

GMB

CONGRESS 2015

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SIS. MARY TURNER MBE

(President)

(In the Chair)

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Held in:

**Citywest Hotel, Conference and Event Centre,
Dublin**

on:

Sunday, 7th June 2015

Monday, 8th June 2015

Tuesday, 9th June 2015

Wednesday, 10th June 2015

and

Thursday, 11th June 2015

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY ONE

(Sunday, 7th June 2015)

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FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
SUNDAY, 7TH JUNE 2015
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. Firstly, I would like to thank the Black Ravens, who were playing as you came into the Hall. *(Applause)* I would also like to thank the Scoil Rince Seoige Dancers for their enthusiastic dancing. Colleagues, please give them a round of applause. *(Applause)* Congress, we will be making a donation to both of these groups a little later on. *(The President made presentations to the dancers)* Well done and keep it up. Just remember when you start work — are you listening to me, Claire? *(Laughter)* — you've got to join a union, and make sure it's the GMB. *(Applause and Cheers)* Well done. Thank you.

BANNER CEREMONY

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now move to agenda item no. 2, which will be our Banner Ceremony, which is the traditional opening of our Congress. This year Northern Region will be forming the Banner Party with the new National Banner, and we also welcome Regional Banners and the Unity Banner into the Hall. I call Congress to order for the Opening Ceremony. Congress, please stand to greet the National Banner. *(Congress was upstanding for the Banner Party to the singing and music of Jerusalem)* *(Applause)* Congress, let me thank all of the Banner parties who did a wonderful job. You made a marvellous entrance.

VIDEO MONTAGE

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we start Congress with a short video showing our events and campaigns from the last year. Please switch off your mobiles or make sure that they are on silent, because the fine is going up to £20 for each one I hear. So shop them. *(Video Montage shown)* *(Applause)* Did you enjoy that, colleagues? Is that not what we are about? *(Calls of "Yes")*

WELCOME FROM GERALD NASH TD

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you have seen a stranger on the stage, but he is no stranger to the people of Ireland or to this Union. Could I, please, welcome all delegates to Dublin and to the GMB Congress. We have a very special guest with us today, someone who really believes in trade unionism. In London and England, at times, we find that there are not many people who are on one side of the fence who do believe in it. However, he does. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you Gerald Nash, or can I call you Ged? We are at home. Ged is a Labour Minister in the Irish Cabinet. In July 2014 he was appointed Minister of State for Business and Employment with special responsibility for small businesses and collective bargaining. Do you remember that phrase?

Since his election in 2011 he has served as a member of the powerful Public Accounts Committee, he is a former member of Loud County Council and Droghada Borough Council and has also served as Mayor of Droghada. I call on Ged to say a few words. Please, Ged, will you address Congress. *(Applause)*

GED NASH: Thank you very much, indeed, Mary, and welcome home. Chairperson, delegates and friends, on behalf of the Government, on behalf of the Irish Labour Party and, indeed, on my own behalf, may I, first of all, offer you a very warm welcome to this the 98th GMB Congress, but only its second Congress to be held in Dublin. President and General Secretary, as a member of SIPTU, which is Ireland's largest general union, may I also wish you all a very safe journey home. Is it too early for jokes?

I had reason to reflect, colleagues, recently on what we are calling here in Ireland “the decade of centenaries”, during which we are commemorating significant events in Irish history that took place between 1912 and 1922. Among the events of the early 20th century that really shaped who we are today, we can list the foundation of my party, the Irish Labour Party in 1912 by the Irish Trades Union Congress, Dublin’s great lock out of 1913, the First World War, the Ulster Covenant, the Easter Rising of 1916, the foundation of the Free State and, of course, universal suffrage. In negotiating our way through and past the commemoration of these events can, of course, be difficult. Many of them, of course, are part of the common history of these islands, and some of them mark growing divisions in this island and the establishment of a separate Irish state, so they retain a potential for bitterness and divisiveness. Our approach is to mark what is important to each tradition in a tolerant, inclusive and respectful way, and to celebrate what is common to us all.

One legacy, colleagues, that is worth celebrating by the labour Movement is a product of the Great War, the war to end all wars. In the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 the warring countries agreed that universal peace can only be established if it is based on social justice. They warned that where conditions of labour involve injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people it can produce unrest so great as to imperil the peace and harmony of the world. They declared that an improvement of the conditions of labour was, therefore, urgently required. They listed, as examples, the regulations of hours of work, the regulation of labour supply, the prevention of unemployment, the provision for an adequate living wage, protection against workplace sickness, disease and injury, the protection of children, young persons, women and migrant workers and recognition of the principle of freedom of association. So they agreed to set up what we now know as the International Labour Organisation in order to achieve these objectives through binding international agreements. This part of the Versailles Treaty concludes by spelling out what they agreed as principles of, and I quote, “special and urgent importance”. Among the principles listed are the guiding principle that labour should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce; the right of association for all lawful purposes and the payment of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life. This treaty and its institutions have set the agenda for reforms and the conditions of labour at national and international level in the century that followed. The agenda of the labour Movement has become part of the human rights’ agenda, not just in Britain, Ireland and the European Union, but also, as some of your sessions later this week will reflect, throughout the developing world.

I firmly believe, delegates, that we need to re-dedicate ourselves to what they called at Versailles “the guiding principle that labour is never merely a commodity or an article of commerce”. What I mean by that is that labour isn’t just another input to be costed and factored into production at the cheapest available price or to be warehoused off site and then provided on a just-in-time basis. Labour is about livelihoods. It’s about arranging working lives, personal lives and personal finances. It is about having the wherewithal to plan for a future, for a family and a mortgage. It is about human dignity and human respect. Common to all of our agendas right now, no doubt, is the decline of the standard employment relationship and the increase in atypical work. The world of work is changing at a pace unknown to previous generations. This change presents challenges for employers, workers and their representative bodies, for employment law, for industrial-relations practitioners and for policymakers. Managing and responding to that change in the world of work is a shared responsibility. The challenge for all of us is how to do this while remaining true to our fundamental guiding principles.

Of course, Ireland, as you know, is a small and open economy. We recognise factors such as globalisation, the shift from manufacturing to services and the spread of information technology. We know that these changes have created sectors in the economy that place a premium on flexibility in the workplace. Our track record in this country at attracting foreign, direct investment and high-quality jobs illustrates the ability of our labour force to respond to the changing needs of a massively

competitive global marketplace. But we do need to emphasise that in all of this innovation the basic requirements of a decent working life must be protected. Employment policy has always to strike the right balance between enterprises's need for flexibility with a worker's right to job security and to a basic level of predictability in the terms and conditions of work.

We also know that there are in the workplace some relatively low-skilled individuals who work, essentially, as casual day labourers. This is a phenomenon we have seen growing in this country. Non-standard terms and conditions can be imposed on the vulnerable, the low paid and those with little social protection, and this condition of insecurity can become permanent. We must, rightly, be concerned to ensure that whole cohorts of our workforce in precarious employment do not fall victim to low pay, insecure hours or enforced and bogus self-employment. An important aspect of this relatively new and growing phenomenon is that women are over-represented in non-standard employment that is poorly paid, insecure, outside or, at least, at the very edge of our employment protection laws.

Right now, of course, delegates, there is an increasing debate in Britain and in Ireland about zero hours and low-hour contracts. Again, we see at work the competing demands of flexibility, efficiency in human resource management, more resilience in downturns and greater competitiveness, on the one hand, versus insecurity, limited integration into the business, lower motivation and poorer work quality, on the other hand. I repeat, no doubt, for some workers, that flexibility can help in reconciling work and family life or studies and can serve for some as a stepping stone to enter into the labour market. But the inherent danger in all of this is that if it is more than just a stepping stone and becomes a permanent resting place, then we all encounter job and income security, lower job satisfaction and entrapment in a succession of short-term jobs with inadequate social protection. I have already said in this country that some of the contractual arrangements that have been foisted on people are, in my view, frankly perverse. Legislating for this phenomenon throws up all kinds of questions for government, for our society, both in Britain and Ireland, and for our economy. There are, however, questions that I have every intention of grappling with, and those of you who are familiar with my work in this audience will know that I will be presenting proposals to our Government this autumn about how we tackle those grotesque and perverse arrangements that are in nobody's best interests. *(Applause)*

Of course, we are all aware of the need to balance fair employment with the need to create jobs, but the bottom line is that workers need, and are entitled to, basic security in their employment in order to plan their lives. This Government — I have said it before and I'll said it again — with the Irish Labour Party at its heart, has made it clear that we are not going to preside over an economic recovery which involves a ruthless race to the bottom or the sacrifice of extremely hard-won rights that are rightly considered as the mark of a decent and progressive society. *(Applause)*

As economic recovery in this country takes hold, and as it accelerates, as it is at the moment, and as unemployment continues to fall at a rapid rate, we, as a Government, expect to see the benefits of our economic recovery being shared up and down Ireland, in every single city, town and village, by way of better working conditions and improved pay, particularly for low-paid workers.

I end, President and General Secretary, where I started, with the assertion that adopting for change will present a challenge to all stakeholders, but an individual's labour should never, ever, be regarded merely as a commodity or an article of commerce.

I want to thank you, delegates, for inviting me to attend here today. I hope you all have an extremely successful and fruitful few days. I know that this is just the second GMB Congress ever to take place in this country. I hope that this is not the last occasion on which we see you over the next few years. It would be discourteous of me, of course, not to hope that you have a successful few days, but I will

say, in conclusion, that some of us here in the hall today are hopeful of the right result in the England—Ireland match, taking place at lunchtime today. (*Laughter*) I won't take my hospitality to extremes. Genuinely, I hope you have a small amount of time during the next few days to enjoy what we have on offer here in Dublin. I understand that some of you may be, in fact, taking a little extra time off work to enjoy the sights, sounds and everything else that we have to offer right across the country.

Thank you, again, indeed, for your very kind invitation, Mary, and welcome home. Please enjoy the next few days of deliberation and debate with your union colleagues. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me say a very sincere thank you to Ged, the Minister, for such a lovely speech. You know, there is hope. May you bring that hope across to the other side of the water, Ged, this time, because maybe you will be able to convince the Government that we have in that fairness and respect is all we want in life, and no more. (*Applause*) Let me say how proud I am today to be *here* with my own Congress, as President, back home in Ireland, that I never thought we would ever achieve. I am so proud of this Union for saying that there are no barriers. The sea is not a barrier us. People are what we care about, and I thank you very much, indeed.

Please accept, with our love, the James Connolly book *The Reconquest of Ireland, The GMB at Work* — they are good bedtime reading. They won't cause nightmares, I promise — and, of course, we wouldn't let you go away without a bottle of our whisky that was made by our members in Scotland. Some are SNP members, but it is made by our members. (*Applause*) (*Presentation made amidst applause*)

What a difference, colleagues. That is what you call governing for all and not just for the few.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

THE PRESIDENT: Safety procedures. You will find details of the fire and evacuation procedures on page 135 in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide document. Please take time to familiarise yourself with the nearest exit.

WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND VISITORS

THE PRESIDENT: I would now like to introduce the members of the platform party. On my right, although not usually, is the Vice President, Malcolm Sage. Also on my right is Kathleen Walker Shaw, our European Officer, who does a marvellous job for us in Europe, and will also be assisting our Vice President. Welcome, Kath. (*Applause*) On my left, where he has been for a vast number of years, is our General Secretary and Treasurer, Paul Kenny. (*Applause*) Next to him is someone we depend on a great deal, and that is our Executive Policy Officer, Ida Clemo. Welcome, Ida. (*Applause*) And I am Mary Turner, sitting in the middle. (*Applause*)

Let me now welcome the following guests and visitors. We have three new General Member Auditors, who will be supervising the counting of votes, in case I haven't been to Specsavers this year. They are Andrea Warren from Southern Region; John Swainson from Northern Region and Andy Burgin from Midland Region. If you have any problems, just go and see them.

I would also like to welcome *ex*-Regional Secretary John Cope from the London Region (*Applause*) and Allan Garley from Wales & South West Region. (*Applause*) I now welcome the Regional Presidents. The first one doesn't need a car this year. His name is Vic Baines from Midland & East Coast Region. Vic, welcome back and we are glad to see you back in good health. (*Applause*) I also

welcome Andy Irving from the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region (*Applause*); Frank Rowberry, Wales & South West Region (*Applause*), and Pauline Hinks from Birmingham Region (*Applause*).

Of course, I welcome our verbatim shorthand writers, Phyllis Hilder and Michael Thear, who have done this job for as long as I can remember. Welcome again to you both. (*Applause*) We have not had any requests for signers this year, but if you require any assistance please go to the information desk.

Congress, this is a wonderful venue and this year you have plenty of room. Firstly, could I extend a very warm welcome to all first-time delegates. (*Applause*) Could I remind all delegates that all Congress sessions are transmitted live on GMB Congress TV, so, please, don't use any inappropriate language. This means that your speech will be shown live over the internet through the GMB National Website so, please, don't use any inappropriate language.

Make sure you remember to say your name and region clearly for the verbatim record, and so that your name can be shown on the screen. Please also mention if you are a first-time speaker.

Could I ask delegates to take a moment to check that you have the following three documents: the running order, the financial accounts and the gingerbread men and women. So it is all included for you. That is the order of business.

I will now give you information on Congress motions and rule amendments. *This* document gives you all the information that you require. Standing Orders, for example, will be coming here today. All Congress documents are printed on environmentally friendly paper.

There is free tea and coffee available from the Café in the main Exhibition Area. This has been sponsored by Pellacraft. Pellacraft has also sponsored the note pads in your wallet. Well done Pellacraft. Thank you. (*Applause*) I would also like to thank our other sponsors, who are UnionLine for Congress lanyards and wallets, LV for the refreshments in the hall, Digby Brown Solicitors for sponsoring the GMB Internet Café and the Peoples Operator for the Congress T shirts. Please make sure you visit the exhibition area.

ROLL CALL

THE PRESIDENT: Would all Regional Secretaries please notify the Congress Office of any changes to your delegation.

OBITUARIES

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the obituaries. I now call on Congress to stand in silence as a mark of respect for departed GMB delegates whose names will be shown on the screen. (*Congress stood in silent tribute*) Thank you, Congress.

TRIBUTE TO BILLY HUGHES

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to pay a special tribute to our dear friend and “worthy President”, Billy Hughes, the Northern Regional President who sadly passed away at the end of last year. This was a great shock to us and he will be sadly missed. Billy had been a figurehead of the trade union Movement for nearly three-quarters of a century. Do you know, colleagues, age has no barriers when you believe in justice, and Billy did exactly that. He was a much loved, admired and popular Lay member and will be remembered for his outstanding contribution to his Region as Regional President and as one of the memorable speakers at GMB Congress for many years. We

would like to welcome his niece, June Lowery-Kingston, who is in the Hall today here with the Northern Region. Welcome, June, and I will meet up with you later. (*Applause*) Delegates, we have now a video of some of Billy's antics at this Congress which delighted us all. (*Video shown*) Congress, that was a very short snapshot of Billy Hughes. There are hundreds more of them, and *that* finger went up many a time, but so did the handkerchief that he brought with him to cover the lights. I was proud to call him my friend and I was proud that he chose this union to continue his lifelong ambition for justice. Billy, we will never give up that fight for those with asbestos and plural plaque to get what is rightfully theirs. So I give you that promise.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Malcolm Sage): Could I inform Congress that the names of the Regional Tellers who have been appointed are now being shown on the screen. Could I, please, emphasise that Tellers must remain in the Congress Hall whilst Congress is in session and that the delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken. I will now give a demonstration on eligibility for voting: I would like everyone in the hall to put your hands up, please. Could the following now, please, put your hands down: visitors, guests, auditors, full-time officials, Regional Secretaries, National Officer and National Secretaries, GMB staff and members of the CEC. Only those of you who still have your hands up are eligible to vote at Congress. Thank you.

CONFIRMATION OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The members of the Standing Orders Committee and the CEC Observers are now being shown on the screen.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm, very much. Could I congratulate Helen Johnson on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for the eighth time. With her is Barry Smith.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Apologies for this report, Mary, but it is a bit longer this year. President and Congress, I am Helen Johnson from the Midland & East Coast Region speaking as SOC Committee Chair, formally moving SOC Report No. 1.

President and Congress, you will find a copy of SOC Report No. 1 in your Final Agenda at page 22. I, formally, move adoption of that report, and in doing so the SOC would like to thank delegates and their regional secretaries for agreeing 18 composite motions that also appear in your Final Agenda at page 105.

Would colleagues also note the long-standing guidelines for Congress business on page 17 of your Final Agenda. This will help all of you, especially new delegates, in understanding the procedures and guidelines that the President and the SOC work to.

Withdrawn motions: The SOC has been informed that the following 13 motions have been withdrawn: Motion 111, Work Station Legislation, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 140, Zero Hour Contracts, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 149, Labour Government to Introduce the Living Wage, standing in the name of London Region; Motion 154, Employment Agencies, standing in the name of Midland & East Coast Region; Motion 166, Outsourcing of Services, standing in the name of Midland & East Region; Motion 180, Impact of Spending Cuts on Local Authorities, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 216, Regional Regeneration Bank, standing in the name of Northern Region; Motion 220, Ethical Procurement Policies, standing in the name of Wales & South West Region; Motion 236,

General Election & Bye Election Ballot Papers, standing in the name of London Region; Motion 276, VAT on OAPs' Fuel Bills, standing in the name of London Region; Motion 297, Health, standing in the name of Northern Region; Motion 330, Industry Training Boards, standing in the name of Midland & East Coast Region, and Motion 353, Housing, standing in the name of London Region. Would Congress delegates please note that if any further motions are to be withdrawn during the week, the following procedure must be adhered to: you must notify you regional secretary, the regional secretary should then inform the SOC in writing that the motion has been withdrawn and the SOC will then report the matter to Congress so that all delegates will be aware of the position and will be able to follow the Congress Agenda.

Existing policy motions: President and Congress, in accordance with Congress decisions adopted since 2008, the SOC is recommending that motions which are existing policy are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate. The Central Executive Council has advised the SOC which motions are in line with existing policy, and the SOC has accepted this advice and is recommending that these are put to Congress without the need for debate. These existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 at page 23 of your Final Agenda. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC, which is at page 122 of your Final Agenda. The letters "EP" also appear beside each motion in the Final Agenda.

Motions out of order: The SOC has ruled that the following motions are out of order for debate. Motion 37, Full Time Officers. This motion calls for all full-time officers to be regularly elected after a period of five years. This would require amendment to rule 17 to put this into effect. This is because, with the exception of the positions of General Secretary and Treasurer, full-time officials are appointed under rule 17, subject to the authority of the CEC. No rule amendment has been proposed. Therefore, the motion is out of order for this reason.

Motion 55 has been ruled out of order, Mobilising the Community. The motion calls for a campaign to mobilise the unemployed and retired members through a 25p a week community membership scheme with reduced benefits to be agreed by the CEC. This would require amendment to rules as rates of contributions and the level of benefits are set by rules 45 and 48 respectively. No rule amendments have been proposed. Therefore, the motion is out of order for this reason.

Motions overtaken by events: Congress, there are a small number of motions remaining on the Final Agenda which may have been overtaken by events. These are the motions that call upon an incoming Labour Government to take action. The SOC has raised this matter with the regions concerned and has invited them to meet the SOC to discuss the position before any decisions are taken on whether these motions should still be debated. The SOC will report back to Congress with any recommendations in due course.

Emergency motions: The SOC has accepted an emergency motion as being in order for debate and this is Emergency Motion No. 1: Save the British Steel Pension Scheme from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. This is on page 129 of the Final Agenda.

President and Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 1. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen, does any delegate wish to speak on any of the SOC recommendations?

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am calling for Motion 55, Mobilising the Community, to be referred back to the agenda. The reason why that is because I have been a member of the GMB for two years now, but I am under employed and on a zero-hour contract. For me, I believe that the GMB is a working union, but I am in favour of a community membership

scheme and I think that we should bring forward a rule. That is my reason for it being referred back. I am a first-time speaker, by the way. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to speak? (*No response*) Helen.

SIS. H. JOHNSON: President and Congress, with regard to Motion 55, the SOC does not debate the content of the motion. It merely looks at whether or not, by using the existing rules, if it is appropriate, it can be placed before Congress. Our belief is still that it does not meet the requirements, and therefore we believe it is out of order.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Congress, I now put the SOC Report No. 1 to the vote. All those in favour, please show?

SOC Report No. 1 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Now I am going to move the reference back. On the reference back, which is Motion 55, how does Congress vote, for or against? Is that for? Will you put your hands up? Okay. Let's make it simpler. Who wants to accept reference back on Motion 55? Please show. All those against, please show? That is lost.

The call for reference back on Motion 55 was LOST.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen and Barry.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, it now gives me great pleasure to call our President, Mary Turner, to address Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to give a warm welcome to all delegates, visitors, staff and exhibitors. I'd particularly like to welcome all the first-time delegates, and we have just heard one, and we are delighted to see so many of you here.

Colleagues, last year GMB celebrated 125 years since the union was founded. Just a couple of years after our founding we heard our first Congress here in Dublin — it is fantastic to be back. Traditionally, we look back on the year, and something we cannot do without mentioning is the passing of Billy Hughes. I will miss my title of 'worthy President' and his hankie over the light. Billy was a devoted campaigner and trade unionist who fought tirelessly to defend our members. As you saw, we have honoured him today.

Congress, it has been a very busy year. From our successful "Britain needs a Pay Rise" tour with stars Jacqui Abbott and Paul Heaton to the TUC march last October, to launching our very own YouTube channel GMBTV and smartphone app. We've fought for our members on the shop floor, now on the airwaves and on the streets, and we've grown as a union. In April we finalised a transfer of engagements with Stoke-based ceramic union, "Unity" — a union with a very proud history and a very bright future too. I would like to welcome their President, Tommy Dawkins, and our three new CEC members from Unity: Lynn, Karen and Peter, who are here with our Birmingham delegation today. Welcome to you. (*Applause*) We're delighted that you are here. We know that you share the commitment for fairness and social justice that is the bedrock of the trade union Movement. On that note, I would like to congratulate North West & Irish Region, who are our hosts for this Congress. You were the first region to hold a "fracking" conference in Blackpool to debate a very hot topic,

hearing from scientists, politicians, environmentalists and industry experts. We know that this is an emotive issue. We will be debating it tomorrow with our CEC statement.

Paul — Paul McCarthy — your region put justice at the top of our agenda with the “Campaigns for Justice” conference where we heard from the Hillsborough Family Support Group, Blacklisting Support Group, Durham Miners, Remploy Workers, the Shrewsbury 24, and the Cammell Laird workers as well as from Andy Burnham, Kathleen Walker Shaw and Tom Watson. Nationally, we have put justice front and centre too. Equal access to justice has been a fundamental right in Britain since the Magna Carta.

Congress, 800 years later we are still fighting for our right to justice after the Coalition Government’s attack on legal aid and the right to have free tribunals.

Last year GMB launched our own legal service for members. Unionline came about through a lot of blood, sweat and tears but we are proud that the very first trade union law firm is not only up and running but helping our members every day. There will be more on that on Wednesday, when we help to celebrate their first birthday and we blow out the candles. Congress, justice goes hand-in-hand with equality. I am proud that 50% of our members are now female. (*Applause*) Regions have held women’s conferences, some for the first time. Our National Equality Conference took place in Leeds and there will be more this afternoon about the Women’s Project. We are proud to pay tribute to our own June Minnery and Sheila Bearcroft, who served this year as president of the STUC and the Wales TUC. We congratulate June and Sheila.

Our new office in Reading has been named after Eleanor Marx to commemorate her special place in GMB history. The year just passed will also go down in the history books as the year same sex marriage became legal in England and Wales and, Congress, now Ireland. (*Applause*) How fantastic to be here this week so soon after this country became the first in the world to pass marriage equality by a national vote. Well done, Ireland. (*Applause*) I want now to make a comment on something that I do care about, which is that if we want real equality, then we must have it. I believe it is now time for Ireland to give women the right to choose. (*Applause*)

But that wasn’t the only referendum this year. In Scotland we took part in an historic referendum on independence. GMB Scotland bravely took a position to campaign for our union to stay together and, thankfully, that was the result on the night, but not the end of the issues. The rising tide of nationalism saw the SNP sweep to victory in Scotland at the general election, costing Labour vital seats in the contest. When SNP Dundee City Council recommended awarding a contract to the blacklisting firm “BAM”, we saw what the SNP could mean for our members. It should be “BAM WHAM”, shouldn’t it? A debate which engaged the public like never before must now turn to a debate how Scottish Labour can rebuild as a party.

At the same time, we will choose a new Labour Party leader and deputy leader across the whole of the UK. We’ll be joined by the candidates on Tuesday, when delegates will have a chance to put questions to them. What they are facing is no small challenge. The ink was barely dry on the ballot papers before David Cameron launched a new attack on trade union members and our right to have a voice in politics. Over the last five years we saw the Gagging Act, changes to legal aid and voter registration. But, Congress, we have seen nothing yet! This Government are trying to restrict our political fund to stop our members having a say in politics while fat cats in the City of London use their slush fund, hedge funds to prop up their friends from Eton. They’re going to tell us we must meet strike ballot thresholds when precious few of them would meet such a test at their own election result to Parliament. And they’re going to make it legal for agency workers to break strikes.

Congress, we know what they're in it for. We know who they represent. They tell us that they are the party of working people. Did we say we mustn't use bad language because this Congress is going out on the airwaves? Well, they talk such a load of shit, I've never heard the like of it. *(Applause)* The point is that this is just the beginning. They are looking to axe entitlement to housing benefits for young people which will mean young people on the street. They will reduce the cap on benefits and turn more schools into academies. We didn't get the result we wanted but, as ever, we don't mourn. We organise and we will continue to fight for better pay, better housing, better rights at work, better opportunities for our young people, and that 16 and 17 year old should have the right to vote in the referendum. It is their future. *(Applause)*

Congress, as the NHS is forced to make cuts, everyone will feel it. Are you listening, lads? To cut costs — if you're a man and you're living in Essex — they have decided that you will have to pay for the snip. There will be no free vasectomies — you will have to pay — and also they are denying women fertility treatments. They will be very closely at it. This Union has defended the NHS for all of its life, and we will take on zero-hours employers, who make their millions on the backs of insecurity, poverty and fear. And we will fight for a Europe that works for our members and a Europe that defends our rights at work, not the employers' right to exploit. We will be very, very clear in the months ahead as the debate about Europe hits the headlines. We will stand up for all workers. We do not blame those who are exploited, we damn those who exploit. *(Applause)* Congress, we've got a packed agenda. I'm proud to welcome you to Dublin to experience it, and would like to extend a warm welcome to Brendan Barber — he won't believe I'm saying this — the Chair of ACAS, Gilbert Bermudez from Costa Rica and Richard Moore on the Crossfire project.

As always, delegates, I am proud of our long history, proud to be President of the GMB and of our growing powerful union. Together, we can take on any battle, and I've got a feeling this year we'll take on a few more.

Congress, before I finish my speech, I would like to thank my Region for the support that they have given me and my family over a difficult year. I would also like to thank those on the platform and staff in this Union, and to you who have contacted me on several occasions. Most of all, I would like to thank my family for the support that they have shown, because without your family you can't do this job if you really believe in it. To my daughter upstairs, thank you. *(Applause)*

So I leave Mr Cameron with this message. Who do you think you are kidding if you think this Union's on the run? You know where it is coming from. We'll play your little game, because we ain't going anywhere. *(A standing ovation)*

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. I now call on Eddie Marnell, CEC member from the North West & Irish Region, to give the Vote of Thanks to the President.

BRO. E. MARNELL (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I move this Vote of Thanks to Mary. I am delighted to be standing *here* to be delivering the Vote of Thanks to Mary, our National GMB President. It is a privilege to be speaking in Dublin, the country of Mary's birthplace. If ever there was a working-class hero, then it is Mary Turner. She has never forgotten her roots. Throughout Mary's involvement in the union and politics, Mary told it as it was and was always right in her judgments. I can speak personally of Mary's help and campaigning for Cammell Laird going back to the days when myself and 36 comrades served time in Walton Prison for being on official strike. Mary was instrumental in organising the union to show solidarity at the prison in person. Whenever I have meetings now some 30 years later, the men always refer back to Mary and her continuing support for the men and their families. May I thank you, our worshipful sister. You had more fighting

commitment to our cause when others didn't. I can only say you certainly did keep the Red Flag flying, and Jim Connell himself would be proud to know of your continuing support.

It would be remiss of me not to mention your old sparring partners, Billy Hughes and John Toomey. Like me, boilermakers both. They are sadly missed by family and trade union friends alike. I am sure that many people will remember them this week in thoughts and words. I would also like to mention Tommy Webb, another son of Ireland, who was the oldest member to be imprisoned back in 1984. Tommy was born in Dublin in 1923, and lied about his age to join the Royal Navy. He spent the whole of the Second World War on convoy duty in the Atlantic. He died in abject poverty and was to be buried in a pauper's grave. However, his comrades, in rally round, who made sure that he had a fitting send off and his assets were scattered on the Mersey in the presence of friends and colleagues.

Mary, on a lighter note, I understand that a while back you decided to go on holiday to Tipperary. What a surprise that was for Denny. He was so surprised that he had to borrow a tie and jacket of George to make it to your wedding blessing in the church in Tipperary. Apparently, all your family and friends kept the secret from Denny.

In finishing this Mary, throughout your time and involvement with the union and Labour Party, you have kept the faith in the common good of the people. It would be nice at this year's Labour Party leadership hustings if a candidate emerged with your values, your integrity and your socialist beliefs. Have a great week. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Eddie, let me say thank you. I was proud to do what I could. You still haven't had justice but we have not forgotten. We are still going, and you have been a party to that, too. Well done.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, you have adopted rules for the Congress, so I will move on. I thank Malcolm for having taken the Chair. Before we begin our first debate, I would like to explain a few points of procedure. Please listen carefully. To save time I will take motions in groups. Your session programme will show the grouping. When I call a motion, can the movers and seconders and anyone who wishes to speak come up to the chairs *here* in front of the rostrum. So when I call the group of motions, you can all come up. This will save a great deal of time. I will call the movers and seconders and then anyone who wishes to speak on each motion. At the end of a group, I will call the CEC speaker to reply rather than deal with each motion individually. Where the CEC is supporting a motion, I will advise Congress. Where the CEC has another position, for instance, support with qualification or refer, the CEC speaker will give the reasons for their decision. I will then move to a vote of all motions in that group. Where there are no speakers against the motion, I will call for the votes on motions in a block. Should any Congress delegate wish me to take a separate vote on individual motions, please make that fact known to me when you come to the platform.

Finally, could I remind Congress that a large "X" in front of a motion in the Final Agenda and programme means that the SOC has ruled the motion "Out of Order" as reported in SOC Report Number 1. Existing policy motions are marked in the Final Agenda with a large "EP" against them. These, as outlined by SOC Report No. 1, will not be listed in the detailed programme as they will not be debated.

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS

CEC rule amendments can be found on page 117 in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide, and the CEC is supporting all of these.

THE PRESIDENT: I call on the Vice President to move CECRA1 Rule 4, CECRA2 Rule 29, and CECRA3 Rule 35.13.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, before I move the motions, I hope you enjoyed the platform's demonstration earlier today on the difference between FIFA and the GMB; FIFA take bribes, the GMB take dives. *(Laughter)* Thank you.

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 1

Rule 4 Dissolving the Union

The union may be dissolved (formally ended) by a vote of five-sixths of the whole of the financial members of the union.

CECRA1

Number existing rule as clause 1

Insert Cause 2

2 The distribution of the remaining assets amongst members is on the basis of their complete years of membership, each year comprising one share

(Carried)

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 2

Rule 29 Audits

1 **Our accounts will be audited by chartered accountants appointed by the Central Executive Council.**

2 **Our accounts will be examined by three of our members, who will be elected every four years in line with the appropriate rules for nominating and electing officials. No region will have more than one auditor. The auditors elected will be the first three candidates from different regions according to the number of votes cast. 36**

3 **The members elected to examine the accounts must not be members of the Central Executive Council, employees of the Union or regional auditors.**

4 **The members will have the same access to our books and information as the chartered accountants, under the conditions of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974.**

CECRA2 Audits

Insert new rule 29.2

2 Our membership register will be audited by an assurer appointed by the Central Executive Council

Re-number existing Rule 29.2 to 29.4 as 29.3 to 29.5

(Carried)

CEC RULE AMENDMENT 3

Rule 35 Branches

13 **Members or branches must not issue any addresses or circulars without getting approval from the regional council, regional committee or**

Central Executive Council. Also, members must not make our business known to unauthorised organisations, unofficial journals or the print media without getting approval. Any member of any branch who:

- **issues or hands out any circular;**
- **makes our business known, or calls unauthorised meetings, without the approval of the regional committee; or**
- **breaks this rule in any other way;**
will be suspended from receiving all benefits we provide and could have their membership cancelled.

CECRA3 Branches

Rule 35.13

Line 4 Delete “print”

Clause to read:

13 Members or branches must not issue any addresses or circulars without getting approval from the regional council, regional committee or Central Executive Council. Also, members must not make our business known to unauthorised organisations, unofficial journals or the media without getting approval. Any member of any branch who:

- issues or hands out any circular;
- makes our business known, or calls unauthorised meetings, without the approval of the regional committee; or
- breaks this rule in any other way;

will be suspended from receiving all benefits we provide and could have their membership cancelled.

(Carried)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, moving Rule Amendments CECRA1, 2 and 3. CEC Rule Amendment 1 is designed to improve the Union’s financial management by emphasising that we are what is called a “mutual body”. This is a rule that has been adopted by other unions and will help clarify our position in the eyes of HMRC.

CEC Rule Amendment 2 is required to comply with the new legislation under which the Union has to report on the accuracy of our membership register. We have to appoint an assurer to do this, and the rule change will give the CEC the authority to make that appointment.

CEC Rule Amendment 3 brings this rule up to date. Previously, there was a bar on unauthorised disclosure of Union business to print media. This change means that that bar will apply to all types of media.

Congress, please support CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2 and 3. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Does anyone wish to speak in this debate? Shout out because you are a long way back if you do. *(No response)* I now call for a vote on CEC Rule Amendments 1, 2 and 3. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They’re carried.

Rule Amendments CECRA1—CECRA3 were Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I will now take the next two items together and hear the CEC's response after Motion 17. Could the movers and seconders of Motions 14, 15, 16 and 17 please be ready to speak after Motion 7.

**UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS
REPORT ON PASSED MOTIONS
MOTION 7**

7. REPORT ON PASSED MOTIONS

This Congress calls for the CEC to produce a written report annually before Congress for a progress report on motions that are still outstanding from previous Congresses and an update on the progress of motions passed the Congress the year before.

The report should include actions taken and timescales for when the motions could be implemented etc.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. MOFFETT (London): Congress, I move Motion 7 – Report on Passed Motions. We seek the CEC to approve an annual report to Congress on the previous year's motions for all delegates. Last year I attended Congress for the first time and I was amazed by the variety and depth of the motions passed. Now this year I find myself wondering "What happened to those motions? Did we do well? Did we do badly? Where we didn't do so well, can we build on that and try and build support and membership? Where we did do well, can we use that to build membership? If it is on-going, again, where can we help and how can we help, so we can let our members know that we are doing what we can to pass what we can. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

BRO. D. BYRNE (London): First, I would like to say what a pleasure it is to be speaking in Dublin at this GMB Congress, when I think that my father was an active supporter of the Irish Labour Party before Ged Nash was even born and joined the migration to England in the 1950s. It just goes to re-emphasise the links between the labour Movement in both countries.

With regard to the motion, I want to try and put it into a perspective for you. Every year we all go to dozens and dozens of meetings where new ideas are put forward, minutes are taken and there might even be action plans agreed. Then we go to follow-up meetings months later and we find out what progress has been made and all the rest of it. When it comes to Congress and we pass motions, we don't always know what has happened with them and who is ensuring that they become policy or that they are progressed further. We might hear odd bits and pieces through *Candid*, or if some of us belong to regional council or whatever, but we are not asking for a detailed quarterly up-date on things that have been agreed at Congress. We just want an annual report produced before next year's Congress that will, basically, give us some information as to what has happened with all the things that we agreed and passed this year. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else wish to come in on the debate? *(No response)*

**UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL
MONUMENT TO WILL THORNE
MOTION 14**

14. MONUMENT TO WILL THORNE

Congress agrees that on this 125th anniversary of our founding Union, the Gasworkers and General Labourers, we should consider erecting a monument to our founder, Will Thorne.

Despite the large number of statues to the so called "Great and the Good" across the UK, there are precious few to working class pioneers like Will Thorne.

As well as founding the Gasworkers and General Labourers Union that he served as General Secretary he also chaired the TUC and was a founding member of the Labour Party, serving as an MP for many years. A WORKING CLASS HERO.

BARKING & DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): Congress, I move Motion 14: Monument to Will Thorne. In my view and that of many others Will Thorne is amongst the greatest of the unsung working class heroes of all time. Not only was he the founder of the Gasworkers and General Labourers Union, he was the forefather of today's GMB. He was a founder member of the Labour Party, an early West Ham councillor and one of the first Labour Members of Parliament as well as being an early Chairman of the TUC. This would be outstanding for anyone in the 1880s, but for a young, unskilled man with no formal education, who, because of his family circumstances, had started work at aged six. He was forced, because of circumstances, to travel over great distances to find work. This, surely, makes Will Thorne unique. Nor should the recognition be confined to what he achieved then, but should acknowledge the lasting benefits that New Unionism has brought to millions upon millions of people to the present day. The opposition forced upon the unskilled and semi-skilled against forming a trade union was enormous, not only from the employers and the establishment at the time, together with the politicians, both Tories and Liberals, but also the craft unions of today. The gasworkers of Beckton were not the first or only group of workers to form a union in the East End of London. There were the Bryant & May matchgirls and the Thames dockers. There were many others across the UK led by dedicated and brave workers.

What set Will Thorne apart, however, is not only the manner in which the Gasworkers' Union was established and spread but what they so quickly achieved. Initially, there was the 8-hour day. The principal achievement was, surely, the successful foundation of the Labour Party and the harnessing of both his industrial and political ideas, a philosophy that holds good even to this day. Just think, the living wage, zero hours, employment rights and many more were trade union aspirations which need political support to become a reality.

As the motion says, colleagues, the UK, not just London, is filled with statues and monuments of the so-called "Great and the Good", celebrating battles of various types, but, surely, Will's battle, with his army of workers to raise working people from the subjugations and near serfdom in which they existed was by far the most outstanding and longest lasting of them all.

Colleagues, in the lineage of the Gasworkers Union, the GMB, as we are today, from the very early days many unions, has absorbed many groups and industrials. It is true to say that the GMB, more than any other union from the 19th century and early 20th century, can trace our lineage to the original Gasworkers and General Labourers Union. Our founder, Will Thorne, was ably assisted by Eleanor Marx. Colleagues, I am pleased that the motion has the full support of the CEC.

THE PRESIDENT: Brendan, can you wind up, please?

BRO. DUFFIELD: Yes. I'll be one sec. (*Laughter*) What it needs, in my view, is the wholehearted support of our lay members and Congress. I suggest that it could be funded not just from national but by subscriptions, branches and members.

THE PRESIDENT: Brendan, please wind up!

BRO. DUFFIELD: As individuals we would be able to show our appreciation to a true working class hero whose indomitable foresight and courage paved the way for what we have today.

THE PRESIDENT: Brendan, please!

BRO. DUFFIELD: I move.

SIS. H.PURCELL (London): Congress, it is a huge honour to second this motion calling for a monument to our Union's founding father, Will Thorne. I know some of you may think I am a Londoner but I am actually a Brummie so I have something in common with Will Thorne and as a Brummie woman, mother and trade unionist, I have a huge amount of respect for him as a man, father, son, and working class hero. As a man he laboured hard, educated himself, and never forgot his roots. As a father he led by example looking for a better life for his wife and children. As a son he supported his mother when his father died and went out to work at the age of six. As a trade unionist and politician what can I say, you have heard from Brendon how his working class hero progressed our movement. He wanted huge improvements in terms and conditions for working class people and founded this very union which we all hold so dear.

There is no doubt, then, that Will Thorne inspired many throughout his time and is indeed a working class hero who should be remembered. We certainly need inspiration in times like these. Whilst his memory lives on in our Union we should celebrate him in a wider and more public fashion and what better way to do so than to erect a monument to our brother. I would like to end this speech with a quote from Will regarding his relationship with his mother and how she inspired him. I found this very moving when I read it: "I had to give up this job finally because my mother said that the work was too hard and the distance too long for me to walk every morning and night. I remember her telling me that the eight shillings a week would be missed. Someone would have to go short. But it was no use being slowly killed by such work as I was doing and it was making me hump-backed. It was not until I had been away from the work for several weeks I was able to straighten myself out again. My mother's rebellion against the way I was being worked is the rebellion of many mothers. It is the rebellion that I feel and will continue to carry on." Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. The mover of Motion 15?

ELEANOR MARX DAY MOTION 15

15. ELEANOR MARX DAY

This Congress notes that Eleanor Marx's contribution to the foundation of the GMB was both vital and profound. The GMB recognises and applauds the Socialist influence of Eleanor Marx on its development as a Socialist Trade Union and that it is right and proper that there be a dedicated day to her memory.

Congress resolves to:-

- Establish the 16th January as "Eleanor Marx Day" within the GMB

- Promote events commemorating Eleanor Marx's life and contribution to the Labour movement as a whole and the GMB in particular
- Promote the literature of Eleanor Marx within the GMB

TRANSCO GAS BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, brothers and sisters, comrades, "I am speaking not only as a trade unionist but as a socialist," the words of Eleanor Marx when addressing a rally of workers battling for an 8-hour day, a reduction to eight hours, I think it is important to note. Marx stands as a principal advocate for the working class. Without her efforts alongside that of Will Thorne to establish a fighting trade union amongst the gas workers our Union would have a very different character, and that would be to its detriment. Marx displayed a commitment to the working class and their capacity to organise and fight for better conditions and a better future.

Although Marx knew such struggle was not fought in isolation at a time when there were supposed debates as to whether unions should have a say and political representation, Marx recognised that we are involved in one struggle across many spheres. Eleanor Marx spoke of her meetings with those in the gas works and that they had "one and all declared themselves socialists."

Congress, by establishing a day in her name may we work and strive to realise a time when such a declaration may be made by all those in the labour movement at large. Every worker, every trade unionist, every representative, every Labour MP should say proudly that they are a socialist and that they are a trade unionist, and that they stand with the working class and are of the working class. Marx envisioned a world where the scourges of unemployment and exploitation were no more and that world was through socialism.

Congress, I am proud to say that the GMB does pay tribute to the contribution that Marx made to the foundation of our Union. This motion seeks merely to enhance that contribution and may serve as a catalyst to our efforts in fighting for our members and for society as a whole. There was a time when Marx describing the state of the working class asserted that they were "if not dead, at least in a profound sleep". My brothers and sisters, let us use the life and work of Eleanor Marx to rouse those who slumber, those who have had lethargy enforced upon them through a system which anaesthetises the very way that they feel. Let them rise as one and show that the working class will not be laid low by capitalism.

Let us honour the memory of Marx by declaring 16th January Eleanor Marx Day, the day we seek maybe viewed as a signifier. Congress, it is a declaration of intent. We honour Marx in recognition for what she has done and for what she will do for we must follow in her footsteps and educate, agitate, and organise. Eleanor Marx declared, "This is not the end but only the beginning of struggle." It is the same struggle. It is our struggle and we must honour Eleanor Marx for her contribution to it and forge a world that is based on her principles. Congress, solidarity. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David. Secunder?

SIS. C. SIBLEY (GMB Wales & South West): This motion does not call for a tokenistic acknowledgement; instead, it seeks to set a day when members of our great Union can truly honour Eleanor Marx's achievements. Let this be a day of organising union members. Let this be a day of learning from the past to forge a better future. Let this be a day of protest and demonstration, given the system has not really changed very much: well, not enough, anyway. A day of action seems a fitting tribute to remember and celebrate the fighting spirit of Eleanor Marx. She wrote about how the arm of the state existed to maintain the present conditions of property and social rule. We still see

this in the crackdown on peaceful protest today. Marx stated that for women emancipation means nothing but economic freedom, living in a world which acknowledges a gender pay gap exists. These words remain profoundly relevant. When she asserted that without larger social change women will never be free, she acknowledged that in order to realise true equality the system itself must be dismantled and a new one made.

We should be proud of the role that Eleanor Marx played in the creation of our union. In turn, let us make her memory proud of the way in which we continue to battle against the same system that she saw for all it was and still is today. By establishing Eleanor Marx Day we proudly proclaim that 125 years after the formation of our Union we still fight for the principles that Eleanor Marx espoused, solidarity, socialism, and equality. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Charlene. I ask the mover, Southern Region, on 16, and while you are coming up to the platform I will then be moving on to Motion 20, to be moved by London Region, Motion 21, London Region, Motion 22, Birmingham Region, and then Motion 23, Yorkshire Region; if you would like to start moving up.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MOTION 16

16. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

This Congress believes that International Women's Day, March 8th, be recognised as a notable date in all GMB diaries.

L17 LEWISHAM BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. PLANT (Southern): This is not the most radical motion there has ever been and it is not going to change the world but if passed it will stop me getting angry every time I get my new GMB diary. There is a page in the diary of notable dates. Included on this page are, quite rightly, 28th April Workers' Memorial Day, the dates of GMB Congress, the TUC Congress, and the Labour Party Conference, yet International Women's Day on 8th March, the same date every year, is not listed. The date of the FA Cup Final is but that is the men's FA Cup Final.

International Women's Day is not a day made up by Clinton Cards. It has been observed since 1911. The United Nations, governments, and women's organisations, around the world all observe International Women's Day. They hold large-scale events that celebrate the achievements of women as well as highlight what there is left to do to achieve equality, and there is still much to achieve. We know that women are still not paid equally to that of their male counterparts. Women still are not present in equal numbers in business or politics and globally women's education, health, and violence against them, is worse than that of men. GMB merchandise should reflect our values and events that are important to our movement. As a Crystal Palace supporter it will probably be a rare occasion that I need to know what the date the FA Cup final is but I would like our members to be reminded of the date of International Women's Day every year. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Well done.

BRO. D. TUCKWELL (Southern): First-time speaker. *(Applause)* International Women's Day is a symbol and a celebration of humanities that fight for the rights of all women. GMB is part of that fight. With GMB membership predominantly made up of women it is surprising we have not seen this important omission of International Women's Day from our diaries before but I am glad we

have. We know change can be dramatic but it is usually brought about through small steps, including this one. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you, David. Motion 17, London Region.

RETIRED MEMBERS' ASSOCIATION MOTION 17

17. RETIRED MEMBERS' ASSOCIATION

Congress is alarmed that when the GMB diaries are printed the RMA is not mentioned as are other sections of this great Union.

Congress calls for the RMA details to be included in future issues.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH,
London Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. A. CHOLERTON (London): The retired members of this great Union have incredible knowledge and experience stretching back to World War II and beyond. Much of what we now take for granted has been won for us by their strength and determination in standing up to bullies and to those who put self interest first. Over the next five years under the newly elected Conservative Government our terms and conditions will be under the greatest attack for 30 years. With the threat to abandon the Human Rights Act in favour of a watered down charter we need all the experience we can get. This Union and its allies fought relentlessly for better health and safety, equal pay for equal work, and for the Human Rights Act. We continually strive to represent the workers in times of strife and to stand by them when they are abused and bullied.

The members of the Retired Members' Association have seen the dark times when women were paid less than men even though they did the same work. They have seen the racist abuse that we all despise today. They have fought against discrimination in all its forms. Their experience over the next five years in the battle against the return to dark times will be invaluable but to harness this experience we need to promote the Retired Members' Association. GMB already does this but we must try harder. This motion is quite simple in its objectives and simply calls on GMB to include the details of the Retired Members' Association in the diaries that are sent out to thousands of members every year. This will help stimulate greater involvement and help in the fight against this government. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Seconder?

SIS. M. BOWMAN (London): President, Congress, our region's RMA would like contact details and references to the RMA to be included in the Union diary. Even though we may be retired, we still play an active part within our Union and we just ask that we get recognition. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mavis. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Speak now. Yes? Come on, then.

BRO. W. HINSLIFFE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Mary, Congress, I think this motion is good but it does not go far enough because we are trying to get our name in the diary, but what about the Union magazine? If we get in at all, it is generally the last page. I have been to pensioners' parliament now for about 15 years. We carry that banner around and we are proud of all who have turned out, but it is not in there at all. I think as you get older like me you are not photogenic. If you

get me in the right frame I am a bit like George Clooney. (*Laughter*) I would love to see it on that front page with a new banner just for once. We have all done it, our own Union winning cases, fighting to protect people. When you retire they still come into the club and ask you questions about pensions and things like that so you never actually lose touch. We are ground roots for the Union. I am 80 years old and I am going to live until I am 100 so I am going to be in this Union for another 20 years. So, for Christ's sake, recognise us and give us some respect. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Bill, you look wonderful. You are wearing well. We are getting the airbrush in.

BRO. U. DESAI (London): Congress, I had better introduce myself. I am a delegate from Plaistow GMB and also have been a Newham councillor. It is the first time that I am at Congress as a delegate. (*Applause*) This is really what Brendan said about a memorial to Will Thorne. I fully support the motion except that I want to add one thing. It should not just be the GMB who give the resources for a set of such monuments to our heroes. We should also be looking at Labour Councils to help us with such things. It is the unions that founded the Labour Party and they should never forget that and one of the proudest days of our political life is 1st November 2014 when the GMB held its 125th anniversary dinner at Stratford Town Hall, the very Town Hall where Kier Hardy was elected as the first Labour MP. There were the cheering crowds from the balcony on the top floor, and on that night Mary, Paul Kenny, and Robin Wills, the Mayor of Newham who also was a GMB member, raised a flag in memory of Will Thorne and renamed the Council Chamber after Will Thorne. We will not stop at that. We are going to name the upstairs Council Hall after Kier Hardy.

We can and should be doing such things all over the country only because we should be setting the lead. We are also looking to work with the GMB and its officers, and the political department, to see what we can do further. Why can't we set up a scholarship and a workers' research centre in East London. We want to see what we can do in the Barking Road where the GMB was actually set up, with either a statue or a memorial to Will Thorne. Our history is important. If we do not know of our past, we will not know where we are and we will not know how to go into the future. Our history is for us to preserve and to build upon to pass to the future generations and that is why I think what Brendan has said is so important. It is not about nostalgia, it is about understanding our roots, and remembering our past to understand where we are today so we can move forward into the future with confidence and strength. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Unmesh. Anyone else? No? Mary Hutchinson.

SIS. M. HUTCHINSON (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC asking Congress to support Motion 7 and 17 with the qualification which I will outline. Firstly, on Motion 7, after Congress 2010 carried a motion called, Black Hole, a number of measures were put in place to ensure greater transparency and accountability. At our meeting in September, the CEC agrees on the allocation of all the motions passed at Congress which get referred to a department, section, or CEC committee to progress. Any action taken is reported as part of the General Secretary's Report to Congress the following year.

The qualification is that the motion calls for an annual written report, progress report before Congress. This may not be the most appropriate solution as in many cases this report would be out of date as soon as it was produced as progress may be ongoing. We understand that branches want to know what is being done with their motion and we will investigate providing a real-time Congress report which is accessible through the members' area of the GMB website so that branches can look at the latest progress on their motion.

Moving on to Motion 17, on the Retired Members' Association, the CEC understands the importance of informing members of our structures but the qualification is a minor one, that the RMA is not a

section in itself as all RMA members can be members of one of the three sections of the Union. However, we agree that contact details for the RMA should be included in the GMB diaries and will make sure this happens in 2016. Congress, please support Motions 7 and 17 with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Okay. Congress, all those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 7 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask London Region on Motion 17, do you accept the qualification? Yes? (*Agreed*) Okay, Congress accept? (*Agreed*) All those in favour please show. Thank you.

Motion 17 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to 14, 15, and 16. The CEC is supporting. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 14 was CARRIED.

Motion 15 was CARRIED.

Motion 16 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. Thank you, speakers. I now move on to the next part of our agenda, London Region to move Motion 20 and London Region to move Motion 21. Colleagues, I did make you aware before we were getting through the other half that I was calling these motions. Carry on.

ESTABLISH A GMB OR TUC RADIO STATION MOTION 20

20. ESTABLISH A GMB OR TUC RADIO STATION

Congress agrees the GMB should promote a feasibility study with a view to establishing a GMB or Trade Union's radio station, as a means of mass communication.

GMB PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. S. RUSH (London): Thank you, Mary. Morning, President, Congress, colleagues. I am a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) Media is a daily part of our lives from paper, TV, and of course radio. Ask yourself one question, who owns and controls most of the news media in this country. I am sure you have all heard of Rupert Murdoch and members of his family, and I quote, "It's a great time for the competitive free press." One assumes he means the very newspapers that overwhelmingly backed the Tories. We as a nation have had to suffer a mainly right-wing media campaign against unions and the Labour Party, especially notable during the six-week period running up to the elections. Think LBC, now a national radio station and its main morning weekday presenter one Nick Ferrari and his regular love-ins with right-wing so-called personalities such as the Johnson family and Nigel Farage.

I am sure you all know that Boris, our soon to be departing London Mayor, along with his clan, is a regulator contributor on this station. The morning after the election his father and brother were guests on the breakfast show congratulating themselves on a job well done. BBC Radio 4, not a disclaimer in their Conservative propaganda programmes. SkyTV, *The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *The Times*, etc., all similar with likeminded views. Think headlines, National Railway Workers go on Strike, Refuse

Workers in Dagenham on Strike, but all we are told is those naughty unions are holding the country to ransom and will create havoc. We are not told why the workers are taking this action. It is time we had a fair say on the workers' view and ask yourself one question, who owns and controls the news media. Again, it is Rupert Murdoch. Then Lord Rothermere, a controlling shareholder of the *Daily Mail*, a known supporter of the Conservative Party and a friend of David Cameron.

This is why at this year's Congress we need your support in a feasibility study on our own union radio station so we can help balance the books. Think Paul Kenny having his say, unable to put across workers' views and how our lives have been eroded or the unfairness of zero-hours contracts. A regular chat show with Labour Party guests, speakers, or workers asking about their rights, the chance to lose bias and create a second option for Britain's workers. With a union station the subject matter is endless. We need your help, Congress. Let the workers spread the word and have their fair say. Our branch has had great success with press and media but a station that cannot be silenced or can work through the agenda we set at the beat of our drum must be a practical and pragmatic way forward for the future. I thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Simon.

BRO. B. DUFFIELD (London): President, Congress, as the mover said, there is a dreadful right-wing bias in the British media, both in print and on screen, and on air. Ed Miliband and the Labour Party were vilified by all forms of media, some of the things were very scurrilous and worthy of civil action and this vilification has continued against the trade unions. Colleagues, even the Labour supporting *Daily Mirror* rarely supported the trade unions. It is something, colleagues, when the *Barking & Dagenham Post* refused to print the trade union's side of the current acrimonious refuse dispute in the borough.

Congress, if the media will not give our message then we must do it ourselves. As the mover said, the LBC radio station is the house management of the Tory Party. Let's get GMB Radio off the ground and get our message across. President, I will second this and hope we can move it. How many people did we see before the election like our trade union General Secretary on TV, and other people, supporting us? Not one. So, we do need to have our own voice in London and start getting people to listen to our radio station and spread it all round London; in that way we will have our voice heard in more depth and detail. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Brendan. Brendan, we have to get that voice right across the country, not just in London. Okay. I now call the mover of Motion 21, London.

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM MOTION 21

21. CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

Congress supports the stand the union has taken over the years in favour of media reform and its opposition to the concentration of media ownership in the UK. It reiterates its belief that genuine investigative journalism, freedom of expression, diversity and plurality, limits on cross-media ownership and trade union recognition must be key principles underlying media regulation.

Congress notes that up until 2004, the union was affiliated to the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF), which was set up in 1979 to campaign for a democratic and accountable media, but for financial reasons decided to end its affiliation.

Given the critical role played by the media in shaping public opinion, especially in this election year and the urgent need for reform of both media ownership rules and press regulation, Conference instructs the NEC to renew its affiliation to the CPBF, at a cost of £450 per annum, at the earliest opportunity.

HOLBORN BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom seeks a news media that is accountable and independent. For the past 35 years they have resisted the power of the corporate press and campaigned for diverse, democratic, and accountable media. It is a constant struggle. The UK ownership of the media has been sold into the hands of a tiny minority so that 70% of the UK national market is now controlled by just three companies, and Rupert Murdoch's News UK holds more than a third of the market. The price of a free press, as someone might have said, is eternal vigilance.

It is shameful the way that the *Mail*, the Murdoch press, and the *Telegraph* have used distortion and lies to bolster pro-Tory sentiment during the election. Rupert Murdoch personally instructed the *Sun* to turn the heat up against Ed Miliband telling editors that the very future of his news corporation depended upon the election results. Labour would have rightly introduced laws to break up media companies such as his which have become far too powerful. Now they have their party into power, they are going after the BBC on the entirely spurious grounds that it is too left-wing, if you can believe that, because it occasionally dares to challenge Tory views and propaganda. They want to have everything their own way.

Remember, if we let markets dictate everything in our lives and communities we will end up with a world of the lowest common denominators. How can we expect fearless and robust coverage of financial scandals, austerity policies, policing, climate change, and foreign affairs, when so much of our established media are in hock to vested interests. How can we expect coverage of the election to go beyond both an obsession with personalities and the issues that the party leaders want us to focus on without first challenging and ultimately changing the intimate relationships between the media and the political establishment it is supposed to hold to account?

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom monitors the UK news industry, responding regularly to government and regulator consultations, helping to inject democratic values into policy making. Working closely with similar organisations and unions for media workers, we need changes in policy and the law and we can do this by raising awareness of the issue using the media, social media events, campaigning, and political lobbying but this takes time, money, and active supporters. The campaign's financial position is precarious and while most of the work is done by volunteers, they need help to keep the campaign going. Congress, I urge you to support this motion and campaign for a truly free press. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt.

SIS. K. AKINTUNDE (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 21, Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. Congress, over the years the union has supported and stood for media reform in the UK and has opposed the concentration of media ownership in the UK, upholding the values that true democracy needs truth telling and the belief that freedom of expression, diversity, and plurality is needed in order to create a mass media system that informs and empowers all members of society and enhances democracy. There is a serious problem with plurality in the UK with just three companies, News UK, DMGT, and Trinity Mirror, controlling 70% of our national newspaper circulation. Where a firm dominates the media landscape

they exercise considerable control, which can lead to media bias and the suppression of information and which is why an organisation such as Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom is needed.

For many years now politicians have remained cowed by the ability of some of our largest media organisations to decide on what issues we should discuss and what parties we can trust. It is now more important than ever that we continue to campaign for a media that confronts power instead of simply bowing down before its representatives. Without our support for greater press and broadcasting freedom, our parliamentary elections will continue to be a washed-out reflection of democracy. Congress, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kehinde. I ask for the mover of Motion 22, Birmingham Region.

BANNER THEATRE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY APPEAL FOR CORE FUNDING MOTION 22

22. BANNER THEATRE'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY APPEAL FOR CORE FUNDING

This Congress notes the Banner Theatre Company has been creating vital socially educational theatre performances for 40 years. It must also be noted that they have managed this by working closely with and being helped by Trade Unions, but often relying on grants and the dedication of unpaid company members for survival.

This Conference agrees to commit to show our solidarity with this group by promoting and providing regular support and contribution towards core funding at a national level and to encourage Regions and Branches to do the same locally. This would help ensure that this group carry on producing pro-trade union, anti-exploitation campaigning shows for many years to come. This would also enable them to cultivate and train a new, younger layer of political, socialist, Trade Union activists to support the many struggles and campaigns that undoubtedly still lie ahead of us all.

B10 BANBURY NO.1 BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): The Banner Theatre was founded in the 1970s as an amateur theatre company based on the socialist principles. For over 40 years the company has produced documentary based shows using a range of multimedia, drama, music, slide shows, audio, and historic recordings. The principles of equality and anti-racism lie at the heart of the Banner Theatre's work. This is reflected in the productions with hard-hitting points often made through humour and a mocking manner. The range over the years has developed performances that encourage discussion and debate about employment rights and representation, and equality and social justice. The company's socialist and anti-racist stance has often attracted negative comments and hostility of those that wish to silence them. The premises was even been firebombed in 1988 but they have kept going. Over time the group have performed and inspired hundreds of thousands in the working class communities and trade union members and activists, as well as young people and youth clubs, schools, with shows often either developed in conjunction with or commissioned by us, the Trades Union Movement.

For many years they worked closely with the GMB in various projects, such as Women at Work, a show that explored the sexual discrimination in the workplace, and then in 1995 they did a show on sweatshops that exposed the line between backstreets sweatshop employers and big brand manufacturers. In more recent years, thanks to the group working with the West Midlands Training Department, Tom Rigby, the GMB members have been educated, inspired, by their anti-racist performances.

This important group have never been permanently funded and rely solely on project grants and performance fees, and have often to rely on the dedication of unpaid Banner Company members to survive. This motion is calling on us, the GMB comrades, and the Trades Union Movement, to help ensure that their voice, the voice of the Banner Theatre, continues to be heard for the next 40 years. We call to do this by making a commitment to continue to show our solidarity with the group and broaden them wherever possible, and ask in regions and branches to provide regular support and contributions towards the funds. Brothers and sisters, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Secunder? If anyone wishes to participate in any of these four motions, please come to the front now. Carry on.

BRO. T. DAWKINS (Birmingham & West Midlands): Long time speaker of Unity, first-time speaker at the GMB. (*Applause*) I support this motion because I am a big believer in learning and there are thousands of people out there who cannot read and write, and any way that we can help them by putting on shows, singing songs, letting them know about the union, must help. The frightening thing is that there are thousands of people not in the union but also thousands of people who do not know what a union is. Any way that we can help with that, that is the support we need. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tommy; short, sharp, and sweet, thank you. Motion 23, Yorkshire.

SPONSORSHIP OF ENGLAND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM MOTION 23

23. SPONSORSHIP OF ENGLAND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM

This Congress calls upon the CEC to enter into dialogue with the English Football Association for sponsorship of the England Women's Football Team.

The GMB trade union promotes across all spectrums of the workplace and sport is one of these which regionally we are involved with, but would like to get behind our women's national team.

DONCASTER CENTRAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Referred*)

SIS. A. MORRELL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Come on! (*Applause*) I stand before you a woman with no liking or understanding about football, the so-called beautiful game, but I do understand equality. That is no more prevalent to me than the fact that football is not equal. Women are not treated anywhere near like the men; there is no money, there is no advertising, there is no pushing. I found out this morning that we are in the middle of a World Cup tournament. Apparently, if I watch BBC3 or the internet I would know this, but there we go. This morning Paul has talked to us about how many women we have, we are now at a 50% ratio, which is, we embrace, we encourage, and we educate our women. This is something we should do as sponsorship for the England women's team. We have talked about raising our national – I have lost the words now – whatever, and getting more people involved in the union, what a better way than football and for us to start now as FIFA fall on their bent and corrupt sword, for an organisation with its equalities, its trust, and its love for everything social and justified, to take on and sponsor the Women's England Football Team. I stand before you moving Motion 23, this Congress calls upon the CEC to enter into dialogue with the Football Association on sponsorship of the National Women's Team. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allison. That isn't going to work, Allison!

SIS. A. MORRELL: There we go. Rest in peace Billy, colleagues. (*Applause*)

SIS. M. TAYLOR (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am seconding Motion 23. I have just told you I am from Yorkshire Region, more than that, I am from Barnsley (*Applause*) well known for, “How much?” We do believe in value for money and the GMB sponsoring the English Women’s Football Team will show support when it is still about the game, not just about the money. Support this motion but more than that get behind the women’s football, England versus France, 9th June, and after hearing that other speaker I want it in the diary! (*Cheers/Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh dear. How did I get into this? Does anyone wish to speak in the debate, any of them? No? Thank you. I call June Minnery to put the CEC position on these motions. June? Now, listen here, I asked you four minutes ago to get up here or do the marathon!

SIS. M. HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Thank you very much. I am a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I have not prepared anything but I just want to say I really support this. I love sport. I love football. We support far too many – we do not support far too many male sports but we do not support enough women’s and so please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? No? I call June Minnery to put the CEC’s position. Hi, June.

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): I am speaking on behalf of the CEC asking for Motions 20, 21, and 23 to be referred, and we have a qualification to Motion 23. I will take Congress through these in order.

Motion 20 asks us to look at the feasibility of a GMB or TUC radio station. Following Motion 9 carried at last year’s Congress we have made changes to how we broadcast to members and non-members and we upload regular clips to a GMB YouTube site. Running a radio station is a lot more difficult. There are initial costs involved in setting this up and the question as to whether a trade union is allowed to hold a licence. The likelihood of recovering the costs of running a radio station is remote, although a digital option would be cheaper. In addition, the skills needed to keep the content in line with GMB policy would require highly experienced and dedicated staff. It is also possible that this form of media might be used during GMB elections as a platform for candidates. We agree that the very many options that this motion presents would need a full investigation and we could support the motion being referred to consult with the TUC on the merits of a feasibility study.

Motion 21 asks us to renew our affiliation to the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. Congress, in many cases the reasons for disaffiliation from an organisation are not just monetary based. We take a considered view of the aims, values, and activities of the organisation. The past decision made to disaffiliate was because there was little activity from this organisation. However, we are asking Congress to defer this motion to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee to revisit this affiliation.

Motion 22 is asking us to promote and support the Banner Theatre’s 40th anniversary appeal and we understand the unique position in the labour movement. However, a qualification is that the Banner Theatre has made an appeal through our regions to have an option to support them at a local level and GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Region has been proud to support them in the past. We feel that it is better to retain this regional focus rather than involving the union nationally.

Finally, on Motion 23, we already support a number of sporting teams and it would be advantageous for GMB to be associated with women’s football and on a personal note Scotland has a team too as it grows in exposure. However, we are asking for this motion to be referred so that we can fully research the cost and benefit.

Therefore, Congress, please agree to refer Motions 20, 21, and 23 to be investigated more fully and support Motion 22 with the qualification I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. Congratulations on your presidency of the Scottish TUC. Okay, I am going to take those three that are referenced and ask each region do they accept the reference. London Region, do you accept the reference? Agreed? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does London Region accept reference to Motion 21? Agreed? (*Agreed*) Yes. You have suddenly lost your voices! Motion 23, does Yorkshire accept the reference? (*Agreed – loudly!*) You see! Does Congress accept those references? (*Agreed*) I am going to take the three together, Motions 20, 21, and 23. All those in favour please show. All those against? They are carried. Thank you.

Motion 20 was REFERRED.

Motion 21 was REFERRED.

Motion 23 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Now I move to Motion 22, Birmingham Region, do you support the qualification? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. Does Congress accept? Yes. (*Agreed*) All those in favour please show. All those against? That is carried. Thank you. Thank you, June.

Motion 22 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Malcolm, you are down there on duty!

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: GMB BRANCHES – A FUTURE THAT WORKS INTERIM REPORT

The membership of the Branch Review Working Party is:

CHAIR	MALCOLM SAGE, VICE-PRESIDENT
BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS	MARGI CLARKE
LONDON	JOE ISAACS
MIDLAND & EAST COAST	VIC BAINES
NORTHERN	JOY THOMPSON
NORTH WEST & IRISH	KEVIN FLANAGAN
GMB SCOTLAND	JOHN MARR
SOUTHERN	ANDY NEWMAN
SOUTHERN	BARBARA PLANT
WALES & SOUTH WEST	ROGER HUNT
YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE	ERIC BATTY
GENERAL SECRETARY	PAUL KENNY
REGIONAL SECRETARY	PAUL MALONEY, SOUTHERN
REGIONAL OFFICER	HITEN VAIDYA, LONDON
HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS	ROSE CONROY
PRESS OFFICER	STEVE PRYLE

MEDIA & CAMPAIGNS CO-ORDINATOR	CHARLOTTE GREGORY
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	STEVE SHORT
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	PAULA KEANE
NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION UNIT	ALISON TURTLE

Following to the adoption by Congress 2014 of the interim CEC Special Report “GMB BRANCHES – A FUTURE THAT WORKS” the Branch Review Working Party has met a further four times in 2014 and 2015 to discuss and progress action on recommendations in the Congress 2014 Special Report.

The Branch Review Working Party received reports, interviewed and took evidence from the following colleagues on the following subjects:

Martin Smith, National Organising Officer on branch retention and recruitment

Brian Strutton, National Secretary on facility time audits

Brian Shaw, National Equality Forum Chair on branch activity community campaigning

Michael Flunt and Aubrey Thompson, British Gas Stewards on virtual branches

Nick Hughes and Sophie Hayes, GMB Wales & South West Region on the regional membership retention project.

1. Branch Development Plans

Following the Working Party recommendation and rule amendment agreed by Congress 2014, January 2015 saw the first submission of Branch Development Plans under rule 35.1b. Regional return rates up to 17 March 2015 are shown in Appendix 1 and an updated report will be made to Congress.

The Working Party received a report on non-school local authority recruitment, and activity in local authority branches and making the most of GMB facility time arrangements. Working Party views were sought on a Local Authority Facility Time Audit to be carried out to get a proper understanding of activity and creating role profiles so members with full time release knew what was expected of them. The Working Party agreed an audit would help, but was not a one size fits all solution, and should be analysed alongside branch development plans. Organisers need to complete the audit and be more involved with Local Authority branch activities, Senior Organisers need to ensure the audit is completed, but overall management for the audit lies with the National Secretary as part of an industrial organising strategy, to measure activity, and report to the SMT. At regional level Senior Organisers would report to Regional Committee and Regional Council. The Audit records a starting point to move activity forward. It is hoped that the lowest performing 20-30% of local authority branches raise activity, and raise recruitment levels which could potentially double non-schools recruitment. Regional return rates will be reported to Congress.

2. Branch Websites and Survey

Following the Congress 2014 offer that GMB nationally would fund the first year for branches to set up their own website as set up by Pellacraft, 111 branches took up this offer. A further 16 branches funded the set-up themselves. In December 2014 116 branches who have a Pellacraft branch website were asked to complete an on-line survey to ascertain their experience in setting up the website and the benefits of having a branch website. At the closing date for replies on 16 January 2015, 48 branches had completed the survey.

The survey showed 90% of respondents heard about and signed up for their CEC free issue Pellacraft website at GMB Congress 2014. Almost half, 46.34% opted for PRO (£198) version while 29.27% for STANDARD (£150) version and 24.39% opted for the BASIC (£102) version.

87.6% branches said they will continue with their websites when the first free year is over while 12.4% said they would not continue i.e. pay for it. 80% said they intend to keep the same version while 20% said they would not keep the same version.

It was apparent from the survey that training was required to help branches update and take control of website content, to that end Pellacraft have released a training programme with practical on-line demonstrations on how to load information onto the website. Pellacraft will have a dedicated website helpdesk stand at Congress 2015.

3. Virtual Branches

The Working Party discussed the concept of virtual branch meetings, but felt they may only work for a very limited number of branches. Concerns were raised about whether a virtual meeting complied with the rulebook. Other concerns were about privacy and security and the need for records of meetings to be maintained. The Working Party agreed that virtual meetings of branches could only be held following permission of the Regional Committee with some rules and protocol about what constitutes the need for a virtual meeting.

The Working Party received a demonstration of the British Gas database project to ensure greater accuracy of membership contact details. The membership is spread across the country in 81 branches across all nine Regions and the senior British Gas GMB negotiating team needed a way to contact their 6000 lone working members easily outside British Gas's own networks. The Working Party welcomed this development and the ability for the up to date and verified information to be automatically uploaded to the GMB central database, and **recommended** GMB looks at better integration of databases to gather membership information. This system could also be used to provide members with information eg benefits and services such as Unionline, as well as to receive information.

4. Notification to Branches about apparent leavers

The Working Party were informed that facilities were in place to notify branches of apparent leavers. The Branch Review Working Party **recommends** that Regions regularly report apparent leavers to branches. This can be done on a daily or weekly basis so branches are notified at the earliest opportunity that a member may have left and can investigate accordingly, before the member is automatically lapsed after three months of non-payment.

5. Motion 14, carried by Congress 2014

At the request of the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee Motion 14 carried by Congress 2014 was discussed by the Working Party.

The Working Party were advised that Branch Secretaries will be able to see their branch membership information online, and should be given the ability to amend some basic details such as address, email, telephone number, employer to help keep members' records as up to date as possible.

The Working Party **recommends** this system is put in place, and Branch Secretaries are sent advice by the NAU on accessing this information and amending details.

6. Action on Branches under non lay member control

The Senior Management Team have discussed reducing the number of branches under non lay member control and substantial reductions have taken place some by closing or merging branches, some by electing lay members as Branch Secretaries. In November 2014 the Working Party received a report showing the number of branches with no branch secretary or with an officer or staff member acting as branch secretary. A comparison report was received by the Working Party in March 2015 which showed that the number of branches under non-lay member control had been reduced. The SMT will ensure that this trend continues.

In order to limit the amount of time a branch is temporarily under non-lay member control the Working Party **recommends** a rule amendment is made to rule 35.4

Analysis of Changes between October 2014 and May 2015 (updated information provided by the NAU or Region)

Region	Internal Branches October 2014	Internal Branches May 2015	New Internal Branches Since October 2014	No Change Since October 2014	Still Internal, but Changes Made Since October 2014	Closed Since October 2014	Returned to Lay Member Control Since October 2014
Birmingham	11	10	-	8	2	-	1
London	20	24	6	18	-	1	1
Midlands	7	5	3	2	-	3	2
Northern	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
North West & Irish	88	65	6	45	14	22	7
Scotland	33	32	5	27	-	4	2
Southern	13	8	2	5	-	2	5
Wales & South West	54	6	2	-	-	46	4
Yorkshire	9	7	3	4	-	3	2
	237	157	27	109	16	81	26

7. Branches with no recruitment or involvement in GMB democracy throughout 2014

The Working Party received a report showing 109 branches that had not recruited any members during 2014, of which 65 were under non-lay member control, only 6 of which had sent a delegate to Congress or submitted a motion in the same period, and only 8 of which met regularly. The report gave a definitive view of non-active branches and will be sent to Regions for action and to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee for information. An updated analysis will be reported to Congress and the Working Party will continue to monitor this.

ANALYSIS OF BRANCHES THAT HAVE NOT RECRUITED IN THE 12 MONTHS MAY 2014 – APRIL 2015 (updated information provided by the NAU)

BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS	11 BRANCHES
LONDON REGION	7 BRANCHES
MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION	2 BRANCHES
NORTHERN REGION	4 BRANCHES
NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION	13 BRANCHES
GMB SCOTLAND	11 BRANCHES
SOUTHERN REGION	4 BRANCHES
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION	25 BRANCHES
YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION	1 BRANCH

8. Retention Projects

The Working Party was advised of pilot retention projects in three regions where phone banking, email and SMS messages were being used to contact apparent leavers. The most successful of these pilot projects appeared to be an in-house phone banking system operated by Wales & South West Region.

The Working Party received a presentation on the in-house phone banking retention project in Wales & South West Region which highlighted that local knowledgeable personal contact with apparent leavers led to a high percentage of retentions, the majority of which were retained on Grade 1 or 2 rate. This system also highlighted potential problems which could be identified to an Officer to follow up. The Working Party agreed that this was the most cost effective way of retaining members and **recommends** that an evaluation exercise on the use of existing resources to promote and retain members is carried out .

9. New Joiners

The Working Party was advised of a trial in three Regions on how membership information is recorded for new joiners. The SMT were also investigating a more modern way to process membership forms, such as a digital machine-read system. Investigations have shown that the variation in what information is stored and how much is transferred from membership forms needs to be standardised and more effective use of technology could free up existing resources to deploy on retention work.

10. Increase in Congress related branch activity - Motions and Rule Amendments to Congress 2015

Following submission of motions and rule amendments to Congress 2015 there were 15 more motions than submitted to Congress 2014.

13 Branches submitted motions in 2015 that had not submitted a motion in the previous six years. This is clear evidence that more branches are engaging in the internal GMB democracy and it is hoped that this will continue to increase in future years.

11. Branch Secretary Handbook

The Working Party were advised that work was underway between the NAU and Regional Finance Officers to produce a Branch Secretary Handbook. The March meeting of the Working Party received a draft outline of the areas the handbook would cover, and suggested other issues the Handbook should cover including in respect of GMB@WORK. It was agreed that the publication availability of the Branch Secretary Handbook should be produced in time for Congress.

12. Status of Retired Life Members

In response to clarification of the status of Retired Life Members holding office without paying full contributions it was confirmed that in line with rule 18.7 Retired Life Members could hold office up to branch level whilst maintaining their Retired Life Membership. If a Retired Life Member sought office above branch level, eg Congress delegates, Regional Council member they would have to pay the appropriate rate during their whole term of office in line with rule 18.2

Following their term of office they would revert to Retired Life Member status without having to pay the one off contribution again, unless it had been refunded to them.

13. Branch Financial Report

At the March meeting the Working Party discussed RA17 submitted to Congress. The Working Party agreed that whilst the rule amendment was worthy as it aligned the rulebook to actual NAU procedures it had highlighted an incorrect term in the rulebook – branch balance sheet, which should be referred to as branch financial report. The Working Party therefore **recommends** an alternative rule amendment to rule 37.3 to address both these issues.

14. Rule 26 and Rule 47

During the course of the Working Party discussions clarification was sought on when a member qualifies to pay the unemployed rate and it was clarified that in line with rule 47.3 that the member must be a full financial member and have been a member for 52 weeks. A discussion on the application of and wording of rule 47 in general resulted in the Working Party agreeing suggested rule changes to rules 47 and 26, which tidies up the rulebook, removing references in rule 47 to members cards being marked but maintaining that branches must notify Regions if the member is ill or unemployed for more than 26 weeks so the Regional Committee can consider extending the reduced rate period. The suggested related rule amendment to rule 26 ends the arrangement where a member would pay full contributions if unemployed or sick and was receiving legal assistance. Congress is asked to pass the following changes to the rulebook.

15. Rule Amendments

Rule 26

Clause 4, Line 5 – Delete “by”

Clause 4, Line 5-8 – Delete “However, if the member changes employment or is unemployed while we provide legal assistance, the regional secretary may decide to limit the period for which the member needs to pay full contributions.”

Clause 4 to read:

- 4 If we agree to provide legal assistance for any member, the member must keep at all times to any terms and conditions we set, and in particular must do the following.
- Continue to be a member of the union and pay contributions as set out in these rules.
 - Accept and follow the advice of the solicitor or representative.
 - Co-operate with the solicitor or representative, and in particular:
 - reply to correspondence;
 - keep to arranged appointments;
 - give them as much relevant information as possible; and
 - tell them if they change their address or name.

Rule 35

Clause 4, Line 4

Delete “carry out the branch secretary’s duties”

Insert “for up to six months carry out the branch secretary’s duties, whilst the regional secretary and regional committee formally review the situation and agree the long term solution.”

Clause 4 to read

4 If, in the opinion of the regional committee and regional secretary, and with the agreement of the branch concerned, it is not practical for a member of the branch to act as branch secretary, regions have the power to direct an organiser to temporarily for up to six months carry out the branch secretary’s duties, whilst the regional secretary and regional committee formally review the situation and agree the long term solution. This organiser will take part in the branch committee’s meetings, and will have the right to speak but not to vote.

Rule 37

Clause 3

Delete clause 3,

Insert new clause 3:

" 3 The branch secretary will send to the National Administration Unit the branch's financial report, which should be signed by the auditors and the president, within the timetable set by the National Administration Unit."

Rule 47

Delete Clause 5

Clause 6, Line 1 – Delete “ ’s card”, “be marked to show they are”, “paying”. Insert “pay”

Clause 6, Line 3 - Delete “send the member’s card to”. Insert “notify”

Clause 6, Line 6-11 – Delete “If the regional committee allows the member to continue paying a reduced rate, the member must continue to keep to the conditions set out in clause 5 of this rule, and, at the end of every 13 weeks, the branch secretary must again send the contribution card to the regional secretary. The regional secretary will mark the card and keep a record of the member’s contributions at the regional office.”

Clause 7, Line 5-6 – Delete “and keep a record at the regional office”

Re-number Clauses 6, 7, 8, 9 as Clauses 5, 6, 7, 8

Rule 47 to read

Rule 47 Paying reduced contributions when unemployed or ill

1 This rule gives members:

- who are temporarily out of work, either through being unemployed or ill (this includes when the employer has a sick-pay scheme in force or when the member is pregnant); and
- whose ordinary wage is significantly reduced or stopped as a result;

the right to pay a reduced contribution to continue to be entitled to those benefits which they would normally be entitled to when paying full contributions, in line with the conditions set out in these rules.

2 If a member is ill but their employer does not have a sick-pay scheme in force, we may credit the member's contributions in full for up to 26 weeks in a row, in line with the conditions set out below.

3 The benefits of this rule will apply only to full financial members who have been a member for 52 weeks.

4 Any member who is out of work or ill and is covered by their employer's sick-pay scheme can apply to the branch secretary to have their contributions reduced to 5p a week. The member must do this no more than six weeks from the date they stopped working. The reduced rate will apply for the time the member is out of work or ill, and will allow them to continue to receive the same benefits as if they were paying full contributions.

5 A member cannot pay a reduced rate for more than 26 weeks in a row. If the member is ill or unemployed for more than 26 weeks, the branch secretary must notify the regional secretary. The regional committee will consider the member's circumstances and will either give or refuse permission for the member's reduced rate to continue for more than 26 weeks.

6 If a member is unable to work because of an accident for which they are receiving a cash benefit, they must pay full contributions while claiming this benefit. If the member's employer does not have a sick-pay scheme in force, the member will be allowed to pay the reduced rate. In all cases, the branch secretary should report the matter to the regional secretary. The member must continue paying full contributions when they return to work.

7 Members who are unemployed are responsible for applying to their branch to pay the reduced rate. Members who are ill or unable to apply themselves must get someone to apply on their behalf.

8 Without affecting rule 49.3, we will pay a member's contributions for any week they receive benefit under rules 49, 50 or 51.

The Working Party will continue to meet after Congress 2015, and will bring further reports to future Congresses.

Appendix 1

Branch Development Plans return rate as at 15 May 2015.

Birmingham & West Midlands	54 of 83 branches
London	81 of 100 branches
Midland & East Coast	83 of 85 branches
Northern	40 of 79 branches
North West & Irish	125 of 190 branches
Scotland	86 of 112 branches
Southern	63 of 74 branches
Wales & South West	95 of 115 branches
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire	70 of 70 branches

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC and moving the CEC Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works Progress Report and Rule Amendments to Rules 26, 35, 37, and 47 contained in the report.

Congress, following on from the Branch Working Party Report to Congress 2014, the Working Party has met four times to continue to progress action on recommendations in the 2014 Special Report. A lot of good ideas have come from the Working Party and a lot of progress has been made. The Working Party has discussed branch development plans, local authority facility time audits, branch websites, virtual branches, notification of apparent leavers, access to branch membership information, branches under non-lay member control, recruitment, inactivity, retention projects, processing new joiners, branch secretary handbook, the status of retired life members, branch financial reports, and legal assistance for the sick and unemployed members and will, if Congress supports and adopts this progress report, continue discussions and make recommendations to help branches to function better, engage more, and contribute to GMB democracy.

There is already evidence of greater branch involvement in the democracy of GMB. For this Congress there are 10 branches that have submitted motions that did not do so in the previous six years. Also, there are 30 branches that are sending delegates to Congress 2015 that had not done so during the previous six years. It is hoped that this trend will continue.

I now turn to the Rule Amendments. The rule amendment to Rule 26 ends the arrangements where a member would pay full contributions if unemployed or sick and was receiving legal assistance. The rule amendment to Rule 35 limits the amount of time of branches under no lay membership control. The rule amendment to Rule 37 ensures the correct report title is shown in the Rule Book and aligns the timetable for return to the actual timetable set by the National Admin Unit. Finally, the rule amendment to Rule 47 removes the reference to members' cards being marked but maintains the procedure of branches informing regions when a member is ill or unemployed for more than 26 weeks so the regional committee can consider extending the reduced rate period.

Congress, please support and adopt the Special Report, adopt the Rule Amendments I have outlined, and allow the Branch Working Party to continue its work. Congress, we will now hear from two lay members of the Branch Working Party. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mal. Colleagues, while Margi Clark is seconding can I say that I will explain how I intend to deal with this very important report. We will have an additional speaker from the Branch Working Party. I will then call for anyone who wishes to speak in this Congress and then I will move to the vote. Thank you. Hi, Margi.

SIS. M. CLARKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, as a member of the Branch Review Working Party I second the CEC Special Report, GMB Branches – A Future that Works Progress Report, and Rule Amendments to Rules 26, 35, 37, and 47, contained within the report.

Congress, you will have received updated charts and analysis reports of the three charts shown within the Special Report. The update to the first chart on page 4 is an analysis of changes to branches under non-lay member control. The report in the Special Report is up to March 2015. The updated report circulated shows the up-to-date position. As Congress will see, the number of internal branches has reduced further as a result of 39 more branches being closed or merged during April and May 2015, and a further nine branches being returned to lay member control.

The second updated chart, also on page 4 of the Special Report, shows an analysis of the number of branches in each region that did not recruit during 2014. The updated report circulated shows the number of branches in each region that did not recruit in the 12 months May 2014 to April 2015. The total count of non recruiting branches in this reporting period is 78 branches down from 109 branches when this report was produced for 2014.

The third chart in the Special Report on page 9 is a list of the return rate of branch development plans. The updated report circulated shows the current position to date. As Congress will see, the number of development plans returned is vastly higher in March and in some regions either all their branches or virtually all their branches have returned their development plan. You will note the total number of branches in some regions is lower. This is as a result of closures or mergers of branches since March. Where there are still branches who have not returned a development plan, this is predominantly because these branches are new or have only just returned to lay member control, or are going through a process of closure or merger but not yet completed that process so would not be expected to return a development plan.

Congress, one of the reports of the Working Party received was to have an input into an audit of facility time. The audit aims to get a proper understanding of facility time and allow members with full-time release to know what is expected of them as part of an industrial organising strategy. As stated in the report, the return rate will be reported to you. To date, 40% of audits issued to local authority branches with more than 20 members have been returned. This will go a long way to forming strategy and setting out how GMB can get the best use out of our facility time arrangements and help potentially to double non-schools recruitment. The Working Party was asked to clarify the status of a retired life member and confirm that a retired life member could hold office up to branch level whilst maintaining their retired life member status, but if they sought office above branch level, they would have to pay the appropriate rate for their whole term of office in line with Rule 18.2.

Congress, please support and adopt the Special Report, adopt the Rule Amendments, and allow the Branch Working Party to continue its work. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margi. I now call on John Marr, GMB Scotland. John?

BRO. J. MARR (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, good morning. I am a lay member for the Branch Review Working Party, speaking on behalf of the CEC about the work of the Branch Review Working Party. The Working Party considered how technology can be used by branches to interact with their members and improve communications. From Congress 2014 a total of 116 branches

opened a branch website. Following a survey of those branches, it was clear that some further training was required. Pellacraft realised that at least a training programme with a practical online demonstration was needed and they have a dedicated help desk at their exhibit stand in the hall for anyone who needs help with their branch website.

The Working Party received a report from British Gas stewards on the database project set up to ensure greater accuracy of membership contact details. The Working Party recommends GMB looks at a better integration of database to gather membership information. Once GMB has a greater accuracy of membership information we can contact members more easily. The Working Party again looked at the question of virtual branches but continued to have concerns about their compatibility with the Rule Book, privacy, and security, and agreed if a branch felt that they wished to set up a virtual branch they should do so after consultation with and permission of the regional committee.

One major recommendation of the Working Party is to allow branch secretaries to access their branch membership information online and give branch secretaries the ability to amend basic contact details. Also, the Working Party will advise that facilities were in place to notify branches of apparent leavers and recommended that regions send reports to branches on a daily or weekly basis, so branches are notified at the earliest opportunity if a member may have left so they can investigate before a member is automatically lapsed after three months of non-payment.

I would like to turn to my own branch, the Scottish Ambulance Service, whose members are employed across the length and breadth of Scotland and outline how I as a branch secretary communicate with my members. My challenge was how to communicate with our members who are spread over 30,414 sq. miles, with over 180 branches, some of them who are on islands and also members who work from their homes, and they were divided between seven divisions. I started looking up each member's NHS email address and placing each one of them into a distribution list for their own divisions. I embrace social media forms that the members would know and use regularly, both Facebook and Twitter. I opened two Facebook accounts, one open to the public and one closed to members only. The closed one would allow members throughout Scotland, and throughout the service, to communicate with each other if they have any particular issues or concerns. For example, a member in the Western Isles might ask a question on Facebook and get answers from members in locations as diverse as Edinburgh, Aberdeen, or Gretna Green. In addition to reinforcing these initial communication steps, we also set up Twitter, a web page, and quarterly newsletters.

The Branch Working Party will continue to explore how technology can help branches as it continues its review. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, John. Does anyone wish to speak in this debate? Speak now.

BRO. T. NORTHOVER (GMB Wales and South West): President, Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Special Report on Branches. First-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Thank you. My region takes the view that this report is a valuable supplement to the first interim version adopted at Congress last year. The report strikes a balance between an honest and objective analysis of branch performance while also introducing positive proposals for bringing about improvement and change. It openly addresses some of the deficiencies that we as a union have experienced with branch recruitment, retention, workplace mapping, etc., and has approached the challenge of reenergising branches in a structured, pragmatic, and sensitive way.

We are confident that initiatives such as producing a branch secretary handbook will prove to be a valuable organising tool and that the proposed Rule Book changes will provide greater clarity with

regard to conditions of contribution rates during periods of illness or unemployment. Congress, this report and the accompanying recommendations, if adopted, will strengthen the purpose and role of the branch in organising for the future.

We are proud to be a great campaigning union and it is essential that our branches reflect this so we need to carry on encouraging engagement in member-led activity not only within the GMB itself but also as part of the wider Trades Union Movement. My region would therefore like to congratulate the Branch Review Working Party on their valuable work and proudly commends their progress report to this Congress. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tim. Well done. Anyone else?

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Madam President, Congress, I am speaking in support of the Branch Review Working Party Interim Report. Comrades, we are a campaigning union but that means that lay member activists, the hundreds and thousands of lay member activists that we have, need to have structures that they can build their campaigns upon. The question I ask you, if a new member joins your branch and wants to be active, is there a structure that they can take part in and if a group of workers approaches your branch and they have a campaigning issue is your branch structured in such a way that you can put them in touch with other lay member activists who have similar issues that can share their experience and take that campaign forward.

If you want to hear an example about how that has been successfully done, come to the Southern Region Fringe Meeting afterwards, today, to discuss how we have taken on the exploitations of agency workers in the Marks and Spencer Distribution chain.

What I will say is that branches need to participate in the democracy of the union in order to have that structure. That is our responsibility as lay members. We have to do that. If we need assistance, we can go to the officers and get that assistance but what the Branch Review Working Party quite clearly agrees the lay members that are on that committee it is our responsibility as lay members to be in charge of this union, to take it forward as a campaigning union and fight to improve the lives, working conditions, of our members. Southern Region supports this interim report. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Andrew, as you have done part of this little note, at lunchtime there will be a Fringe Meeting on Temporary Workers, arranged by the Southern Region. Apparently their flyers did not turn up from the printer. That is my interpretation of it. Thank you. Anyone else?

BRO. J. COMERFORD (Northern): Speaking in support of the CEC Special Report on Branches. Congress, the GMB@Work Policy has been one of the key reasons why the GMB is in the strong position it is today. It is essential that we bring together through this report, branch plans, workplace audits, workplace mapping, and officer organisation into the GMB work toolkit; without members we do not exist. The most important document in the GMB is a completed application form. We need to utilise this document to reinforce what we do both industrially and indeed politically. We have a vast pool of talent and it is a case of harnessing those resources back to our volunteer effort and official help and support. Through effort and thought the sky is the limit. This report, just like the report on the women's project at Congress this year is historic. We should embrace the Branch Report and the Northern Region asks Congress to approve it. Please support. First ever. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, James. Well done. The next one?

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Supporting the CEC Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works. *(Applause)* Our region fully supports this report and its findings. We welcome the recommendations made by the Working Party, in particular for branch secretaries to

be able to update membership details. This will lead to crisper communications and ultimately keep our members informed; after all, knowledge is power. Contact with our members is taking a more electronic route and so many branches set up branch websites during last year's Congress. The survey undertaken by the Working Party highlighted the need for further training, which is now being offered, and we will keep this momentum moving.

Facility time for non-school local authority staff is always and will be a sticky issue. The recommended audit laid out in this report will be a welcome one by our reps, I am sure. Recruitment and retention has always been important and the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region model is an absolutely fantastic one. Having up to date information of your branch and any leavers will catch them before they move beyond our reach. This report states that it is easy to do and will support our branches in fulfilling their branch development plan. Again, I have to point out that our region is one of the only regions that has 100% return rate on our branch development plans. Well done, guys. *(Applause)*

Congress, we have five long years ahead of us. It is not going to be easy but it is a battle that we can win. Now more than ever we need organisation and branches can do this. We need to get organised. We need to engage our members and give them the power to make informed decisions that affect their lives. Branches need to be active and we need to lead by example. Do this and we can succeed in 2020. Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Cindy, how much did Tim pay you to say that!

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Not enough! *(Laughter)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Thanks. Next, please.

SIS. A. DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): Speaking in support of the GMB Special Report on Branches – A future that Works. GMB Scotland welcome the Special Report on Branches – A Future that Works. The report, in conjunction with the previous report presented at Congress last year captures and identifies the current issues that face the branches and the regions. GMB is a proud union, steeped in history, and the branches are the core of its strength.

The branch development plans are fundamental to the union enabling the branch secretaries, and indeed the full-time officers, to set their goals for the coming year and plan accordingly. Engagement with the full-time officers, the senior organisers, and the regional committees are crucial to the smooth running and organisation of the regions and the union as a whole. Also, the branch secretaries' handbook to be introduced this year will enhance the role of the branch secretary enabling them to take it forward and carry on the ethos of GMB@Work and the function of the branch.

On finishing I would like to adapt a well-known song which most of the delegates will know from Lacey, "Some branches will. Some branches won't. Some branches might need a lot of loving. Most branches won't." Please support the report. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Vacancy at number 7!

BRO. L. LANGLEY (Midland & East Coast): First-time speaker and first-time delegate. *(Applause)* Speaking on the CEC Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works. Congress, I am a young member and an activist. I am speaking on this but I can only relate to the workings of my own branch. From those branch discussions I have taken part in it is apparent that there is no one plan fits all as all branches are run differently. My branch is an active branch within the care sector where

there are always issues that arise. We have always submitted a branch development plan and we have regular stewards and branch meetings. My branch takes an active part in submitting motions to Congress and taking part in the internal democracy of the union. Personally, I do not know why a branch would not want to take part in the internal workings of the union but there could be all sorts of reasons, but surely that decision is up to the branch and the region to resolve locally and should not need national input unless requested.

The CEC suggest that more branches should take a more active role. However, my region submitted 42 motions and only 14 actually made it to Congress. From talking to other activists this has had a negative impact on my branch and the region as a whole, never mind more branches being involved. My suggestion is perhaps to be careful in this report not to put people off by enforcing too many rules and regulations. We need to encourage branches to be more involved and not frighten them off. Congress, what do you think? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lee.

SIS. S. JAMES (Birmingham & West Midlands): First time-delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Speaking in support of the CEC Report. When I received the report I was taken aback by the title, Branches that Work. I believed, as I am sure many of you have done, that all branches work as per the GMB Rule Book. However, I was very surprised after reading the document to find that many branches seemingly do not work, a fact strengthened by the number of branches that did not recruit last year. From firsthand experience as an organising officer for my branch, I can confirm that by moving with the times, if you like, the recommendations outlined by the CEC do work.

For example, following last year's offer by Pellacraft at Congress my branch took the opportunity of having a branch website designed and being able to instantly connect with our membership is helping not only to engage with them but also to recruit. We also regularly receive updates from our regional membership department outlining new members and leavers, who we contact individually helping to build and repair relationships wherever possible.

As a branch serving members within a local authority which has had many cuts to staffing and services over the past 12 months, we have found that by making these small changes we have been able not only to retain membership but also have an increase. The recommendations put forward in this report serve one main purpose, to enable GMB branches to provide our members not only with the best representatives but also to be at the forefront of communication and engagement. After all, our members are the most important people in the GMB; if it were not for them we would not exist.

By adopting this report I can see no reason why the 78 branches with no recruitment figures last year cannot be drastically increased this year and this is why, Congress, on behalf of Birmingham and West Midlands I commend the CEC and the Branch Working Party for their work on this report and ask for your full support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Sarah. Well done.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Morning, Congress. Top of the morning to you. Old time delegate but speaking with the passion of a new delegate. (*Applause*) Congress, I do thank the General Secretary and the Working Group. I have had the pleasure of serving on that Working Group and I will tell you what, I am a passionate lay member. I am passionate about the democracy of this movement. I am passionate to see this movement grow through strong, vibrant, active branches across this country. That is the lifeblood of this movement. If we do not build our branches, we die. I will tell you what, it is working. It is working. It is a great pleasure to get up here and follow so many first-time delegates. Let's applaud the first-time delegates. (*Applause*) I have seen more first-

time delegates arriving in this hall in the last few years than I saw in the previous 10 years, and that is a great tribute to some of the work that has been done. Building the branches, building the membership, so that they are vibrant places where the thirst for social justice in the world of work is fostered and grows, where members become activists and activists become leaders, and leaders become general secretaries. That is what we want. It has been a privilege to serve and I thank my region that has struggled with some history in terms of branches but we can see the growth, we can see the development, we can see the fruits in our membership. I thank you for that but I will tell you what, don't just pass the report. The easy bit is passing the report. Go out, do your branch plans, build the membership, build your branches and, more importantly, build their engagement and democracy in this movement through the branches and through the members. It is yours. Make it grow. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

BRO. V. WEST (London): Supporting the Special Report. As people will remember who have been here before, I am still as vertically challenged as I was 12 months ago! Small but perfectly formed. *(Laughter)* Congress, GMB London Region fully supports the Special Report. We are proud that the union is doing this work and we thank the Working Party for the work that it has done and the work that it will continue to do. Branches, as has been said, are the lifeblood of this union. They are the basic building block of this union. If we do not have vibrant, organised, and well-run branches this union will collapse. All our branches, whether they have been inactive and have started to become active, or are more active, can learn from this report. All branches can go out and do more. Congress, I commend the report to you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Vaughan. Is there anyone who wishes to speak for or against the report? No? Okay, I now put the report to Congress. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, Congress. Thank you, Malcolm, and to the Taskforce.

The CEC Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works Interim Report was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to and will be calling Composite 18, which is on page 116, London Region to move and London Region to second. I will be asking GMB Scotland, who did withdraw Motion 85 in favour of the composite, if they wish to participate. Thank you.

BRANCH ORGANISING AND EQUALITY FUND COMPOSITE 18

(Covering Motions 47 and 383)

47. Branch Activity and Equality Fund (London Region)

383. Branch Organising and Equality Fund (National Equalities Conference)

BRANCH ORGANISING AND EQUALITY FUND

Congress notes the ongoing work being undertaken on the review of branches and debate around how branches can be re activated. The National Equality Conference welcomes the increased activity around equality across the whole of GMB and believes this lies at the heart of this issue.

This Congress believes that one of the key cornerstones of branch activity needs to be around equality and inclusion as well as campaigning in the local community on issues affecting GMB members.

One of the key areas we can help branches become more active is to provide central resources that can help such as a 'Branch activity and Equality kit.' This would allow the NEF and REF's to provide information on how members can be involved in the GMB around campaigns that can be run by the local branches in their communities where they live.

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Seconding Composite 18, Branch Activity and Equality Fund, on behalf of the National Equality Conference.

What are the benefits of this, you may ask. With this fund we can support activity to reduce disadvantage and inequality in employment, and economic activity, support measures to address hate crime and its underlying causes, shift focus to early intervention and prevention, support the effective implementation of the public sector equality duty, increase the capacity of communities to engage with the mainstream providers, including the public and third sector around the redesign of the public services and the prevention agenda.

The equality outcomes are that people who are protected experience increased opportunities, such as employment and imbalances in representation in public life are addressed leading to a reduction in poverty. People in communities are able to take action for their collective good and are able to participate in democratic processes. Discrimination against people is reduced and those covered by current hate crime legislation experience lower levels of crime. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jamie. Nice shoes you got on today, Jamie! Anyone else? Does GMB Scotland wish to participate? No? Okay, thank you. I call Paul Hayes to give the CEC statement. What shoes has he got on: yours, Jamie! (*Laughter*)

BRO. P. HAYES (Regional Secretary, London): President, Congress, the CEC welcomes the suggestions in the composite which will allow for resources to encourage campaigning on equality matters at branch level. Under the stewardship of the National Equality Forum, GMB's work on equality has come on leaps and bounds and all of us in this room should be very proud of what we have achieved. We now have a network of regional equality forums championing and campaigning on a range of equality matters from domestic violence to transgender rights, to mental health, to managing caring responsibilities, and many more issues. The strength of the work on equality has been GMB activists coming together, coordinating activity, and campaigning.

However, in order to take equality agenda to the next level, we need to support activists and branches to continue campaigning while encouraging other branches to do likewise. There is about £6m sitting in branch accounts and the CEC need to examine how these funds can be used and whether some of this money can be utilised in a productive way to boost recruitment activities, such as distributing resources to growing branches, to help campaigning activity, and build links with community organisations. Branch activity kits are also a good idea and we have commissioned Pellacraft to produce 25 suitcases with GMB on their free prize draw which you can all get from the stand.

I am getting nervous up here, it is unbelievable! I can't believe it. Ah, there is the case. (*Laughter*) There you go. Composite 18, this is one I am asking you to support. It is what we need to do and it ensures that our future maintains the equality agenda right on that centre stage. Once we achieve that, once that becomes our centre stage, then we have achieved our objectives to fight for social justice. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Yes, send them packing! (*Indicating suitcase.*)

BRO. P. HAYES (CEC): I thought there was money in it!

THE PRESIDENT: Just send those 25 [suitcases] to the Government. Thanks, Paul. Be very careful how you reply, London Region. There is a case there! As your regional secretary's reply to debate, do you accept the statement? (*Agreed*) You are safe. Okay. Does Congress accept the statement? (*Agreed*) All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. (*Composite 18 was Carried*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleagues. There is no prize, as I said earlier, for the Fringe Meeting at lunchtime on Exploitation of Agency Workers, which is in the Brittas Suite. Paul Maloney is putting on lunch.

I remind delegates of the excellent displays and gift stands at the back of the hall, especially at lunch break.

I have to remind you to go and pick up your T-shirt from the stall, all sizes available on Stand 5 in the Exhibition Hall.

Okay, colleagues, you will now see a list of Fringe Meetings on the screen. I wish you all a good lunch. Congress is closed until 2 o'clock.

Congress adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress reassembled at 2.00 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress, please, come to order. Thank you. Delegation meetings should be over to those on the sidelines.

Congress, in following the order of business, I am going to be calling Rule Amendment 18: Rule No. 37 Branch Secretary, to be moved by Southern Region. The CEC is opposing.

RULE AMENDMENT 18

RULE NO 37 BRANCH SECRETARY

Rule 37 Branch secretary

6 If a member wants to transfer to any other branch, the branch secretary will give them a signed and stamped transfer paper. The branch secretary must not allow any member to transfer to their branch without a transfer paper. Transfers will need to be approved by the regional secretary and registered with the regional office.

RA18

Clause No: 6, Line All

Delete all and substitute new wording

Delete all and replace

Insert:

If a member wants to transfer to any other branch, the branch secretary must provide written authority, which can be either provided on paper or by digital media. The branch secretary must not allow any member to transfer to their branch without evidence of such approval from the branch secretary of the branch they are transferring from. Transfers will need to be approved by the regional secretary and registered with the regional office. Branch secretaries of both the branch that the transferee is leaving and the branch the transferee is joining will be advised by the regional office when the transfer takes place.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): I move Rule Amendment 18, which is on page 103 of your Congress Agenda. It is worth noting what the existing rule is. The existing rule says that for transfer of a member between branches the branch secretary of the branch that the member is leaving has to fill out what is called a “signed and stamped transfer paper” and that the transfer cannot take place without that. The rule amendment we are proposing is that there should be no substantive change to the process but instead of a signed and stamped transfer paper, then it is allowed by a letter on paper or by digital media. So the only thing we are seeking to change is to stop using a stamped transfer paper, which no branch has got, and instead use an email. That is the only thing we wish to change. The actual process will remain unchanged. Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. I call the seconder.

BRO. D. TUCKWELL (Southern): Congress, I am seconding Rule Amendment 18. Having changed branch last year, my experience did not involve branch stamps or trotting about from branch to branch carrying a transfer paper as per rule 37. I didn’t even see one. Our branch secretary contacted the other branch, the region was informed and it was done. The GMB is a 21st century union. We even allow people to join on-line, after all. Branch secretaries, regional officials and members are all busy. With email and other electronic communication the transfer of members can be done more easily and more efficiently keeping all informed. Let our rule book reflect the 21st century. Please support the rule amendment.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, David. Are there any other speakers in this debate? (*No response*) No. In that case, I will call Andy Worth to give the CEC’s position.

BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, replying to the proposed rule amendment 18. Colleagues, we believe that the rule change is well intentioned and intends to make the branch transfers more efficient in the digital age. It is fair to say that there are some parts of the rule book that could well do with further update in future years. However, the way that this rule change is worded is what gives the CEC the difficulty. They believe, because of the wording of it, that the wording is not helpful and it, potentially, would lead to hold ups in the transfer process not to improve it and we do not want the system to be brought to a halt. So the Executive is asking Congress to oppose Rule Amendment 18.

Mary, can I say, while I am at the rostrum, that I thought that the speech from the Minister was brilliant this morning. Can I suggest we get a transcript of that speech and we provide to all the British Labour Party MPs. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I would absolutely agree with that, Andy. We don’t need a resolution. We will do that. It will be provided, and to the Tories and Lib-Dems. Does the mover wish to give his right to reply to the CEC statement? I note the answer is yes. Andrew, it is all yours.

BRO. A. NEWMAN: President and Congress, I am a little bit mystified by this. If you look at what we are proposing as the rule change, the existing rule says that the branch secretary will give them a signed and stamped transfer paper. We are changing that to the branch secretary must provide written authority which can be provided by paper or by digital media. What the CEC seems to be saying is that currently the Union doesn’t obey its existing rule. We want to change the existing rule so that it can be done by email. That’s the only change. If they are saying that that holds up the process, that means that, clearly, currently what is happening is not being done according to rule, which I do not think is acceptable. I am asking you, particularly those of you who are branch secretaries who don’t have access to a stamped transfer paper that you could sign, to disobey the instructions of the CEC and vote to change the rules so that we can do exactly what existing rule 37 says but by email instead

of by a stamped transfer paper. Nothing will change except you can do it by email instead of a form that you don't have. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Congress, the CEC is asking you to oppose this rule change. So, accordingly, I will take the vote. All those in favour of the amendment, please show? All those against, please show? That is carried.

(Rule Amendment 18 was Carried)

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

MOTION 42

NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK

42. NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS NETWORK

This Congress calls upon the CEC to affiliate to the National Shop Stewards Network (NSSN) without delay. At a time when young trade unionists are facing an uncertain future with the rise of zero hour contracts, attacks from bosses on workers' rights, as well as increased austerity measures against the poor, it is vital that we join together with the NSSN to deal with such attacks and make a valuable contribution by supporting the 10 Now campaign for a better living wage.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am moving Motion 42, National Shop Stewards Network. The National Shop Stewards Network is a conglomeration of several trade unions which the SCU has affiliated to as no. 9. It is made up of ordinary shop stewards, trade unionists and lay members, who are calling for an all out general strike and £10 now. We are calling upon the Central Executive Committee at a time of increased austerity to take steps to affiliate to the National Shop Stewards Network due to the further cuts that are being implemented in public services; for example, libraries and youth work. Libraries are quite close to me because I do work as a librarian. These cuts, which have contributed to the 40% vote to ballot for strike action, are set to be implemented by the Conservative Party. While there is casualisation of the workforce, this is also leading to cuts in facility time for trade union reps under a government which does not care much for workers' rights, unless they belong to the bankers and the Etonians who will inhabit our House of Commons for the next five years. Therefore, it is imperative for the Central Executive Committee of the GMB to support this motion and affiliate to the National Shop Stewards Network without delay. I urge you, as a Congress, to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hannah. Well done. I call the seconder.

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Madam President, brothers, sisters and comrades, I would like you all to support Hannah in her motion. It is affiliating to a shop stewards network. Surely, in this day and age, now more than ever, we need to stand together with all our brothers and sisters across the whole trade union Movement. This motion is asking us to do it nationally. The CEC has short hands and long pockets. They don't want you to support it nationally. They will let us work with it at branch level. I think we need, nationally, all to join together. The brothers and sisters of this union must unite. That is what this motion is all about. So I ask you to support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Does anyone else wish to come in on this debate?

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of the motion on the National Shop Stewards Network. I note from the General Secretary's Report, where all the details of last year's motions are listed, that it says that on the affiliation of last year to a National Shop Stewards Network the GMB would continue to work with them on issues of mutual interest. I would like to ask when and where we worked with them? What issues of mutual interest did the GMB work with the National Shop Stewards Network on?

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt. Anyone else?

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): Congress, I do support the motion but I am slightly confused as to why it is on the agenda when last year I moved the same motion, and on page 19 of the General Secretary's Report there is a report with regard to referred motions, and it says: "The CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee agreed that rather than affiliate nationally to the National Shop Stewards Network, the GMB will continue to work with them on issues of mutual interest."

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Paul, do you wish to answer this point? I do have a view on it. Does anyone else want to speak to this motion? (*No response*) I call Paul McCarthy to give the CEC response.

BRO. P. McCARTHY (Regional Secretary, North West & Irish): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC and reply to Motion 42. Colleagues, Motion 42 calls for affiliation to the National Shop Stewards Network. Congress, the CEC is not opposed to working with the NSSN. Indeed, there have been numerous local examples of co-operation between them and the GMB. However, we do not believe that national affiliation is the answer. Branches can and do support the network as they see fit. We were asked to consider this matter by Congress last year and came to the same view. Congress, we ask you to support the motion with qualifications that, rather than affiliate, we want to encourage continued working with the National Shop Stewards Network wherever it is in the best interests of the members and the branches of the GMB.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does the mover of the motion wish to reply to the statement? (*Declined*) Congress, this union is supporting with the qualification as Paul has outlined and what is in the interests of the GMB. Congress, does the region accept the statement? (*No response*) Will somebody speak to me? Yes, you do. All those in favour, please show? Any against?

(*Carried*)

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2. Helen.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President and Congress, I move Standing Orders Report No. 2. Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motions and rule amendment have now been withdrawn. Motion 31, Ability to Organise, standing in the name of Southern Region; Motion 128, Default Recognition, standing in the name of Southern Region; Motion 226, Inheritance & Inequality, standing in the name of Southern Region; Motion 339, Something for Nothing Society – Housing, standing in the name of Southern Region, and Rule Amendment RA27, standing in the name of Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

Bucket collections. The SOC has given permission to Wales & South Western Region for a bucket collection. This is to sponsor Rhian Greenway, staff employee of the region, who is taking part in the Velothon Cycle Ride in Cardiff next Sunday to raise funds to fight Motor Neurone disease. Her

brother has the disease. Nick Hughes, Senior Manager, is also taking part in the cycle ride. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the end of the Monday morning session. Would the regional secretary please note that when the collection has taken place the region should provide the SOC with a written note saying how much has been collected so that the President can report this to Congress. President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 2. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Helen. Does Congress agree the Report?

SOC Report No. 2 was Carried.

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

MOTION 87

WHAT'S THE RIGHT AGE FOR A YOUNG MEMBER IN THE GMB UNION?

87. WHAT'S THE RIGHT AGE FOR A YOUNG MEMBER IN THE GMB UNION?

This Congress calls on the CEC to do a study on what is the correct age range for a young member in the GMB and report its finding back at next year's Congress.

GMB MID LINCS BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: I am now moving on to the next business. I will be calling Midland & East Coast Region to move Motion 87.

BRO. B. COOK (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 87: What's the Right Age for a Young Member in the GMB Union?

President and Congress, in recent years the GMB Young Members' Network has bounced on to the scene. Young members deal with many issues which are the same as for those over 30; ie, housing issues, low pay, bad terms and conditions in the workplace and the cost of living. However, young members aged 16 to 21 will be likely to be in education but still need to be able to buy clothes, to pay for food and transport. They can also become parents and taxpayers as well. However, no disrespect to young members, as they are starting their employment journey, they are still learning and lack a little bit of experience. So what is the correct age range for a young member? Do we decide it on experience? Do we decide it on industrial or political needs, or do we decide it on the needs of the GMB? This has been the subject of debate at network meetings. The GMB Young Members' Network is willing to take a look, to accept responsibility, to conduct a study and decide what we think is best for our young members.

Since we increased the age range to 30, it has given our young members more experience and potential. The study will help to provide tools, knowledge and how to mobilise young members further, and grow the GMB further. We want to ensure that the GMB survives for another 125 years. Please support this motion and our young members. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ben. Secunder.

BRO. COLIN GUNTER (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 87. President and Congress, for many years the Young Members' Section of the GMB appeared dormant. Today the Young Members' Forum is vibrant and active. This bodes well for the future of the union, seeing our young activists getting involved and having fire in their bellies. When the time comes to hand over the baton, we need inspired activists to be able to fulfil their role within the union. Age can be an emotional subject, but let's have the debate. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Colin. I am now going to be discriminatory. Any young member who wishes to come to the rostrum and speak to this motion is quite welcome.

SIS. A. WITTAMS-SMITH (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and this is my first-time speaking. *(Cheers and applause)* I would like to speak in favour of this motion as the issues that disproportionately affect young people, such as housing, low employment, low wages and unfair benefits are affecting people into their lives. This is only being ingrained by Tory social policy. As such, it makes sense for GMB young members to be inclusive of our members facing those same struggles at whatever age this research shows them to be continuing on until. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Aimee. Well done.

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of this motion. It is right that we assess the right age for our young members in recognition of the way that the workplace has evolved or, perhaps, more correctly, has regressed over the last few years. Increasingly, people are being involved with different types of work before they are into a unionised workplace. The increased casualisation, zero-hours contracts and general insecurity at work means that for many young people it could be 23, 24 or even 25 before they get into a place of work that has strong GMB representation, or which has any kind of union representation. Therefore, I am speaking in support of this motion because we should be assessing the age. I am also proud to say that the GMB Young Members' Network, which is a vibrant and active network, is more than happy to shoulder responsibility to enable such a review as we understand, as a union, that like must understand like. I urge you all to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Is there anyone else?

BRO. U. ALI (GMB Scotland): Congress, I speak in support of Motion 87. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

GMB Scotland welcomes the rise of the young members from 27 to 30, which has now taken effect. Young members and young people are the lifeblood and the future of our union and our country. We are the workers, taxpayers and leaders of tomorrow but, Congress, we are also the workers, taxpayers and leaders of today. Therefore, it is only right that young members are at the heart of our union in organising, in policymaking, in workplace bargaining and in recruiting future GMB members. This motion calls for a study to be undertaken to examine if the proposals from the CEC work for all of our equality structures. I call upon the GMB National and Regional Young Member Network to be fully involved in this study. Scotland's young members accept their responsibility in this and look forward to contributing. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Usman. Is there anyone else wishing to speak in this debate? *(No response)* Can I call on Craig Dawson, who is the CEC Observer, to give the response on behalf of the CEC. Welcome, Craig.

BRO. C. DAWSON (CEC Observer): Congress, the CEC is asking Congress to support Motion 87 with a statement. I am also a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I would like to start by thanking Ben, David, Aimee and Usman for their fantastic contribution to this debate. As young members, they are a credit to this union and I think they have done a fantastic job. *(Applause)*

Last year Congress carried the London Region's Motion 32 on raising the age of young members. This called for the age of defining young members to be raised from 27 to 30. The motion was then referred to the Young Members' Network and the National Equality Forum, and both groups agreed

with the motion and recommended a re-definition of the age from 27 to 30. This was further endorsed by the CEC's Organisation Committee. Given the particular characteristic of being defined "young" is that you also become old and, as suggested in the motion, a study would be a useful exercise to determine whether our recommendation works and is appropriate for all of our equality structures. In particular, by making this change, this would open up questions as to how many more young members would be defined as "young". What is the regional distribution and gender make-up of those members? This is where it gets technical. Currently, there are 31,204 members under the age of 27. This works out at about 5% of the trade union's membership. By raising the age to 30, we would have 52,798 young members. This would work out at a total of 8% of the total GMB membership. Making this change would, therefore, mean an additional 21,594 young members who are, potentially able to engage with the GMB Young Members' Network. The key question — this is one that the Young Members' Network will be pursuing with vigour — is how we engage and how we represent those young members, and we will do it with abandon! (*Applause*) The CEC agrees that a study should be conducted and a report brought back to Congress in 2016.

Before I move this motion, I would also like to say that it is fantastic not only to see and hear young members speaking but to see so many young members in the hall. I also think it is fantastic that there were so many young members out on the march yesterday. I want to stress again that those young members are a credit to this union, they are the future of this union and we just need to get behind them as much as possible. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Craig. Does the mover wish to respond? (*Declined*) Does the region accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Does Congress accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Hands up all those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

(*Carried*)

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION BRANCH EQUALITY OFFICERS MOTION 81

81. BRANCH EQUALITY OFFICERS

This Congress agrees to campaign for statutory recognition of Branch Equality Officers, and further agrees that until such time as this recognition is granted, all Branches will be urged to make all Equality Officers shop stewards.

BUXTON BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. B. WHILDING (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 81. President, this Congress recognises the valuable work that the branch equality officers play in protecting and enhancing members' rights at work. However, it notes that under legislation the branch equality officers have no rights to paid time off for trade union duties, unlike workplace reps and stewards. Congress, we now have a Tory Government, and if we are to believe what is reported in the media they will try and abolish time off for union-related duties. President, this Congress agrees that it will campaign to make the position of the Branch Equality Officers the same as the workplace reps and stewards for them to be entitled to paid time off so that our equality officers can make sure that our members are treated with the greatest respect and to ensure that the equality issues, no matter what they are, will be at the heart of negotiations with the employers conducted by the GMB. Congress, please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much. Secunder.

The motion was formally seconded from the floor.

TO CAMPAIGN FOR PAID TIME OFF FOR EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES MOTION 82

82. TO CAMPAIGN FOR PAID TIME OFF FOR EQUALITY REPRESENTATIVES

This Congress believes that GMB to mount a campaign to get equality representatives to have the same rights to paid time off to handle equality cases just like the Health & Safety representatives have.

We maybe living in the 21st century but discrimination in the workplace is still present whether in form of someone disability, their sexuality, race or region.

In some cases an equality representative who has more knowledge about equality plays a vital role in such cases and to aspect them to handle such cases when they have limited time and pay is not fair while Health & Safety representatives get paid time off to investigate and to handle cases.

It is vital that GMB campaigns with the TUC and other organisations to highlight the vital role that equality representatives have and campaign to get them to have the same rights to paid time off to handle equality cases.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 82: To Campaign for Paid Time Off for Equality Representatives. Equality representatives, including branch equality officers, can be concerned with a wide range of diversity issues from promoting diversity to management to helping to ensure legal compliance and conducting audits. They can help to raise awareness of issues relating to equality and diversity, raising the profile of equal treatment of workers on the grounds of gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc, and to engage employers on a wide range of equality issues.

Equality representatives have no statutory right to time off for training or facilities compared with those who are health and safety reps. There are still members who are discriminated against in the workplace. It is vital that our members have someone who can represent them who understand the equality laws and can spend time with the members to ensure that the right action can be taken. My branch noticed how much understanding I had relating to equalities and asked me to become the branch equality officer, which I accepted with honour, as I have been able to promote equality within the branch as well as in the workplace.

Since becoming a member of my Regional Equality Forum I have been able to use my knowledge even wider, especially on LGBT issues and now lead the Southern Shout Group in raising more issues. It is time for us as a union to work with the TUC and other union organisations to campaign to get our equality representatives and branch equality officers the same rights for paid time off just like those who are health and safety reps to investigate and advise our members so that they are not discriminated against. Let's end the discrimination that our equality representatives and branch equality officers face when dealing with discrimination cases. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. I call the seconder.

BRO. S. HANCOCK (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am going to be seconding Motion 82 to campaign for paid time off for equality representatives. There are times when dealing with equality-based cases when we need someone who understands equalities, and these are often our equality reps or branch equality officers. At the

moment, they don't get the same rights for paid time-off training facilities. All these advantages are given to the health and safety representatives. Let us join, as a union, and work with the TUC to campaign for equal rights for all equality reps and officers to ensure that they receive the same rights as our health and safety reps and officers. I call you to support this motion. I second. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much.

PROTECTING UNION EQUALITY OFFICERS' RIGHTS MOTION 83

83. PROTECTING UNION EQUALITY OFFICERS' RIGHTS

This Congress calls upon our Union to work with all unions to promote, protect and increase Equality Officer's rights by:

- a) Increasing the knowledge and awareness with all stewards and Equality Officers so that they are aware of their rights in the workplace and can challenge employers to implement policy and best practice.
- b) To lobby GMB supported political parties to protect the role of the Equality Officer through legislation.
- c) To continue to lobby and campaign until there is legal recognition of the role of Equality Officer including paid time off.

FULHAM 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. HURLEY (London): Congress, I move Motion 83. President and Congress, one of the best things I have ever done is to join the union, become a shop steward and take on the role of my branch's equality officer. The role takes the individual on a massive adventure of learning and enables us to make change, not just in the workplace but within our union and to our country, by adding new laws or changing existing ones, to protect the public. The current UK Tory agenda is and always will be to destroy the union, allowing the business sector to drag us kicking and screaming back to Victorian times where workers had no rights. One of the ways they did this was by not allowing shop stewards enough time to help the member and collecting information on the situation that had occurred, enabling an unfair outcome. This resulted in the introduction of laws, including the Employment Relations Act, designed to allow the stewards time off to represent their members and to facilitate a fair hearing. Congress, shockingly, still today, shop stewards are not aware of their rights when it comes to assisting our members. This is compounded for our equality officers, who often pass members' cases which fall under the Equality Act and require deeper research prior to representation but have no access to facility time. Most employers recognise the importance of settling issues, or so they say, at the lowest level, yet still fail to facilitate time off for our equality officers to review existing company policies and procedures and to practise carrying out equality audits which highlights bad management practices. This is not just an issue for our union but for all unions so we must not shy away. We must stand and fight for all union equality officers of today and the equality officers of tomorrow, just like our predecessors did for our shop stewards, who recognised that by protecting them, we protect our members.

We instruct the GMB to raise awareness across the union in regard to shop stewards' rights and to lobby all political parties, and instruct the GMB to join with all unions and campaign nationally until the equality officers' position is protected by law, as it should be. Thank you. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

SIS. L. MANN (London): I second Motion 83. President and Congress, the role of the branch equality officer is an extremely important and valuable role for branches, their regions and the union as a whole. Once a member takes on the role of a branch equality officer not only do they take on more cases where the main issue is around equality, to advise other shop stewards on their cases and attend local equality meetings, but when they are passionate about equality and fairness, as I am, the role widens to attending regional equality meetings, regional and national self-organised groups and sometimes the National Equality Forum, not to mention helping to organise and attend regional and national equality conferences. The work we do raises awareness of issues that people may not know much about, increases union activism and participation by people in under-represented groups and helps members when managers go after them on capability, sickness or being harassed by them. It also can be used as a recruitment tool. By showing people that we care for them and understand their struggle is great for organising within workplaces. Therefore, I wholeheartedly agree with and support this motion. Lobbying and campaigning to protect the role of equality officers through legislation and campaigning for legal recognition of the role, including paid time off, is important to ensure that we carry on and move forward with the great work that our branch equality officers do each day. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, this is quite a long debate but it is split up. Does anyone in Congress wish to come forward and put their point of view on Motions 81, 82 and 83?

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 81. I was recently elected, in December 2014, as my branch equality officer for W50, and I wear that badge with pride, I have to say, because I come from an un-unionised workplace where I feel like I have to hide the fact that I am a member of a union and I know I should not have to do that. When I was 21 years of age — I joined the union movement when I was 18 years old but I didn't join the GMB until I was 23 — I knew that I wanted to become a shop steward. That is one of my goals. Therefore, I call for Congress to support Motion 81. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

BRO. W. McEWAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I would like to spend two minutes speaking on Motion 82. I don't believe that there is any point in comparing the different reps. Comparisons can lead to a race to the bottom. I feel that the wording could be construed as derogatory towards safety reps. I am sure that that was not intended, but I believe — I fully support the motion — that the campaign should be for legislation to be put in place for equality reps. Safety reps get paid time off, and this is the type of legislation that should be campaigned for, not just for equality reps but for all reps. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Next speaker.

SIS. M. TAYLOR (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I agree with the campaign to get time off — I fully agree with that — but I wish every young member was like the people we have in this hall. We found it very difficult to get our branch an equality officer. If I had asked him to be a shop steward as well, he would have turned me down flat. Now he does a great job as a branch equality officer. Luckily he gets time off from work at our place.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. We will move on, colleagues, and we will come to the vote on this package of motions later. I now move on to Motions 89, 90 and 96.

DUAL DISCRIMINATION MOTION 89

89. DUAL DISCRIMINATION

This Congress believes that the dual discrimination regulations s.14 of the Equality Act should be implemented. These provisions were dropped by the coalition government when the Equality Act came into force. This would help address, for example, both age and sex discrimination that is facing our members who are older women.

L17 LEWISHAM BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

SIS. B. PLANT (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 89. There was a time when long-service staff would have got a gold watch for their service. Now they seem to be put on a capability procedure instead. As a local government rep, this is what I see happening more and more, especially to older women working as school support staff. They are managed out, either on capability or health grounds. The 2010 Equality Act brought together the separate discrimination provisions. Section 14 of this Act permits dual discrimination, claims on the combination of protected characteristics. However, this section was never brought into force at the time and, in the end, it was dropped altogether by the Coalition Government for no other reason than to reduce the cost of regulation on business. People do not just have one identity and, therefore, discrimination may well involve a combination of more than one protected characteristic.

Last year the TUC published a report called *Age Immaterial*, which is about women over 50 in the workforce. Age and sex discrimination is a thread which runs throughout this report. We cannot ignore that and do nothing about it. More women over the age of 50 are working than ever before, but many older women also care for children, partners, parents and grandchildren. This limits their ability to remain in paid employment as requests for flexible working are usually turned down. It cannot be the case that, despite their knowledge and experience, more and more older women are being pushed nearer and nearer to the exit door as a result of capability, redundancy or being advised to retire.

The 2010 Equality Act must be amended to enable all kinds of combined discrimination claims, alongside the removal of employment tribunal fees. Otherwise there is no justice and employers will be given a green light to discriminate with little fear of any action taken against them. Harriet Harman pledged that if Labour were re-elected in May then they would reinstate section 14 of the Equality Act. But under this new Tory Government more austerity is a real and serious threat to older women and their families. We must continue to press this element of the Equality Act to come into force. Section 14 was introduced to deal with a particular problem and, therefore, until it is in force there will always be a gap in protection. Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

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

SIS. A. WIJE (Southern): I second Motion 89. I support this motion because in certain types of cases you have less favourable treatment that crosses different strands of discrimination. We have heard stories of the older woman who doesn't get the anchor job on the news. That is not necessarily a sex-discrimination claim because other women do get the job. It is also not necessarily an age-discrimination claim because older men do get the job. It is a combination of the two, the older woman, that counts. We have highlighted the case of the older woman, but the same intersectional discrimination can be suffered by the young British man, the male Muslim or the black man. The list goes on. I support the motion. All I want to mention for the future is that there is no reason why the legislation only refers to "dual discrimination". It should refer to "multiple discrimination", where "multiple" is defined as two or more protected characteristics. Also the current provisions only cover direct discrimination which, obviously, needs to be extended to cover indirect harassment, etc. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Asha. I call Motion 90.

CHILDCARE AND EQUALITY MOTION 90

90. CHILDCARE AND EQUALITY

This Congress calls for greater work to be done across sectors, backed by statute in amending The Equality Act (2010), to ensure employers conduct gender equality audits of all staff in senior management positions and assess what formal arrangements employers have more widely for childcare provision.

Society will not change unless there are genuine safeguards against any discrimination and those employees, regardless of background, ethnicity, age, gender or orientation, should be able to access childcare support to enable them to have the parity of esteem of the opportunity for employment.

In today's low wage, zero hour contract culture, it is vital that there is statutory support for those wanting work, that there is less discrimination at work and for decent childcare support.

Congress calls on this issue to be taken forward as part of GMB Policy and for its implementation to be monitored and reported back to CEC and NEF.

T22 Newcastle Hospitals BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. L. TIMBEY (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 90 on Childcare and Equality. The various laws that were passed were brought together in the 2010 Equality Act. They have been good laws and they have been part of taking the UK into a modern age that reflects today's workforce. It is a simple fact that workers today are either on a low wage, zero-hours contracts or on a much higher income. All sets of workers have different demands, but when it comes to childcare it seems that we live in a society that does not reflect the modern workplace. Childcare costs are similar to housing costs. They vary from city to city, region to region and there is no set fee for any childcare provision. The fact is that too many employers in too many cases are not doing enough to help the workforce in either flexible working or recognising that childcare costs are going up and up. Countries across Europe have had a different way of provision for many years but, yet again, the British employers, in too many cases, do not give enough attention to childcare. Indeed, when budget cuts happen, things like childcare and training become easy targets for those cutbacks. Congress, the Equality Act is a really good law passed by the last Labour Government but, in many cases, it goes to the heart of the GMB's equality agenda. However, with the pace of change in workplaces becoming quicker and quicker, we need to ensure that the Equality Act is also brought up to date. Our members who have caring duties, and that includes childcare, should not face discrimination in the workplace. It is a fact that a happy and well-motivated workforce is one that produces more. That includes modern-day employers who should be aware of the caring needs of their workers, not just seeing them as a member of the workforce. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

BRO. R. DOWSON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 90 on Childcare and Equality. Comrades, as the mover said, we need to ensure policies at work cover those with caring duties being helped more. Workers have borne the front of the great recession, and, as we all know, they are still paying for it today. Yet in many homes, workers exist on low wages, topped up by benefits. Many have to go to work on these zero-hour type contracts. It is a scandal in modern Britain. It is back to the time before the Second World War. The idea that workers are being helped with their caring duties is light years away in many cases.

Congress, we need to campaign to stop discrimination in the workplace, to make childcare, the caring duties of workers and equality to become the normal way of operating in the workplace. Employers who show they care about their workforce will get their rewards. Those who don't should be part of our campaign as we seek to develop our equality principles and put them into practice. Please support. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 96 and Southern.

**FOR ALL REGIONS TO HAVE A GMB SHOUT! GROUP
MOTION 96**

96. FOR ALL REGIONS TO HAVE A GMB SHOUT! GROUP

This Congress believes that every GMB region should have a GMB SHOUT! group to support LGBTI members in their region and to provide support to branches in promoting LGBTI.

GMB SHOUT! Plays a vital role within GMB. In 2014 we saw GMB SHOUT! celebrating its 10th birthday as well as the birth of SHOUT! in the Southern region which branch G36 was proud about as its Equality officer was involved setting SHOUT! up in the region.

This congress is aware that there maybe some branch secretaries who have some concerns and questions regarding such group especially costs.

It is vital that GMB plays a vital role in supporting its LGBTI members and to raise awareness the issues they face and by having GMB SHOUT! in each region it allows members be supported more knowing there are people who understands their issues and support them. GMB SHOUT! provides guidance to non-LGBTI members and to branch equality officers and to the regions equality forum.

GMB SHOUT! also helps to promote GMB as a whole at such events like pride both regional, national where other unions are present to demonstrate that GMB is a union that cares and campaigns for LGBTI members where LGBTI members still face discrimination even in the 21st century.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 96: For All Regions To Have a GMB Shout! Group. While we have GMB Shout! as a national group for our LGBTI members, it is vital that each region has its own Shout! Group to support the members in their region, which at the moment not all regions have. Last year I was asked to set up GMB Shout! in the Southern Region, and this year we will be celebrating our first birthday. This could only be done with the support and backing of our Regional Secretary, Paul Maloney, and the Regional Equality Officer, Michelle Gordon, who are really behind Shout! to ensure that GMB can provide the vital links between our LGBTI members and the branches. We are aware that there are some branch secretaries who have concerns and questions regarding such groups, especially in relation to cost. I will say that the GMB does not know how many LGBTI members it has, and this is where GMB Shout! plays a vital role in connection LGBTI members with GMB and its branches.

GMB Shout! also helps to promote the GMB as a whole at events like Pride, both regionally and nationally, while other unions are present to demonstrate that GMB is a union that cares and campaigns for LGBTI members while members still face discrimination in the 21st century. Last year GMB Shout! was present at all events in the Southern Region, which is a first for Southern

Region and Southern Shout! We will continue to be present at all Pride events again this year, especially when Portsmouth are holding their first Pride event for over 10 years. As Paul Kenny knows, Kent is also have their first Pride event this year. We need to show that the GMB is a union that cares about LGBTI people, and this year to celebrate the first birthday of GMB Southern Shout!, and thanks to the support of Southern Region and National, including the support of Pellacraft, we are launching our own Southern Shout! website here at Congress. That website also has a mobile number to support our members, and the website will provide downloadable leaflets both for LGBTI members and non-LBGTI members as well as other information.

As Southern Region will be hosting next year's Congress, Southern Shout! will be on hand to welcome you all at this event. Please support this motion to ensure that every reason has a Shout! Group so that our LGBTI members know that they are not alone and that we, as a union, care.

I have one more thing to say. Madam President and General Secretary, will you both do the honours of sparing some of your precious time to do a video interview for Southern Shout's! website? Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. S. HANCOCK (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 96: For All Regions to have a GMB Shout! Group. Whilst we have a GMB Shout! Group as a national group for all of our LGBTI members, it is important that each region has its own. It is pretty simple. Through that group they can support members at local levels and make them feel a part of our GMB family. Having a regional Shout! Group will ensure that they will be able to ride that important link between members and their branches and, ultimately, enable us to reach new members. Please support this motion so that every region has a GMB Shout! Group so that our LGBTI member know that they are not alone and that we are a union that cares. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Simon. Does any member of Congress wish to come in on this debate?

SIS. M-L HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, in relation to Motion 90, I question the request for equality audits "of all staff in senior management positions" only. Why? Should it not read, "All staff"? Childcare provision in this country is a mess. We know that, and I would love to know what the answer is and I would love to have that taken forward. I think that all staff should have the right to an equality audit. Childcare in this country is expensive. Therefore, I would request that "in senior management positions" is taken out and just be inclusive of all workers. Thank you.

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): President and Congress, I have been banging on about this for years. I have a daughter who has real problems with childcare and paying for it. She lives in Cardiff, and it costs as much for her to have childcare for her son as it does in London. Now she has got him at school and she can't even get him childcare because there are no childminders locally to her. So she can't even work full-time now and she would really like to. So it is a real problem. I really wish that somebody would do something about it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Motions 97, 98 and 99.

FOR GMB TO SUPPORT THE ALBERT KENNEDY TRUST MOTION 97

97. FOR GMB TO SUPPORT THE ALBERT KENNEDY TRUST

This Congress believes GMB should support The Albert Kennedy Trust in partnership with GMB SHOUT! both to highlight the work that The Albert Kennedy Trust does and to make a donation or raise funds for them.

The Albert Kennedy Trust supports young LGBTI people under 25 years old, who are homeless, living in a hostile environment, face bullying and / or rejection, in need support around coming out or to support people who are supporting a young person who might need their help.

Being a young LGBTI person still isn't easy even in today's world and by supporting The Albert Kennedy Trust GMB can show that we as a union do care and support our current and future LGBT! when they face hard times.

At present The Albert Kennedy Trust only operates in 3 major cities in the UK and by supporting them they will be able to reach out to more people.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Congress, I am moving Motion 97: For GMB to Support the Albert Kennedy Trust. Delegates, the Albert Kennedy Trust supports LGBTI homeless young people in crisis. Every day they deal with the effects that homelessness can have on young people's lives. The Albert Kennedy Trust Mission is to ensure that all LGBTI young people are able to live in supportive and caring homes by providing a range of services to meet the individual needs of those who would, otherwise, be homeless or live in a hostile environment. Some of our LGBTI members face a choice of whether to come out to their families or not just because of their family failings and background. Some may be in a bad relationship and not know how to escape.

We, as a union, have a responsibility to support our young LGBTI members when they need help, and by supporting the Albert Kennedy Trust in terms of helping them to raise funds and donations, we can build a partnership with them in an area where we are unable to provide direct support by our Shout! network to our LGBTI young members. We can direct them to the Albert Kennedy Trust, who can provide the support which we are unable to do, and build a partnership so that our members get the right support they deserve.

Southern Shout! is having to work with National Office and others in compiling a report for Congress to consider this motion at a later date. I accept the CEC recommendation to refer. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)

AFFILIATION TO SCHOOL'S OUT MOTION 98

98. AFFILIATION TO SCHOOL'S OUT

Congress calls on the GMB to affiliate to the LGBT charity, School's Out.

This charity aims to work with schools and young people to make our schools safe and inclusive for everyone.

School's Out is and does:

1. A formal and informal support network for all people who want to raise the issue of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism in education.
2. Campaigns on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues as they affect education and those in education.
3. Research, debate and stimulates curriculum development on LGBT issues.
4. Works with school support staff unions, teaching and lecturer unions and other professional stakeholders in education.

5. Promotes equality, safety and visibility in education for LGBT people and all the protected characteristics.

ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Congress, I move Motion 98, Affiliation to School's Out. Congress calls on the GMB to support this motion to affiliate to the LGBT charity, School's Out. A study by King's College, London, has revealed that children who are bullied can still experience negative effects on their physical and mental health more than 40 years later. The study tracked 7,771 children born in 1958 from the ages of seven until 50. Although the risk of poor health and social and economic consequences 40 years after exposure to bullying was quite small — around about 1.5 times the norm — the study said it was similar to that faced by children in care. The School's Out charity aims to work with schools and young people to make our schools safe and inclusive for everyone. The School's Out charity provides both a formal and informal support network for all people who want to raise the issues of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexualism in education. They campaign on lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans issues as they affect education and those in the education system, research debate and stimulates curriculum development on LGBT issues. They work towards unity between teacher and lecturer unions and other professional stakeholders in education. They promote equality, safety and visibility in education for LGBT people and all the protected characteristics. We and children should be able to live without fear of abuse and bullying just because we are LGBT. School's Out has been campaigning for LGBT people for 40 years. Let's make it another 40. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the seconder.

BRO. D. McNULTY (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second Motion 98 — Affiliation to School's Out. School's Out began in 1974, fighting against oppression in society and towards equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, helping them in all walks of life, in their struggle for individuality, campaigning, educating and working tirelessly removing hurdles. It has promoted equality throughout school classrooms. It is through all of this hard devotion that School's Out is now a recognised charity. There is a story about challenging the wrongs in society, helping and supporting the young through education against intolerance, by giving guidance and challenging stereotypes that lead to prejudice and discrimination. School's Out has recently become a charity organisation and has been educating our children for 40 years plus. It has opened many doors along the way and I am sure it has challenged perceptions and bettered many lives. It has educated young children across the United Kingdom, striving to eradicate homophobic language and bullying from our schools and society. It has jointly participated in music, drama, presentations and social events through primary and secondary education, throughout the curriculum without fear of discrimination. School's Out has campaigned for 40 years and is still campaigning today. Hence, my speech. Affiliating this organisation into the GMB is long overdue as we, a trade union, fight to take on management and bullies on a daily basis. As a union, we strive to campaign for equality throughout humanity, bettering the world, ourselves, our futures and our children. To turn our back on School's Out is not an option. Their journey is that of equality. President and Congress, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Dennis, welcome to the GMB. Dennis is a new branch secretary and he is doing great. Well done. *(Applause)*

DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY MOTION 99

99. DOMESTIC ABUSE IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY

Congress notes those who experience domestic abuse come from all walks of life. The introduction of coercion and control being a form of domestic abuse is welcomed as it describes domestic violence as a violation of one's human rights. The new law makes patterns of coercive, controlling and psychological abuse a criminal offence.

Domestic abuse is an issue for heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian and gay people and in the trans and non-trans community. Unfortunately the LGBT community receive less favourable treatment and disproportionately less access to specialist support services. This is further frustrated by the lack of awareness, training, attitude of police officers and local authorities who fail to deal with and focus on the impact on those in the LGBT Community who experience domestic abuse.

Due to the lack of such specialist services including refuges and funding being ring-fenced both on a local and national level, many from the LGBT community will continue to suffer in silence and remain in their current situations placing themselves at much greater risk of further harm and in some cases, death.

The threat of closure of Broken Rainbow, a helpline charity for those in the LGBT Community who have or are experiencing domestic abuse, will have a devastating impact as it is a lifeline for many.

We call upon Congress to:

- Support the work of Broken Rainbow and other LGBT Domestic abuse groups
- Campaign with groups to show solidarity
- Lobby MPs to ensure that such specialist services remain open.

HOUNSLOW BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. T. CHANA (London): Congress, I move Motion 99 — Domestic Abuse in the LGBT Community. President, as a survivor of domestic and sexual abuse, you often find it hard to understand how you managed to live through years of isolation, fear, being told that you are useless, that you are ugly and that you are going to be killed and your children will be killed if you leave. You wonder how you managed to endure years of punching, slapping, kicking and your money being withheld, so you can't buy basic things like sanitary towels because you are not allowed to leave the home. Your every move, your action and every word is controlled. In that situation, you are powerless to stop the hair pulling, the strangling and the constant demand for unwanted sex, compliance being the only option in fear of being killed.

As a survivor of LGBT domestic abuse, we are further compounded by the abuser threatening to out you to your family, your friends, your employees and colleagues, preventing you from coming out, forcing you to act straight, using your sexuality against you, forcing you look for a cure. The power is taken away from you. You are no longer in control. A TUC report in 2014 on the impacts of austerity on LGBT organisations concluded that cuts meant a drastic reduction in LGBT support services leading to lives being lost. The Albert Kennedy Trust, which supports young LGBT people facing homelessness due to domestic abuse, has seen an increase in its service. Broken Rainbow, the LGBT domestic-abuse service, which was set up in 2002, faced closure this year. It managed to get funding for another year. Why do we need special support services? Not only are they lifesaving but they also provide a safe space and service for all those affected by LGBT domestic abuse.

Naz Mahmood and Matthew Oysten shared a loving 13-year relationship. Naz lead a double life. His family didn't know. He said that Matt lives in his house because he was an investor in a property that they had bought together. They were due to marry. In July 2014 Naz told his family that he was gay. They told him to see a psychiatrist to get cured. Four days later Naz committed suicide. The ultimate betrayal for Naz was yet to come. As Matt arrived at the cemetery he found that Naz's funeral had already taken place. He had been told the wrong time for the funeral. Matt was denied the right to say his final farewell to the love of his life. This cannot be right. There are many LGBT people who suffer in silence, who are alone and who are exhausted. Finding the right and safe

specialist support services is a key to saving lives. An equal society recognises people's different needs, their situations, their goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be. It is a basic human right, Congress, to have access to special support services so that LGBT people can be empowered to move on with their lives and be free from domestic abuse. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. S. HURLEY (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 99. President and Congress, we are all aware that most of the issues we face today are controlled by the Government, which have been busy cutting services up and down the UK, and some of the hardest cuts are yet to come. Last year charities warned the Government that domestic violence refuge provisions were at crisis point. Yet when I researched how many Early Day Motions were discussed during 2014 to 2015 on the subject of LGBT domestic violence, I found only one, which was tabled on 18th December of last year. Congress, with the UK having less than 10 charities which offer LGBT domestic violence support, and knowing that one-in-four of the LGBT community suffer domestic violence, combined with the statement made by Taranjit Chana just now, we can all see the need to protect, ring-fence and improve these vital services. Congress, with such little support available, we need to find, to link up with groups, to organise and support the LGBT community and lobby the MPs to do more to protect existing services, and to ensure that suitable training is rolled out not just to the police but to all local authorities, housing associations, support groups and charities. No one should have to suffer domestic violence alone. We can ease their pain. Together we can make that change. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. Does anybody wish to come into the debate on this section?

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Regarding to Motions 98 and 99, Southern Region support these motions. In relation to Motion 98 — Affiliation to School's Out — by affiliating to School's Out we, as a union, will be able to reach out to more young LGBTI people who may decide when they are older to join our union and to support our LGBTI members better who work in the education system. I had the pleasure of being invited to attend the launch of Labour's *Ending Homophobia Together*, which supports LGBTI young people and teachers back in February at the Houses of Parliament. We need to raise the issues that LGBTI people face as they grow up. By working with School's Out we will be able to educate young people at an early stage of their education to promote equality and better understanding. It would also be a bit of our support for our Shout! Group to show what we can do. We are quite happy to support that motion.

Regarding Motion 99 — Domestic Abuse in the LGBT community — some surveys suggest that there is domestic violence in one out of every four LGBTI relationships. We, as a union, need to work and support LGBTI domestic-abuse groups to ensure that any of our LGBTI members who face being victims of domestic violence are guided to these groups and to ensure that they get the best possible support and advice. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with LGBTI domestic groups and to remind MPs that such specialist services must be kept open to prevent domestic violence getting worse, or in some cases to prevent death. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is anyone else. We now move to the next section. I call Birmingham Region on Motion 100 and then Yorkshire Region on Motion 104, Domestic Violence Web Page on the GMB Website. Birmingham.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WEB PAGE ON THE GMB WEBSITE MOTION 100

100. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WEB PAGE ON THE GMB WEB - SITE

This Congress is to support the introduction of a domestic violence web page to its web site. The web site should include phone numbers such as (National domestic violence help line, victim support etc.). It could also include links to other sites such as womensaid.org.uk.

Men can also be victims of DV so a web page such as this could be a lifesaver for some of our more vulnerable members.

C80 DUDLEY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. CHARLES (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, domestic violence or domestic abuse is an issue which affects many of our members' lives. Stereotypically, victims are often portrayed as female, as statistics indicate that it is predominantly women who suffer abuse. However, in reality domestic violence knows no boundaries of gender or sexuality, race or religion, age, disability, or income level. Honour-based violence, forced marriage, and female genital mutilation, are also recognised as forms of domestic abuse. In short, anyone from any background may be affected. The abuse suffered may be physical, sexual, psychological, financial, and emotional, and includes coercive and threatening behaviour as well as physical violence. Its victims are often left feeling humiliated, isolated, and powerless to escape their situation.

The statistics relating to domestic abuse are shocking. One in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. That is 25% of our female members and more than 16% of our male members. Two women a week are killed by current or former partners in England and Wales. UK police receive one domestic assistance call every minute yet Home Office figures indicate that this is just the tip of the iceberg with only 35% of incidents actually reported to the police.

In households with children, the effect of domestic violence on a child can be severe and long-lasting. The child may become withdrawn and find it difficult to communicate, they may have feelings of anxiety or depression, or there may be problems at school, aggressive or bullying behaviour, truancy or difficulties in learning.

The very nature of domestic violence means that it is often a hidden crime whose victims feel powerless to escape. They may feel humiliated and ashamed that the abuse is somehow their fault or they may believe their partner will change and the violence will stop. Financial and emotional dependence on their abuser, isolation, and a fear of what their partner may do if they try to escape the situation, are all barriers that can prevent those who have experienced domestic abuse from seeking help.

On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police; 35 times. The risk of violence is greatest at the point of separation or after leaving their violent partner. Clearly, domestic violence is a massive issue which affects many, many people, no doubt some of whom are here with us today, and taking steps to escape from an abusive relationship is a very courageous act.

As a union, it is our duty to do all we can to help our members who experience domestic violence. Congress, I call upon you to support this motion to introduce the domestic violence web page on the GMB website, which will highlight the issue of domestic violence and the impact it has on our members' lives, offer information and support to all those who experience abuse, and signpost victims to organisations who can offer advice and practical assistance. By raising awareness, campaigning and supporting our members, we can encourage all who experience domestic violence to recognise that they are not alone, that there is help available, and they do not have to continue to

suffer at the hands of their abuser. By providing information and access to appropriate support organisations via our GMB website we can enable our vulnerable members to move forward with their lives so they are no longer the victims of domestic violence but the survivors of it. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Secunder?

SIS. S. JAMES (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, as Sue spoke, domestic violence can take many forms, sexual, emotional, and/or financial in addition to physical abuse. Every act of violence is wrong and everyone has the right to a life free from fear and violence, something I think we all agree on. I personally have experienced many forms of the abuse I have touched upon at the hands of a former partner and know how easy it is for computer records to be checked when seeking assistance. However, if the opportunity of support outside the usual remit is available, it may help victims find the strength to leave an abusive relationship. On average, two women in the UK will die at the hands of a current or former partner and one in four will suffer domestic abuse in their lifetime. I can guarantee as I look around this room that every one will have come across someone in an abusive relationship, you just may not know it.

GMB is a trade union for everyone and we often talk of equality through inclusion but we are much more than that. We often find ourselves becoming a safe point of contact for our members where they feel they can discuss issues they may not be able to with friends, family, or work colleagues. Factors at home can contribute to work related issues so it is only right that we promote assistance in any way we can. By having a dedicated page on our national website with links to support networks, as well as encompassing the regional, and branch websites will not only give a safer web page to find details away from the typical pages but have the potential to save lives.

In my region, our women's group, the Birmingham Organised Sisters Society, or BOSS as we call ourselves for short, are in the process of creating such a page in addition to our social media accounts, as we are actively confronting the issue of domestic violence in all forms by the White Ribbon campaign, inspired by the pledge made by men who campaign to stop domestic violence against women; although we do recognise that men and LGBT groups also suffer from domestic violence, but due to stereotypes and stigma do not report as many incidents. However, domestic violence is not just an issue in our region and so, Congress, I second this motion wholeheartedly and ask for your full support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Anyone wish to come in the debate?

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): Speaking about Motion 100, domestic violence web page on the GMB site. It is vital Congress supports this motion as often websites are one of the places people tend to visit to look up information. Because of this, SHOUT! As part of its content has an article about domestic abuse and domestic violence on its website where there are some contact numbers and support groups in the resource section for our LGBT members. We are also working with Southern Region on producing in the near future a leaflet which can be downloaded and printed relating to domestic violence as this is an issue that we in the Southern Region have been working on for some time. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Colleagues, I have dealt with those particular issues separately but we do have one more to go, and it is Yorkshire Region on 104. (*Applause*) She has paid her tenner! What do you want!

END COMPULSORY WORSHIP IN SCHOOL (MOTION 104)

104. END COMPULSORY WORSHIP IN SCHOOLS

This Congress calls for an end to compulsory worship in schools. At present, the law requires all publicly funded schools to hold a daily act of “broadly Christian” worship. This is a throwback to a different era. In today’s diverse, pluralistic society, it is an anachronism. Congress accepts that pupils should be taught and allowed to develop an appreciation of various religious and philosophical view points, including non-belief. That, however, should be part and parcel of education. Assemblies should be used to foster a sense of collective identity amongst pupils and to promote moral, social and cultural development, not a narrow religious point of view.

PARKGATE BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, I am sure you remember when you were at school singing *Morning Has Broken* and *We Plough the Fields and Scatter*, the bowing of our heads and thanks for what we have. This was a regular occurrence in schools and was built into the beginning of the day back when I was at school, quite a few years ago. This was easily done. Back then the demographic was mainly Christian based. School communities have now changed but the policy of compulsory worship has not changed with it. We now have a rainbow of nationalities and religions that go with this. Bow your head and giving thanks does not fit this policy any more. One size does not fit all and I should know.

Nationalities and different religions that make up school communities are enriching our children’s religious education in giving them a wider view of the world beyond the school gates. It is developing tolerant individuals that embrace people’s differences and what those differences do to make for a more interesting world. Many schools have moved with this and now have moments of reflection.

Religious education in schools still plays a huge role in educating our children about the differences in their communities and the way people live their lives, and the values and principles they live by. This, to me, is more important than taking five minutes of every morning to give thanks to a god that a large percentage of the assembled probably do not follow. School assemblies will be better used to foster a community spirit amongst pupils, to help their fellows simply because it is the right thing to do. Our children should be inspired to change the world. We should be giving them the skills to promote their own moral, social, and wider cultural development. Schools have moved with the times. Congress, I ask you to support this motion to change the policy to reflect that. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder?

BRO. M. POULTON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker.
(Applause) President, Congress, our country has a strong tradition of tolerance. Look around the hall; we have people of different religions and beliefs, different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, different sexual orientation, all mixing together in mutual respect and acceptance. However, the country also has a history of intolerance, of anti-Semitism, racism, and religious intolerance. By having compulsory worship in schools there is a danger of returning to those dark times. By their very nature religions are mutually exclusive. They promote the idea that only their viewpoint is the correct one, that there is no alternative, and we should not be subjecting children to this in schools.

Of course, we should not ignore the role religion has played in the history of our country. It has inspired building of cathedrals and the writings of great works. It inspired the Anti-Slavery Movement, the labour and Trades Union Movement. The way we inspire our children to carry out these good works is not to give them a narrow view of the world. Instead they should embrace the wider picture and this can be done by promoting a community spirit in school assemblies.

Schools should be used to educate, not indoctrinate. They should be promoting the moral, social, and cultural development of our children and this starts from assemblies at the beginning of the day. Congress, we should move away from the daily worship and progress to developing our kids into well adjusted tolerant citizens. I move to support Motion 104. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. While I am calling for any speakers, will Lorraine Parker, Executive Member, please come to respond? Anyone wish to come in on this particular debate? Come on, then, Kevin. I ask Wales & South West Region if Lorraine Parker is around.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Speaking in a personal capacity against Motion 104. I tell you why, because I think the motion is misleading. Anyone who thinks that when the faith education is done well actually it excludes people, you are mistaken; it does not. It is inclusive. There are many, many schools up and down this country have faith education that build the values, the inspiration, and the leadership that we need in these communities. Pupils cannot tell and many have made arrangements for children to opt out.

Remember, this movement was built on the solidarity developed by many in the faith communities, of many different faiths, not just one faith. Many people of faith communities work together up and down this country to build solidarity, to build new communities, to work together, to build cohesion. I think a failure to understand faith and religion in our communities can actually lead to greater division, not less division.

So, I think you are mistaken and I would ask you to oppose this motion because it is dangerous and I think it is wrong. I work in communities where we are building communities that are multi-faith, many of our Muslim colleagues stand up together with the Christian faiths, actually stand up for dignity and for justice, and many of our church leaders are standing up for the rights at work. What sort of signal does this give? I totally disagree with this motion. I think when education is done well and faith education is done well, you build the values and the dignity that is so important for this country; the foundations of this very movement and this country rely on it. Don't throw it away easily. Listen carefully and vote against the motion. Congress, I ask you to oppose. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Do you want me to take the vote separately, or those for and those against?

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): I would like you to take them separately.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Come on, then, don't sit there.

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am speaking in support of Motion 104. To the last speaker, the motion is not about getting shut of religious education in schools. As the speakers have already said, it is an important lesson in school to teach people about different faiths. Speakers have already spoken about how religion has led to this great movement.

THE PRESIDENT: Ian, I am going to offer the region and the mover to come and answer Kevin's point. You are not the mover, it is Kevin, but carry on for the moment.

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Apologies, Mary. Consider myself reprimanded. I do ask people to support it. The intention is about compulsory religious worship in assemblies. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. I ask the mover if he/she wishes to come and reply to the opposition.

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I think we have got a little bit confused with where the basis of this motion comes from. It is not about stopping religious education in schools. It is not about letting people worship. It is about stopping compulsory Christian worship only. We are such a diverse nation now. Our schools do not just have Christian beliefs and that is it. We need to accept everybody's faith. We need to promote tolerance. By just having Christian-based compulsory worship this is not showing tolerance of everybody's religion and everybody's belief. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, colleagues, thank you. I think we have quite a good debate on this particular issue. I now call Sheila to speak on behalf of the CEC. As last-minute we have asked Sheila. Sheila, well done.

SHEILA BEARCROFT (CEC, Manufacturing): Speaking on behalf of the CEC on the motions in the Equality debate. The CEC is asking you to support Motions 83 and 96 with the qualification, and refer Motions 97, 98 and 99. I will take these in turn.

Motion 83 calls on the GMB to promote, protect, and increase equality officers' rights in the workplace. We have conducted considerable lobbying and campaigning on this issue, including lobbying the Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, Gloria De Piero, MP, and now Shadow Minister for Trade & Investment, Ian Murray, MP, and at a fringe meeting that was held at this year's TUC Congress. Speaking as a member of the TUC General Council this has been fought for long and hard by the national TUC.

The qualification is that given the continuation of an unfriendly government, the case for workplace equality officers or reps should be broadened to include other main political parties.

Motion 96 calls for the establishment of regional-based GMB Shout Groups with the support and the encouragement of the National Equality Forum a number of regions already have active SHOUT! Groups. The qualification is that, given that we now have the governance framework of regional equality forums, and a national equality forum, all regions should be encouraged to support LGBT activists to develop regional SHOUT! Groups under the umbrella of Regional Equality Forums.

Turning to Motions 97, 98 and 99, asking for the union to support various LGBT organisations. On Motion 97 the Albert Kennedy Trust has been in existence for 25 years and supports young LGBT 16-25 year olds who are made homeless or are living in a hostile environment. The trust helps them by providing homes and enabling them to manage independent living as well as improving attitudes within society towards LGBT young people. We support this motion but we would ask that this motion be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee to look into the request for financial support.

Motion 98 calls on the GMB to affiliate to the LGBT charity, Schools Out, which is a member-based organisation that has been working for over 40 years making schools and educational institutions safe places for LGBT communities. Again, we ask that this motion be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Finally, Motion 99 recognises the problem of domestic abuse in the LGBT community and complements Motion 35 carried at Congress last year, which highlighted the increasing number of black and minority ethnic LGBT hate crimes. The GMB Respect at Work policy has been updated to include domestic violence in same sex relationships and Broken Rainbow was one of the organisations we consulted. Again, we are asking for this motion to be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee to decide on what level of support we give these organisations.

To recap, Congress, please support Motions 83 and 96 with these qualifications, and agree to refer Motions 97, 98 and 99. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila. You have done a great job. Thank you very much. Colleagues, I am going to go very carefully through this particular issue. Could I ask London Region if they support the CEC's qualification? You do? (*Agreed*) Does Congress? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 96, GMB SHOUT! Yes? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Congress accepts? (*Agreed*) Okay.

Does Southern Region accept the reference back on Motion 97? (*Agreed*) Congress agree? (*Agreed*)

Affiliation to Schools Out, London Region, do you accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 99, LGBT Community, does London accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) I heard a little "no" there.

Okay, can I then move to a controversy that was stated and I am going to take this particular vote separately. Okay. I ask the regions, Congress, to vote on Motions 81, 82, 83, 89, 90, 96, 97, 98, 99, and 100. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against?

Motion 81 was CARRIED.

Motion 82 was CARRIED.

Motion 83 was CARRIED.

Motion 89 was CARRIED.

Motion 90 was CARRIED.

Motion 96 was CARRIED.

Motion 97 was REFERRED.

Motion 98 was REFERRED.

Motion 99 was REFERRED.

Motion 100 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the vote on Motion 104. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? That is Lost. Okay.

Okay. Can I take it again? All those in favour of 104, please show. I have been to SpecSavers this morning! Okay. All those against? A card vote has been called for. Tellers on! (*Cheers/Applause*)

Colleagues, while the card votes are being sorted out, Mary is going to the women's! Please make sure you are seated when you are putting your vote in.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Could we have the tellers in position, please? The CEC is supporting this motion so all those in favour, vote for, and those against the motion, vote against. Are tellers in position?

Birmingham & West Midlands Region will count GMB Scotland, London Region will count the Southern Region, Midland & East Coast Region will count GMB Wales & South West Region, Northern Region will count Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, North West & Irish Region will count Birmingham & West Midlands Region, GMB Scotland will count London Region, Southern Region will count the Midland & East Coast Region, GMB Wales & South West Region will count the Northern Region, and Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region will count the North West & Irish Region. Are all the tellers in their place? Can you hold your hands up if yes, please?

THE PRESIDENT: Will regions inform me when their region has voted, please. Then we will carry on with the business.

I am now going to go through the list. Have Wales & South West Region voted? *(No)* I am stopping there. Come on, whoever is doing the vote. Zip! Zip!

Birmingham & West Midlands, have you placed your vote? *(Yes)* North West & Irish Region? *(Yes)* Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region? *(Yes)* GMB Scotland? *(Yes)* Northern Region? *(Yes)* London Region? *(Yes)* Midland? *(Yes)* Southern? *(Yes)* (Ooh, that was weak!) Wales & South Western Region? *Yes*.

Okay. Let's get on with the business. We can count!

PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP AWARDS FOR EQUALITY

THE PRESIDENT: We launched these awards in 2009, so this is the sixth year of recognising the exceptional work of our members in regions and branches. There are four categories with awards given to those who have inspired and championed various aspects of the Equality Agenda. Can Congress come to order, please? You will find more details about the winners in a separate document in your wallets. It gives me great pleasure to announce the winners of each award and invite them to come up to the platform to collect their framed certificate and trophy.

Colleagues, the Most Inspirational Individual on Equality in the GMB or at Work is Brian Shaw, London Region. *(Applause)*

(Presentation amid applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the next, the Most Inspirational Regional Equality Forum, goes to the London Regional Equality Forum for their work on the equality branch toolkit. *(Applause)*

(Presentation amid applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The next is the Most Inspirational Equality Project for Organising, which goes to GMB Young London for their campaign work. *(Applause)*

(Presentation amid applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The Most Inspirational Project for Making a Difference at Work goes to Tempay Shop Stewards, Southern Region, for their massive recruitment of other agency workers despite resistance from the company. *(Applause)*

(Presentation amid applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Could the two winners of the Highly Commended awards please come to the stage to collect your framed certificates. The Highly Commended Equality Project for Organising goes to Brian Terry, from the Southern Region, for his work in Malawi and in driving the GMB@Work Agenda, and Highly Commended Project for Making a Difference at Work is Carl Banks from the London Region for his work on the Trans Equality Toolkit. *(Applause)*

(Presentations amid applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, the awards that we have just presented, and others, they were inspirational and motivating. However, Congress, could I ask all regions – all regions – to nominate in this award section? It does inspire the members to get involved and to be part of this union. That is my only request. It is an honour to get an award and I know you can see how delighted they were. Thank you, colleagues, and thanks to everybody who has received their awards.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE JOHN TOOMEY

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, those of you who were at Congress last year will remember that we paid tribute to our dear John Toomey from the North West & Irish Region. Firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to members of his family who are with us today and welcome them to come on stage, Marian and Brian Toomey and Kim and Mark Hampson. *(Standing ovation)*

Congress, you may not be aware but yesterday we acknowledged the memory of John and the inspirational work he had done and in our college in Dublin we named a room after John, the very first to be named in Dublin, his home town. With pride, honour, and love, I award the Gold Badge to his family. Thank you.

(Presentation amid applause)

BRIAN TOOMEY: I would like to thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. It means a lot, your special recognition to my Dad, John Toomey, and all the work he put in. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: See you tonight, gang. We'll all have a Guinness!

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: GMB WOMEN'S PROJECT (INTERIM)

GMB National Women's Taskforce Membership

Ann Lafferty	Secretariat to Task Force	National Office
Mary Turner	National President Chair of the Task Force	London Region
Sheila Bearcroft	CEC member Vice Chair of the Task Force	GMB Wales & SW Region
Kathy Abu-Bakir	National Equality Committee member	Southern Region
Jude Brimble	National Officer	National Office
Ida Clemo	Executive Policy Officer	National Office

Rose Conroy	Head of Communications	National Office
Emma Golding	Head of Human Resources	National Office
Margaret Gregg	CEC member	NW & Irish Region
Sue Hackett	Organiser and Regional Equality Officer	London Region
Sarah Hurley	Branch Equality Officer	London Region
Mary Hutchinson	CEC member	Northern Region
June Minnery	CEC member	GMB Scotland
Desiree Risebury	Senior Organiser	Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire Region
Kath Slater	CEC member	Midland & East Coast Region
Viv Smart	CEC member	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Karen Smith	Membership Manager	National Administration Unit
Cath Speight	Head of Political Department	National Office
Kathleen Walkershaw	European Officer	Brussels Office

Non Member Associates

Paul Kenny	Equality Champion/ General Secretary	National Office
Paul McCarthy	Senior Management Team Representative Regional Secretary	North West & Irish Region

Membership of the National Women's Taskforce has remained relatively constant and together we have continued to address with due diligence the overarching objectives set out in the CEC Women's Special report in 2013 which were:

“There needs to be a full change management programme that embeds the necessary changes at all levels of the organisation. The General Secretary should champion the change and oversee an annual equalities audit (to be included each year in a report to Congress), to ensure that all appointments, procedures, initiatives, services etc. should be accompanied by an equalities impact analysis. This should be replicated within each Region.

We have also sought to implement our aims and objectives outlined in our previous Interim Report that;

“The GMB Women's Task Force aims to develop and recommend policies, actions and structures that will ensure the GMB's profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the union”

Since our last report we have done all within our power to ensure the implementation of the recommendations contained within our 2014 report and worked towards the prioritisation of changes to put before Congress 2015 that we feel will best achieve our aims. The Taskforce believe that one of the key issues that requires immediate and urgent attention is the GMB Appointment Process.

GMB Appointment Process and Procedures

Background

The CEC Special Report to GMB Congress 2013 identified “*a perceived lack of transparency*” of process around job advertisements and appointments especially senior positions in the Union. It also identified an “*absence of a level playing field*” with “*marked differences*” with regional arrangements when carrying out appointments.”

The lack of a consistent approach to appointment procedures in the past has resulted in reputation damage, as well as the obvious undermining of confidence that posts were always awarded on merit and capability against set criteria.

All and any perceptions that career progression is by way of length of service must be clearly dispelled forever, merit and ability to fulfil the role must be the only criteria. Who you know or are friends with have no weight or place in a modern equality and merit based appointment process.

There needs to be a robust appointment process in which faith, trust and confidence can be placed by those who seek employment and confidence in those whose role it is to appoint and promote employees.

GMB has made significant advances in our appointment procedures during recent years and the introduction of uniform training across the GMB for all those participating in selection and appointment panels with the aim of raising both knowledge and consistency in all areas is to be welcomed.

Current system

It is often cited that the current system for appointments at this level are "pre ordained" and such a perception erodes and damages the validity of any process.

The current system has produced some outstanding appointments however it is useful to remind ourselves that at times the current system has been inconsistent in the quality and capability of some choices made.

It is also clear that manipulation of the system has occurred in the past with quite distressing results for the Union. In recent years some appointments to senior grades like Regional Secretaries have been made by selection panels drawn from the relevant region and the Central Executive Council (CEC). This model appears to have worked well and has helped silence the rumours which have been used to undermine the old process surrounding predetermination.

The whole basis of power in the GMB is built on the principles of balance between the National and Regional parts of our Union. The lay bodies of the CEC our Regional Committees are our strength. It would be against that balance of power and responsibility if appointments at the level of National and Regional Secretaries were centralised to the CEC as exists in other Union's.

Entry Level Officers

The appointment process for entry level officer grades has been overhauled and a far more robust interview and selection criteria brings both stronger candidates to the fore and does so with more transparency.

For Membership Development Officer and Senior Organisers it is vital that the same vigorous consistent appointment process is delivered throughout the Union with clear understanding by the appointment panel of the requirements of the post in question and the capability of all and any applicant to fill such a post.

Appointment panels to cover these two particular officer grades should continue to be drawn from suitably trained and competent persons from Regional level with National HR support at all times and throughout the process.

The success of adapting and introducing the new system now makes it inevitable and urgent that the appointment process for more senior roles within the GMB are also strengthened to ensure any flaws in the current system whether real or imagined are dealt with.

It must clearly follow that the changes made by the Senior Management Team (SMT) to the entry level officer appointments must be extended to all other officer rule book posts which are covered by an appointment process.

The roles National Officer, National Secretary and Regional Secretary are high profile important and critical positions which would also benefit from a new and consistent approach for the appointment procedure.

Proposed system

GMB is not any other organisation and we must have modern appointment processes which recognise and reflect the absolute link between our National and Regional Structures. The process used in the GMB Southern Region for the appointment of the Regional Secretary seems an ideal ready-made model to follow for how a new system might operate.

An appointments panel drawn from properly trained members from the relevant Regional Committee and the CEC in equal numbers would provide the correct balance, ensure a consistent approach and go a long way to eliminate that perception of pre determination or "fixed outcomes".

The new system coupled with a far more vigorous profiling and task based interview procedures would hopefully encourage a wider more diverse choice of candidates and help to raise standards.

The same type of panel make up would be used and drawn up for National Secretary and National Officer appointments with Regional members of the panel being drawn from the

pool of those suitably qualified and trained as well as having the knowledge of the relevant Industrial areas concerned.

The President of each selection panel would be determined by the type of post being interviewed for example for a Regional Secretary post then the Regional President would preside. If the post is for National Secretary or National Officer then the National President or Vice President would preside.

In all situations only those who had received the appropriate training on a regular basis could participate at any level in the process. Ex officio to the panels but without voting rights may be such persons as are required by the panel in order to authenticate candidates claims or conduct such exercises or provide such information as may be required in line with agreed interview process for the use of the panel in their deliberation.

National HR department will participate at all levels of the appointment process including shortlisting and interview stages but will not have any vote in the event such a process is required at determination stage.

The appointment system for National Senior Staff position has produced a significant change in the gender balance of the Heads of Department or similar type roles. Nonetheless in order to introduce a standard and consistent system, it is recommended that those appointments currently of senior staff which have previously been dealt with by a panel drawn solely from the CEC, be replaced with one identical to that being recommended for National Officer appointments.

There is a clear understanding that the Union must use and encourage the engagement of many more women in the future direction of our Union. Old protocols or rigid structures shouldn't stop us dealing with the complex problems of here and now. The recent restructure of the SMT is a clear sign that strategic thinking in the GMB about perceptions are understood and are being addressed

In essence, the changes proposed in this paper build on what has or is currently happening. It recognises the need for inclusion in the appointment process particularly for the most senior posts and offers a system that will produce confidence in future applicants that appointments are merit based.

It will bring to the interview table a wider base of candidates from which to make a choice and improve both the quality and opportunity within the process from which both applicants and the Union will be winners.

The new process should help more women and black and minority ethnic applicants have confidence in a robust and transparent system where candidates whose merit and abilities be the criteria that selections will be made on.

Recommendations for Change

The Task Force **recommend** that the **appointments process** should

- Be robust and one in which faith, trust and confidence can be placed by those who seek employment or those whose role it is to appoint and promote employees

- Be compliant with relevant equality legislation and ensure that the best candidate is selected based on merit and capability
- Be implemented consistently across the Union for senior appointments
- Include profiling as well as a relevant task based evaluation exercise
- Always conducted in a fair, transparent, and accountable manner

The Task Force **recommend** that the **appointments panel** should

- All receive regular and appropriate training to ensure compliance with current equality legislation
- Be suitably qualified and have good knowledge of the post
- Be made up of an equal balance of CEC lay members, Regional or Section Committee members with appropriate industrial knowledge
- Include the National President/Vice President or Regional President determined by the type of post being interviewed
- National HR Department will support Regional and National appointments as outlined in the proposals
- Determine whether any other person be required without voting rights in order to authenticate candidates claims or conduct or provide information for the use of the panel in their deliberation (i.e ex-officio)
- Act in a responsible and transparent manner ensuring that there is no pre-determination and no informal contact with the interviewee outside of the process.

Appendix A gives further details on interview construction, candidate feedback, potential advice for candidates and Appendix B lists subsequent rule amendments.

The Task Force **recommends** that the issues contained in this document are **implemented** and **reported** back to Congress 2016

Statistics on Women in the GMB

The Taskforce have taken the national statistics referred to in our 2014 Interim report and broken them down by region. This information, as contained in Appendix C, highlights the substantial regional variations regarding:

- The number of women GMB members
- The number of GMB women workplace representatives
- The number of branches who have a Branch Equality Officer
- The gender of the Branch Equality Officer

The Taskforce have been trying to better understand these differences by considering regional practices in place and how these differing practices impact upon the statistics. Looking at regional best practices and how they can be replicated throughout the union. In doing so we are aware of the weaknesses and disparities in how data is kept and what information is shared.

The Taskforce **recommend** that a standardised **regional equality audit** be undertaken on a regular basis.

That the audit covers regional practices as well as regional gender related statistics. That the completed audits be the subject of circulation, comparison and evaluation by the SMT and the National Women's Taskforce

Communicating our Commitment

The Taskforce are keen to ensure that the GMB Rule book reflects and communicates the unions stated intent to support and encourage its women and to that end, we would recommend an appropriate statement be included within the "Our Purpose".

The Taskforce **recommend** that the following words be inserted as an additional bullet point in the GMB Rule Book "**Our Purpose**" statement.

"We will strive to ensure that GMB's profile reflects all equality strands in the union at all levels of the lay and employee National, Regional, Branch and Workplace structures."

The implementation of the Interim Report to Annual Congress 2014

The Congress decision to implement the Taskforce Interim Report was welcomed and work has been done to ensure that the report is widely circulated using the GMB national web, journals and the Equality Forums.

The following section is provided to detail some of the work and actions undertaken by the Taskforce to implement recommendations contained within their Interim Report to Annual Congress 2014.

Zero Tolerance Statement

The Zero Tolerance Statement contained in our interim report has been subject of wide circulation. It has been featured in the GMB journal, placed on the GMB National website, sent to all Staff via the Staff Bulletin; it is included within GMB@Work training and will be displayed in all GMB offices.

Workplace Contacts

The Taskforce contacted each of GMB's 6,000 Workplace Contacts to request their participation within our online survey. The results received have provided a clear insight into the needs and aspirations of Workplace Contacts throughout the union. We are now in the midst of taking appropriate to ensure the information received is acted upon. Part of this work is looking at the regional variance in training provided to those undertaking this role with a view to standardising best practices throughout GMB.

Workplace Representatives

DVD Women's Voices

The Taskforce DVD 'Women's Voices' – is available for use as an aid to encourage women to become GMB representatives. It is the intention of the Taskforce to produce a series of different "Women's Voices" DVD's, to encourage women to become more active in all aspects of the union.

GMB Training and Education

There were lots training and education related recommendations contained within the Taskforce interim report. Work on equality proofing course material is underway. Regarding the other recommendations the Taskforce is working with Carl Parker the National Education Officer and the Regional Education Officers.

Workplace Representative Development Programme

A draft policy has been drawn up by the Taskforce and submitted to the SMT for consideration. This policy will offer a programme for Workplace Representatives to develop within GMB.

Branch Equality Officers

The Taskforce are currently encouraging all Branch Equality Officers to participate in an online survey in which they will be asked to identify the issues they deal with, the problems they encounter and the assistance which they would like to have provided. Once the survey is complete and the responses analysed, the Task Force will continue to work with the National Equality Forum to create national guidelines to encourage a greater take up of this position.

Annual Women's Conference

Arrangements have been made to ensure regions budget for and plan their Women's Regional Conferences. The Taskforce have offered their support in the organisation of these Conferences. In several regions this event has now taken place and been the subject of positive feedback.

GMB: The Employer, Women's Progression

Staff to Officer Scheme

A new national policy has been developed and implemented covering the arrangements for employees to gain the insight, knowledge and experience to be able to carry out an Officer role within 12 months.

Mentoring Policy

A draft policy on the provision of Mentors for GMB employees has been drawn up by the Taskforce and submitted to the SMT, for consideration.

Conclusion

The Taskforce seek the endorsement of this their second report to Congress.

Appendix A GMB Appointment Process and Procedures

This appendix gives further details on the GMB Appointment Process and Procedures in particular:

- **Advertising Vacant positions**
- **Short listing applicants for interview**
- **Make up of interview panel**
- **Interview Process**
- **Candidate Feedback**

Advertising Vacancies

Vacancies within GMB will continue to be circulated as broadly as possible in order to encourage applications from branches, activists, employees and external applicants, in particular from groups currently under represented.

All vacancies are sent to the National HR department, who circulate it to every Region. Each region then sends this on through its structures to all members via its offices and branches. All vacancies are placed on the National GMB website and on the relevant regional website. In addition, depending on the nature of the role, GMB uses the TUC website and other specialist external websites for advertising.

Short listing Applicants for interview

The short listing phase of the selection process is critical to a successful outcome and will comply with equality legislation. The panel will comprise of at least two people, with additional involvement from HR, and be gender balanced. Each member of the panel will assess applications on his or her own to help prevent bias, following which they will meet to agree a final shortlist.

If advertising a post results in a limited response, steps will be taken to re-advertise to a wider audience. Depending on the number of applicants, there may be a process of long listing, followed by short listing.

Short listing involves reviewing applications against the criteria, identifying a suitable pool of candidates. To ensure that the process is fair and objective, the panel will consider each application against the same set of criteria. The criteria will relate to the requirements of the job and refer to the job description and person specification.

The Appointments Panel

The composition of the panels to appoint senior posts in the union (National Officers, Regional Secretaries and National Secretaries and Heads of National Departments) will be adhered to consistently throughout the union.

Those on the appointments panel will receive regular and appropriate training and have knowledge of the advertised post. National standards will be set for appropriate and on-going training which will be a mandatory obligation for those who undertake the responsibility of interviewing prospective candidates.

The Panel will be gender balanced and appropriately reflect equality and diversity strands where possible as well as industrial, regional and national representation.

An appointments panel will be selected for each post and be drawn from properly trained members. The Panel will consist of an equal representation from the relevant Regional Committee (50%) and CEC members from outside the Region (50%). The Chair of the Panel will be determined by the type of post being interviewed; for regional posts, the Chair will be the Regional President and for National posts the Chair will be the National or Vice President.

The same type of panel composition will be used and drawn up for National Secretary and National Officer appointments with Regional members of the panel being drawn from the pool of those suitably qualified and trained as well as having the knowledge of the relevant Industrial areas concerned.

There is the opportunity for persons to be required by the panel in an “ex-officio” role. They will be present to authenticate candidate’s claims or provide information, as may be required, in line with agreed interview process, for the use of the panel in their deliberation. Any person acting as “ex officio” will not have voting rights.

National HR department will participate at all levels of the appointment process including short listing and interview stages but will not have voting rights in the event such a process is required at determination stage.

The Interview Process

The interview process has two main purposes – to find out if the candidate is suitable for the job and to give the candidate information about the job and GMB.

The interview, to recruit and select, will be a rigorous and robust evaluation exercise consistently used across the whole of the union. It will ensure that the best candidate for the job is selected based on merit. Every candidate will be offered the same opportunity to give the best presentation of themselves.

There will be two parts to the selection process, the first being task based and the second, a structured interview, therefore allowing a range of methods to be used. There will be direct involvement of National HR personnel at all levels, the system used to evaluate applicants and the system used to record the evaluations to ensure a consistent and fair approach. The new system coupled with a far more vigorous profiling and task based interview procedures should encourage a wider more diverse choice of candidates and help to raise standards.

Candidate feedback

Following the interview process, all candidates should be offered constructive feedback, either orally or in writing. The interview panel should agree who is going to provide applicant feedback. Giving feedback should be conducted in an open, positive and professional manner and give positive feedback to any unsuccessful candidate on any aspects they could reasonably improve on for future success. The feedback should be descriptive and should be based on the criteria specified on the person specification, focusing on how the applicant did or did not meet the criteria.

Conclusion

The Task Force recommends that the issues contained in this Appendix are implemented and reported back to Congress 2016

Appendix B Rule Amendments

Congress is asked to pass the following changes to the Rule Book

Rule 17 a Officials – authority over

Clause 3 Line 3

Delete: “or the Regional Committee”

Insert: “ or an appointment panel”

Rule 17 a to read

Rule 17a Officials- authority over

1. The *Central Executive Council* has full authority over all national, sectional, and regional officers and has the final say over all matters relating to their conditions of employment or otherwise (except disciplinary matters). The council's decision will be final and binding on all officials.

2. The *Central Executive Council* can pass on its authority for officials to regional committees, as long as so doing would not take away any of the council's overall authority, including the right to decide on the number and grade of senior organisers and organisers.

3. No member will be eligible to be appointed, nominated or elected for any national, regional or section office within the union unless the *Central Executive Council* (or an appointment panel, if it has been given the authority) is satisfied that the member is suitably qualified and capable of efficiently carrying out the duties of the office.

In line with rule 15 this clause will not apply to candidates for *General Secretary* and *Treasurer*.

Rule 17 d Regional Secretary

Clause 1 Line 1

Delete “the regional committee”

Insert: “an appointment panel made up of an equal balance of members of the regional committee and the Central Executive Council.”

Clause 1 Line 2

Delete: “and the procedure for appointing them”

Delete Clause 2

Re-number Clause 3 as Clause 2

Insert new Clause 3

“Appointments under this rule will be made in accordance with guidelines and procedures issued by the Central Executive Council”

Rule 17d to read

Rule 17d *Regional Secretary*

1. *When a vacancy arises an appointment panel made up of an equal balance of members of the regional committee and the Central Executive Council will appoint a regional secretary. The person appointed will need to be approved by the Central Executive Council.*

2. *For the purposes of these rules, a regional secretary will be treated as if they were a member of the regional council for as long as they hold office as regional secretary.*

3. *Appointments under this rule will be made in accordance with guidelines and procedures issued by the Central Executive Council.*

Rule 17 e National Officials

Clause 1 Line 3

Delete “.”

Insert “, and such national officers for each section as the Central Executive Council considers necessary.”

Clause 4 Line 1

Delete “nominated”

Insert “appointed, nominated”

Insert new Clause 5

“Appointments under this rule will be made in accordance with guidelines and procedures issued by the Central Executive Council”

Rule 17 e to read

Rule 17e National Officials

1. To help the *General Secretary and Treasurer* with matters relating to members of the sections, the *Central Executive Council* will appoint a national secretary for each section, and such national officers for each section as the *Central Executive Council* considers necessary.
2. To help the *General Secretary and Treasurer* with developing and implementing strategies for workplace organising, the *Central Executive Council* will appoint a national organising officer. The *Central Executive Council* will appoint such other officers in support of that role as the *Central Executive Council* considers necessary from time to time. The national organising officer will convene a national organising team including representative officers from each region. The purpose of this team will be to ensure the co-ordination and implementation of effective organising strategies across the Union in line with *GMB@Work*.
3. When a vacancy arises within the union for a national official (except as set under rule 14 - *General Secretary and Treasurer*) and is taken by a member who has not previously been elected, the member will need to be elected by all members of the union.

4. No member will be eligible to be appointed, nominated or elected to any national office within the union unless the Central Executive Council is satisfied that the member is suitably qualified for the office in line with rule 17a3. The election procedure will be as set out in rules 17f and 65, unless changed by the Central Executive Council.

5. Appointments under this rule will be made in accordance with guidelines and procedures issued by the Central Executive Council.

Appendix C

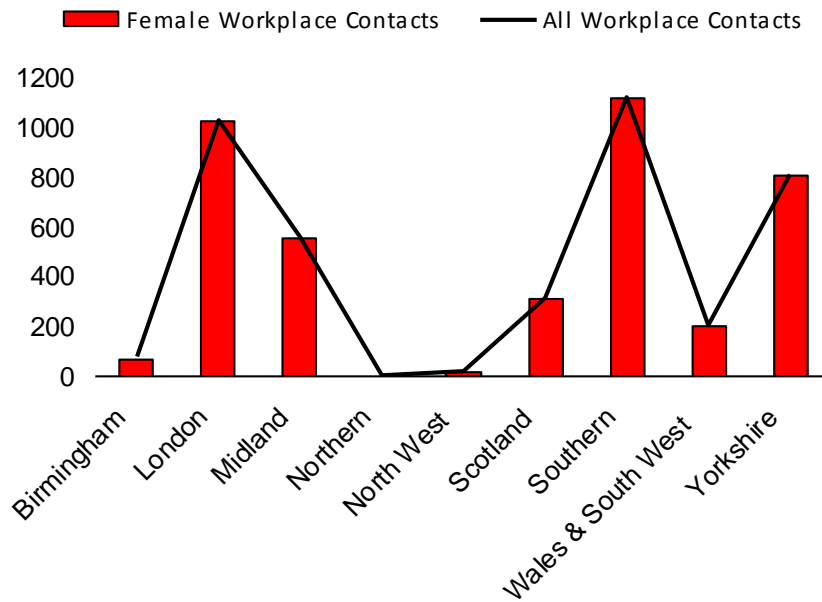
GMB Data – Regional Breakdown

Source GMB membership system 2013 and GMB payroll 2013

Membership



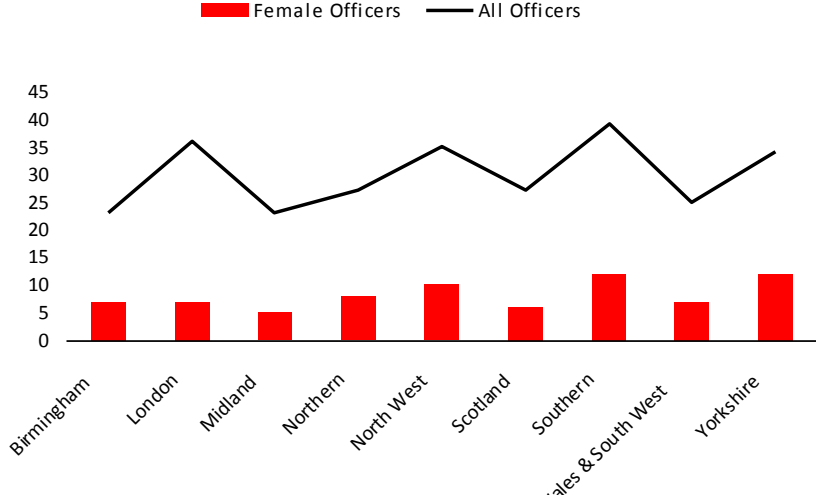
Workplace Contacts



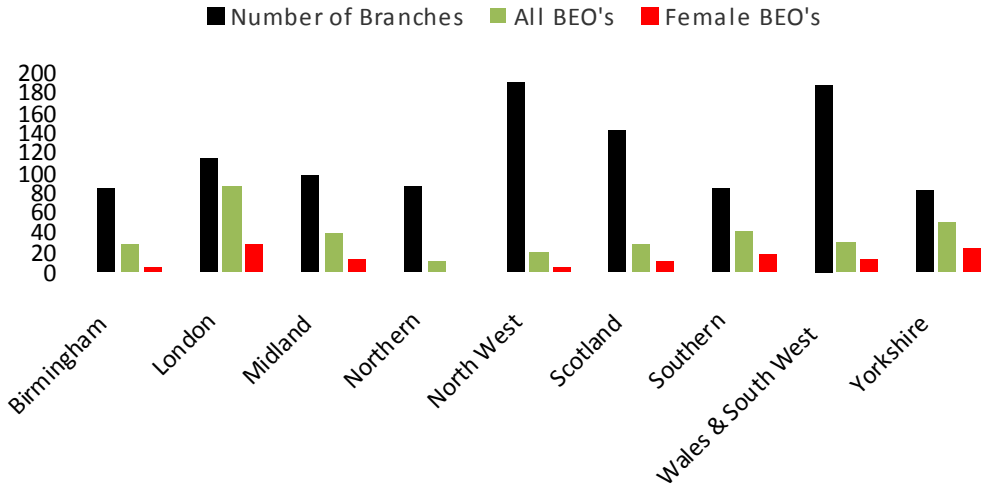
Shop Stewards



Officers



GMB Branch Equality Officers



THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now move to the second CEC Report of the day. I will call for any speakers on the debate. The GMB Women's Project. I now call Paul Kenny to move the CEC Special Report and Sheila Bearcroft to second. Sorry?

POINT OF ORDER

SIS. Z. WARREN (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, a point of order, CEC Special Report: Women's Project. Referring back to previous motions carried and specifically passed Motion 144 at Congress in 1993 that all documents provided by the CEC shall be voted on by paragraph or section, we ask Congress to apply this to this document. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. CLARKSON (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, my region is in full support of the CEC Special Report: Women's Project, but request that the document is gone through page by page as per the 1993 Congress, as the appendices at the back of the document are something separate to what the actual Women's document is about. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else?

SIS. V. DAVISON (Northern): Speaking in support of the CEC Report: GMB Women's Project. The Northern Region welcomes this report ----

THE PRESIDENT: Hang on. I know we were a long time waiting for the vote but the greyhounds aren't off the block yet! Colleagues, I now put the request to Congress that has just been moved by the Midland & East Coast Region, that we go through this document, firstly, I take both, do we do it paragraph by paragraph or do we do it page by page, or the whole document? I will put it to you. The whole document? Hands up. Paragraph by paragraph? All those in favour? Page by page? Sorry, those against? It is the whole document, colleagues. (*Applause*) PK, you move it. I'll play it!

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Okay, *that* is the document in case you need to read through it. I hope you have all read through it pretty extensively before you got here. Congress, President, we like to finish each Congress session on a bit of a high and, frankly, I cannot think of a better high than coming back to Congress this year with the second leg of the Women's Taskforce Report.

It may seem strange, it even seems strange to me, that it is a man albeit the General Secretary that is actually moving the report. This is the closing chapter of a book we started to write, would you believe, 125 years ago when the Executive of our union, as it was then, the Gasworkers, actually nominated Eleanor Marx to be a delegate on behalf of our union for that year's TUC and Eleanor was actually refused entry to that conference of the TUC on the grounds that she was a woman.

You will see that actually there is a long history in the Trades Union and labour Movement; almost from the first breath of our organisation we faced all sorts of obstacles about trying to pursue the issues of equality and, as I say, some of those have been within the ranks of our own Trades Union and labour Movement.

In the last two years we have had a real honest look at our operations, our style, and our make-up. In the last 10 years things have changed. We have more women members in the union, a lot more. We have more women activists than ever before and we have more women officers. This report highlights not just that change but it helps us to think and chart the way forward but, bluntly and frankly, colleagues, we have to do a hell of a lot more.

We have to ensure that for women and indeed all interested applicants our appointment system for senior positions in the union is fair, transparent, and most importantly not predetermined. If you apply for a job, you get the job on merit, not because someone is giving a nod and a wink six months or a year before.

The work done over the last two years by the Women's Taskforce has been to challenge what we do and, frankly, from where I sit I think they have succeeded pretty well. So, a big thank you to all of the Taskforce for the contribution they made but I want to make a special mention to Ann Lafferty. Ann transferred to National Office from our Birmingham & West Midlands Region to help coordinate and assist the Task Group. Ann has been patient, she has been patient with me, she has been patient with everybody, but she has been determined and I am absolutely certain that her contribution to these historic changes has been critical.

Congress, we look a very, very different union than we did a decade ago and if you do not believe me, come and stand on this Congress stage and look out. It is a very, very different union. We are a very different union. We are because we had the courage to change in an inclusive manner, and in a comradely manner. The hallmark of the GMB must be we challenge and we change.

We changed entry level officers' appointments procedure, much more robust but much more transparent and, frankly, much more testing. We introduced compulsory training in equality awareness for everybody who is involved in the appointment process itself.

At National Office, senior staff, plenty of those posts are now occupied and have been appointed in the last couple of years. Our National Political Officer, our Head of Communications, and the National HR Manager and the Head of Corporate Law, all women, who, by the way, in addition to being women they were actually the best candidates for the job, and that was the point. (*Applause*)

Now we come to a big change in what we do. We know it is the right thing to do. We have nothing to fear by giving people a fair crack so that the best candidates come forward, that people have confidence in a system, and they believe that it is a transparent and fair system. I want no more either of whispered suggestions that there is no point in applying for a job here or a job there because it was all stitched up a very long time ago because you know they know that person, or that person knows that person.

We all know if we are being truthful that those rumours and whispers have gone on and it undermines the union and it undermines the people who get those jobs on merit. It continues to undermine them and it is going to come to an end. So, regional secretaries, national secretaries, national officers, and national senior staff will all now come under the umbrella of the recommendations we are putting to you of the appointments process and the appointments panels drawn from the strengths in our regions, with all the life experiences and knowledge of what services members need, and also from our national experiences from members drawn from the Central Executive Council. That experience and that knowledge, that ability to know and to question, and to plan forward the type of union we want.

I move with considerable pride and with great humility what I think looks like a very simple change in the union's appointment structures, it looks like it, but let me kid you not, this is a massive culture change in the terms of how the union looks at itself and, more importantly, how the union wants to look at itself. We do not want it ever to be suggested that there is any way that people can say, "I don't apply for a job in the GMB, I don't apply for a promotion, I don't apply to take that, because I know I will never get it because it is predetermined."

We are proposing a system that effectively draws those strengths from regional and national and, frankly, if anybody complains about the wisdom and skills that exist in that particular group, all properly trained, all properly updated, then I am not sure we can ever please them but we will be able to know we have a transparent, honest system. We have a system that no one can criticise us for and, more importantly, hopefully will encourage a lot more of our women members to become activists, a lot more of our activists will participate in much wider participation in the union, a lot more of our officers to think about where the union should be going and what the members need and, more importantly for me, we will have a union that looks forward and not relies on something that we stitched up 75 years ago because, basically, it was all men then, anyway, wasn't it.

I move the report to you. I hope that you will support it and I hope that we have an incredibly successful process over the next few years, and that we encourage as many people as possible from all gender backgrounds and from all ethnicities to come forward with confidence that the GMB has a robust and determined appointments system. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Sheila Bearcroft to second. While Sheila is seconding, anyone who wishes to take part in the debate will they come forward, please.

SIS. S. BEARCROFT (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, delegates, you will have seen that the Women's Taskforce Special Report before you today spells out the recommendations arising out of over two years hard work and building on last year's interim report. The GMB is advocating an appointment process that is applied consistently regardless of where the vacant post is or what the vacant post is. It is imperative that we put in place an appointments system that is not only fair but is seen to be fair if we are to ensure confidence in our selection outcome.

The Women's Taskforce has worked hard to identify the areas that GMB can improve on in order to fulfil our aim of always being the best, research into how and where women join GMB, what motivates them to get active, and what holds them back from taking part in GMB activities at the workplace and beyond. This has helped us to rediscover our debt to Eleanor Marx without whom it is doubtful that the Gasworkers Union would have survived those early years. How proud Eleanor would have been that the union she helped found now boasts in excess of 50% of its members are women. *(Applause)*

So we change to match the times and the needs of our union and our members. However, the Women's Taskforce does not think that the introduction of a new fairer appointments system is going to result in an overnight change in GMB's gender employment statistics, but it would send a message, a message that if you apply for a job with the GMB there will be no predetermined outcomes. Ability is the criteria, not patronage, jobs for both men and women who have the best talents, the best ability, the best skills, the best knowledge and the best commitment. GMB will offer jobs to the best applicants and it will always be the right person for the right job.

That is a message that will encourage more people, more members, to apply for senior positions in GMB, including more women. Colleagues, can I speak personally as the only woman regional president within the GMB. Sisters, it is about time some of you joined me. *(Applause)* Congress, I second the report. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sheila.

BRO. T. FELLOWS (Birmingham & West Midlands): I will be short and sweet as I normally am! The Birmingham Region totally agrees with the project and the report except on page 3 we talk about manipulation, predetermination, jobs for the boys, if you want, yet on page 12 there is a rule amendment which says: "Regional secretary. Delete the regional committee. An appointment panel

made up of an equal balance of members of the regional committee and the Central Executive Council.” The way that reads, if it becomes the rule, is that it is open to manipulation. It does not say how many are in the selection committee but if it is 10 you can have five members of the regional committee and five members of the CEC from the same region. Isn't that open to predetermination and jobs for the boys? So, Birmingham Region would like an amendment to that rule change and it would then read: “An appointment panel made up of an equal balance of members of the regional committee and the members of the Central Executive Council from other regions,” from other regions. I move that you support the project and the report with the amendment to that rule change. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

SIS. V. DAVISON (Northern): Speaking in support of the CEC Report: GMB Women's Project. The Northern Region welcomes this report and from our point of view it is a key part of how this union moves forward. We need to encourage, mentor, and train the 50% of our membership that are female so that they can help this great union to reflect the workplaces we represent, not just that it is part of our wider political aims and objectives to ensure that our people reflect the society they work in. We want to place on record our thanks to the members, activists, and officers who helped to produce the CEC report.

Congress, we celebrate the many great years of workplace help and support by GMB reps and officers. However, we all know that it has been difficult for women to break through. Let's face it, that has been the same the world over, but we need to move on. I have lost a page. Okay. Sorry. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): President, Congress, speaking in support of the latest progress report and its recommendations. Congress, London Region is pleased to receive this second report from the National Women's Taskforce and applaud the work of the members of the committee who are examining how GMB can become more inclusive to its women members and staff at every level of our union structures. As we know, this latest report is most timely given as we have heard today that women now make up an equal number of membership. This report presents progress today to recommendations relating to the union staff appointment process. It also recommends that a standard regional equality audit be undertaken on a regular basis and puts forward rule amendments which communicate our union's commitment to equality through inclusion. Congress, these recommendations and rule amendments are a progressive step in the right direction and ones, therefore, which London Region fully endorses. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. B. PLANT (Southern): President, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC Special Report. My region welcomes this latest progress report from the Women's Taskforce and thanks them for their continued hard work to make the GMB a better, more diverse, and more representative employer and trade union. We are proud that it is our region's model for the appointment of a regional secretary that the Taskforce now sees as best practice of how a new system may operate. Although at the moment it would appear that you have more chance of being appointed a regional secretary, traditionally, if you are called Paul than being a woman.

If we are to represent the best kind of employer, then job adverts and appointments must be transparent and consistent. Merit and ability must be the only criteria to determine whether someone gets a job. We welcome, therefore, uniform training for those involved in the selection process and the commitment to balance between national and regional parts of the union. We hope, though, that the commitment is for all regional committee and all CEC members to be properly and adequately trained on a regular basis. This maximises the pool of members who can sit on panels and help us to eliminate the perception of predetermination and fixed outcomes, otherwise who decides who it is

within regional or the CEC who will be the properly trained members. It is high time that our leadership reflected the make-up of our membership. Southern Region recommends this report to Congress 2015. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. A. DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): Congress, GMB Scotland welcomes the CEC Special Report. Both Paul Kenny and Mary Turner announced from the rostrum this morning that we now have more women than men in the GMB. This report firmly sets out the commitment by GMB to ensure our union is representative of our membership base, to take forward, embed, and enshrine in our structures the significant role that most women have within this great union of ours. With no disrespect to our male colleagues, there is and always has been a supply of talent within our female membership as can be seen within this hall today.

GMB has been bold to grasp the nettle and commit fully to this project. This is about our future, a future based on the involvement and participation of women within the GMB at all levels. Of my own region, GMB Scotland, I can state that we have embraced a fair appointment process as our last three appointments to organisers have been women. These appointments were not on anything other than merit. These women were the best candidates for the role and have been an excellent addition to GMB Scotland. We fully support the Women's Project. (*Applause*)

SIS. S. MACARIAN (GMB Wales and South West): President, Congress, speaking in support of the progress report. Wales & South West Region believes that this progress report shows dedication to promote equal opportunity and a discrimination-free workplace. It addresses that any type of unlawful discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated within the GMB union. We fully support the content of the report and will implement the recommendation of a robust and consistent approach to be adopted generically throughout the regions, which would ensure that the aims of the report are achieved.

The Taskforce have identified a clear direction on how they believe the system should move forward with the transparent consistent approach to eliminate that perception of predetermined or fixed outcome. It seems clear that entry level officers' appointments are far more robust. In the light of this we welcome the introduction of uniform training across the GMB. We also encourage the Annual Women's Conference to take place in all regions. I had the pleasure to attend the North West & Irish Women's Conference in Liverpool, which was inspiring, motivating, and certainly brought and created a fantastic networking tool to encourage women to be active and help belief and confidence to enhance their activity beyond their own beliefs.

Congress, please support and promote this report. Moving forward we must encourage the recommendations that the Taskforce have highlighted within this document. May I, on behalf of the Wales & South West Region, thank the Taskforce for their commitment and hard work towards creating a transparent, fair, and equality-driven union via this project. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. A. BURTON-KEEBLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Speaking in support of the CEC Special Report. President, Congress, we welcome the progress report from the GMB Women's Project. Historically, women's issue have not been addressed. However, with the work of the GMB National Women's Taskforce, we are at the forefront of tackling equality in women's issues from the inside out. The GMB needs to learn from its mistakes and give women the support they need to succeed from the ground all the way up to the higher levels. We also need to share the experiences of these women who have succeeded in order to not only show other women what can be achieved but to give them the hope and confidence to achieve it themselves.

It is absolutely fantastic what the GMB Women's Project is achieving, but there are going to be even tougher times ahead and the momentum needs to keep going. There are obviously improvements to

be made in the number of female shop stewards, officers, and branch equality officers. Just remember where we came from. Times ahead are going to be a challenge what with the Tories already attacking human rights and unions. We need to be strong and pull together to stop what we have already achieved in equality in women's issues being attacked by our current government. We totally support the GMB Women's Project and look forward to the GMB National Women's Taskforce's future work. (*Applause*)

SIS. M-L. HARRISON (Midland & East Coast): I welcome and support the sentiment in the main body of this report. Those who know me know that I have fought long and hard on the part of women to raise the equality of women and the advancement of women. Women still do not have equal parity with men but where I do not agree with the report is in the attached appendix. There is no correlation between the two. How and where will giving the Central Executive Council full authority over the regional officers with the final say over all matters help the advancement of women? Women are yet again being exploited by the few at the top to control the masses at the bottom. The insinuation is that at a local level we cannot recruit openly and fairly. I disagree with that. I think we can. Taking power away from the regions is not the answer. It will not work. Therefore, I am asking you to vote in referring this report back, not to change the content of the report, I thought it was a brilliant report, but to change its recommendations, make them meaningful, make them relevant but, more importantly, make them inclusive and respectful to not only women but your local and regional branch members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. M. JENKINS (Midland & East Coast): As a region we support the Women's Report. I spoke quite passionately last year on the report. But we have concerns. As has already been mentioned, this report and its appendix are supposed to help strengthen our regions but how is making, in appendix A, the appointment panel consisting of equal representation from relevant regional committees and part of the CEC anything really to do with the Women's Report? Surely, in doing this it is taking away from the strength that our regions have. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. HARGREAVES (North West & Irish): President, Congress, and delegates, second-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) The North West & Irish Region welcome this progress report. The new proposals for interviewing and appointments are proactive and bring the GMB into the 21st century. We are all proud to be in the GMB at a time when there is the highest percentage of women, and believe together we can move the union forward. Our region, the North West & Irish, is proactive for our women members. This year we will hold our 15th Women's Conference. We have also started a Women's Forum. This group is now doing a women's project. This is done for women by women. With the support of our region and Paul McCarthy, women are being empowered with the knowledge that they can have a voice and make a difference. I feel there is an army of hardworking, fair-minded, honest women waiting to be tapped into. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, is that it? I call the General Secretary to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you. I think that is a pretty good discussion and I will try and make clear what I think were the three points raised.

Firstly, Trevor Fellows is always short and sweet, you said. That is not entirely true but we will gloss over it. The point you made is okay, actually, Trevor. We have made this clear at the Executive but we will make it clear here, and it will be in the minute and if we have to we can issue it in a guidance note. Just bunging up an amendment to a rule in your speech is not going to work but we can make it explicitly clear in this discussion, explicitly clear in the minute, and explicitly clear in the guidance notes.

If, for example, there are five and five, that was your suggestion, five regional committee members and five Executive members. None of those Executive members will come from the region where the appointment is being made. Equally, if it is a national appointment, let's say it was an appointment for the public services national secretary, there is going to be people from the public services national section committee on the appointment panel from a national perspective, but you would not then top that up with a load of people from local authorities from the regional section. You have to have that diversity. As long as we are clear, there is never any intention that anyone will be able to load the dice; it will be a diversity.

In terms of those appointments I go a bit further. We have said that if it is an appointment, for example, for a regional secretary and it is five and five, the chair of that appointment process will be the regional president, providing of course the regional president has undergone the appropriate equality awareness training. No one is going to sit on those panels unless they have, and by the way we are suggesting not two-year updates but annual updates to ensure that people keep refreshed, and we will have as wide a group as possible. There is a churn, obviously, in the union at national level and also at regional level. So, to be absolutely crystal clear, if it is a regional appointment, five members from the regional committee and five other CEC members who will be drawn from regions other than the one where the appointment is being made in.

Two points were raised by Midlands & East Coast, colleagues. Mary-Louise Harrison, I did not quite get it, Mary, but let me try and explain something that I think you may have missed. You basically said how did this help us because we were taking away the right of people to make appointments locally? I do not know where in the document you read that because it is not in there. There is no change whatsoever to the appointment process in the regions, for staff or entry level officers, or for membership development officers if the region wants to appoint, or even for senior organisers. It is explicit that those arrangements seem to be working and they should stay the same. I do not know where you got the impression that somehow this appointment process took away the regions' right to appoint. It does not.

Turning to Michelle. Look, Michelle, I have just got to be honest with you. You say what does having joint panels bring. I think this is what it brings. It brings a number of things. This is what I think it brings. Firstly, and if you have not heard it you are lucky because I have heard it and I have heard it many times down through the years, that senior jobs in the organisation are predetermined. Now, there will be people sitting in this hall, and I do not ask you to put your hand up but you know I am telling you the truth, and we have to eradicate any suggestion of that. It may be complete nonsense but the problem about a lie is you have to nail it. Anyway, why wouldn't we draw all that experience at regional level, who would not previously have been involved in the appointments of national officers and national secretaries, because that has been the complete purview of the CEC, why wouldn't we draw people from regional level who could be argued may be well involved in all sorts of issues in the workplace and with the membership, that will bring knowledge and experience to those appointment panels. Why wouldn't we do that?

On one hand, not only does it work because you have a much more robust system. We have a system currently where to be a new officer in the GMB, because we altered the process, we did training, we did a much more exhaustive process on entry level, in most regions the appointment process is over two days. That is pretty tough and more women are coming through that exercise at the moment than we ever had before. Do you know how long the average interview is for a national secretary or a regional secretary, if the entry officers' point is two days, so what is a regional secretary, a week? It is about 45 minutes. You cannot be serious. We cannot be serious that jobs, a national secretary, national officer jobs, and regional secretary jobs, that we are going to appoint people on the basis of an interview done by a group who mostly know them, whether it is a section or national committee, or the regional committee, and we are going to interview them for 45 minutes. I think the time has

come to be a bit more robust than that. I think that is why over the years sometimes people have said, “What’s the point?”

Michelle, I don’t accept but do appreciate your comments and I am really grateful you made them but the truth is, this is a two-way exchange. The national appointment system benefits from people from the region and, frankly, the regional appointment process benefits from people at national. That means, ultimately, the goal is achieved and the goal, in case we forget it, is actually to have an appointment system that encourages more people to have confidence in this union and, ultimately, more women to come forward at all levels of the organisation, including the top jobs, and actually be successful on the basis of their skills and their merit and not have to worry that there is no point in applying because someone else has long since worked out who is going to get the job.

That is my response. I heartily ask for your endorsement. I have made the point to Trevor that we will write it in. It is a good point, Trevor. We will write it in so that there is absolutely no doubt that it is never going to be more than that balance. I hope on that basis you will accept those comments and support the report.

The Women’s Taskforce deserve it, this Congress deserves it and, frankly, the women in our union deserve it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now move to the vote on the report. This will include in the vote, Rule 17A, Rule 17D, and Rule 17E, in Appendix B. Is that quite clear? All those in favour of the Women’s Project and the Rule Amendments, could they please vote now. All those against? That is carried quite sufficiently. Thank you, colleagues. (*Applause*)

The CEC Special Report: GMB WOMEN’S PROJECT (INTERIM) was Carried

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I said nothing during that debate. I was the chair and at times there was the odd occasion when I could not attend but I would like to thank all the colleagues who were on that project. Believe you me, it was not an easy task for any of them, with the different views, different areas. Kathleen was on it, and especially staff members were on it, and lay members were on it; it did not make any difference, all their views were taken into consideration.

My special thanks to all of them for their support and their help in bringing about what will honestly be a true reflection of how we recruit and when we recruit, and where we recruit, from the bottom to the top. When Paul says there is a perception that the jobs are already gone so what is the point in applying, that was the perception, it was the perception round the whole of the union. In my day you just did not apply for those, you did not even think about it, you did not dare. Even when you wanted to get on the Executive Council or the Regional Council, if you were not in the club of certain people you did not get there. That was a fact of life.

I am proud to say I broke that mould in London Region. I was told to my face, “We will only tolerate you for two years.” Well, sorry, I am still there. (*Applause*)

I am now going to read out the card vote: all those in favour of Motion 104, verified by the general member auditors, votes FOR 177 and votes AGAINST 166. It is carried, in case anybody could not get that, by 11 votes. So, we had all the doubles. Thank you.

Motion 104 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to a couple of issues. First, Moira from Yorkshire Region has lost a blue Nokia mobile. If anyone finds it – you have found it? Tim, give her back her mobile!

Anyway, I have a couple of announcements. This is the conclusion of business today. I look forward to seeing you tonight at the President's Night to be held in the hotel. Details are being shown on the screen. Can I say a big thank you to British Gas who are the main sponsors of the event, and also to another two sponsors, Future Fusion and Pattinson & Brewer, the solicitors. Thank you to all of you for funding the President's Dinner tonight. I look forward to seeing you all there. Have a great time. See you later. Congress is adjourned till 9.30 in the morning.

Congress adjourned.