four Seasons, HC-One, Orchard, Lifestyle and Care UK. Uncertainties over the financial stability of private providers have driven many private sector care workers towards GMB membership.
- 3.5. The extent to which social care services previously delivered by local councils have been outsourced to providers like Southern Cross is dramatic. In 1993, 95 per cent of home care was provided directly by local councils. By 2002, this had fallen to less than 40 per cent and it currently stands at just 11 per cent⁴
- 3.6. In the past two decades, private firms have bought giant chunks of the residential care sector due to a government led desire to save money by outsourcing services to private providers. Accusations of 'fault' are now irrelevant and GMB must wake up to the challenge, work from within and make sure social care is put high on the national agenda.
- 3.7. The UK's aging population alongside increases in Alzheimer's disease and dementia means inevitable increased demand for social care and more opportunities for private sector providers: There are currently 488,000 care home places across the UK with an estimated market value of £24.1 billion.⁵
- 3.8. Whatever the wrongs of Private Equity in the system are, and GMB's views on this are well documented, now is not the right time to be picking fights. GMB must do what is best for GMB members working in the sector and with Private Equity deeply entrenched, GMB must work alongside enlightened employers to get more money into the sector.
- 3.9. GMB has a vision of a society where carers are truly valued. The national living wage - which GMB has been at the forefront of campaigning for - is a start. Carers who are rewarded fairly are happier and do a better job and that change in attitude brings massive benefits for our elderly and vulnerable care residents.

4. Low pay and poor Terms & Conditions

- 4.1. The care sector workforce is amongst the lower paid in the economy, with 25% of all full-time care worker and home care staff earning less than £7.00, 20% earning under £6.88 an hour and 10% earning less than £6.60 as of April 2015, according to the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.⁶ The Trade Union Wage premium for workers in the Caring, Leisure and other service occupations is 20.9%⁷
- 4.2. The introduction of the government's NLW rates in April 2016 for workers over 25 years old was a welcome move in the right direction for care staff and many will see an extra

⁴ www.socstudies.group.shef.ac.uk/spa/upload/809-624-Privatisation%20and%20outsourcing%20in%20social%20care.pdf

⁵ Ibid

⁶ www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2015provisionalresults

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/trade-union-statistics-2014

50p per hour in their pay packets. The other side is that care providers will struggle with the increased costs unless government and local authorities increase funding. If this does not happen we face a race to the bottom, worsening the situation of high turnover of staff and lack of continuity of care.

- 4.3. GMB supports the work of Living Wage Foundation to raise wages. GMB will continue to make strong representation to all councils and companies across the UK to make work pay. GMB members make clear in their experience that at least £10 an hour and a full working week is needed to have a decent life free from benefits and tax credits.
- 4.4. GMB will continue to fight for all of the points outlined in our Charter for Care Sector Workers which includes:

Fair pay

- working towards a living wage to be set at £10 per hour as agreed at GMB Congress in 2014
- job security for all members, 'No' to zero hour contracts
- decent sick pay, pensions and overtime pay

Workplace

- protection in the event of unfair accusations; dignity and fair treatment at work
- enough staff for the number of residents
- a safe, healthy and secure workplace
- training to help you do your job and progress in your career

Funding the care sector

- talking to government about proper funding for social care; a good society looks after its frail, vulnerable and elderly

5. Lack of recognition of care worker skills

- 5.1. A skilled and motivated workforce is essential to delivering quality care but this will not be developed without a radical overhaul of funding, commissioning and employment models. Caring for elderly and vulnerable people is a huge responsibility, undertaken by an over stretched, under trained, under paid and undervalued workforce. The contribution to society made by the social care workforce must not be understated.
- 5.2. The private residential care sector is at the heart of Britain's health and care system. It is where we house and care for some of our most vulnerable citizens, many of whom suffer from long term medical conditions such as dementia and diabetes. It is already 'home' to over 425,000 people, and to one in six people aged over 85. The need for this vital part of our health and care infrastructure will only increase with the projected rapid growth in the very old and frail: between 2010 and 2035, the number of people aged over 85 will more than double, from 1.4 million to 3.5 million.
- 5.3. Care for the elderly is characterised by relatively unqualified, almost exclusively female workforce employed in jobs that are lower paid and seen as lower status. Caring work is undervalued in British society, traditionally seen as requiring little skill. It is perceived as innate, something which comes naturally, particularly to women. There is a growing breadth and depth of skills needed in caring jobs. A situation at odds with the training, status and pay currently accorded these occupations.

- 5.4. As The Cavendish Review into Healthcare Assistants and Support workers pointed out:
*The phrase 'basic care' dramatically understates the work of this group. Helping an elderly person to eat and swallow, bathing someone with dignity and without hurting them, communicating with someone with early onset dementia; doing these things with intelligent kindness, dignity, care and respect requires skill. Doing so alone in the home of a stranger, when the district nurse has left no notes, and you are only being paid to be there for 30 minutes, requires considerable maturity and resilience.*⁸
- 5.5. GMB will continue to fight for a trained, fairly and properly rewarded workforce. Skills training must be certified, funded, comprehensive and on-going, covering essential areas such as caring for people with dementia and enabling workers to develop specialisms on top, linked to opportunities for career progression.

What GMB did

GMB is your independent voice. When issues are brought to the attention of GMB we make sure they are looked and dealt with in a sympathetic manner with dignity and respect. When the issues are serious and GMB does not get a suitable response from the employer, we take them to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the media to make sure they are taken seriously.

In a recent case, serious issues were raised by GMB members about a care home in Sussex. CQC were involved as was the BBC Inside Out programme. The outcome has been positive, GMB is now the recognised trade union across all the company's homes and we have begun work with the company to rectify the issues. We have fought our way in and will do everything in our power to make sure conditions for our members and residents are improved.

6. High turnover and reasons

- 6.1. Very low pay causes a high level of staff turnover. Low status, low pay and poor working conditions are making it difficult to retain staff in the care sector. Recruitment and retention problems, high vacancy and high turnover rates are problematic for the sector, bad for the residents and clients and costly for employers. The profile of social care must be raised. GMB has a crucial role to play in improving recognition of workers in the sector, particularly regarding improved terms and conditions and pay.
- 6.2. The Centre for Workforce Intelligence has reported that *'poor terms and conditions coupled with demanding yet sensitive tasks make social care a difficult area to recruit and retain staff.'*⁹
- 6.3. England has a turnover rate of 24.8% for all care staff with a high of 30.6% for care workers and low of 12.5% for registered managers¹⁰. A Skills for Care briefing report¹¹

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/236212/Cavendish_Review.pdf

⁹ Centre for Workforce Intelligence: www.cfwi.org.uk/publications/planning-and-developing-the-adult-social-care-workforce-risks-and-opportunities-for-employers/@@publication-detail

¹⁰ www.nmds-sc-online.org.uk/Get.aspx?id=285944

¹¹ Ibid

states that a turnover of 15% presents a problem and over 20% is a major deterrent to a quality service. The cost of this constant replacement including advertising, selection, induction and training is unsupportable. At 28% turnover, an average domiciliary care agency replaces its entire workforce in less than 3.5 years, which prevents any real development.

- 6.4. Chair of the Relatives & Residents Association, Judy Downey, has said the state should take responsibility for training staff to work in social care settings stating '*we don't ask Eton to train their teachers, or Harley Street to train their doctors.*'
- 6.5. GMB has long championed that care work should have a higher status if talented professionals are not going to be lost to the sector. Continuity is very important in the care of the elderly and vulnerable.
- 6.6. A GMB motion at TUC Congress 2015 stated that the high turnover of carers and perennial shortages of nurses and other specialist staff affects quality of care, increasing NHS and care costs; that providing no state funding for care sector training is an illogical false economy; that care sector training standards should be universal, funded by government; and, that care occupations should be registered and seen as a career path, not low paid, unappreciated, '*invisible*' roles.
- 6.7. The motion was agreed and the TUC General Council was instructed to campaign for:
 - immediate care sector fees and funding increases to at least £600 per week as per Rowntree Foundation Fair Care Model
 - a new and independent Training Commission responsible for ensuring the supply of UK trained staff - for all occupations - to meet future demand in the care sector and NHS
 - new government funding for care sector training.
- 6.8. A well trained, well paid and motivated workforce will help reduce the unsustainably high turnover of staff, benefitting the employers, residents and workforce and the sector as a whole.
- 6.9. GMB is a driving force behind improving standards in the workplace. GMB is your campaigning union within the care sector.

7. GMB Recommendations

Bed blocking and Better Funding

- 7.1. Bed blocking is choking the NHS. A failure to provide timely social care for elderly people coming out of treatment has led to patients who are ready to leave hospital becoming trapped in a system already dangerously starved of resources.
- 7.2. Put simply, bed blocking is nothing more than the predictable result of a government policy which is demonstrably penny wise and pound foolish. As government underfunding sends social care down the pan, so the NHS is dragged with it: Bed blocking rises, we spend money we don't need to spend keeping people in hospital who shouldn't be there and, to cap it all, make many of them sicker by doing so. A hospital is not an appropriate place for elderly people to be left unnecessarily.

- 7.3. Despite claims from the government of ring fencing NHS funding, the NHS is in no position to shoulder the added pressure of bed blocking: The number of patients waiting longer than four hours in A&E has tripled and bed occupancy rates are well above recommended levels.
- 7.4. But there could be light at the end of the tunnel. Proper investment now in the residential care sector, which is willing and ready to help with the bed blocking crisis, would be cheaper in the long run, better for those who should be discharged and would free up beds for those who actually need to be in hospital.
- 7.5. With better investment and funding of a willing residential and nursing care home sector a lot could be done to alleviate this downward spiral. The crippling cost of bed blocking to the NHS proves that there is no place for austerity in the funding of social care - to do so is morally indefensible and, plainly, financially stupid. The future of the NHS is intertwined with the fate of social care.
- 7.6. The setting up of a Fast track discharge fund would pay for out-of-hospital beds and be invested in residential care facilities to care for patients safely in the community. The greater role for residential care would make much more efficient use of limited healthcare funds.

Increased powers for the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

- 7.7. The CQC must be given further powers in addition to those given in the Care Act 2014. It is imperative that there is a regulator in the sector that has the capacity to monitor the financial positions of companies in the care home sector with powers to enable them to end the history of huge debts in the sector.

Training Authority

- 7.8. GMB will call for the setting up of a training authority that will require all authorities and companies in the health and social care sector to plan and train enough staff to look after patients and residents.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. GMB is very proud of the work its members do in the care home sector looking after the most vulnerable in our society.
- 8.2. GMB will continue to fight on all fronts for the sector to be properly and adequately funded.
- 8.3. GMB will continue to ensure profit and privatisation is not put before care and make sure carers are a truly valued part of society.
- 8.4. GMB will continue to campaign for a properly trained and fairly rewarded workforce where care worker skills are fully recognised.
- 8.5. GMB continue to call for more integration between the NHS and the care sector – better funding of the residential sector will help free up beds in hospitals, a much more efficient use of limited healthcare funds.
- 8.6. GMB continue to call for more powers to be given to the CQC to enable proper financial regulation of the sector.

- 8.7. GMB continue to call for a training authority to be set up which will benefit the carers, the residents and the sector as a whole.
- 8.8. What GMB is fighting for:
- For the lowest hourly pay rate the care sector to be above the current National Living Wage and moving towards £10 an hour. Maintenance of differentials for all other staff
 - For all hours worked to be paid, including handovers and unpaid breaks
 - Improved rates for overtime/weekends/nights/bank holidays
 - Adequate differentials in grades, (especially senior carers) and to reward extra responsibility and encourage career progression
 - Decent sick pay
 - Decent holidays and holiday pay
 - Consistent pay rates for the same jobs across the sector.
 - Increased pay in high cost areas
 - A knowledge and skills framework that supports personal development and career

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now move to the second of our CEC Special Reports, and I will explain how I intend to take this debate. The Report will be moved and seconded. Then I will call for one speaker from each region and then move to the vote. I now ask John McDonnell, from the North West, to move, and Viv Smart from Birmingham, to second.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am proud to be moving the Special Report on the GMB in the Care Sector — Campaigning to Prevent the Collapse of Social Care. Congress a time bomb is ticking under the system of care for our elderly and vulnerable, the result of years of chronic under-funding and society's failure to face up to its responsibilities for those in need who have paid tax and National Insurance all their lives.

This country's welfare state was set up to provide a cradle to grave, a safety net for all, founded on the principle of social insurance. The people of Britain paid into the system via their taxes and National Insurance contributions. The welfare state was there as and when needed to ensure adequate income, healthcare, education, housing and employment. Yet social care has experienced years of chronic under-funding by successive governments, and it has made today's safety net one of cradle to the care-home door. Unlike the NHS, which can still be held up as a beacon of our values, but for one in 20 of us who will go into care, this crumbling pillar of society represents a betrayal of hundreds of thousands of citizens who contributed to this country all their lives. There is something badly wrong with society's priorities, when the vital job of caring for our elderly attracts little more than the national minimum wage! *(Applause)* Or even the national living wage! Does today's care sector really represent the full value of a society we place on the 400,000 people in residential care, the 800,000 people who get help at home or the 1.5 million workers who care for them? For five years now the GMB has led a campaign for proper funding for the

care sector, crucial if our elderly and vulnerable are to receive the care that they deserve. It is essential if our GMB members are to be paid properly for what they do.

An economic analysis published last autumn, funded by the GMB, Four Seasons and HC1, revealed that within five years care homes will be under-funded by £1 billion per year. If nothing changes, 37,000 care beds will be lost, thereby costing our NHS £3 billion a year in bed blocking. Last November, for the first time in years, the Government diverted more money to social care by giving local authorities the ability to put council tax up by 2% to raise extra case for care homes. Although the extra £382 million that this raises is a welcome step, it is nowhere near enough, and simply transferred the responsibility for addressing the cap in good care funding to local authorities. This has established a post-code lottery in which the already wealthier councils are able to raise the most money, and those with lower incomes will suffer significant shortfalls in funding.

Congress, without series fee and funding increases, more Southern-style collapses are inevitable. More home-care companies will go bust. More care homes will close and more care beds will be lost. The knock-on effects to the NHS are obvious, and are already happening as more people end up in hospital. Bed blocking is choking our NHS. Failure to provide timely and adequate social care, especially for the elderly and people coming out of treatment, has led to patients who are ready to come out of hospital being stranded. In simply terms, bed blocking is nothing more than the predictable result of a penny-wise and pound-foolish Government's policy of under-funding.

As governments under fund and send social care down the pan, so the NHS gets dragged with it. Bed blocking rises. We spend money that we don't need to by keeping people in hospital who don't need or want to be there. To cap it all, it makes many of them sicker by doing so. But there could be light at the end of the tunnel. For five years now the GMB has led a campaign for proper funding for the care sector, crucial if our elderly and vulnerable are to receive the care that they deserve, and essential if GMB members are to be paid properly for what they do. Let me repeat this. Economic analysis last autumn for the Republic Report, funded by the GMB, Four Seasons and HC1 revealed that without serious fees and funding increases more Southern-style collapses are inevitable, more care-home companies will go bust, more care homes will close and more care bed will be lost, and so it goes on. So politicians of all parties must face up to the funding crisis, to stop talking about the integration of healthcare and act. With proper investment now of the Fast-Track Discharge Fund and for the social-care sector to ease the bed-blocking crisis, it will save the NHS money. It will be better, too, for those trapped in our hospitals and better for our members working with the elderly and vulnerable.

To conclude, President, if the money being thrown at corporation tax cuts and uncollected taxes on properties, with incomes going to tax havens, went into social care the country could look itself in the mirror, and again our elderly and vulnerable would get the quality of care they deserve. Please support this CEC Special Report. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Viv.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): Congress, on behalf of the CEC, I am seconding the Special Report on GMB in the Care Sector. In moving the report, John set out the dire straight of the care sector and what needs to change if it is to be prevented from collapsing. In seconding the report, I want to focus on the GMB members who are part of the army of 1.5 million people working in this sector. GMB is incredibly proud of the work our members do. By looking after the most vulnerable in our society, their pay and conditions do not adequately reflect the demanding and often stressful jobs they do. The care sector has a high turnover of staff and a perennial shortage of carers, nurses and other specialist roles. Low status, low pay and poor working conditions make it difficult to retain staff, which is bad for residents and clients and, possibly, for employers. This situation has to change. The care workforce must be certified, skilled and properly trained to cope with the ever-increasing demands from growing needs and rising dementia. There must be new government funding for universal standards of training for the sector funded by grants to both the public and private sectors. After all, Eton doesn't pay to train its teachers, so why should Four Seasons pay to train its carers?

Care occupations must be registered and set with a career path, giving those working in the sector the status they deserve and benefiting those our members care for with the safeguards they need. The current status of low-paid, unappreciated and invisible roles must be consigned to the dustbin of history. GMB has raised the profile of the care sector and we have come a long way since the collapse of Southern Cross and the abuses that were involved, which rubbished the reputation of the sector. But there is much still to do before our members get the recognition they deserve.

As it has done for the past five years, GMB will continue leading the fight for the lowest hourly-paid rate to be above the Living Wage Foundation level, and moving towards £10 an hour. It will continue to lead the fight for all-hours work to be paid, including handovers and when our members come off their breaks to deal with emergencies. It will lead the fight for improved rates for nights, bank holidays and weekends and for decent sick pay and holidays, as well as leading the fight for proper career structures, including adequate pay differentials that reward extra responsibility. GMB will continue to ensure that profit and privatisation do not come before quality of care. GMB will campaign for a properly-trained workforce as a truly valued part of society. GMB will continue to call for more integration between the NHS and the care sector, including better funding for residential and domiciliary care that will free up beds in hospitals and make more efficient use of limited healthcare funds. Above all, GMB will continue to fight for enough cash for the sector so that those being looked after get the highest quality care, and those looking after them get paid what they deserve. Please support the CEC's Special Report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I will now call the two regions that withdrew motions in favour of the Report to speak first, namely, Birmingham and the Midland. Then I will ask for just one speaker from any other region that wishes to speak.

SIS. Y. THOMAS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of Birmingham & West Midlands Region. I am a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) Congress, currently the care industry in today's society is in crisis. The quality of care is being compromised across the care industry. The quality, safety and sufficiency of social-care services are fundamental to a dignified society. However,

the care industry is in danger of the deepening crisis, which is compromising the dignity and wellbeing of individual who are placed in our care, their families and carers. Individuals who are placed in our care are not receiving quality care, the care that they so much deserved, and it is not because carers do not care, but because of the privatisation and historical underfunding in the care sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us stop and think and ask ourselves what can we do to change the direction that the care industry is heading into? Carers need more pay for the job that we are doing. To be a carer is a skilled job. *(Applause)* You have to be able to show empathy, to be passionate, loving and caring. More than all of that, you must have patience. Carers have to be able to recognise and support cultural values and diversity. Presently, our mandatory training is poor. It is sitting in front of a computer completing a tick-box exercise. There must be improvement to staff training. I have spoken to staff and asked them for their preference in regards to training, and everyone told me the same thing: doing face-to-face training has a lasting impact on them, which in turn will help them to provide quality care for all service users.

In 2015 the Birmingham & West Midlands Region launched an Ethical Care Charter, focusing on three main issues that are affecting our members: inadequate staffing levels, poor training and for a liveable wage. C40 branch has been fighting for changes in the care sector, and we will continue to carry on with this fight until there are significant changes that will benefit our staff and individuals who we care for. With the GMB being the largest union for care workers, we need commitment and support to change the direction of the current care crisis. We support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Midland.

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC's Special Report. As many of you will be aware, I have been campaigning for the care sector for a number of years. Our members in this sector are amongst the lowest paid in the country. If we cannot get proper funding for social care, there is a strong possibility that thousands of our members could lose their jobs when care-home providers have no other option but to call it a day and close the homes. These are not scare tactics or supposition. It is fact. Unfortunately, over the last couple of months, I have been representing members in several care-home closures. This is not because they are bad homes and it is not because of poor quality of care. The underlying factor is chronic under funding, leading to unsustainable losses.

Funding for the care sector during the past four years has either been frozen or, in some cases, reduced. This is despite the overall increases in the cost of living, the increase in the National Minimum Wage and the new National Living Wage. The introduction of the 2% levy on council tax has not addressed the chronic under funding. The effect of the introduction of the so-called Living Wage has led a number of employers to recover some of the increase by getting rid of the staff differentials. The staff who were above the National Minimum Wage threshold and have not had a pay rise for a number of years are now on either the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage, or very, very close to it.

Congress, the care staff are already some of the lowest paid employees in the country. The extra burden should not be placed on their shoulders. If long-term funding is not resolved, taking into account the introduction of the so-called Living Wage, then there could be a collapse far more damaging than the demise of Southern Cross, which could lead to thousands of beds being lost and thousands of our members being put out of work. The brunt of that loss would then have to be taken up by the NHS. That would lead to massive bed blocking as there would be nowhere else for the patients to go. This could lead to a breakdown point of the NHS. I fully support the Special Report on the Care Sector. Please support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bill. Does London Region wish to put a speaker in? (*Declined*) Does GMB Scotland wish to put a speaker in?

SIS. A. DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am speaking on the GMB Special Report on Social Care. GMB Scotland recognises that the Special Report on Care is needed and is welcomed. Our members in the private-care sector in Scotland, like our colleagues in the UK, are under valued and under paid, whereas members in our public services are well paid, due to what has been achieved by our region. However, Congress, we do have to register a concern that the report does not recognise the situation in care in Scotland, as care is different in Scotland. Campaigning for £10 an hour is the right thing to do and it has our full support, but our immediate challenge is the level of commitment from the Scottish Government to bring in the Living Wage in October this year in line with the local authorities. The problem is that GMB Scotland does not believe that the funding is actually in place to meet the commitment of the Living Wage. So aside from the rhetoric of the Scottish Government, if funding is not in place to move to a Living Wage, we will be fighting job cuts as well as attacks on hours, pay, conditions in care.

The report doesn't deal with the Scottish Social Services Council. Increasingly, our members have been hauled in front of SSSC Disciplinary Panel. That Panel can take away our members' rights to work in the care sector due to their registration being suspended or revoked.

GMB Scotland, obviously, supports having the highest standards of care, but the SSSC is increasingly seen by the care workers as a threat to their livelihoods and a stick with which to beat them. This is not sustainable.

So this summer GMB Scotland will launch its own campaign in the Scottish private-care sector. This industrial and political campaign will highlight the threat of the SSSC, argue that care workers in Scotland are under valued, over worked and subject to a sector-wide race to the bottom. We must press the Scottish Government to ensure that the cost of the Living Wage is fully funded and call for the creation of a sector-specific National Bargaining Forum for the betterment of our members' interests and those of the service users.

We support the Special Report, but we ask that Congress notes the differences in devolved areas. Therefore, the report to Congress should reflect the realities of the care sector across the UK, including Scotland. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Annette. I call North West & Irish.
(*Declined*) I call Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Congress, our region fully supports the CEC's Special Report on the Care Sector. We know only too well the impact the cuts have had on our service users. For example, in our region it is The Green. A council-run care home in Leeds, after an intervention, was proposed to be closed. Over four thousand people have signed an on-line petition calling for The Green to be saved. In addition, hundreds of people protested in support of the petition, instigated by a local Labour MP, Richard Bergon. In April of this year, Leeds City Council Scrutiny Board made the decision that no definite decision to close The Green was made. In May a report by the Quality Care Commission stated: "The Green provides good quality of care, where residents are well-cared for, and family and friends are involved and actively encouraged." In June, a statement from the Leeds City Council appeared in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, and this: "The Council intends to come up with recommendations before the end of the year"; a change of position from the decision made in April. If The Green is to close, what would be the alternative? This would result in poorly run, private budget care homes that would fall short of Quality Care Commission standards, where many require improvement. This instability in change of care can have a significant impact on service users, and I would like to give you an example of one in particular. The existing support to a service user from The Green Community Support Outreach Workers was withdrawn.... I've lost my page. She was put into a private care home, left alone, abandoned in her own room, left in her own mess, feeling alone, by herself and isolated. To add even further to her suffering, she was raped by a dementia patient, after which she declined even further. Her family, with the support of our region, was able to move her to a nursing-care facility, where she is now properly cared for. But how many more people with dementia have to suffer and endure the same? We need a council-run service, with specialists in dementia care, as one of the core purposes of our local authority. Leeds has been hit hard by cuts from the Conservative Government, which makes a political choice not to care any more. We ask Congress to support our region's campaign to keep The Green Care Home, for dementia sufferers, open and other council-run homes across the region and the country. We ask you to support our colleagues in the region as they meet with the leadership of Leeds City Council, where the future of The Green, its staff and service users and families now hang in the balance. I ask you for your support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Southern Region.

SIS. T. HOOD (Southern): Congress, I am the branch secretary of GMB Surrey County Council Branch. The branch represents care workers, education workers and other public service workers. Twenty years ago there were 50 care establishments in the county of Surrey. They were fully funded, staffed and maintained by the public purse. Today the last are being closed by Surrey County Council and hived off to the private sector. If the care and the money follow, then we should not have a problem, but the Government is expecting local councils with reduced budgets to provide the same level of care, whilst the private sector begins to suffer from the same lack of funding. Through local council placements, we, the GMB, will work with all care providers to provide the best care for our elderly and for those with mental illnesses. I am really proud today to say that in our visitors' gallery we have the owner of

Graham Care — Ernie Graham — with whom GMB is working closely. GMB supports.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tina. GMB Wales and South West.

BRO. P. RAYBOULD (GMB Wales and South West): Good afternoon, Congress. To say that the state of Britain's residential care is in crisis is an understatement. Providers are suffering from an unsustainable combination of falling funding, increasing demand for services and escalating financial liabilities. Such is the scale of the problem that a funding deficit of over £1 billion in just five years' time is eye-watering, and it will result with a loss of around 37,000 extra beds nationally. The implication of a threat greater than the collapse of Southern Cross is such that the vast majority of care-home residents will end up on general hospital wards. That I should know, because I spent 25 years working in the Health Service as a nurse. I just had, one day, to give it all up with epilepsy, which is another story for another day. At the end of the day there is not enough capacity in the Health Service to sustain the amount of people coming into A&E wards.

The policy statement of last year set out the need for greater integration of health and social-care services. Where I live in Torbay, we have one of the first integrated-care organisations that actually takes in adult social care. Unfortunately, today, in the press, a report says that the system is failing already, and that the community services are in need of improvement. It also goes on to say that the new system may work or it may not. We have four community hospitals that are actually at risk of closure, and we have set up a group with the ex-MP Adrian Sanders, myself, the former leader of the council and an independent councillor. So we have already set up a group to try and fight that happening. We are going to put together a case to go to the Health Select Committee. We have tried the banner approach for years, so let's try and do it the Tory way of being nice to them, be pleasant and then kick their teeth in at the end of it, hopefully. I am going off the speech, but at the end of the day I thought it was more relevant to mention what is really going on in a real integrated-care organisation that does not function, does not work and which will fail at the end of the day. That is just a warning for the future to the rest of the country. The south-west does get left out and we do get ignored. We do have a couple of Four Seasons Healthcare Homes in the south-west area that I represent. We have got a few members in them — we could do with more — but the fight we have is that they want to shut hospital beds in the community and replace them with, in my opinion, outsourcing clients and patients to the private sector which, in my book, just isn't fair. I commend your Report. Well done. I'm sorry if I have rambled, but I will leave you now. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Northern Region. (*Declined*) I will now put the CEC Special Report on the Care Sector to a vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That's carried.

The CEC Special Report on the Care Sector was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move to the Employment Policy: Pensions & Retirement. I call Motions 110, 111, Composite 9, and Motion 114.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: PENSIONS & RETIREMENT
ATTACK ON PENSIONS
MOTION 110

110. ATTACK ON PENSIONS

This Congress is asked to look at the current economic climate by this ruthless Tory government which has led to unprecedented attacks on the already watered-down pensions of hundreds of thousands of our members throughout all the regions covered by our union. We therefore call upon Congress and the CEC to ensure that a common strategy is developed to highlight and organise pensions attacks.

N45 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. GILLOW (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 110: Attack on Pensions. Many of us have witnessed and been victims of corporate theft from our pension schemes throughout the '70s, '80s and '90s. The Maxwell scandal culminated in the setting up of the PPF to ensure that our funds would be protected. Thanks for that, but it did nothing to underpin and protect those schemes, while they passed the burden to the taxpayer when they failed.

We have seen the recent Parliamentary questioning of Philip Green's actions within BHS, collecting dividends and bonus payments of over £571 million and leaving a pension deficit of £580 million. Asset stripping, no; pension fund stripping, yes. We've seen the failure to realise his obligations as a responsible employer! The good thing is, though, that all of that money will have been filtered back into the UK economy, but maybe not. It appears that Monaco is his haven of choice to stash his ill-gotten gains. Then the Tories announced, whilst they were looking to sell Tata Steel, to change the law on the pension funds, with a one-off — come on, we are all well-versed in their tricks — vehicle to allow further corporate robbery. This issue will be at the top of the agenda in every board meeting throughout the UK, an open invitation to further plunder our schemes.

Congress, defined benefit schemes are closing faster than ever before. It is another tick-box exercise, another ticket to be put in the golden envelope of workers' rights and the very exploitation of those rights. I work in a regulated, once nationalised, industry, with a guaranteed income and an operating profit of £567 million last year. We had a nightmare of a year! This culminated in the announcement that they were going to close our defined pension benefit system. By our calculations, to plug the deficit it would have required £15 million a year. We are told that employees and shareholders are deemed to be equal by the company, so will there be a reduction in the share dividend? No. Our accounts show that it will be 2.2 pence. They don't want to do that. They want to shut the scheme down and move everyone on to the award-winning defined contribution scheme. Currently, the employer puts in 15% maximum into that scheme. However, the Stakeholder Pension has been created with a minimum employer contribution rate of 3%. There is plenty of scope for a reduction there in the future years.

Let me send United Utilities a clear message. We are the GMB, and we will campaign and fight against any movement to shut our scheme down.

Congress, we are seeing the ceiling of working age being lifted to levels of a previous era, where people will have to work until they drop. If you are unemployed, it is the opposite. You will be dropped until you work. If anybody does make it to retirement, poverty is more likely to be on the horizon than one of a deserved and comfortable level in retirement.

This motion is quite simple. We need to do more to highlight and campaign against the undermining of our pensions. I do not wish to be complicit in condemning future generations to a retirement of poverty. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. W. GOULDING (North West & Irish): Congress, I second Motion 110 on Attack on Pensions. This motion calls for the establishment of a strategy to try and fight the sustained attacks on our pension, to keep hold of what is our deferred pay. Nevertheless, a common theme is occurring in individual pension disputes that some sister trade unions cannot be relied upon as recognition appears to them to be more important than representation. We are the GMB, and our membership knows what we stand for, which is why our numbers are bucking the trend. We may have another four years of this ruthless Government, a Government hell-bent on breaking down the constraints to the collection of wealth. For us, the working people, it is the opposite. As Mick has described in his dispute, with a company unwilling to reduce the share dividend, we have a government that is giving further tax reductions to the wealthy. It is obscene. The stench is becoming more putrefying with every Tory commitment to be the party of the working people. Their every promise is guaranteed to give further misery. Please support this motion to fight the pensions attack on working people. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I take the next motion, let me make a couple of announcements. Can delegates, please, check that they have the correct wallet as the bag of Mohamad Akbar of the London Region has gone missing, which contains his medication, glasses and speech for later.

Also, can Bro. A. Carrion please go to the LV stand to collect his prize.

I will now take the mover of Motion 111.

RETIREMENT LIVING PENSION MOTION 111

111. RETIREMENT LIVING PENSION

This Conference calls upon this government and all subsequent governments to support 'The Living Pension'. This is to be based on a standard working week of 37.5 hours multiplied by the National Minimum Wage which equates to 37.5 multiplied by £7.20 the National Minimum Wage from April 2016 totalling a 'living pension' of £270.00 per week. And each subsequent year, the 'Living Pension' to rise in line with the minimum wage increases. The National Minimum Wage was brought in to ensure every person had sufficient money to live on, if that is the case then the same should apply to pensioners as well. The buzz words of today are the

'living wage' this is even supported by the current government, lets expand that commitment to the 'living pension'.

S74 STOKE/SHROPSHIRE GAS BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. ADAMS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 111, Retirement Living Pension. I am a pensioner, but it is with some sadness that I am asking Congress to support this motion for dignity for people in retirement. As the fifth richest economy in the world, I don't really think that I should be speaking about this today, but it is a sad reflection on the way we treat our retired people as a society in the UK. We will all, some day, hopefully, reach retirement and when we do we should not have to hope for some security as far as being able to afford the basics in life. They should be provided after all of our years of work and contributions to our society. The Living Wage was designed to reflect what was required to provide a basic standard of living. The figure of £7.20 mentioned in the motion and in all the press campaigns can now be called the new Living Wage, but in reality it is the new Minimum Wage. The real living wage stands at £8.25p for the UK and £9.40 for those in London. So we are asking to be given nothing more than the equivalent of the new Minimum Wage to live on. Do we not deserve to have the basics in life: food, clothing, energy and a roof over our heads? For those who have worked all their lives and contributed to our society, do they not deserve, at least, the very basic standard of living and some dignity?

The European referendum has been making headlines. In the press, on a daily basis for months now, the Government are saying that we are better in the EU. So let's have a look at the pensions in some of the other European countries. This data is from the OECD and the ISSA, and it is accurate as at 1st March 2013. The highest maximum annual state pension is Spain with £26,630 per year. Second is Germany with £26,366 per year, and Sweden was £25,135 per year. As you can see, they all pay decent maximum pensions, which allows some dignity in retirement. So what did the United Kingdom pay in 2013? I can tell you that it was nowhere near the ones that I have just mentioned. It was a meagre £7,488. If you equate that to a 37½ hour week, it is just £3.84 per hour. It is way short of the £7.20. Yes, we should stay in Europe, for we should look at what is paid by those countries who, obviously, respect their pensioners and make sure that they have a decent standard of living in retirement. Please support this motion.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. I call the seconder.

BRO. T. HACKETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I second Motion 111: Retirement Living Pension. This motion is asking for the minimum to live on, as the state pension at this moment is not. When are we going to stand up for all those pensioners who die every winter because they have to choose between food or energy to heat their homes. The winter of 2015 was exceptionally hard for pensioners, with figures now showing that 40,000 elderly people died over this period. As has already been said, we live in the fifth richest economy in the world, so why do we have to accept living in poverty in retirement?

On a personal note, my wife is from Madeira Portugal, and has worked in this country for over 40 years, for which she receives £119.30 per week. Before coming to the UK, she worked in Madeira for just five years. She found out by letter dated 6th May 2016 that, for those five years, she will receive a pension of €201 per fortnight. That equates to £76.92 per week after the exchange rate difference. That is why I said that that was just for five years. Please support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Composite 9 and London to move.

STATE PENSION FOR WOMEN

COMPOSITE MOTION 9

(Covering Motions 112 and 113)

C9: Covering motions:

112	RETIREMENT FOR WOMEN	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
113	WASPI AND STATE PENSION	London Region

STATE PENSION FOR WOMEN

Congress notes the current up swell of anger over state pension changes, with state pension age being at the forefront of this. It is felt that a small section of women are being hit particularly hard due to the acceleration of State Pension Age increase in 2011 and because the State Pension equalization has not been communicated sufficiently at all since its introduction in 1995.

There is also a major concern that people were misled either intentionally or unintentionally by comments made by the Coalition into believing that the Single Tier Pension meant everyone would receive £155.65, this will not be the case for most of our members retiring in the near future.

We need to clarify and reassure women of their rights to choose consisting of when they retire and when they will qualify to claim their state pension.

This Conference calls for:

- A campaign for an urgent review into the age when women can retire and claim their state pension. The Government plans a review in 2017.
- GMB to support the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign
- A root and branch review into State Pension provision and whether it is providing a fair, timely and decent benefit. Also, the ways it could be improved to the benefit of working people who rely on it most.
- Use these reviews to influence debate within the wider political context.

(Carried)

BRO. E. STEWART (London): Congress, I move Composite 9. Pensions may seem a difficult and ever-changing subject. However, be thankful for the fact that this composite is nice and simple. It is in two parts. The first part says that we should support those women who are facing the inequality of having their state pension aged increased by the last Con-Dem government. As it was done over a short space of

time, it did not allow them to make plans to accommodate the change. Also, the state pension age rise was so badly communicated to people affected, it gave them little to no chance to prepare for the change.

The second part of the composite is that the GMB takes a look into the new state pension age to understand how it can be improved for working people. All state pension age rises do not take into account the variations in life expectancy depending on the job and locations. For instance, firemen, mobile care workers, etc. This cannot be the best way of administering the state pension. Before you look beyond life expectancy and fairness or fitness at work, state pension provision must be focused on delivering for those who need it most — working people. I move. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. P. O'ROURKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Retirement for Women. I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* President, Congress and visitors, many women were unaware of previous changes and sharp rises in the state retirement age, with little time to change their plans. We strongly object to the speed in which the previous changes have been introduced. Women who were born in the 1950s have faced rapid increases in their state pension age. Those increases were poorly communicated from the Government. Those women have had very little time to prepare for their retirement. Our members need to know, with some certainty, about what they will get from the state and when they will get it. Even in the 21st century, women in their 60s still earn 14% less than their male counterparts. Many women were not allowed to join their company pension scheme at the beginning of their career, so there are fewer National Insurance contributions. They have taken time out of work to have their children and to look after their parents. The rise in the state pension age has constantly been the biggest issue for women in our union. The retirement age has been 60 since the 1940s, so it is unsurprising that women were not expecting the change. Many of our members have spent their lives working and, understandably, waiting for the point at which to retire. Congress, this motion agrees with equalising the state pension age for men and women, but we feel very strongly about the unfair way that the changes are often implemented. We call for an urgent review. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Pauline. I call Motion 114. Birmingham & West Midlands.

RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION CHARTER MOTION 114

114. RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION CHARTER

This Conference to support the charter for retired and older members. Provide a decent living pension. Provide social care services funded by public provision. Real independence control and choice for social care service users. A well paid and trained recognised and skilled social care workforce. Provide ample and correct benefit and services information to all. Free UK wide public transport without time restrictions.

T10 TAMWORTH BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. INGLEBY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 114. President and delegates, this motion is calling for a charter for our retired and older members, to include a campaign that would consist of providing a decent living pension, to provide social care services funded by public provision, and real independence control and choice for social care users. It would include free UK public transport without time restrictions and provide ample and correct benefit and services information for all. This charter would offer protection and direction to our members signposting them to receive the correct advice on their state pensions and benefits.

Congress, GMB has always been on the frontline to protect and safeguard our members, and continues to work tirelessly in our aim to achieve this. We feel that this is the right time to campaign to this ruthless and selfish Government before all of our benefits are so cruelly robbed and taken away from us.

We are asking for a working party to be formed, to review and inform members on a regular basis. This working party would be formed from the RMA and would work with the wider organisation, with an aim to achieve guidance, strong protection and a clear strategy, with targets and recommendations from our charter, therefore developing a better quality of life for retired and older members. Congress, there is a great deal of work to be done. We will not and cannot allow this selfish and greedy Government constantly to take away our fundamental rights, our pensions and our benefits. We must not allow them to steal our Health Service, our independence and, more importantly, our dignity. Congress, with support and guidance from the RMA and a potential working party, we can achieve this. Please support this motion.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jackie. Secunder.

SIS. A. JONES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and second-time speaker. *(Applause)* President and Congress, we wholeheartedly agree with the comments Jackie made. We strongly support this motion. I would just like to make one point. The bus pass is invaluable to our retired and older members. For many it brings a freedom that without it they would not be able to afford to travel. This motion calls for no-time restrictions. This is vitally important to our members, who frequently need to attend doctors and hospital appointments in the early morning. Many struggle to pay the fares and we feel that these restrictions should be abolished. Please support. Thank you. I second.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Bryan Hulley to give the response on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. B. HULLEY (CEC, Manufacturing): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting Motions 110, 111 and 114 as well as Composite 9, which covers Motions 112 and 113, with the following qualifications.

On Motion 110, the motion calls for the GMB to have a common approach and strategy to organise and fight off pension attacks. The Pensions Department will work to support all those facing attacks on their pensions, and will develop guidance and training to support members and reps in discussions. The qualification is just to

acknowledge that we may have to vary our approach as a union to mount the best possible defence.

On Motion 111 the qualification is that although we are in agreement with the motion in that there needs to be a pensions outcome for people that provides enough income to support them in retirement, this needs to be from both state and workplace pensions. Workplace pensions are the key to this, as the employers should meet some of the financial burden of looking after their hardworking employees in retirement. Workplace pensions have become more integral in an economy where we cannot trust employers to pay their tax, especially with a Chancellor of the Exchequer who has slashed the tax obligations for businesses.

Motion 114. The majority of Motion 114 is existing GMB policy. However, we are unsure that the motion calls for ample and correct benefit and services information for all. The GMB works in partnership with the Child Poverty Action Group on welfare rights, and regions have access to guidance in what is an extremely specialised area. The qualification is that we believe the motion should form the basis of a charter, and the CEC could work with the RMA, the Retired Members Association.

Finally, on Composite 9, the qualification is that we need to make sure that when we are influencing debate around what the state pension age should look like, we consider all working people. It is clear that those people who wish to raise the state pension retirement age concern themselves only with the national average life expectancy. They do not have the nuance to consider reasonable life expectancy or type of work. This is directly disadvantageous to all working people. Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 110, 11, 114 and Composite 9 with the qualifications I have outlined. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does North West & Irish accept the qualification on Motion 110? *(Agreed)* Does London accept the qualification on Comp 9? *(Agreed)* Does Birmingham accept the qualification on Motion 111? *(Agreed)* Does Birmingham accept the qualification on Motion 114? *(Agreed)* Thank you. We will now go to the vote. I will now put Motions 110, 111, Composite 9 and Motion 114 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They are carried.

Motion 110 was CARRIED.

Motion 111 was CARRIED.

Composite Motion 9 was CARRIED.

Motion 114 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We will now move on to item 4. I will be calling on Motions 47 and 48, Southern and Motion 49, North West & Irish.

UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS
MOTION 47
LABOUR PARTY

47. LABOUR PARTY

This Conference agrees that in light of the Collins report that led the Tories to interfere yet again with political funding that GMB needs to review its approach to funding outside of the traditional political fund.

C23 CARSHALTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

BRO. G. LEWIS (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a second-time speaker. *(Applause)* Actually, my colleague, Alice, and I are here from the Brussels branch, and it is the first time in 30 years that our branch has sent anyone to Congress, so we are really excited to be here.

Congress, I spoke to this issue earlier today during the CEC Statement on the Trade Union Act, but I have been asked to move the Carshalton Branch motion, Motion 47, on one of the most sinister parts of this Tory attack on our movement: the political fund for the Labour Party. I could not be happier to speak on this motion for them. We know the financial straits of our party and the Tories know it, too. We know and they know that by attacking the unions they weaken Labour's ability to oppose, to scrutinise and to hold the powerful to account. The wealthy and the powerful do not like it when we express any opinion that differentiates us from a doormat, let alone when we take up our right to run the country, but they don't just want to gag us because eventually we will be able to spit the rag out. They want to take away any voice we have — period! This is not a cynical political attack aimed at the next election. This is a power struggle to end our movement. Congress, we can't allow it.

Money is the only language that Mr. Cameron understands, so this Government thinks that if they take away our money, they take away our strength. Congress, money is not strength. Unity is strength. So how does a 21st century union respond? We need to recognise and accept the new reality that there is not much we can do about money until we get a Labour Prime Minister back in 10 Downing Street, so we need to use other tools. For now, with our European rights, the law is on our side. That is why so many Tories want us out, so that they can sweep away 40 years of labour law. We need to challenge this Government's attack on our new rights, and the cynical re-writing of laws like TUPE in the European courts. We also need a new relationship with our members, especially young members like me. Our new General Secretary has already given his commitment to do just that.

I got my first regular part-time job just before the 2007 recession hit, working at a cinema, and I wanted to join BECTU, but, on part-time work, I couldn't afford the membership. Out on my own in a north Yorkshire market town, I didn't know anyone else who was a union member. For young people in the UK, I'm not sure that much has changed since. I meet a lot of young workers who not only do not see the value of joining a union, but they barely know what a trade union is. Congress, we have a duty to recruit these workers, and in doing so we will have the people power that this Tory Government could never even dream of, but we need to go further. We

need our politics to engage with the modern world, with my world, a world where social anger does not bring people out on the streets but it brings them out on Facebook. A 21st century union should see the new relationship between activism and social media as an opportunity and take it with both hands. This can and should be the way we engage young workers who cannot afford politics. If, like I couldn't, they can't afford to donate, then they can volunteer their labour and become activists online and on the streets. *(Applause)* What better way could there be to marry up great traditions with the change in the world? We won't have the money but we will have our voices. So just give us the tools and we will move the mountains. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gareth. Seconder? *(The motion was formally moved from the floor)* I call Motion 48.

TUC AFFILIATION MOTION 48

48. TUC AFFILIATION

This Conference notes that there has been considerable evolution over the years of union organisational structures, sizes and relationships between affiliated bodies and to organisations that the GMB is affiliated.

This congress resolves that the CEC evaluate the current role of the TUC, the benefit to our members that affiliation brings in respect to the affiliation costs and evaluate this expense with regards to value for money and what aspects of the TUC that the GMB wish to be involved with.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. WATTS (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate, moving Motion 48: TUC Affiliation. *(Applause)* Congress may be surprised to learn how much the GMB pays the TUC. In 2014 the TUC's total income from affiliations from all unions was £15.4 million. TUC staff costs and pensions were £13.8 million for that year. The GMB's affiliation fees, according to its own accounts, were £1.6 million, which means that the GMB funds 10% of the TUC's affiliation income. When dealing with these big numbers, it means that 2.6% of the GMB members' contributions goes to the TUC compared with 9.8% of the contributions going to branch funds and branch officers' commissions. To put that into perspective, let me tell you what we paid our own GMB organisations and officials. The GMB in 2014 paid out £13.3 million in GMB officers and other salaries, yet our pro-rata contribution to the TUC staffing costs of is a full £1.6 million. To put that into perspective, for every 10 officers that the GMB employs, we are also funding a TUC official.

So what do we get for this money? What do these TUC officials actually do? If you look at the TUC's Annual Report, it is arguable that the TUC has grown out of all proportion, and it is worth us challenging some of the assumptions as to what the TUC does. The TUC disputes committees often deal about complaints by one union about another. This motion is not calling for a divorce from the TUC, but we need to do some straight talking with them as to how relations can be improved. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Secunder.

SIS. M. RODRIGUES (Southern): I am second Motion 48. Vice President and Congress, we need to evaluate, on the value-for-money basis, what benefits come to GMB members from our major financial contribution to the TUC. For example, GMB does not need the TUC to do research. Either we can do our own research in-house or we could, more cost-effectively, work with other research organisations. The GMB does not need the TUC to issue press releases. We have our own press members or spokespeople who are more than capable of dealing with politicians on TV and radio. The question is: does GMB benefit from the TUC employing five people in their press office, plus a further three individuals on their digital media?

We are not criticising the TUC, but in the interests of good governance it is right for us to look at our value-for-money and to ensure that GMB members' money is spent as effectively as possible. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Manetta. I call Motion 49.

SUPPORT FOR UNEMPLOYED MOTION 49

49. SUPPORT FOR UNEMPLOYED

This Congress asks that GMB extends further its services to members and the wider community to those facing redundancy as well as short and long term unemployed. Currently members' subscriptions are reduced to assist with the financial implications of such circumstances. However, there is not a coordinated offer in place to support members with employability related courses and assistance in navigating their welfare rights entitlements.

This motion asks that GMB regions and nationally look at affiliating to organisations who can extend their offer and work with the union to develop its services to members at this most difficult time in their lives. This will enable the union to draw upon the unique skills these organisations have in supporting people with Welfare Rights issues and helping them gain new employment.

P42 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 49: Support for the Unemployed. When a member wants legal advice, we call in a solicitor. When a member needs support at a meeting, we call in a shop steward. When a member needs help, we get him on a course and we send in a union learning rep. When a member wants help on health and safety issues, we call in the health and safety rep. When a member's job is under threat, we do everything we can to save it. Sadly, however, we know only too well that this is not always possible, and it is at this stage, Congress, that I seek your support in looking for and developing services to assist colleagues when the gates have been shut. Likewise, there are huge opportunities for us to engage new groups of activists who struggle in finding employment, or for good reason are unable to work and need the might of the GMB

behind them for support, to act as a voice to challenge head on the difficulties and injustices that they face.

In my own region — North West & Irish — work clubs are a service that we offer not only to existing members but the doors are open to members of the community to come to our GMB learning centres and receive support. Sometimes they are about CVs, presentation skills and employability. Sometimes it is just a cup of tea and a supporting understanding ear. As a movement, we already have some great organisations who have skills and expertise in providing support to the unemployed. The TUC Unemployed Workers Centres, whilst reduced in numbers in recent years, can be found across the country, and I believe that there is more we can do as a union to support and engage at a greater level.

One organisation I work with, which is close to my heart, is the Blackpool Centre for the Unemployed and Residents Advice Service, an organisation that supports approximately 80 people per week by offering welfare rights' advice.

I am too young to remember the film *Cathy Come Home*, but I have seen it and it runs as true today as much as it did all those years ago. Day in and day out many people are failing to claim the correct benefits, not understanding their entitlements, so we need to look at innovative ways to address the demand for the Welfare Rights Service using technology, union resources and union buildings. A holistic human approach is needed, particularly for those with mental-health issues. Signposts in employment support are already key areas of support through the various life-long learning projects I spoke of earlier this week in the Training debate. It sickens me when the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community are labelled “scroungers” because they need financial support. These are not handouts. They are welfare right entitlements, money needed to put clothes on the backs, to pay for medication, to feed the children, to put a roof over their heads and money to be able to participate in society. It is tempting to ignore the rumblings of glorified internet trolls, but their projected ignorance has severe consequences. One of the biggest charities for the disabled has warned that the campaign of demonization by both journalists and politicians has led to a surge in abuse for people with disabilities. People need this help because of in-work poverty. Our members, with jobs, working hard, day in and day out, are in poverty because employers won't pay a living wage, in poverty because of zero hour contracts, in poverty because the Tories persist in withdrawing vital resources for those with disabilities and family support, in poverty because of local council resources have been decimated, and ballooning debts due to unscrupulous pay-day loan companies and sharks, and in poverty because of rogue landlords demanding extortionate rents. These are the scroungers who we need to clamp down on. Shame on them. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder.

SIS. J. PITCHFORD (North West & Irish): Congress, I am seconding Motion 49. Extending further services to our members and the wider community, the ones facing redundancy and unemployment, has the capacity to change lives. Cuts and changes to Jobcentre Plus mean that for many people a meeting with a Jobcentre Plus adviser ain't what it used to be. With the culture change to sanctioning and a one-size-fits-all-

approach system, many of their members and their families struggle to access or even to have the confidence to ask for support with training, skills and welfare advice.

If I can refer quickly to a case study from a lady who sought help from one of the learning centres that Dave mentioned, because she had had a bad experience with a Jobcentre Plus adviser, who comment on her facial expression and her facial appearance, despite the fact that she had a genetic disorder. He told her that her face looked like a pancake. She was fortunate to find support, but many people don't. She found support, she gained confidence and she is back in employment. She is now a teaching assistant and her skills are recognised. We all know, as trade unionists, the benefits of learning are well evidenced, and we know that we do lose contact with our members when they become sick and unemployed. This motion could help us in our plans to regain these members and to build a 21st century union. I second.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joanne. I now call on Sheila Bearcroft to respond on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. S. BEARCROFT (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, replying to Motions 47 and 49. Motion 47 is really important. It recognises that the GMB will have to take actions in the light of the new Trade Union Act. The motion is right to identify this as unprincipled interference by the Tories, not just in the union but in the democracy of our country. Although legislation has been somewhat blunted by our efforts and those of the TUC, and our colleagues in Parliament, it still leaves us with a number of problems. We ask you to refer the motion to allow the CEC to turn those problems into opportunities, and to come back to you next year with a new strategy to fight for our members in the political arena.

Motion 49 seeks support for the unemployed. GMB has a long record of working with Unemployed Centres, and the Advice and Support Groups. The motion points to a co-ordinated offer to unemployed members. The CEC asks you to refer the motion so that we can consider how to implement a co-ordinated approach and how to do it in a cost-effective manner. Of course, we will report back to you again next year. Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila. Does the Southern Region accept reference on Motion 47? (*Agreed*) Does North West & Irish Region accept reference on Motion 49? (*Agreed*) In that case, I will put those motions to the vote. All those in favour of Motions 47, 48 and 49, please show? Any against? They are carried.

Motion 47 was REFERRED.

Motion 48 was CARRIED.

Motion 49 was REFERRED.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS REPORT

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: This now takes us into items 5 and 6, which is the Annual Accounts and Auditors Report and the CEC Rule Amendments. We are now going to take items 5 and 6 together, and I will call on Tim Roache, our General Secretary and Treasurer, to answer written questions on the Accounts, to move the Annual Accounts & Audit Report, and to move the CEC Rule Amendments on contributions which can be found on page 117 in the Final Agenda as CECRA4 and CECRA5. If any region would like to put any speakers in to ask questions on the accounts or the CEC rule amendments, perhaps they could move to the front, please. Tim.

Rule 45 Contributions

1 Once they join the union, members will pay a contribution in line with this rule.

Members will pay £2.90 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, unless they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;
- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed;

in which case, they will pay £1.70 a week and be classed as grade-2 members. However, grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, a grade-1 member.

The above grades are only used for deciding what contributions members should pay and the benefits they may receive.

CECRA4

Rule 45 Clause 1,

Line 3: Delete “£2.90”, insert “£3.00”

Line 8: Delete “£1.70”, insert “£1.75”

Clause will now read:

1 Once they join the union, members will pay a contribution in line with this rule.

Members will pay £3.00 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, **unless** they are:

- part-time members employed for 20 hours or less;
- young people under 18; or
- recruited as being unemployed;

in which case, they will pay £1.75 a week and be classed as grade-2 members. However, grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, a grade-1 member.

The above grades are only used for deciding what contributions members should pay and the benefits they may receive

Rule 45 Contributions

2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £2.90 and £10 for grade-1 members, and between £1.70 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

CECRA5

Rule 45, Clause 2,

Line 4: Delete “£2.90”, insert “£3.00”

Line 5: Delete “£1.70”, insert “£1.75”

Clause will now read:

2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £3.00 and £10 for grade-1 members and between £1.75 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much, Malcolm. Good afternoon, Congress. Tim Roache, General Secretary and Treasurer, to move the Annual Accounts, answer questions on the accounts, and to move CEC Rule Amendments 4 and 5 on Members' Contributions.

First, questions on the accounts which have been submitted in writing, in advance. The first is from Danny Faith in London Region: Page 6, Benefits & Legal Expenses, this has moved from a surplus of £669,000 to a deficit of £332,000. Is this due to tribunal fees or are there any other reasons?

I am delighted to say, Danny, that the answer is that it is totally the other way round. It is a cost of £669,000 in 2014 and actually a net recovery of £332,000 in 2015. It is not to do with tribunal fees. There are a number of other reasons. One is the management charge we make to Union Line. Union Line started in May 2014 so the charge for 2014 only covered half the year and 2015 was a full year's charge. The second reason is that legal costs were lower in 2015 because in 2014 we settled some old equal pay costs thus escalating the 2014 bill. The third reason is that in 2015 regional legal income went up by £300,000 as old cases were settled.

A second question from Danny is: Page 28, according to the accounts membership is 622,596 so I will be correcting quoting 640,000 members.

Danny, the 640,000 figure accurately reflects the number of members on the database. We have always quoted a lower figure for public consumption on our formal returns to account for some unreconciled members and cash members for whom we do not have accurate details. Asda is a case in point that you will all know. We struggled for many years to get any accurate membership data from them at all. It is also for members where employers simply will not give us the details to back up our check-off

payments. It also means, Danny, that we do not have to pay so much to the TUC so that is always very welcome.

A question from Ian Jones in Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region: As the director and company secretary of Ethical Threads Ltd could Mr. Wylie advise Congress of the turnover for the past 12 months. Because of the claimed exemption in the last accounts submitted to Companies House in 2014 it is not possible to obtain this information from an open source search and whilst the GMB hold 50.5%, could he please advise Congress who the minority shareholder(s) is or are.

The answer, Ian, is the turnover in last year's Ethical Threads accounts was £32,184. The other shareholder is the Battersea & Wandsworth Trade Union Council Trust, otherwise known as the Workers Beer Company.

They are the three questions that we received in writing. I have given answers to those but just to plug, if you like, that on the first afternoon of Congress we have a fringe meeting that Allan fronts up with our national accountant, Graham Dow, to go through the finances. Please, always be happy to go along, have a frank and thorough debate. We will always have open and transparent discussions about the GMB finances.

Congress, the Union's accounts are in your wallets. It is in this book. Please, get it out and have a look at it if you have not already. There is a lot of detail in here about all aspects of the Union's finances but the accounts tell a simple message. They show a union that is healthy and strong, equipped to organise, campaign, and fight for our members. Our assets continue to grow as does our income. It is a good story and one which owes a lot to all of you and the rest of our activists and staff, but I do want to pay tribute particularly for this to my predecessor, Paul Kenny. (*Applause*) His leadership took us to this position of strength. He created the environment of a tight budget discipline and accountability across all regions and national accounts which allowed us to invest in campaigning and growth.

In taking up that baton from you, Paul, I give this Congress my assurance that my stewardship of members' money will be no less vigorous. We will never budget to spend more than we receive from members in any given year. We know that is the way to disaster and once before it nearly led to us losing our place as an independent union. That will never happen on my (or our) watch.

Last year we made a small operating surplus. Once you strip out pensions and other adjustments required by accounting rules, our operating surplus was just over £350,000. It was a bit less than usual because we made the very sensible decision to buy out of the lease of our old national office in Wimbledon. That saves us anything between £2m and £8m. Our budgets for 2016 aim for a surplus of just over £1.5m. It sounds like a good figure but that is not a great deal of leeway on an expenditure of £64m.

On to contributions, increasing contributions is never popular. We all appreciate the arguments about the impact of austerity on members' pockets and purses and some also argue that we need to keep contributions low to encourage recruitment. But we have to cover our costs if we are to fight for members hit by austerity, and we tried a

few years back an experiment of freezing contributions to build recruitment. The upshot was that we had to come back to Congress for a 25% increase in contributions and we were saddled with a £3m debt which took years to clear. Oh, and membership dropped. That is why the Congress policy is firmly to cover costs on contributions.

There are also a number of risks ahead which could hurt us financially. Osborne's economy is stuck in the mud and members' jobs are under threat in the private sector. The Tories infatuation with austerity, the moves to unfunded devolution in England and the shrinkage of budgets in Scotland all add up to yet more pressure on public services and on the jobs of our members. That is without the economic turmoil and attacks on workers' rights which will come from a Brexit vote, should that dreaded day come in a couple of weeks' time.

The Trade Union Act is a partisan and spiteful piece of legislation. Even though in its final form it is not quite as bad as it started out, it still imposes costs straight on to us, such as the pleasure of paying to the dreaded certification officer. Many of you have been doing excellent work, switching public service members from check-off to direct debit and that campaign, as we heard this morning, must and will continue. While there may no longer be an imminent risk of check-off going, we not only need to guard against it happening in the future but we will have to pay a so-called administration charge for members remaining on check-off. If we are not careful, that will add at least a six-figure sum to our costs.

Like most final salary schemes, the Union's pension fund is in deficit. We are just about to start discussions with the trustees over the fund's valuation. It is a good scheme and one which Congress has been proud to back in the past and I thank you for that. The CEC is committed to the scheme and we will have to meet our obligations as an employer, which could put further strain on our costs.

Congress, we have talked a lot this week about our vision for a new 21st century union, a union which puts resources into campaigning and growth. For example, we are only able to achieve the fantastic result on blacklisting because we could afford to risk almost £3m in legal costs in pursuit of fairness and justice for our members. These types of opportunities and challenges will only increase. We need to talk to our members more and listen to them and that means getting into the digital space more than we have done before. Working with regions we will be developing and building GMB's digital presence. It is where members are looking and it is where we will need to be found.

Our strategy for growth is very simple. We build our activists base. You and your colleagues in the workplace are the heart of the Union and we will be multiplying the number of activists across the Union like we have never done before. To deploy strong and confident activists costs us money and the key to it all is training and education, not delivered by some third-party provider for which in any case public funding is disappearing, we need specialist GMB focused training, delivered by our people, employed by us. The review you have launched this week must result in a strengthened and comprehensive GMB education system, consistent across every town and every city in the UK. That is the way we will build this Union.

Congress, the rule change proposes a 10p weekly increase to Grade 1 contributions, and a 5p weekly increase to Grade 2. All other contributions will stay the same and all of the increase will go to the general fund and not the political fund. I believe this is a fair and necessary change. It keeps us financially stable and provides funds for growth and building our activist network. GMB membership is one of the best value purchases anyone can make. For less than the cost of a pint of beer in Bournemouth, our members get the support of the strongest and best organised union in the country. Please help us to build on that strength and organisation by supporting these rule changes.

Congress, I move acceptance of the accounts and CEC Rule Amendments 4 and 5. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can I now have it formally seconded, please? Formally seconded? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: With no one on the seats down here, I will move straight to the vote. All those who accept the annual accounts and auditors' report, please show. Any against? That is carried.

The Annual Accounts & Auditors' Report was ADOPTED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of CEC Rule Amendments 4 and 5 please show. Any against? That is carried.

CEC Rule Amendments 4 and 5 were CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I move now to item 7, which is Union Organisation, Composite 3, London to move and Wales & South West to second.

UNION ORGANISATION: Representation & Accountability
COMPOSITE 3
REPRESENTATION OF EQUALITY STRANDS ON THE CEC
(*Covering Motions 38, 39, and 321*)

C3 Covering motions:

38	REPRESENTATION OF GMB YOUNG MEMBERS	Wales & South West Region
39	RETIRED MEMBERS' ASSOCIATION (RMA)	London Region
312	CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND EQUALITY	National Equality Conference

REPRESENTATION OF EQUALITY STRANDS ON THE CEC

The Trade Union movement maintains a proud tradition of representative democracy. Congress believes that in order to best represent its members we must always seek to ensure that our structures are accountable, representative, and orientated to their needs.

This Conference notes that the Central Executive Council (CEC) has reservations for some equality groups notably women and black members and has agreed to two young members observing CEC meetings.

Due to the finite nature of being a Young Member (coupled with the existing structures) there is no real likelihood of a Young Member being elected to the CEC. This oversight in our democratic structures robs the GMB of the voice and representation of its Young Members in one of its most valuable forums.

This Conference believes that now is the time to review the inclusion of reservations for the equality areas to ensure that all equality strands recognised by the GMB through the National Equality Forum (NEF) are represented on the CEC.

Therefore, this Conference:-

- Resolves to establish a working group which will include members of the GMB Young Members Network to look at the democratic representation of Young Members within the GMB and to assess the feasibility of Young Member observer positions becoming full members of the CEC and assess RMA Representation on the CEC in its own right and not as an Observer
- Instructs the working group in question to work with National Equality Forum, the SMT, CEC, other regions/national forums for equality as well as the women's task force to agree proposals and rule amendments and deliver their report with recommendations to the next GMB Congress 2017.

(Carried)

BRO. B. SHAW (London): Chair of the National Equality Forum, proud to be moving the motion selected by our Equality Conference as the motion sent to Congress albeit it is composited with Motion 38 Young Members, from Wales & South West and 39 Retired Members Association from London Region. It was a very proud moment that as our new General Secretary took up the reins Tim came and spoke at the National Equality Conference, a powerful endorsement of the work around equality and a true champion for equality. That is why I say to the newspapers, like the sexist, racist, homophobic, and transphobic *Daily Mail*, this Union will not be lectured by you about equality. *(Applause)*

Our Central Executive Committee currently has a reservation for certain equality groups. Each region has the ability to elect a woman to a seat and nationally we have five seats for members that are of the black and minority ethnic group. When Congress took these decisions they were for specific reasons, to look at tackling under-representation on our Central Executive Committee and to encourage more women and people from black and ethnic minority groups to become involved in the Union. Since then we have agreed to co-opt Young Members for they have no vote.

However, time has moved on and we need to revisit reservations on our Central Executive Committee to ensure they fully reflect all the equality areas. Currently, there are no reservations for members who are disabled, members who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans, neither are there reservations for Young Members under the age of 30 or, indeed, retired members.

This motion is looking at ensuring we seek to have some form of reservations to strengthen the voice of these members at the Central Executive Committee. What this

motion is not about detailing how that representation is made up or, indeed, what rule amendments are required to achieve this aim. That was deliberately left out so as not to predetermine what the outcome of the review is going to be. This motion calls for a wide spectrum of views including each region, the senior management team, the current Central Executive Committee, but importantly members of the National Equality Forum, Young Members as well as the Women's Taskforce, so that we look to achieve a consensus and then come back to Congress in 2017.

The GMB stands transformed as a union with every region now having equality conferences and women's conferences, and a national GMB Young Members Group, and we need national summits for each of the equality strands under the umbrella of the National Equality Forum. This motion comes from the Equality Conference, the second largest annual conference in the Union's calendar and delegates there were strongly of the opinion this was the most important issue that needed to be addressed via Congress.

I am very pleased that the Central Executive has accepted the motion by looking to set up an equality taskforce to look at this and come back to Congress 2017. This motion is of its time, this issue will not go away, and it is one of the building stones of making sure we are a 21st century union. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Secunder.

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales & South West): Proud as ever to be Chair of the GMB Young Members Network. (*Applause*) My brothers and sisters, as Bro. Shaw observes, building a 21st century union we cannot build such a union with views on equalities mired within the 20th century. We need fully participative Young Members seats on the CEC, so spoke our General Secretary, Tim Roache, yesterday at the Commercial Services Conference. This motion calls for a working group to assess the feasibility of such seats, not only for the members that I represent in Youth but throughout the equality strands where our brothers and sisters lie. I feel I must emphasise this is a motion which will explore the practicalities of that representation. James Connelly once said, "Our demands most moderate are we only want the earth." Here and now that may be our desire but that is not what this motion is for. We seek only the representation that we deserve and are owed.

I tell you most solemnly the voice of equalities, the voice of Youth must be heard, but not only heard, it must be listened to, and it must have the votes within those organisations in which we have our structures so that we may actually achieve true representation within this Union. I urge you to support this motion. I implore you to support this motion. We do not beg for to do so would be to assume that we do not have the right to be a fully fledged member of this Union at every strata from lay activists up to the Central Executive that governs our union. Therefore, I stand here today in proud solidarity with our brothers and sisters within the equality movement and say please support this motion. Solidarity. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call John Phillips on behalf of the CEC. John?

BRO. J. PHILLIPS (Regional Secretary, GMB Wales & South West): Speaking on behalf of the CEC on this important composite motion. In order to build our 21st

century union we need to ensure that all of our structures, including the CEC, are relevant and reflective of our membership. The CEC, colleagues, is supportive of the principles of this motion and would like to accommodate it in a positive manner. It is absolutely right that the GMB should be leading the way in this crucial area. The motion asks for a review of all equality strands on the CEC and specifically addresses representation for both young and retired members. For our young members our current practices allow the Young Members Network to select two ex officio observers to attend at CEC meetings and participate, and there is also a standing item on Young Members on the CEC agenda itself.

The CEC do not intend to make any changes to this arrangement for the time being as this continues to work well and gives Young Members continuity of representation. Furthermore, the Young Members Network will continue to decide for themselves who their observers will be. As for retired members on the CEC, the CEC cannot recall a time when the RMA, or indeed its predecessor, did not have a member elected onto its body. Indeed, the present CEC includes three RMA national committee members.

Congress, all parties agree that there needs to be a formal review of equality strand representation on the CEC and the CEC itself supports the sentiments of this motion. We indeed welcome the establishment of an equality action group to fully consider how we best represent all equality strands and we are happy that the NEF would be a stakeholder on the working group.

However, colleagues, the CEC qualification is that although we support the motion, that should not be interpreted as the CEC agreeing from the very outset to order the suggestions contained in the motion itself. The working group will need to be set up first and will be that forum who will fully consider all aspects of representation on the CEC and, of course, any implications on exiting structures, election procedures, and accountability.

Essentially, colleagues, it will start with a blank piece of paper with very little ruled in and very little ruled out. It will be a holistic review that will encompass, and quite rightly so, all of the relevant equality strands. That group, Congress, will ensure that any changes benefit the Union and its members and will prepare a report and recommendations for Congress 2017.

The current CEC, of course, is in post until 2019 so there is ample time to consider all of the implications of this composite and put in place potential rule changes should they need to be agreed. Therefore, colleagues, the CEC supports Composite 3 with that qualification. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Does London accept the qualification? Speak to me. Yes. (*Agreed*) Does Wales & South West Region accept reference? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show on Composite 3. Thank you? All against? That is carried.

Composite 3 was CARRIED..

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Union Organisation in General, a Review of the CEC and General Secretary Elections, North West & Irish Region to move, Yorkshire to second, priority in debate to London and Southern Regions.

UNION ORGANISATION: General

COMPOSITE 2

REVIEW OF CEC AND GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTIONS

(Covering Motions 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15)

10	VOTING EDUCATION	Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region
11	CEC AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS	North West & Irish Region
12	ELECTION OF GENERAL SECRETARY	North West & Irish Region
13	GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION 2015	London Region
14	ELECTION OF CEC	North West & Irish Region
15	BALLOT PAPER DISTRIBUTION	Southern Region

REVIEW OF CEC AND GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTIONS

While we warmly congratulate the newly elected members of the Central Executive Council and the General Secretary, we need GMB members to be strong and educated on the important issue of voting, especially for General Elections where we saw the Tories become government because working people did not turn out to vote.

This Conference calls upon the CEC to adopt a policy on educating people on the important issue of voting in important elections and we also call for an ongoing campaign of political education aimed at maximising our members' participation in General, Local and European Elections.

Further to the motion sent by this branch in 2013 and agreed by Congress, it appears from the low turnout for the General Secretary & CEC positions that education has not been forthcoming and people do not turn out to vote, even when the voting paper is sent directly to them at home.

This Congress notes with great concern the extremely low turnout in last year's General Secretary Election. Less than 5% of the membership voted and the successful candidate received support from less than 3% of the membership. It believes that despite the importance of this election many members were simply unaware of who the candidates were.

Congress believes that the poor turnout was largely due to the fact that voting papers were sent out in the union's magazine rather than a separate postal ballot. An election for the most important position in the union should not take place on the cheap. The practice of sending out voting papers in the union's magazine is not conducive to achieving a decent turnout.

Congress agrees that future elections for the position of General Secretary and CEC elections should be conducted by a full postal ballot with ballot papers posted individually to members' home addresses in the same way as an industrial action ballot and not placed inside magazines.

It is in all our interests to have a good level of active participation in the elections of our CEC and senior posts in the Union. The election has highlighted some concern by members in relation to the participation within the ballot and potential weaknesses in the election process itself.

In order to help the Union for the future, we, the GMB, should lead by example. We therefore call on the CEC to carry out a root and branch review of our recent internal elections and we ask that research be undertaken by an appropriate body of the Union to identify the following points:

- The reasons why the turnout was low?
- Whether the way the ballot papers were issued was a factor in the low turnout?
- How awareness about the elections, their importance to the union as well as the information about candidates standing and the procedures used helped or hindered overall participation in the election processes (e.g. hustings meetings, candidate profile information and how the elections were promoted to members).

In light of the growth in the use of social media & new technology we ask the review to look at how new forms of communication could be developed to improve participation in the democratic processes within the union. This should include the potential for new ways of voting, for example secure on-line voting to be considered. Over time systems and communication processes have changed and we need to move with them to ensure our election procedures and processes are fit for purpose going forward.

The important task is to identify the key reasons for the low turnout and a report prepared to bring forward recommendations and, if necessary, Rule Change proposals for next year's Congress for Congress to consider to hopefully avoid a repetition of this poor turnout in future elections.

(Referred)

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, we have a great union, we witnessed the power of this great union from this rostrum over the last few days and during the conferences held yesterday for the sections. Congress, on your behalf I congratulate Tim on his election and also to Paul McCarthy of the North West & Irish Region, both of you engaged in an election of integrity, travelling up and down the country in hustings, demonstrating the true principles of solidarity between you both and the higher demands to be servants of this Movement and we all thank you for that. There are many unions who have torn themselves apart. You two acted with real integrity and should be proud of the way you did it. *(Applause)*

However, many of us felt, as I am sure you did, that this time around the process did not quite work. We did not have the participation levels that are demanded of a 21st century union and we need to look at it. It is time for a review and it is time to look at how we can use technology as a better way of communicating in that review. I know many of you felt the way in which the ballot paper was issued was not effective enough. It was enclosed in the magazine, members tossed the magazine to one side, maybe not realising the ballot paper was there, or they left it to be dealt with later and not realising the time limits in terms of getting those ballot papers returned.

Therefore, we are asking that you look at ways in which we can better deal with the election process. I do not want to be stood here because the way we are going we may as well be stood here with the LV wheel of fortune with the candidates and just spin it from the rostrum. We could do it that way but I do not think it is the way a democratic open movement wants to do it and I know you do not want to do it that way. That is how we should do it, a direct ballot to the members, through the post, direct to their homes. *(Applause)*

Also, hustings, how are people to know these great candidates if they do not actually get a chance to read the paperwork or see them. What about webcasts, what about online questions and answers. A growing proportion of our membership is using this new technology. I am using a teleprompter right in front of me now to do this speech. I am ignoring it but I am using it. That is another issue. It is about using technology.

I know legislation limits the way in which these ballots can be held and we are not necessarily in control of that and I applaud those who have done work on the Trade Union Act to get that changed. Maybe we need to move when legislation allows to online voting so that members who are quite familiar with doing it now can do it in the future, and look at it. We are asking for a root and branch review of the process to learn the lessons of what maybe did not work so well this time so that we can improve it and actually improve it for the next elections and for all important elections inside this Movement. On behalf of the regions and the other colleagues who put the motions in, I am happy to move this and ask for a review, that we do it thoroughly, we do it properly, we learn the lessons, and we help the process of election be great because we are great in many other fields as well. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Yorkshire Region.

SIS. S. YOUNG (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): (*Cheers*) President, Congress, why don't people go out and vote? By not voting we have a Tory Government in power with a tiny majority of just 12. It would not be hard to get them out but we are stuck with them. With the turnout in the election the Tories gained power with just 37% of the vote and yet they dare in their toxic Trade Union Bill to expect unions to have at least a 40% turnout of eligible voters with a 50% yes result to take strike action: hypocrites. However, 24% of the population did not vote at all. If they had, the UK may look different today, especially as most non-voters are working class; that gave a Tory victory. I voted but I did not vote what we finished up with and I wish I had a space ship so I could send Cameron, Jeremy, I cannot say his second name because it will come out right, and all their mates back to whichever planet they came off. We would be far better off without Tory scum here.

We also have to look at our own turnout in GMB elections. My branch nominated Tim to stand as General Secretary and was proud to do so. However, when it came to the vote only 4.4% of GMB members eligible to vote actually did. Why? How can we achieve anything with a low turnout? There were problems with voting papers coming late in Yorkshire, which meant we had to extend the period of voting. The voting papers were sent out in the magazine. Did they get missed? I know we cannot campaign in general elections but maybe we should. I voted and was proud to have voted for Tim and I wish him every success. However, I call upon Congress in view of upcoming EU referendum to review the turnout and participation in the recent election to see if we can find the cause to low turnout, make it better, a true democracy, something the Tories will never do in their power hungry arrogance. I second. Now, has anybody got a spare space ship? Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: London.

BRO. D. POLE (London): Can I at the outset start by saying that when our branch drew up our resolution, which is incorporated into the composite, no criticism is meant to be levelled against any of the participating candidates and we were certainly aware that steps had also to be taken to avoid the skulduggery by certain parties that occurred in the last contested General Secretary elections.

However, there is no hiding the fact that the turnout in the General Secretary election was pitiful and reflects badly not only on the GMB but on all of us active within this Union. A turnout of 4.5% with half a million or so members not voting is, frankly, a disgrace. Last May after the terrible General Election result, slight comfort was taken that the Tories only got a 24% vote of those entitled to vote. That says it all in respect of our turnout. Rest assured our enemies will use that against us if and when it suits them.

I am afraid that one of the reasons for the low turnout must be the fact that many members simply did not know enough about the candidates standing or, indeed, who they were. My branch is a TUPS branch and whilst small many of our members have given lifelong service to the Movement in general yet our branch meetings and workplace discussions were dominated by questions regarding who the candidates were and, more importantly, what they stood for. Many said they could not vote because they did not know enough to cast a vote confidently in such an important election. More information on policies is needed. One member who voted was our Branch Secretary, but he did not initially receive a ballot paper. When he finally got one he nearly missed the slip of paper which he had to complete telling him he had to fill this out or his vote would not be valid. Talk about discouraging people.

We particularly need to look at improving candidate profile information and therefore the review and subsequent report to be prepared is required. We need to deal with this to avoid any repetition. Our union will be stronger, healthier, and more democratic, if this succeeds. Please support the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dick.

BRO. B. MCARDLE (Southern): I wish to add to the strong arguments that have already been made in favour of this composite. Yes, it is inherently a good thing to strengthen democratic legitimacy within the Union. Yes, increasing participation in elections and policy making is an important part of continuing to develop the Union as a genuinely bottom-up organisation. I would also add this. With the ever increasing assault that we face on industrial ballots from this Tory Government with the Trade Union Act, work undertaken by the Union into effectively raising awareness and increasing participation in any ballots must surely be welcome for finding lessons for us all who are involved or may be involved in workplace disputes. Please support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Is there anyone else who wishes to come in on this very important debate? No? Thank you. I now move to the vote. Joe, I forgot you. I could not see him, actually. That is true!

BRO. J. MORGAN (Regional Secretary, Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, the CEC, believe me, is very keen indeed to ensure that a root and branch review of

our internal election arrangements is carried out. The CEC are asking you to refer this back so that a working party can get to work immediately and bring back a special report to Congress 2017. The CEC is acutely aware that being a 21st century trade union means being so in every way, inside and out. The participation level in our own recent elections was a major disappointment for us all, for every one of us.

However, rather than being overly surprised we should channel our efforts now to ensure that we learn from those elections so it does not happen again in future elections. Every day we go about our business in each of our regions organising, recruiting, retaining members, and converting people to direct debit. We all know as activists that none of this can be done effectively, remotely or by remote, it is best done face-to-face in the workplace facing the membership. A 21st century union is proactive, not reactive. A 21st century union goes to the members. We do not wait for them to come to us.

Comrades, there are questions that must be asked. Therefore, the working party will examine why when we conduct our own elections we appear to back away from the very principles we support. Why as a campaigning union do we have to call a halt to campaigning during the periods when our internal democracy is under way? Congress, as the speakers have said when they moved the motion and the composite, the turnout in our last election actually demands action from us. The lack of engagement with the process by our members is a call for action. We have to find a better way of conducting our democratic processes and the CEC is committed to doing so.

Asking candidates to seek support with an election address shorter than some people's Facebook profiles needs another look. Restricting hustings to branches or regions and not in workplaces as we said face-to-face needs another look. Sending ballot papers out in magazines was a mistake and should never happen again.

The CEC will task the working party with finding a better way forward, one that fits with our ethos and culture, that broadens participation and involvement but does not distract from our day-to-day job or bog the candidates down, or the Union down, in factional contests or inappropriate electioneering. The composite refers to the use of social media and modern methods of communication, and this will be central to the review. We must change and embrace social media.

However, we have to be mindful that although we can use new technology to extend our reach to our members, we are obliged by current legislation to conduct statutory elections like the CEC and General Secretary on a fully postal basis only. The CEC also reminds delegates with reference to increasing political awareness turnout in political elections is already existing policy of the Union. Congress, the CEC believes that if we get this right, and of course, comrades, you will decide that, then our internal elections can and should be an opportunity to engage with members and activists, to excite interest in our democracy, and to build our union. We need to demonstrate across every workplace in the country what a 21st century union looks like in action. We, therefore, ask you, comrades, to refer this motion and I thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joe. Well done. Does anyone else wish to come in on the debate? I think the CEC has said it all for members in here. I ask North West & Irish Region, do you accept reference? (*Agreed*) Yes. Yorkshire, do you accept the reference? (*Agreed*) London accept the reference? (*Agreed*) Southern? (*Agreed*) Yes. Congress accept the reference? All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 2 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to Manufacturing and call on Jude Brimble to report back from the Manufacturing and Fine Manufacturing Section. Jude.

MANUFACTURING/FINE MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT

SIS. J. BRIMBLE (National Secretary): Can I start by saying how proud and honoured I am to have been endorsed by the CEC on Saturday as the new National Secretary for our Manufacturing Section Conference. (*Applause*) Listening to the quality of debate yesterday was both inspiring and humbling and I want to thank the National Section Committee for the good guidance and support they gave me yesterday as a first time delegate and a first time speaker.

Yesterday was also an election year for our section president. Congratulations go to Andy Irving, our newly elected National President for the Manufacturing Section from Yorkshire Region, and congratulations go also to Bob Gunn, who was returned unopposed as the Vice President for the Section. Congratulations to you both. (*Applause*)

The theme of this year's conference was very much about the desperate need for a sustainable and credible manufacturing strategy for the UK. The failure of this Government to live up to its promises to put industry at the heart of its economic recovery is having a devastating impact on our members across the manufacturing sector.

Conference, we had 63 delegates, 35 visitors, 44 speakers, 6 first time speakers, 10 women speakers, and we debated 24 motions and one important emergency motion from the London Region on the dispute in London at Bakkavor Food where we sent our solidarity to our members fighting intimidation again on the same site of the Grunwick dispute 40 years on, 40 years on, Congress, and the employers have learnt nothing.

We welcomed our delegates from the Fine Manufacturing Section who came to the conference for the first time and we heard about the staggering number of high-quality skilled jobs that have been lost in the ceramics and the Stoke pottery industries over the last decade, and the importance of having a strong innovative design platform so that new jobs can come through, creativity can be supported, and the craftsmanship of the products produced by our members in the Fine Manufacturing Section can be showcased and recognised on the European, domestic, and world stage.

We heard firsthand again the vision of a 21st century union from our General Secretary and what that means for us in the Manufacturing Sector. This year we

introduced activists' report backs for the first time and we will build on those going forward for the future.

We heard from Brian Golding from Nestle reporting on the excellent work of the National Forum and the GMB campaign to save our members' pensions in that company. We heard from Steve Butterworth and Brendan Stack who told us about GMB successes at Hinkley Point construction programme and how we are using the concept of full-time convenors to organise migrant workers on those sites, ensuring there is no undercutting of the NAECI agreement and the blue book and ensuring that no exploitation takes place of workers on those sites.

We heard from John Logue and Ian Kemp, who talked with passion, pride, and anger, about the crisis in the steel industry. We heard from Nigel Warn from Babcocks about the impact at Davenport and the need for real jobs the successor programme will bring, the need for real jobs that crucially will sustain those local communities up and down our coastlines, and provide quality jobs not just for now but for the next generation.

We had some cracking debates, campaigning against the exploitation of migrant workers, we heard about the European subsidies and just how important staying in Europe is for our manufacturing sector and our manufacturing jobs. Yes, on workers protection, but importantly also about the automatic access to trade outside our own borders on that European platform.

Kathleen Walker Shaw added to that debate when she spoke on the work and the campaign that has been going on in Europe on social dumping, exploitation, jobs, and the need for investment for our Manufacturing Section here in the UK.

We talked about our members working in bricks, cement, chemicals, the food industry, shipyards, engineering, and construction; in fact we debated everything from paper clips to battle ships. I have to pay tribute to everyone who took part in the just outstanding and excellent debate that we had on steel, our members not only fighting to keep steel production in the UK but fighting to keep their local communities alive, and fighting for the jobs now and for the future generations.

It is inconceivable that in the UK we would not produce the raw ingredients of steel that supports hundreds and thousands of manufacturing jobs up and down the country. It is crucial to our national infrastructure and it is crucial to our national security. To Wendy from Port Talbot, thank you for sharing that emotional your speech yesterday about what the closures mean to you and your family, four generations of Benson and Thomas men, 200 years of service. That is why we have to save our steel industry.

Richard Burgon MP, a great friend of GMB, gave an impassioned and heartfelt speech picking up the theme of our conference. He talked about the need for a national investment bank to deliver a new generation of funding for manufacturing. Manufacturing should be the backbone of the British economy, a successful British economy. That is why Labour's commitment to invest in the long term is so important for us to have an infrastructure, the skills, and the technology that we need to support our strategic industries.

President, we also celebrated the achievement of our outstanding activists and Joe Smith received the Jim Kooyman Award for his outstanding work and contribution to our members in Remploy. Ronnie Waugh received the Ben Rubner Shield for his contribution over many years.

President, if I can close by saying that our manufacturing members know why our country needs a strong manufacturing base but it is also true that GMB needs a strong manufacturing section and that is why yesterday we set out a new agenda for the Manufacturing Section to refocus the section on a growth and campaigning agenda, to grow our members not just in numbers but in strength, strengthening our structures by introducing a new sector arrangement, improving our communications, growing credibility with members, and influence with employers, and to be the authoritative voice of the Trades Union Movement on manufacturing.

Our Manufacturing Section has a vital role to play in building a 21st century union and under my leadership and with the support and work of our activists, our regional teams, and the national team, we are committed to delivering that. So, it gives me great pleasure, President, to move the Manufacturing Section Report to the 2016 Congress. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jude, very much. I now ask the movers of Composite 11 to come forward, Yorkshire to move, Northern to second, priority in debate to Birmingham, and 164, Southern to move. Does North West & Irish Region wish to come in on the debate as they withdrew a motion in favour? Please respond. Will the movers please come forward?

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TRIDENT COMPOSITE 11

TRIDENT – THE REAL COST

(Covering Motions 162, 163, and 166)

C11 Covering motions:

162	TRIDENT – THE REAL COST AND EMPLOYMENT	Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region
163	LABOUR PARTY	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
166	SUBMARINE SUCCESSOR PROGRAMME	Northern Region

TRIDENT- THE REAL COST

This Conference, understands that scrapping Trident has widespread support: the SNP in Scotland support cancelling Trident's replacement. Many would privately support scrapping the existing system. Churches, civil society groups and environmental campaigners agree. However, what would be the cost in well paid unionised jobs and are there really billions of savings to be found?

A complete costing is difficult to come by – the Ministry of Defence clearly won't plan in public for a policy it rejects. Parliamentary questions, MoD accounts, private sector figures and reports from the disarmament movement show it will cost billions to scrap Trident.

Even before the costs of laying off the thousands of naval personnel and civilians who depend on Trident, there are several major problems: the four Vanguard class Trident submarines need

to be decommissioned; their nuclear reactors stripped out and stored. There are up to 200 nuclear warheads to dispose of, their highly-contaminated storage, manufacturing and testing facilities need to be decommissioned and the expensive contracts the MoD has signed with three of the world's largest military contractors to run these facilities need to be paid off.

There is a vast infrastructure supporting Trident. Thousands of jobs are at stake in direct work in key sites within the UK as well as in the supply chain in many constituencies across the UK as shown by KOFAC in their excellent publications. There are several thousand naval and civilian staff at its base at Faslane and its warhead base at nearby Coulport. 6,500 staff and contractors are employed testing, building and maintaining its warheads at AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire.

Hundreds more at the Rolls-Royce nuclear reactor design centre in Derby and the Vulcan reactor testing centre at Dounreay, on the northern coast of Scotland.

The GMB nationally and many other unions have a very high density of membership at stake, should there be changes to government and opposition policy.

At the Barrow-in Furness boatyard, there are more than 5,000 people employed by BAE Systems and it is expected that an additional 1,000 would be taken on if the main "gateway" decision on the Successor class is made in 2016. Can we, as trade unionists, condemn this many jobs to history?

The GMB does not and will not support any political decision to do so.

The MoD estimates that its current nuclear decommissioning liabilities, covering all its facilities, are £9.6bn. This is a ballpark figure, much of which involves existing clean-up costs but its projected costs for scrapping Trident are, at 2006 prices, well over £4bn. They include £3.4bn to decommission its warhead factories at Aldermaston and Burghfield; £333m to decommission and store the current fleet of nuclear submarines, including Trident; £146m to dismantle Trident's warheads; more than £150m to decommission Devonport and Rosyth's nuclear shipyards and refuelling facilities; £10m to decommission the Neptune test reactor in Derby and more than £6m on other decommissioning costs. The Vulcan test reactor at Dounreay would cost at least £2bn to decommission, if the UK's entire nuclear submarine programme were to be cancelled.

A separate authoritative assessment, published by Public Finance News in 2007 and drawing on data from the MoD, Hansard and Greenpeace, puts the total costs of decommissioning Trident submarines alone at £1.75bn.

The MoD will pay AWE Management Limited £950m in this financial year and the overall 25-year contract is worth £5.3bn. Then Lockheed Martin's rolling contract for the missiles is worth \$21m (£13.7m) a year. Nicola Sturgeon can have no idea what the cancellation costs of those contracts will be, nor the costs of laying off the 6,500 staff at AWE.

The North East has suffered many recent shocks in manufacturing such as in SSI with the failure of the British Government to safeguard the industry and jobs

However, the direction of travel of the Labour Leadership is to impose the many SSIs on areas of the UK and many GMB members.

Congress believes that rhetoric is one thing, practical high skill based employment is another.

Congress reaffirms our commitment to the thousands of GMB members and their families whose futures are inextricably linked to submarine build and maintenance.

This Conference is dismayed at the approach of the Labour Leadership in respect of Trident renewal and calls on Labour to provide a detailed, second by second account of what their

proposals would mean in practice in what their direction of travel appears to mean for our members involved in the Trident process.

Furthermore, this Conference calls on GMB to confirm its continued support of the renewal of Trident at the 2016 Labour Party Conference to protect GMB members' jobs in this industry.

GMB believes that that highly skilled, highly paid career encompassing employment must be the aim for all our members. In short, the GMB are convinced it would be wrong to assume there would be any meaningful savings at all from scrapping Trident and many jobs would be lost.

Political pressure or not, safeguarding our members interests are paramount.

We urge Conference to support this position and adopt this as national policy.

(Carried)

SIS. C. PINDER (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): *(Cheers)* President, Congress, the Yorkshire Region understands that scrapping Trident has widespread support. The SNP in Scotland support cancelling Trident's replacement. The Labour leadership is opposed to replacing Trident, and many would privately support scrapping the existing system. Churches, civil society groups, and environmental campaigners agree. However, what would the cost in well paid unionised jobs be and are there really billions of savings to be found.

A complete costing is difficult to come by. The Ministry of Defence clearly will not plan in public for a policy it rejects, and parliamentary questions, MoD accounts, private sector figures, and reports from the disarmament movement show it will cost billions to scrap Trident.

Congress, even before the costs of laying off the thousands of naval personnel and civilians who depend on Trident there are several major problems. The four Vanguard class Trident submarines need to be decommissioned; their nuclear reactors stripped out and stored. There are up to 200 nuclear warheads to dispose of. The highly contaminated storage manufacture and testing facilities need to be decommissioned and the expensive contracts the MoD has signed with three of the world's largest military contractors to run these facilities need to be paid off.

There is a vast infrastructure supporting Trident. There are several thousands naval and civilian staff at its base at Faslane and its warhead base at nearby Coulport; 6,500 staff and contractors are employed testing, building, and manufacturing its warheads at AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield in Berkshire, hundreds more at the Rolls Royce nuclear reactor design centre in Derby and the Vulcan reactor testing centre at Dounreay on the northern coast of Scotland.

Congress, the GMB and many other unions have a very high density of membership at stake should there be changes to government and opposition policy. At the Barrow in Furness boatyard there are more than 5,000 people employed by BAE Systems and it is expected that an additional 1,000 will be taken on if the main gateway decision on the Successor class is made in 2016.

Congress, can we as trade unionists condemn this many jobs to history? Congress, the Yorkshire Region does not and will not support any political decision to do so.

The MoD estimates that its current nuclear decommissioning liabilities covering all its facilities are £9.6bn. This is a ballpark figure much of which involves existing clean-up costs but its projected costs for scrapping Trident are at 2006 prices well over £4bn. They include £3.4bn to decommission its warhead factories at Aldermaston and Burghfield; £330m to decommission and store the current fleet of nuclear submarines, including Trident; £146m to dismantle Trident warheads; more than £150m to decommission Davenport and Rosyth's nuclear shipyards and refuelling facilities; £10m to decommission the Neptune test reactor in Derby and more than £6m on other decommissioning costs. The Vulcan test reactor at Dounreay would cost at least £2bn to decommission if the UK's entire nuclear programme were to be cancelled.

A separate authoritative assessment, published by Public Finance News in 2007 and drawing on data from the MOD, Hansard, and Greenpeace, puts the total costs of decommissioning Trident submarines alone at £1.75bn.

Information overload may be but it is critical to understand the vast numbers in terms of cost and jobs we are talking about, much is supposition and Nicola Sturgeon can have no idea what the cancellation costs of these contracts will be, nor the costs of laying off 6,500 staff at AWE.

The Yorkshire Region believes that Congress must have a serious debate on the issue. Highly skilled, highly paid, career encompassing employment must be the aim for all our members. Congress, political pressure or not the GMB must have a voice and safeguarding our members is paramount. Congress, I would urge you to support this motion and reaffirm this as GMB policy. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Northern.

BRO. D. CLEGG (Northern): Worthy President, Congress, our region has a submarine yard at Barrow in Furness. Many thousands of jobs are directly affected by the Barrow shipyard. It has a loud, proud record helping with the defence of this country. On top of that, Congress, there are thousands of families in Barrow and the surrounding areas that will be directly affected by any move to get rid of the submarine programme.

Congress, before people say it, that skills and workers will simply transfer to the civilian work side, well, those of us who have heard that many times before in other shipyards will pour scorn on such promises. Policies made in middle-class North London coffee houses are far removed from the real world of Barrow in Furness. Labour will have to show second by second, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, the practical way that any new policy will operate.

Finally, Congress, Emily Thornberry, the Shadow Defence Secretary, is known to be anti-Trident. We challenge Emily to come up to Barrow, speak with the organisations like KOFAC, who want to promote North West shipbuilding. We challenge Emily to listen to the workers and the families in Barrow and see that those of the real world can awaken Labour from the nightmare it has created for itself. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Davey, not all of us in North London support Emily Thornberry. We support this Union's policy. Right, who is next? Priority in debate to Birmingham.

BRO. C. CHATFIELD (Birmingham & West Midlands): Madam President, Congress, speaking in support of this composite. The first and overriding concern of any political party seeking election in the UK should be the effective defence of the realm. Without this, any other policies, health, education, welfare, etc., are at risk. This means that even dearly held beliefs and principles must be weighed against this duty and must be secondary to it.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of August 6th 1945 an American B29 Superfortress bomber, called Enola Gay changed the whole concept of defending the realm. With the agreement of the Allied powers, principally USA and UK, it dropped an atomic weapon on Hiroshima thus effectively ending World War II.

There is little doubt that the advent of and the threat to use nuclear weapons has and will continue to prevent the wholesale total conventional war between major powers. The fierce and devastating conventional fire power of modern front rank military powers, if unleashed against each other, would have much the same effect on this planet and its inhabitants as a nuclear conflict. It would just take longer.

No leaderships think they could win a nuclear conflict; some might think they could win a conventional one. The nuclear deterrent is not aimed at the terrorist threat or rogue states but at preventing a World War through mutual assured destruction, MAD. Who can doubt that proven madmen, Stalin and Mao, would have thought the prizes of Western Europe and South East Asia worth the taking, except for the threat of nuclear annihilation hanging over them? It even kept our cousins across the pond in check somewhat.

Until humanity realises there are many and much better ways to settle disputes than the use of force we will have to rely on MAD. Our current contribution to MAD is Trident, which is now coming up for renewal/upgrade, which is going to be very costly whichever way. The expense can be offset to a large extent against the jobs, the thousands, tens of thousands of well paid and skilled jobs, both direct and indirect, it will preserve and the strategic manufacturing industries it will support. The human and economic cost of cancellation should be beyond the unions, the labour Movement, and its party's ability to envisage let alone support. In conclusion, I would ask Congress by supporting this composite to send a clear message to the leadership of the Labour Party, if you want to be taken seriously as the government in waiting, start taking the difficult decisions in the best interests of the country and its people. Start by coming out unequivocally in support of Trident. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charles. North West & Irish Region?

BRO. J. BARTON (North West & Irish Region): Speaking in favour of the retention of Trident. I nearly forgot to give my name there for a minute! Jim Barton, one of the Cammell Laird's 37. Congress, Trident is a deterrent. Scrapping Trident will not only be a threat to thousands of jobs, it would also be a threat to millions of lives. Imagine the situation when in the last days Saddam Hussein, or Gaddafi, had nuclear

weapons. Some think they would have used them. Never before, with ISIS or some other crazed despot, has there been a need for Trident as a deterrent. In finality, without missiles it is like a bow without arrows. Congress, please support.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I now ask the mover of 164.

HAVING A CONSTRUCTIVE DEBATE ABOUT TRIDENT MOTION 164

164. HAVING A CONSTRUCTIVE DEBATE ABOUT TRIDENT

This Conference acknowledges the GMB's long term support for Britain's independent nuclear deterrent, and the UK's membership of NATO.

Congress notes the large number of high skilled manufacturing and engineering jobs involved in maintaining the current nuclear weapons, and in developing the Trident replacement, including the building of Vanguard submarines. Even using the figures from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), there are 4,700 skilled jobs dependent upon Trident at the Barrow Shipyard and 4,350 at Aldermaston. There are also 6,700 people working at Faslane. In addition 1,200 jobs exist at the Rolls Royce plant in Derby where the propulsion units for the Trident submarines are built, and there are 2,000 jobs at Devonport involved in maintaining the submarines.

Congress also notes that there is a genuine debate about whether the UK's national security in the 21st century is best served by the Trident replacement programme, and whether nuclear weapons are an appropriate response to the security threats and challenges facing us in the coming decades. For example, former head of the armed forces Field Marshal Lord Bramall, along with retired army generals Lord Ramsbotham and Sir Hugh Beach have said that "Nuclear weapons have shown themselves to be completely useless as a deterrent to the threats and scale of violence we currently face or are likely to face, particularly international terrorism".

Congress notes that there is also an argument for the Vanguard submarines to be built and fitted with Trident missiles that could be armed with conventional warheads, but would also be compatible with nuclear warheads.

Congress notes that for the first time since the 1980's the Labour Party has a leader and a shadow defence secretary committed to working towards unilateral nuclear disarmament.

This Congress believes the British government has a duty to maintain military capability to defend the United Kingdom, to protect safety of British citizens, and the ability to defend legitimate British interests overseas.

This congress believes that those in the Labour party who wish to see nuclear disarmament are equally committed to defence of the realm as those who wish to maintain nuclear weapons.

This congress believes that should a future British government ever seek to relinquish the UK's nuclear weapons, then it is essential that the economic impact is mitigated to ensure that the same level of manufacturing and engineering skills are maintained; and that those communities, towns and cities, where significant numbers of people work in connection with the nuclear deterrent receive investment and training programmes to secure equivalent, highly skilled, highly paid jobs.

This congress resolves to call upon all parts of the Labour movement to conduct the debate over nuclear weapons in an atmosphere of fraternal mutual respect, without name-calling,

misrepresentation and grandstanding which could damage the prospects of electing a Labour government in 2020.

This congress resolves that the GMB will continue to advocate the interests of those workers whose livelihoods depend upon the nuclear deterrent, and the interests of the communities where they live, such as Devonport and Faslane.

This congress resolves that in any debate within the Labour Party concerning Trident replacement, the GMB will recognise that there are military arguments in support of both sides of that debate, and that the mandate from GMB's membership is to protect and defend jobs and communities, not to take sides in the military and technical debate about the merits of nuclear weapons.

This congress resolves to ensure that should any future policy of the Labour Party be in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament then that policy must include fully costed and detailed proposals for developing alternative, skilled, manufacturing and engineering jobs in the communities affected, and that such an investment and training programme must be in place before the nuclear defence jobs are jeopardised.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. ROGRIGUES (Southern): Madam President, and Congress, the enemies of the labour Movement have tried to sow divisions over the question of Trident renewal but the need for a debate has come from events in the real world as during 2016 the UK government needs to make the so-called main-gate decision on whether or not to place orders for the Successor class submarines that will carry Trident missiles replacing the current Vanguard class.

The decision of whether those Trident missiles will carry a new generation of UK built nuclear warheads will not be made this year and it is independent of the decision to build submarines. It is understandable that over the question of such a major financial commitment, especially over an issue as controversial as nuclear weapons, there will be a debate.

GMB calls for discipline in the trade union and peace movement, and the Labour Party, in discussing this issue so that the debate is conducted without misrepresentation. Moreover, let us be clear to any one watching this Congress, that our union, GMB, is speaking with a united voice in defence of around 20,000 highly skilled well paid and well organised jobs in the shipbuilding and engineering industries associated with Trident replacement. We defend the interests of those workers and we defend the interests of those communities.

GMB also defends Britain's strategic and economic interest in maintaining a credible manufacturing and shipbuilding defence capability. The short-sightedness of the Tory Government in not safeguarding the future of our steel industry shows that they cannot be trusted to act in the national interest. We do have to recognise that at some future point a UK government may decide to move away from a submarine based nuclear capability. If that happened then GMB would have to adapt to that change reality but our determination to defend jobs, communities, skills, and manufacturing capabilities, is non-negotiable.

We must be determined that should any future policy of the Labour Party be in favour of a unilateral nuclear disarmament, then that policy must include fully costed and detailed proposals for developing alternative skilled manufacturing and engineering jobs in the communities affected and that such investment and training programme must be placed before the nuclear defence jobs are jeopardised.

Congress, let us stand united in defence of the jobs of our members. Please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Manetta. Secunder.

BRO. J. WATTS (Southern): GMB's position is to defend jobs and communities. Even if the union is sceptical or opposed to nuclear weapons it should unite behind this motion. Indeed, there are some among us who support the Trident renewal programme but do not necessarily support the UK developing and building and deploying our own nuclear warheads. Trident missiles could be a point of weapons carrying controversial warheads, especially when used in passive flight mode. Any discussion needs to be final as Trident missiles would have dual ability for the UK in a defence and NATO sharing programme. The current renewal keeps the UK options open. It is not GMB's job to give defence and bias to the military. It is their job to fight for the interests of our members. Please unite behind this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate on Trident?

BRO. N. WARN (GMB Wales & South West): To start with this is a point of clarity. Everybody keeps mentioning Trident. Trident is the actual missile. That is not up for renewal until 2030. The main concern that we have is to do with the Successor programme, which are the submarines or platforms, as we like to call them. I happen to go yesterday to an International Policy Commission with Emily Thornberry there, she was a great help, but the majority of the Labour MPs and the International Policy Commission are in favour of the replacement Successor programme.

In my own history I have 200 years of working in the defence industry with my father, my grandfathers, and my father-in-law. Over the last seven years 50,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost. If this Successor programme does not continue, there could be another 25,000 to 36,000 jobs and communities will be lost and impact on the UK economy as well. Young apprentices are concerned that they may have no future in becoming any apprentices learning these jobs because of the uncertainty within the Labour Party itself. There are 1,200 supply chains that will all be affected. Please support these motions and our GMB members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nigel. Anyone else?

BRO. A. BUTT (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Good afternoon, everybody. (*Cheers*) Speaking in support of Composite 11. Madam President, distinguished panel, it has been made clear on many occasions that our stance as a union on Trident is one of jobs and not some ideological stance on whether we should have nuclear weapons or not. To misquote Mohammad Ali, "It's just a job." Grass grows. Birds fly. Waves pound the sand and Conservatives lie. Congress, the point is one of

mistrust because for those that say by scrapping Trident we could save money and the Government would reinvest that money into local services, I hear you, I really do, but we have a Tory Government, unfortunately, that have shown this disdain for investing in public services.

Many of the roles linked to Trident are highly skilled roles, which, if made redundant, would leave the country adding to the brain drain caused by doctors leaving the NHS. Congress, this is not just about money saved by the Government, it is about livelihoods and potentially decimating those communities built around those facilities. It is about our purpose and existence as a successful union that looks out for the interests of 640,000 men and women who look on us to speak up and support them. How can we call ourselves a force for working people if we vote for those people to lose their livelihoods?

For these reasons I urge you to support this motion with your heart and conscience for the sake of our comrades and their families. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Colleagues, if your region has been involved in the debate, I would much rather give other regions the opportunity, unless you are against. Danny?

BRO. D. FAITH (London): The last speaker talked about conscience and, frankly, in all conscience I cannot support the sentiments behind the composite. I want to make it clear from the start that we never judge our members by the industry that they work in. We support them regardless. We fight for their interests. We recognise that people do not choose the jobs that are available in the locations where they live but that does not mean that we automatically support the industries they work in and, frankly, I do not think I have heard a convincing argument to say that Britain expanding its nuclear arsenal makes the world a safer place. We do not have independent nuclear weapons; they are under the control of the Americans. Our military policy is entirely subordinated to the Americans and there is a 50% chance that the head of the American military in about a year's time, the man who will have his finger on their button and on the button of the British nuclear weapons, will be Donald Trump. How is that a safer place for the world to be?

The other point is about jobs. I spend my life as a GMB rep fighting against redundancies and I recognise the arguments that are there about jobs. There are two points here. Firstly, I do believe it is possible with imagination to talk about the money that could be spent on schools, hospitals, and on care homes, rather than being spent on nuclear weapons. The second point is that I think we as a union are capable of coming up with a strategy which finds jobs, yes, skilled, well paid, secure jobs, that are there for people to fight for peace rather than for killing people. For that reason, my conscience is that I not only do not vote for it myself, I hope there is opposition to this composite as well. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

SIS. N. DANCEY (Southern): Speaking in opposition of Composite 11 but in favour of Motion 164. David is not alone. I am not going to talk about the rights and wrongs of Trident. I do not think that is what either of these motions are about. We have an

existing policy that supports Trident, end of story, and neither of these motions actually have the opportunity to overturn it or change it.

What we have are two motions one of which is trying to solidify a policy that we have already got, most of the motion is actually a pious motion, it is asking us to restate our position to the Labour Party Conference, which I am sure we would do anyway. However, what it is doing is increasing the conflict that we have with the Labour Party and whatever your thoughts of Corbyn or the Labour Party itself, we all know we do not want another Tory Government. We need to be united as a Trades Union Movement with the most positive trade union friendly Labour leader that we have had in a very long time.

I think the other motion, Motion 164, is positive, it allows us to have a constructive debate in solidarity, in our own union, in the Labour Party, and across the political left. I urge you to vote against Composite 11 and vote in favour of Motion 164. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nikki.

BRO. D. WEBSTER (Northern): Composite 11. I am a Labour councillor and I have been going out these last three years trying to get votes for the Labour Party. The last time I went out was for the local elections and all I got was, "I am not voting for that man. I will lose my job." They are talking about Jeremy. This was a local election and we lost votes because of Jeremy Corbyn. I will support Jeremy as the party leader, even though I disagree with some of his views. I therefore ask Jeremy that he agrees and progresses current Labour Party policy and supports Trident and not his own agenda. I thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, do not go very far because I need to call you. This is the last speaker. Southern, you have already had two goes at the cherry. If you are speaking against – don't give me that look. Go on, then, quickly!

BRO. A. ALLEYNE (Southern): I am backing up basically what Nikki just said. I have spoken to a number of colleagues because I am particularly concerned as to what I heard elsewhere in the Congress, in social gatherings, that there are some colleagues here who are actually a bit timid about expressing an opinion on this. I am worried because the things that make us good at our jobs are what we are lacking in this debate, a healthy disrespect for status and actually question things, whether it be employers or whatever it is, governments. I think with 164 it sets out clearly that we should have a grown-up debate. It is not shutting it down; have a grown-up debate. It does not mean that people who are against it are not patriotic. We are. I count myself as one of them. Please let's not rubber-stamp it. Please let's not start slinging accusations at each other and silly jibes. Let's have a grown-up conversation and address the facts. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Okay, colleagues, I think we have had a fair and open debate and words spoken at this rostrum have been the members' words, not ours. I now ask Gary Smith to respond on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. G. SMITH (Regional Secretary, GMB Scotland): Thank you, President. Speaking on behalf of the CEC on Trident and moving the qualification on Motion 164. Congress, the GMB's position on Trident is crystal clear. We support the fantastic members that we have who do the necessary skilled and valuable work maintaining Trident, many of whom are in this hall today. We support working class communities that are dependent on the prosperity provided by the Trident work, and we support the renewal of Trident and the full complement of four submarines.

Congress, the CEC is not opposing Motion 164 because we do not believe it actually seeks to change our Union's consistent position on the nuclear deterrent. The CEC does recognise that some people have a different view and oppose renewal and indeed call for unilateral nuclear disarmament. As a democratic and member-led trade union it is completely right that these views are held and they are held with due respect that they deserve.

I have to say, Congress, that the will of this our parliament has been consistent for many years and that is pro the nuclear deterrent and that is not going to change, I do not believe, here today.

Let's be clear about the actual debate over Trident and I have listened to some of the speakers. The truth is there is no debate to be had. It is happening and the work on the Successor programme is already going ahead. Those who believe that the Successor programme can be halted I am afraid are in utter denial, denial about the fact that the Tories won the General Election, denial of the fact that there is a parliamentary majority for supporting renewal and denial of the fact that mainstream public opinion does not support unilateral disarmament.

Meanwhile, in the real world, Congress, the realists among us have been campaigning for the jobs our members do and the yards and factories across this country maintaining the existing deterrent and manufacturing the Successor programme. Nikki, I have to say to you, our efforts to defend jobs have been undermined by a glut of diversionary and self-indulgent politics most particularly those that have taken place in the Labour Party. *(Applause)* The GMB warned against this divisive indulgence. We warned against the trap that the Tories have set us. At last year's UK conference we avoided the debate on Trident and we parked the Trident issue realising that this was a reality and that all we could do is be divided and get caught up in a debate which would ultimately be a total distraction.

Regrettably, however, at the Scottish Labour Party Conference last year the debate on Trident renewal was resurrected and Scottish Labour walked straight into a mess of its own making, handing the Tories and the SNP an open goal. I was at that conference and it was an utterly shambolic spectacle. Large sections of the labour Movement were lining up and arguing against the interests of organised labour and against the interests of working class communities like West Dunbartonshire, Fife, and the Upper Clyde. We were told by these savvy strategists that the anti-Trident policy was about the political positioning of Scottish Labour. Of course they talked about defence diversification, Danny, but all the time they have been talking they have not come up with a single credible alternative job, not a single job, never mind the issue of pay, pensions, and terms and conditions, employment for defence manufacturing workers. *(Applause)* Still that coalition of student politicians, middle-class radicals, and

ideological puritans, delivered an anti-Trident policy that went into the Labour Party manifesto, positioning the party directly against the interests of the very workers who should be its bread-and-butter.

Back slaps all around for the Scottish Labour political elite but I tell you, Congress, the chickens came home to roost on Thursday, 5th May, when Scottish Labour was punished at the ballot box finishing third behind the SNP and the Tories; third place in Scotland and teetering on the brink of irrelevance.

What was not widely reported was that one of the three constituencies retained by Scottish Labour and probably the only one that could be classed a traditional working class seat in Dunbarton was won by Jackie Baillie, MSP, who spoke at a fringe meeting yesterday. Jackie is a GMB member. She campaigned against Labour's manifesto. She campaigned on a pro-Trident platform and in support of the workers employed at the Faslane base, and in doing so she won.

I think there is a very clear lesson, Congress. I heard of the interim report, the [Labour Party's defence review later this month, there is a warning here for Labour and the 2020 General Election. You cannot play fast and loose with the jobs and lives of working class communities and expect to win at the ballot box. (*Applause*)

Congress, our division, a division not created by the GMB, has been exploited by the Tory Government who have attempted to renege on their commitments to build a type 26 frigate programme at BAE Systems on the Upper Clyde. Our division has been exploited by the nationalist Scottish Government who want to use Trident as a diversion to keep attention away from the mess of the Scottish economy, from rising unemployment in Scotland and the debate about rising inequality in Scotland, and the division is a distraction from the real issues that we should be campaigning on, the crisis in our Manufacturing Sector, the savage cuts our Public Sector and the rising inequality that is being driven by austerity, these are the real issues affecting and concerning people up and down this country, employment, public services, and poverty.

Congress, GMB is in the business of jobs, of making those jobs organised and making them better, for our members, for the families, and for the communities, communities like Barrow, communities like Derby, communities like Fife, communities like Glasgow, communities like Plymouth, communities like West Dunbartonshire. I am proud to be in this trade union, a union that is unequivocally and unashamedly and unafraid to be on the side of our members and the defence sector, and you should be too. So, no ifs, no buts, GMB supports the renewal of Trident, support Composite 11, support 164, with the qualification for the CEC. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. I now move to the vote on Composite 11. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Against? That is carried. (*Applause*)

Composite 11 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to 164, does Southern accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, colleagues, and thank you, Gary.

Motion 164 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I move to the next point, I have a couple of announcements to make. I want to announce that Neil Derrick has not been here as you may have seen for the last couple of days. This would have been his first Congress as Regional Secretary but, sadly, he had to rush home as he got a call from his father to say that his mother had 24 hours to live. Sadly, his Mum died at 2 o'clock this morning. I would like to send our wishes and condolences to Neil and to his family, and to his brother and his family, and to his father, on behalf of this Union and this Congress. So sorry to give you that extremely sad news but I thought it was only right that you should know. Thank you, Congress.

Now, on a more cheerful note, I ask Dave Webster for one minute to address Congress on a very important issue in their hearts. Dave.

BRO. D. WEBSTER (Northern): Madam President, Congress, first time delegate, but second time speaker now! (*Applause*) Several months ago our Branch Secretary, Steve Forbes, had a minor accident that left him paralysed. He was taken to the North West Spinal Unit at Southport to receive treatment; whilst there he suffered a stroke. He has now been moved to a rehabilitation unit in Southport and he is making good progress and can now move using a walking frame, and he is at the stage just before he can be returned home. I would like publicly to thank Northern and North West & Irish for the assistance they have given his son Steve, who is a GMB member, and Steve's partner Wendy. Thank you very much. (*Applause*) Thank you, Congress, for your indulgence.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. *This* has not been claimed yet. It is a letter to the Alzheimer's Society. There is something in it. I will get it passed down to the stall and give it to them in case there is any money in it. Okay. Thank you.

I now move to item 11, Future Format of Congress. We will now come to the second of the new approach to Congress and I will hand over to the General Secretary to introduce how this will work. Tim.

FUTURE FORMAT OF CONGRESS

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thanks very much indeed, Mary. Thanks everybody. Hopefully, you will recall when I addressed you earlier on that we would have this discussion/debate. We need to look at the future of Congress, the shape that it looks like, what we should rule in and rule out, but just to reiterate what I said when I moved the General Secretary's Report the other day, the two things that are absolutely not even up for discussion is that we will have a Congress every single year and that it is you the members, the activists, the delegates, who will make every single decision in the GMB. So, let me be absolutely clear and unequivocal about that.

Other than that, Congress is a very long week. We understand that. Literally, we are starting this discussion at a quarter past five and I am very mindful that people will have one eye on the exit doors, and your rooms, and functions you may have this evening. But I just thought it was essential to hear from you about what your thoughts are. Again, not as what we have now and trying to tinker around, but assuming we created Congress from tomorrow what would we want it to look like. So, Mary, I do not want to say anything else apart from to hand over to people, come to your mikes and make some contributions, please.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. I understand there are mikes set up. I will go round the regions. London? Then will GMB Scotland come up to the nearest mike.

BRO. A. COPSEY (London): As a first time delegate, what I have seen here this week absolutely inspired me. However, one of the things I did find, Tim – I think it was Tuesday we shared in our successes which I am totally passionate that we should do – to do it at the end of the day and most certainly after the President’s Night, I feel there were a lot of delegates here who were really, really aching to get out of the room. It just went on and on and I feel in future Congresses it should either be in the morning or at the dinnertime session. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. GMB Scotland.

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): President, GMB Scotland welcomes the commitment to Annual Congress. GMB Scotland would never accept anything less. A previous General Secretary took Annual Congress out of our hands and Paul Kenny, god bless him, reinstated Annual Congress and our union benefited greatly as a result of this. A debate on the future shape of Congress is welcome but let’s be clear, we are an industrial trade union, and experiences and needs of our members must always be the priority of this Congress. Fellow delegates, it is our Congress, we will never surrender the right to debate and shape our union’s policy and this, the supreme policy making body of our union, we cannot and indeed we will not accept neutering of our Congress like Labour did where we were talked at and talked down to by the great and the good.

Congress, GMB Scotland welcomes debate but this must remain our Annual Congress, where we, as was quite rightly said, the lay members democratically determine our policies. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. North West & Irish and Midland & East Coast.

BRO. D. HENRY (North West & Irish): President, Committee, I mentioned it yesterday at the Public Sector Conference, the Public Sector is used by every member in this room, whether it is commercial or whether it is manufacturing, so at the Public Sector Conference everybody should be in attendance. You can have the separate ones but we need everybody in the room when it is Public Sector. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dougie. Midland?

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): One or two points which we discussed at our pre-Congress. The difficulty that you must obviously notice from the top platform is empty seats. That is almost before you get to Congress. There is the definite problem with this somewhere down the line and what needs to happen, in the opinion of the Midland & East Coast Region, is that when somebody is congratulated with that letter that comes through the door to tell them that they are a Congress delegate, that if there is a belief, and it can be covered by the letter, that that person is going to have difficulty getting time off to attend Congress, then they should engage with the Branch, the Regional Officer, or whoever, to ensure that time off for trade union activity in these difficult times can still be assured. It is clear to me there is a lot of empty seats.

The Midland & East Coast Region feel that a move to industrial rather than sectional conferences provides a clearer definition between the industries concerned in Congress, the democracy, the debate, the dignity and treatment of workers. What or where, we said, is Congress policy? The location of the infamous dark hole down which motions disappear needs to be known to Branch Secretaries so that when they are being informed, "We want a motion on this," that, or the other, and it usually goes to the Branch Secretary, so that we do not get motions in their hundreds ruled out as Congress policy, we need to have access to that information. At the present moment in time, as a Branch Secretary, and I am going to be told wrong if I am, I do not believe that that is actually openly available.

One other item, President, the General Secretary was being reported by the Tory press in recent times, and I think or we think that the lady that you criticised should be invited to Bournemouth. She should have a first-class day return, Waterloo to Bournemouth, I do not suppose it will cost too much, and this way the entire Congress can have a go. It could be a little uncomplimentary here. Not only can it be reported, we can justify the words and save Tim getting the barracking for it. We all supported what you said, not just a few. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Yorkshire and Birmingham.

A DELEGATE: Can I just add to that? I think it should start earlier because I do not know about everybody else but I cannot sleep when I get away from home. I would like it to start half an hour earlier and finish half an earlier too. (*Applause*) We have our functions and everything else to do later on in the day and we find it very short time. I would rather start at 9 o'clock and finish half an hour earlier. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks. Yorkshire and Southern.

A DELEGATE: Now, before I get lynched this was actually wrote before the debate on Trident as well. We are all passionate with our views and we all support social justice, but I feel there is as lot of time spent duplicating so yesterday in our sectional conference there were three motions moved and the flowers opened. Lots of people got up to speak all fully supporting the motions raised and later everybody voted in favour. The process, though, took about an hour and this led to a delay in the proceedings. Our colleagues who were speaking later were addressing a quiet room because a lot of the visitors and everybody else had left. The suggestion would be

that a motion is moved and seconded, and then only if delegates have an opposing view that it is opened up for debate. This may free some time to get to hear success stories from other activists, like smart metering, or more inspiring stories like that from Margaret Aspinall this morning. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. T. HOOD (Southern): I would just like to say that I really, really enjoyed Congress and I feel really empowered so when I get back to work I am really ready for these people, but what I would like to see is one conference and not sectional conferences. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Birmingham, Wales & South West.

BRO. W. JUSS (Birmingham & West Midlands): We consulted each member of our delegation and we have a number of proposals to make. Some of those have already been mentioned and Tim alluded to some of those points in his introduction.

First of all, we think that Congress could be shorter. It could be run effectively over a shorter period of time. Not only will that save everyone's time but I think it will be more efficient. Secondly, there was a suggestion that there should be a limit on the number of motions put forward by each region but then some others thought that there should be no limit, so there is a split opinion on that. We think that timing throughout Congress could be stricter so that we can get more done and finish on time. If we have fewer guest speakers then there will be more time for delegates to take part. This is a delegates conference. (*Applause*) Also, as someone else mentioned, the sectional conferences can be held, should be held, separately to Congress. (*Applause*) Finally, perhaps social media could be used a bit more to make communication more effective. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Wales & South West Region.

BRO. M. BOWLER (GMB Wales & South West): It is my first time as a delegate to Congress and I found it exhausting. It has gone on far too long. I think it is unhealthy with the amount of time we are sat in the hall but, more importantly, it is unfair on those resolutions at the end of the day when people are not focusing enough to be paying attention. I am in favour of seeing more sectional conferences on a different day, where perhaps you could debate things but when we get the resolutions that will be composited by different regions we must have the confidence that if they need to be ratified at Congress they can be ratified without debate, unless there is a question or an objection to bring to the floor.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Northern. Have I already had Northern? No?

BRO. D. LEYLAND (Northern): Has it been considered having regional quotas of motions so that we have more industrial and technical matters relevant to our workplaces across the UK. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Thank you. Is there anyone else wants to make any comments?

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): I did not hear. I am a bit deaf. What I was going to say, every year when I have come to these Congresses the thing I find most interesting is the fringe meetings as well. I have been saying for a few years some of the people you invite are very professional, explain everything in detail, and some of the debates at these fringe meetings are fantastic. I think that it could be filmed for GMB, for other people who do not really know what is going on within the GMB, they could be edited and monitored so that you can cut all the rubbish out if someone has got a bit naughty or whatever. I think they are a good learning one like the Cuba, the Blacklisting, Show the Red Card, loads of them. They are fantastic. *(Applause)* We have had speakers. I think it is about time we filmed them, put them on our websites, and let people see what the union really does and have these fringe meetings done even more professionally, which you cannot get any better. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Yes. Don't complain to me about leaving late because I am giving you democracy!

BRO. J. DONOVAN (Southern): I will be very quick. As I said it has been my first Congress so I have really thoroughly enjoyed it and I do really feel very enthused about it. There are two points I have. I notice, I have a mobile phone myself, a lot of people have iPads. We need to have some sort of chargers possibly on the desks so that people can literally have their phones charged up or iPads. I can imagine some people are ending up with running out of power. Obviously there are people who have had the little charger, did very good business, but that is mostly because all the phones have been going down, and everything else. That is possibly something for the future as we are supposed to be 21st century.

Another thing I was going to say was, very, very quickly, I just think possibly we ought to have some way of getting back to all the other members, like a film about Congress. You do get a few comments from people saying, "Are you off on a beer jolly for a week?" I can assure you, I am worn out doing this week. I know we have had some good times but, nevertheless, it is hard work and I think we all do hard work whether it is on your side of it or actually on the delegates' side of it as well. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Colleague, on the Pellacraft stall they are selling those for Little Alfie, the chargers, which are a fiver.

BRO. J. DONOVAN: I've got one.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. Thank you. Who is next?

SIS. S. HURLEY (London): We are very much in a world of technology and that is continuously changing. I would like to see GMB look into ways where the documents that we use can be supplied in an online forum. For instance, we look at the online agendas, they are quite large, and if you maybe email that type of document it may cause a crash or block up your emails. If there is some sort of online forum or platform which could be accessed by the members, by the delegates' membership number where they can access all the daily agendas, the final agenda, and just be coming around an iPad and having that sort of open online forum would benefit us. I

ask you to look at those types of IT technologies and bring them in for the next Congress, please. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Sarah.

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, I would like to suggest a more sensible and effective structure moving forward, this would be to take the sectional conferences out of Congress and revert back to a specific industrial conference where all their own businesses could be debated and agreed before being forwarded to Congress by the three sections. This is more sensible, effective, and democratic way forward. It would be more inclusive for our activists because they would only be debating their own industry and not those of the whole section. Those attending would work in the industry and most likely would be different to the members attending Congress, so it would be more inclusive.

The current system makes Congress feel disjointed. You start Congress, then you split, and then you come back. It is not a 21st century GMB, it is a keep calm and carry on. We are not one of the calm and quiet trade unions. We are the activists' trade union. Now, activists need their industrial activities structured. Ten years ago we needed seriously to consider what we could afford to keep and what could go and prioritise what we really needed to spend of the little money that we did not have because then we were in the red. Now the union is consistently living within its means, now is the time to reconsider to bring back the industrial sector conferences. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bill.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): I have a couple of observations from delegates. We felt that maybe it is time to look again at the section conferences. I think the other thing was that some of the section conferences had some brilliant input by activists and if the object of the exercise is to increase democracy for the Movement, which is the purpose of this Congress, then we need to make sure those stories are heard in the wider audience. I think there have been some brilliant contributions and we need to find ways of actually projecting those further.

The other thing is the amount of paper we are producing. We value the tremendous paperwork from this union, brilliant paperwork. However, there are a lot of us who use technology and I think we need to revisit that and look about downloading documents, having it available to us and then maybe limiting the amount of paperwork. Like the daily agenda could be sent to us on email, or on the pdf with a limited number of copies available. By the time we leave tonight, and every night, there will be a whole forest waiting on the tables to be cleared away and put in the bins.

The other question was in terms of using the technology more effectively to make sure we get those messages across, maybe more use of the audio/visual in terms of the presentations that are done in Congress that could be used further afield.

Those are some of the changes we have. I think the underlying principle that the delegates were saying is whatever we do has to extend and increase the democratic

remit of this Congress and the delegates sat in this room. This is a delegates Congress and that must never be forgotten and that is an important priority that has to fuel the whole process, more engagement, more participation, and more ability for this Congress to speak and to be inspired by those who are doing the work. If it is meant to be 21st century, then I think it needs to be activist led and we must not lose sight of that principle, and whatever it is in terms of reducing Congress it should not be reducing the democracy of the lay membership. That is vital. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone else?

A DELEGATE: I just want to say that with the motions that are now ruled as existing policy every year, is there a review on how long they become existing policy, in other words, things move on, what was relevant when they were initially debated may not be relevant at the present time. This not only affects Congress but every other conference that we have as well. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. H. VICKERS (London): Mine actually fits quite well with what Kevin was saying about getting better participation and engagement from all the delegates. This has been my first Congress and it has been amazing. It has been awesome to hear from all of you. I am in awe of a lot of what you are doing and all the battles you are fighting. When we are all sat in a room like this there is not much opportunity for people to speak and discuss. It is a lot of just being talked to. I think it would be brilliant if we could have some breakaway sessions where we have workshops, so we actually get a chance for the people across the union, across the regions, to get together and talk about aspects, like mental health, equality, we could have sessions where we split off and discuss those. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I think that is all. Tim.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you very much. Has everybody had their say? Has everybody who wants to have a say had their say? Okay. Thank you very much. I will try and pick them up, every single point by point.

Andrew, first time delegate, been inspired; that is fantastic, I take your point entirely. I am very grateful that you said that you like the successes session but just like this session, if you have it at the end of the day, and I will come back to this kind of recurring theme, what's the time now, there you go, half past five. Half past five, what time are we due to finish, half past five. So, we are now getting another session like this that is going to be crammed in. I dare say, and I will be bold enough to say, I bet if this session was 11 o'clock we would probably have another round of contributors to have their say. The fact it is half past five, people are saying, "Well, I'm looking at the exit door."

Charlie in Scotland, industrial experience, needs of the members, this is the supreme body. No one has ever said it is not. No one has ever said that that will change. In terms of nurturing what we do and the fantastic work that members do, and moving motions and creating policy in this Congress, I could not make it more abundantly clear that the senior management team and the CEC will never, ever, ever move away

from that. We have to be honest with ourselves about how we achieve that and whether in this exact forum, starting at half past 9 on a Sunday morning, and finishing, if we are lucky, at half past five on a Sunday night, and a Monday night, and a Tuesday night, and a Wednesday night, and then goodness knows what time on a Thursday, and then to use David Lascelles' right analogy, we wonder why there are empty seats, and someone else said, if people get problems with time off we should ask the employer and work with them, of course we will work with them, but how many employers in this day and age would allow people to have that time off to come here. That is part of the issue in this part of the realistic problem. I am happy because I am employed by all of you to sit there all day long, for ten weeks if you like, but is that really building the union?

Dougie, your issue about the Public Sector, we talked about it yesterday and I agree with you. The reality of life is that public services, our public services, are used by us all, so issues that are debated in the Public Services Section Conference impact on us all one way or t'other. So, even if you are a member of commercial services or manufacturing, they will impact on us all, and we talked about that yesterday and I agree with you, mate.

David, I kind of picked up your empty seats bit. We do have definite problems and I do think that industrial conferences, industrial sector conferences rather than section will probably fit the bill better, and I will tell you why. Whether we like it or not, we have to find a way if we are a 21st century union of listening to the people that practise day in, day out, in your workplaces, what goes on, what the threats are, what the challenges are, what the opportunities are, what the strengths are, what our weaknesses are, what our gaps are. That includes our branch structure, our representative structure, our accompanying rep structure, our reps training, our education of our members, our learning abilities, our health and safety. I am not sure that is accurately reflected in our current three section structured conferences. I am talking about conferences. Here we are talking about our Congress and there is a debate going about whether we should have sectional conferences here or not. I will give you this assurance; we will not have sectional conferences next year. How's that?

Carol's point, we should start early and finish earlier? Some people will think that is wonderful, some people will think that is a disaster. It depends how late you are at the President's Night, or your various functions as to whether you think you want to start earlier and finish earlier, or you would want to start even later and finish later. I just think we are looking at it down the wrong end of the telescope. I honestly cannot justify in my own mind, I will sit here all day, but as I said I cannot justify in my own mind an annual congress, an annual congress, that has 320 motions every year, that starts at half past 9 on a Sunday morning and finishes at goodness what time on a Thursday night, every year? Really? And every one of those motions are building the union, really?

Liz, a lot of duplication, it takes me perfectly on to that point, a lot of duplication. Yes, there is and we do have, whether we like it or not, speaker after speaker all coming up in support. It has been moved. It has been seconded. Support, support, support, support. To use Liz's own words because I can, moved, seconded, then no opposition, it takes an hour. We should create more time for our successes, smart metering, Hillsborough, etc. I think that must be right.

Tina, one conference, not sectional next year, yes, as I said I think that is something the CEC can agree with. Well done. We have that.

Warrinder, shorter, more efficient, limit on the number of motions for each region: it is an idea, it is a suggestion. It is not a decision I will make. It is a discussion we will have with the Executive, of course, but is one idea unless we carry on with the 320 motions and you can go to your Elgin Marbles and give horses a wide berth, and 5p carrier bags. That in itself creates a problem. Someone said fewer guest speakers. If that is what Congress wants, that is what you will get. I am not sure that guest speakers are the real issue. I do not think we have had that many guest speakers here this week. The real issue is how many motions we are trying to cram into this space that is Sunday to Thursday night.

Mike, it is exhausting, it is unhealthy, it is unfair, resolutions at the end of the day do not get people's attention. I have to say I agree.

Darren, Northern Region, regional quotas on motions across the UK, okay, just mention that. Thank you for that. It is a point.

Brendan, fringe meetings are interesting, what a brilliant point. Get it filmed, cut out some of the rubbish, he said. I do not know quite what that would leave you with, brother, but seeing as I have spoken at most of them, what a brilliant, brilliant point. Yes, we should film those, yes, we should get them on the website, and on social media. You will know that that video that pre-empted my speech went out to all of our members that we have electronically. If we can do that, and it is not about me, it is about you, if we can do that then we can blooming well do exactly the same for fringe meetings. So Brendan, well done, and we will suggest it.

John, enjoyed it, enthused, chargers on the desks. We have these portable chargers. The problem with chargers on the desk is we have no power points underneath, mate; that is the difficulty. Whether we could have some sort of charger facility at the GMB office, or something like that, it is certainly worthy of consideration because it is a well made point, but you also said we need some way of getting back to the members because they think we are on a jolly. You know, it is only when you are here for a week, isn't it, that you realise what a jolly this isn't. It is anything but a bloody jolly. You understand how hard you work and we sit here, it is the first time I have sat here, Allan Wylie said to me earlier, "Blimey, it seems lighter up here than ever," and I said, "I don't know, mate, I've never sat up there." I have always sat down there. What I have done is watch you come up person after person after person, giving thought and commitment, brighten your speeches up, getting up and moving it, and it is hard work, and it is stressful, and it nerve-racking. Then, yes, we all go to our various functions and dos at the evening time. Some people think that is a big old jolly up, but it is vital. If I am going to build a 21st century union, I want you talking to you and you talking to you, and you asking you what is going on. We do that in the evenings because we do not have the facility to do it here so networking and exchanging ideas and friendship, and comradeship, and that video I said at the start of Congress, saying thank you for coming. Many of you first time delegates, it is astonishing how many of you have come up here and said "first time". The way you spoke with such elegance and bravery has been astounding. I said to you, you will

make friends that you will know and last for ever. You will do that in the bars in the evenings. That is part of Congress. As I keep telling my wife, I am expected to be in the bar till midnight every night. (*Laughter/Applause*)

Sarah's point, London Region, technology, documents, an online forum or platform. What a brilliant idea, Sarah. What a brilliant idea, absolutely easy for us to achieve. It comes on to another point that was made. The answer is yes. In the senior management team we have already discussed, and in the Congress working party we have already discussed how many trees we must chop down in previous Congresses. You will see a notable absence of all of the press cuttings where every single year the Regional Secretaries' trays were full of all these press cuttings throughout the week. We cannot do that any more. If people want to know what press releases we have done, go to the Congress Office and you will see that but you will see it in the press, you will see it in the papers.

Bill, sectional conferences outside of Congress, yes, I think that is a bit of a recurring theme and whether sectional conferences are the right way or the industrial sector conference I think that that is a point well made and someone straightaway, I heard someone say, "That's about cost. That costs half a million quid." Are we going to be an activists union or not? I am not going to sit there or sit in the SMT with my colleagues and tell you how you will organise your workplaces and how you will look after your members. You are going to tell us. If we genuinely mean that you are going to tell us, and we are going to build this union from our activists' base at the bottom, then cost, I am afraid, will have to be found. You very helpfully unanimously passed the contribution increase earlier and the return for that in quid pro quo is that we will invest in you, our activists. We have to find ways of listening to you and what you have to say. Frankly, I think industrial conferences are the right way. People who work in the industries that we represent, our members, today, tomorrow, tell us the challenges, tell us the threats, and we can resource you.

Kevin, North West and Irish Region, it was not about democracy, we have to get these brilliant messages out wider. You are absolutely right in what you said. I think, mate, as well, you talked about the paper stuff and the online platform. As I have already said, Sarah's idea I think is a great one. The use of technology as well to be more effective, all the online visual, I think we have started to move with some of that, as I said in my speech going out and all of that stuff, but it is much more about what we do here that can go out to our members. You said if it is not about democracy then we ought to challenge and ask ourselves about whether we should do it. I think that is the problem. That is also the problem with one of the questions, someone asked towards the end about existing policy, because we have come to the stage where because of this massive number of motions we get every single year, motions on issues that, frankly, we should debate are lumped to one side under existing policy so that we can make space to discuss stuff that is not. What you have is, to use just one example, we had a fantastic housing report that was adopted, I think was it last Congress or the one before – I cannot remember, either last year or the year before – a brilliant, extremely comprehensive report on housing, which was endorsed and adopted in every single sense. Now we have motions on housing that generally are lumped into the existing policy and not debated. The situation in housing is changing by the week. We are making way for that to discuss 5p carrier bags and replica football shirts. That is part of my problem.

So to answer Wales & South West question, no, we do not have any criteria that we go back and revisit existing policy. Someone else raised the question, how do we know what is existing policy, how do all of you know what is existing policy in the GMB? I will tell you what, we are going to change that and I have already spoken to Ida about how we are going to change that. Ida's role in working with me in the General Secretary's office and working with Paul before that has almost been 24/7 month after month trying to prepare and fit a quart into a pint pot for existing Congress and how it looks. I want that to change. Not only do we debate all of these motions on every single issue, whether it is building the union here or not building the union there, you rightly passed motions in the past to say that every motion that is adopted by Congress needs to be actioned. So, on 5p carrier bags, and the Elgin Marbles, someone has to action it; I do not know whether that means me going to Greece, or wherever the Elgin Marbles are, I do not know, but we have to action them. Then Ida has to demonstrate that we have actioned them. Then we need to report to every single person whose responsibility it is to action them. Congress, this is madness. What I have said to Ida is what I want Congress to do is to work on what is our core business, what is building our union, and then straight after this Congress, each Congress, I want her to produce a booklet: yes, online, but, yes, hard copy as well. That booklet will be in the bags of every single one of our thousands of activists so that in your workplaces you will get asked a question, "What is GMB policy on education?" "Yes, bang, there it is. "What is GMB policy on Trident?" We have just done that one. I think that is proper 21st century trade unionism, not hiding behind cramming the agenda with as much stuff as we can and really do we understand what we are here to achieve.

Harriet, controversial point, mate, but you are perfectly entitled to raise it, that is, workshops. I heard a bit of derision, "Ooh, that's back to the old Labour days." I am not sure that will be very well received. I am very mindful of other people's points about this should always be a delegates' conference, it should always be motion based, and that should always create and form our policy, and I am kind of sold to that. It would be wrong of me to dismiss your suggestion because your suggestion is as worthy as everybody else's. (*Applause*)

I hope, therefore, everyone has felt that they have had their say. We are here again tomorrow. If anyone has any other ideas, please have a chat to me, you can buy me a pint at midnight tonight, my wife won't mind, or give me some ideas tomorrow and I will look at them and work on those as well. There is lots of thought, lots of ideas, lots of suggestions, and lots of it very progressive and very helpful. I just hope you can see exactly where I and the SMT and the CEC are coming from on what will always be your conference, your union, and annually we will decide. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. With those last words, Congress is closed. Return in the morning at 9.30. Have a good time.

Conference adjourned.