

GMB

ANNUAL CONGRESS 2014

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**SIS. MARY TURNER MBE
(President)
(In the Chair)**

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Held in:

**Capital FM Arena,
Nottingham**

on:

**Sunday, 8th June 2014
Monday, 9th June 2014
(Tuesday, 10th June 2014: Sectional Conferences)
Wednesday, 11th June 2014
and
Thursday, 12th June 2014**

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**PROCEEDINGS
DAY ONE
(Sunday, 8th June 2014)**

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FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY 8th JUNE 2014

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order? We now open our Congress this year in Nottingham with the Banner Parade. Are we ready?

BANNER CEREMONY

(Congress was upstanding for the Banner Party to the singing and music of Jerusalem)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I thank all the regional banners and their carriers; well done. Congress, I would like you to welcome GMB Scotland who will now bring in our National Banner. Would you please stand. Thank you.

(Congress was upstanding for the National Banner with traditional Scottish music.)

NATIONAL BANNER COMPETITION

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, at the end of last year we launched a national competition in our GMB magazine for the design of the new National Banner to mark the Union's 125th anniversary. We have the competition winner here with us this morning, who is Ed Thorpe, from the Yorkshire Region. *(Applause)*

Ed's winning design is featured on the new National Banner you see here on the stage. Ed, please come onto the stage to collect your prize of £1,000.

(Presentation amid applause)

BRO. E. THORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I would just like to say that I hope it appeals more to younger members, really, and hopefully we will get more. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ed. I would also like to thank the Hucknall & Linby Mining Community Brass Band who have been playing in the foyer this morning. I would like to invite the musical director, Paul Wylie, to come up on stage. *(Applause)* We have just presented Paul with a cheque for £1,000 and a commemorative plate so that he can carry on his good work with the young members and the band. *(Applause)*

VIDEO MONTAGE

THE PRESIDENT: We will start Congress with a short video showing our events and campaigns from the past year, would you please either switch off or put your mobile or other devices on silent because the cost has gone up this year if there is one on.

(Video shown to Congress)

WELCOME

THE PRESIDENT: That was exciting. We move on now and could I please welcome all our delegates, and visitors, to GMB Congress. I call on Andy Worth, Regional Secretary for Midland & East Coast Region, to say a few words. Andy.

BRO. A. WORTH (Regional Secretary, Midland & East Coast): Thank you, Mary. I am coming to the rostrum on behalf of the region to welcome you all to the region, and particularly to Nottingham. It is 106 years since the forefathers of this Union actually held their congress in Nottingham. Hopefully, it will not take quite as long to come back again. I hope that you do enjoy your time in Nottingham. I hope that you work hard and that we maintain the proud tradition of the GMB. I am proud to be a GMB member, and have been for 35 years, and want to continue to build that by working with you. There is a lot of work to do this week so work hard, play hard, but always get back in here for 9.30 in the morning and do the business. It is always the style that we have adopted.

Mary, you give gifts out to guests all week so I thought it might be useful on behalf of the region to give you a couple of gifts seeing we are in Robin Hood country. I did not know whether to give *that* to you or to give it to Worthy President because it would save putting the hanky over there, wouldn't it, like? (*Donning Robin Hood hat*) Billy, if you want one of them this year, come and see me later, mate, you'll be all right!

THE PRESIDENT: Don't encourage him, Andy.

BRO. A. WORTH (Midland & East Coast): We need the characters. We would like to give you a little gift. As I say, you do give gifts out all week. We have for you not just the cheap felt hat of Robin Hood but we have a model of the statue of Robin Hood that is outside the castle in Nottingham. We would like you to accept that on behalf of the region. Enjoy Congress, delegates.

(*Presentation amid applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

BRO. A. WORTH (Midland & East Coast): You know he was a Yorkshireman, don't you?

THE PRESIDENT: Who, Robin?

BRO. A. WORTH (Midland & East Coast): That started a debate!

THE PRESIDENT: I think Paul Kenny is good for that. (*Robin Hood hat*) Thank you, Andy, very much and thank the Midland & East Coast Region, which I am very familiar with.

WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND VISITORS

THE PRESIDENT: Could I now tell you who is sitting on the platform with me for the new delegates who are not aware. On my right is my right-hand man, my Vice President, Malcolm Sage. I could not do without him. Thank you. We have Kathleen Walker Shaw, who is going to help Malcolm. Kathleen runs the European office and, believe you me, does an awful lot of work in Europe on our behalf, and I would like to thank her on behalf of Congress. Thank you.

Of course, on my left, usually, we have our General Secretary and Treasurer, Paul Kenny. (*Applause*) In case anybody did not know him, he is *here*. Next to him is someone who looks after us very well, Ida Clemo, our Executive Policy Officer. May I say welcome to all of them and all the other staff who are around the hall available to help everyone. Okay, colleagues.

I would like to welcome the visitors, the general member auditors, who will count the votes, Ian Burkett, Steve Dery, and Albert Haynes. Welcome.

Ex Regional Secretaries, and I know he is so well-known to many of you here, we have John Cope from the London Region. John, give us a stand-up. (*Applause*)

Regional Presidents are Vic Baines, Midland & East Coast Region, and Andy Irving, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. I understand that Vic is not here but is hoping to come down one day this week. Vic has been quite poorly. Is he here? I believe June is here. June, give him our love and tell him Mary will forgive him for passing her by when he was supposed to pick her up in the pouring rain last year. That should hurry him up.

The verbatim shorthand writers, someone some of you know very well, Michael Thear and Phyllis Hilder, are on my left. He's gone! He's disappeared!

We have not had any requests for signers this year. The Congress Hall has an infra red system, so if you need a headset please go to the Congress Office.

Firstly, I would extend a warm welcome to all first time delegates.

Could I remind all delegates that all Congress sessions are transmitted live on GMB Congress TV. Worthy President, watch that language when you come up here. This means that your speech will be shown live over the Internet through the GMB National website so, please, do not 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 all delegates to take a moment to check that you have three important documents:

1. **One-Page Delegate Outline Programme**, which you should all have. *This* gives an overview of Congress work this week. Sometimes we may have to change it around for lots of reasons. If somebody is arriving late, we then have to manage that. Please have your speeches in your bag ready, but I will give you plenty of warning. Thank you.

You will also be issued with more detailed Session Programmes at the start of each session showing the debates.

2. **Income & Expenditure Report**. These are the annual accounts, which we have here.

3. **Final Agenda & Congress Guide**. This combined document gives information on Congress and Section Conference Motions; SOCI guidelines for Congress business, including time limits for speakers; Standing Orders Committee Report No.1; Representation Statements for Congress; Composite motions; Fringe Meetings; Exhibitions, Exhibitors, and Seating Plan. Can you check that you have all those?

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 Simpsons Solicitors. We say thank you to Simpsons. We will drink plenty of it. I

would like to thank our other main sponsors, UnionLine, for Congress lanyards, Pellacraft for the Congress wristbands in your wallet, and LV for the refreshments in the Hall. I notice you all have sweets down there, except the top table. I'll have to sort them out! We thank Thompsons Solicitors for the delegate bags, Digby Brown Solicitors for sponsoring the GMB Internet Café, and The Peoples Operator for the Congress T-Shirts. Please make sure you visit the stands and can we say a big thank you to all those exhibitors, and others, who are in the Exhibition Area. (*Applause*)

ROLL CALL

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

OBITUARIES

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Congress to stand in silence as a mark of respect for departed GMB colleagues. The names will be shown on the screen and a copy of the Obituary List can be found on page 128 of the Final Agenda & Congress Guide.

Could I say, Congress, that there are four additional names whose deaths have recently occurred. They are: Eileen O'Connor, GMB employee and pensioner; Chris Powell of the London Region; Les Gilford, NW & Irish Region; and Eddie Bree, GMB Scotland. Let's pay tribute to those and loved ones our members have lost.

(Congress stood in silent tribute.)

TRIBUTE TO JOHN TOOMEY

THE PRESIDENT: For many in this hall who knew this particular individual, I would like, with Congress, to pay a tribute to John Toomey. As many of you will know, John was quite a character in this Congress, led me a dog's life at times but we enjoyed the camaraderie. John became quite poorly last year and I was in touch with him quite often, and then I went to Liverpool, and I thank the North West & Irish Region for taking me to see John in the hospital. I have never seen John so well at that time, still bubbling, and actually at that same time the General Secretary happened to phone because John wanted a wheelchair. Those of you who knew John, he said to me, "And I don't want one that I've got to use my hands," and I said, "No, 'cos you want to go over the pub, have a fag and a pint in the other one." He said, "Yes." Paul happened to ring and Paul had been given an electric wheelchair and offered it to John. I tell you, Congress, if you had seen his face, he just could not believe it. Sadly, the following week John died suddenly and that was a big shock to all of us. In tribute to him, and as his family have never seen John speak at Congress in all those years, we thought it would be nice to give them some memories of John at this Congress. So, here is just a small extract, and it is small, from Congress. Could I now ask the video clip to be shown?

(Video shown to Congress)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I know that John used sometimes to play the fool up *here* but, believe you me, he was a very dedicated and quite highly educated man. It was a pleasure for those of us who knew John to have been involved with him. It is a sad loss, as many of our colleagues are. I hope his family enjoy the video when they get it. They were a lovely family and I have to say I am proud of North West & Irish Region because hundreds of people turned out for John's funeral that day. Thank you all and thanks for watching. Malcolm.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Bro. Malcolm Sage): Thank you, Mary. 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 delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken.

I will now give a demonstration of eligibility for voting. I would like everyone in the hall to put your hands up, please. That's got our eyes, Mary! Could the following now, please, put your hands down: visitors, guests, auditors, full-time officials, Regional Secretaries, National Officers, and National Secretaries, GMB staff, and members of the CEC. Only those of you who still have your hands up are eligible (*stumbled on pronunciation – "bugger it"*) to vote at Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Put your teeth back in!

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. For the Tellers, ask Andy for a hat. It looks useful. I do not think it is lined, though, so be careful.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.1

THE PRESIDENT: Could I please congratulate Helen Johnson on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for the seventh year. Well done, Helen. (*Applause*) I will now call Helen, the Chair of Standing Orders Committee, to give Standing Orders Committee Report No.1. Helen.

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, Helen Johnson, Midland & East Coast Region, Standing Orders Committee Chair, formally moving SOC Report No.1.

President, Congress, you will find a copy of SOC Report No.1 in your Final Agenda, starting on page 23. I formally move the adoption of this report and in doing so the SOC would like to thank delegates, and their Regional Secretaries, for agreeing 27 composite motions which also appear in your Agenda, starting at page 104.

The SOC is still considering a possible 28 composite motions, involving Motions 267, 268 and 269. We will report back on this later.

Would colleagues also please note the longstanding Guidelines for Congress Business, on page 17 of your Final Agenda. This will help all of you, particularly new delegates, in understanding the procedures and the guidelines that the President and the SOC follow.

Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 88, Equality for Agency Workers, from Northern Region; Motion 270, Medical Assessments, from London Region; and Motion 271, Campaign for an Investigation of ATOS Healthcare, from the Midland & East Coast Region.

Would Congress delegates please note that if there are any further motions to be withdrawn during the week the following procedure should be adhered to: you must notify your Regional Secretary. The Regional Secretary will then inform the SOC in writing that the motions have been withdrawn and the SOC will report the matter to Congress so that all delegates are aware of the position and will be able to follow the Congress Agenda.

Existing policy motions. President, Congress, in accordance with recommendation 14 in The Framework for the Future of the GMB Moving Forward, the CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress in 2007, the SOC is recommending that motions which are existing policy are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate, as has occurred at each Congress since 2008. The SOC is recommending that the same approach is taken for Congress 2014.

The CEC has advised the SOC which motions are in line with existing policy and the SOC has accepted this advice and is recommending that these motions are put to Congress and are endorsed without the need for debate. You will find the existing policy motions listed in SOC Report No.1 at page 24 of your Final Agenda. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC on page 123 of your Final Agenda. This explains when the policy in question was reached and the letters EP appear at the side of each motion in the Final Agenda.

Motions out of order. The SOC has ruled that the following motion is out of order for debate: Motion 22, Mobilising the Community. This motion calls for a community membership scheme of 25 pence per week for the unemployed, the retired, and students, with reduced benefits as agreed by the CEC. This would require an amendment to Rule 47.1 in that currently the unemployed receive full benefits from the Union for 25p a week. Congress, in line with Rule 9.3 Congress 2014 is not a rules revision year so the motion is out of order for debate at this year's Congress.

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No.1.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Well done. (*Applause*) Is there anyone who wishes to speak on the SOC Report? No? Congress, can you now vote that you accept the SOC Report. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Barry. A good start to the day.

Standing Orders Report No.1 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, these are the rules you have just adopted for the conduct of Congress for the coming week. Malcolm.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT, MARY TURNER, MBE

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

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning, Congress. I would like to give a warm welcome to all delegates, visitors, staff, and exhibitors, to Nottingham. GMB were here back in 1908 under a Liberal government. Today we are pleased that Nottingham is under Labour control. I would particularly like to welcome all the first time delegates and we are delighted to see so many of you here. Be assured that there will be a warm and friendly atmosphere inside this hall, and outside.

Congress, this is a special year for GMB as we celebrate 125 years since the Union was founded by Will Thorne in 1889. Paul can tell you more about that because he remembers it well. (*Laughter*)

Congress, Will Thorne campaigned for an 8-hour day, a 6-day week, and the abolition of slave-driving methods used by employers. Well, Congress, not much has changed except we now call it zero hours.

Congress, I am proud of our long history, proud to be your President. GMB is a growing powerful union. Together we can take on anybody.

Congress, I cannot start my review of the past year without mentioning the loss to the trades union Movement of the passing of Bob Crowe, Tony Benn of course, and as you saw earlier, our own John Toomey. All were devoted to the interests of working people and non-working people, and fought tirelessly to defend their members.

Last year you could not help but be moved by Margaret Aspinall from the Hillsborough Family Support Group; what a year they have had. This year they mark 25 years since this terrible tragedy happened. We are pleased to see justice being done with inquiries running alongside a fresh inquest. We hope and pray that the truth will come out at last. Congress, we send our support to the families as they relive their painful memories of that terrible day.

Last year, Congress, we told you about the illegal corporate bullying that takes place. GMB is the lead union fighting for justice to end the scandal of blacklisting. We have continued to campaign for compensation for the 3,213 blacklisted workers and taken our message to the Welsh Assembly, the Scottish Affairs Committee, while the Tory-led government in Westminster has sat on its hands. No surprise there, then, is there? Please take the time to go to the Blacklist Support Group stand in the Exhibition Hall to check whether you or anyone you know is on that list.

Congress, last month in the local and Euro elections we saw gains for the Labour Party but an uncomfortable surge to the UKIP party. While we congratulate the North West for ridding us of Nick Griffin, the BNP, he made the statement that many of his members had gone to UKIP, but he would get them back. With the rise of the National Front in Europe, do we really want to go back to the 50s, the 60s, and the 70s where people were isolated and attacked just because of the colour of their skin or the language they spoke?

If, Congress, Farage gets a seat in Parliament next year, can you see him giving up his cushy job in Brussels? I don't think so. Let me tell you all, UKIP are a one-trick pony. They must have something to hide as they removed their 2010 manifesto from the website. We saw that over the election campaign UKIP showed their true colours, and some of the cracks appeared. They will never be and can never be the party for working families as their main policies are more cuts in public services and less tax for the rich. Well, Farage was a banker. I did say "banker", didn't I? Yes. Oh, dear, I must be getting old! Their policies are destructive and divisive. We need to expose UKIP for what they really are, anti-EU, anti-independence, racist, anti-union, and anti-women. UKIP have no respect for women. They want to cut maternity pay and Farage said: "No employer with a brain would employ a young, single, free woman." That was a disgrace when he made that comment. What more can you say for a party made up of men?

Beware the promise of a referendum. It is essentially a bribe. Be careful of the wolf in sheep's clothing. Be careful, Congress, of what you wish for.

Congress, it is essential that we are a part of Europe. Many rights we enjoy today originated there, protection for agency workers giving them the same rights as permanent staff, guaranteed paid holidays and ensuring that employers no longer demand more than a 48-hour working week. UKIP

would end most of those rights we fought so hard for. They will scrap our rights to four weeks paid holiday, sick pay, privatise much of our education system, and he makes it quite plain that he would privatise our NHS.

Once again, we have a packed Congress Agenda reflecting the challenges facing our members, our public services, our living standards, our families' hopes and prospects, our safety at work, our pensions, and our employment rights, all of which this Coalition Government intends to threaten, slash, and burn.

Congress, last year I told you the Tories were the nasty party. Well, Surprise, Surprise, as Cilla says, nothing has changed there. Take a look at every Tory government, they have attacked working people. Remember when they sold off our gas, water, and electricity, all essentials for living. They told us we would be able to get them cheaper. Well, we know that was a lie. They gave the rich a nice bonus.

They sold off our manufacturing. They closed every mine and devastated the mining communities. Congress, we must never forgive them for that, ever. They jailed 37 Cammell Laird workers just for standing up for their rights. They closed all our Remploy factories. We have paid, and our members, a heavy price for these acts of sheer destruction.

The Tories have continued to attack our pensions, attack our rights at work, cut welfare benefits, cut our public services, schools, local government, and health services. Well, Congress, I have only one view of the Tory Party, they are nothing but thieving bastards. *(Applause)*

The Tories would have us believe that the economy is coming out of recession and unemployment has fallen but this is just a bluff. The so-called rise in employment is because the jobs being created are casual, insecure, and poorly paid ones. The rise in self-employment is not for some through choice but because there is no other work available.

And, Congress, the Tories continue to find ways to attack unions. Last month Cameron announced that the Tory Manifesto for 2015 will include plans to make further attacks on the trade unions by making industrial action more difficult at a time when our members' are trying to defend their jobs.

The Lobbying Act does nothing to stop the power of corporate lobbyists but stops campaign and community groups out of the democratic process and ties unions up in red tape.

Our rights at work are being eroded. One of the proudest achievements of the last Labour government was the National Minimum Wage making work pay for people, but under David Cameron's government people's standards of living are falling behind. It is wrong that millions of people are going out to work unable to afford to bring up their families. When the Tory Government want access to our bank accounts to claw back unpaid tax but let rich bankers and companies such as Amazon and Starbucks get away with it with a slap on the wrist, you know which side the Tories are on.

Britain needs a pay rise, we need an economy that works for working people. Low wages are a drain on the taxpayer as they are topped up by the tax credits and in-work benefits, which means we all subsidise low paying employers.

A substantial increase in the Minimum Wage would save the country millions a year in welfare benefits. The Minimum Wage needs to be a living wage to make work pay. We are pleased the Labour Party has boldly stated that under them the Minimum Wage will rise faster than average pay.

Living standards have been falling month after month after month. Rent, gas, and electric bills, train fares, petrol prices, the weekly food shop, continue to rise faster than inflation and wages. Ask the most vulnerable low paid, ask those who have not had a pay rise for four years but who look after our most vulnerable people in society. This Government intends to remove Meals on Wheels and use other schemes such as giving our elderly vouchers to go and get their own food. How can we let this happen, Congress?

Under this Government families are forced to take out payday loans for food and rent, and basic necessities. This poverty crisis is also driving millions of people to food banks yet Iain Duncan Smith thinks he can live on £53 a week. Well, Iain, you can when you are living rent-free in your father-in-law's home; of course you can. It just shows you how out of touch they are.

We all know that the universal credit system was unmanageable and there was little evidence that it would work. It was flawed from the start but we had to witness the disaster.

We have seen how the bedroom tax has affected around half a million people, two-thirds of them disabled. Millions have been spent on appeals against the Work Capability Assessments for sickness benefit designed to remove benefits, not to support vulnerable people. We are pleased to see the back end of ATOS who have driven people to despair, and the Tories now plan more cuts.

Congress, we have some very important debates this week. We have two interim reports which show the two task groups reporting back to Congress made on last year's Special Reports on Branches, and the Women's Project. We will hear firsthand from Rachel Reeves, the Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions. We will have a chance to ask her questions on the Labour Government's welfare policies, and their commitment to scrap the bedroom tax.

Margaret Curran will be speaking on the importance and the implications of the Scottish referendum for manufacturing and jobs that affect the whole of the UK.

I am proud to say that GMB Scotland is the only major union who has actually taken a definite decision that we are better together than we are apart. *(Applause)*

Congress, our Union has exposed the billions of pounds of taxpayers' money from housing benefit payments subsidising buy-to-let empires, mostly run by fat cat landlords. The money ends up being offshored into a tax-free haven rather than being spent on building quality, affordable council housing, and homes for hardworking people and their families.

We will have a key debate tomorrow on housing. We will hear from Lord Larry Whitty, who has been working with us to produce a special report. We will hear about the daily struggle people face with high rents charged by greedy private landlords who are in the main subsidised by local councils.

Congress, if anyone ever tries to tell you that the private sector is better at providing public services, the reply should be, "Look what's happened to housing." The Tory answer to the housing crisis is social cleansing, forcing low-paid and vulnerable people to uproot themselves and their families and find places to live in deprived areas, far away from their communities and their schools. In London, Boris is building hundreds of flats not for rent for the local people but for the rich overseas investors.

In London we see social cleansing taking place and how vulnerable people have been punished for having a spare bedroom they use for their carer or medical equipment.

On AstraZeneca, Cameron called them “the jewel in our crown” but, Congress, let us tell them that the NHS is the jewel in our crown. Cameron told voters in 2010 he could be trusted with the NHS. Well, I wouldn’t trust him with a bleeding blood bank. We have had crisis after crisis, staffing shortages, walk-in centres, and A&E departments closing, patients left waiting for hours as hundreds of American private contractors are taking over the running of our health service. Well, we have one message for those American companies: we don’t want you, go home, and look after the millions of Americans who don’t get healthcare, that’s what your time should be spent on. (*Applause*)

We have a CEC Statement on the NHS on Wednesday where you will hear the Tories are taking the “national” out of the NHS and privatising anything they can lay their hands on. On Wednesday we will have debates on the energy market and public ownership. This Government has sold the family silver to run the country. Great institutions such as the Royal Mail have been sold at a loss and workers are now on zero-hours contracts. On Thursday we will be debating zero-hours contracts and this issue the GMB highlighted many, many years ago as affecting the security industry but we all know now that it is more widespread; even the Tories had to admit they got it wrong. Instead of tackling the problem, this Government wants to introduce penalties. Under universal credit job seekers will have to accept casual contracts and risk having their benefits cut if they turn down zero-hours contracts without good reason.

We have an important guest on Thursday, Ed Miliband, and you will have the chance to ask him questions directly about what matters to you and your families. Ed, you were on Good Morning Britain and asked about your shopping basket. Well, Ed, you do not need an American adviser to tell you, here is some of the GMB’s shopping list: we want a manifesto that represents the *Spirit of ’45*; give us back our services robbed from us; stop privatising our public services; we need a massive house building programme; give us back our rail and utilities; get rid of the bedroom tax; take on the landlords; bring back fair rents; look after our young people and give them real work; and most of all give us back our trade union rights. (*Applause*)

Congress, that is only for starters. Wait till we get to the pudding! Congress, I thank you for listening to me. I do hope you enjoy all aspects of Congress. Use this time to make new friends, learn more about the GMB and our campaigns, revitalise our fighting spirit, and when we have next year’s Congress let us pray that we are going to be speaking to and welcoming a Labour government. Thank you. (*Applause*)

VOTE OF THANKS TO THE PRESIDENT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I will now call for a vote of thanks to the President and ask Sheila Bearcroft from the CEC, Wales and South West Region. Thank you.

SIS. S. BEARCROFT (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, it is an honour to have the opportunity this year of moving the Vote of Thanks to our National President, Mary Turner.

So many people over the years have been in the position of privilege that I hold today, so much so that I can add very little, if anything at all, to the richly deserved plaudits that have been given to Mary previously on behalf of GMB members. The word “legend” usually applied to music icons and sports stars is often, of course, exaggerated and given away readily to the extent that it becomes

meaningless and devalued. However, with Mary there is no better word to describe her standing within our Union.

Mary is the true champion of everything that is positive and good about our great union. She acts as the perfect role model for all those who wish to become involved in our work and activities. Mary has so many fantastic personal qualities that recounting all of them here would take me way over the time I am allowed. However, those that stand out particularly are her integrity, her sincerity, her warmth, her dedication to the cause of ordinary working people, her good humour, her modesty and her sense of humility.

In Mary's role as President and despite her involvement in so many senior forums, she has never forgotten where she came from and whose corner she should be in, the former dinner lady who retains such an enormous appetite for achieving social justice and breaking down the class barriers in society, and who has that unique ability that you cannot teach to someone to be able to make everyone feel so at ease whilst in her company.

Congress, if ever you were trapped in the darkest corner and confronted by the most deadly foe, then you would want Mary Turner at your side, and on your side, someone who is compassionate and deeply caring, but totally fearsome and ruthless when opposing those who seek to harm this great Union and its members.

Mary, Congress wishes you an enjoyable and relatively untroubled week. As always, you will guide us through the week's business with your usual humour and professionalism stopping only for the oddly deserved moment of relaxation and medicinal vodka and tonic, and the uplift of your nicotine level.

THE PRESIDENT: Ooh, I thought she was saying my knickers! (*Laughter*)

SIS. S. BEARCROFT: I am privileged to have had this opportunity, Mary, to honour you today but, much more importantly, the GMB is privileged to have you as our President. Mary, you are both unique and peerless. We all love you. Congress, please join me in paying tribute to the one and only Mary Turner. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Sheila, thank you so much for those lovely words and thank you for being my friend. You are also a very formidable woman. I am no different, Congress, than any of you in this hall. We are committed to what we believe in, fairness and justice, and we carry that through to the best of our ability. Sometimes we win and sometimes we lose but, most of all, our members know we have had the choice. Thank you for those applauds and I feel very humble. (*Applause*)

SAFETY PROCEDURES

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I should have done my usual airplane safety procedures. You will find details of the fire and evacuation procedures on page 129 in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide. Please take time to look at these and familiarise yourself with your nearest exits. You don't have to strap your safety harness on because the oxygen won't come down from up there. Have a good look and please observe those rules. It is very important.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Conference, 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 in front of the rostrum ready to speak. Believe you me, this saves an awful lot 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 that decision.

We will then move to a vote of all the motions in that group.

If any delegate wishes me to take a separate vote on any motion, please make this known. That is very important.

Finally, I would remind Congress that a large “X” is not a kiss in front of a motion in the Final Agenda and Programme. It means that the SOC has ruled the motion “out of order” as reported in the SOC Report No. 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

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move to some CEC Rule Amendments that can be found on page 98 in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide, and the CEC is supporting all of these. Could I ask Malcolm Sage to move the Rule Amendments.

CECRA1

Rule 17a Officials

Clause 1, Line 4

Delete: “to”

Clause to read:

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.

CECRA2
Rule 17e National Officials

Clause 4, Line 4

Delete "66", Insert "65"

Clause to read:

4 No member will be eligible to be 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.

CECRA3
Rule 17f Procedure for electing organisers

Clause 2, Line 7

Before have, Insert "they"

Clause 2, Line 9

Before are Insert "they"

Clause to read:

- 2 No member will be eligible to be nominated for election to an organiser position unless:
- they meet the standards set by the Central Executive Council; and rule 17A3
 - the regional committee is satisfied that the member is capable of efficiently carrying out the duties of the office.
 - they have paid contributions for 53 weeks in row before the date they are nominated;
 - they are a fully financial member

CECRA4
Rule 18 Qualifying for office, and the definition of officers

Clause 2a

After Branch youth officers, add new bullet point:

- Branch race officers

Clause to read:

2 During their whole term of office, the following holders in both lists 'a' and 'b' below must pay the full amount of their union contributions in line with rules 45 and 46.

- a
- President
 - Vice-president
 - Central Executive Council members elected under rule 11
 - Congress representatives
 - General member auditors

- The regional president
- Regional council members
- Regional member auditors
- Regional trustees
- Branch presidents
- Branch secretaries
- Branch equality officers
- Branch youth officers
- Branch race officers
- Branch member auditors
- Collecting stewards
- Representatives going to authorised conferences
- Candidates for public organisations

CECRA5

Rule 31 Members' superannuation fund

Clause 7, Line 4

Delete "by"

Clause to read:

7 Members on superannuation benefit will not be allowed to return to the trade without the permission of the Manufacturing Section National Committee. Members who return to the trade will not be paid superannuation benefit until the Manufacturing Section National Committee has given its permission.

CECRA6

Rule 35 Branches

Clause 3, Line 2

Add after youth officer ", race officer"

Clause to read:

3 Each branch will have a president, secretary, equality officer, youth officer, race officer and two auditors (except in branches of less than 100 members, which will only have one auditor), and a committee of no less than nine members. The president, secretary, equality officer and youth officer will all be members of the committee, and will act within the powers set out in these rules. There will need to be at least five members present at the committee meetings for any decisions to be valid (known as a quorum).

CECRA7

Rule 45 Contributions

Clause 4, Line 7

Delete "57 and 58", Insert "56 and 57"

Clause to read:

4 In these rules, a 'financial member' is a member who owes up to six weeks' contributions, and a 'full financial member' is a financial member who has been a member for at least six months and has paid

contributions for 27 weeks in a row. In each case, 'paying contributions' means paying the full amount of the member's appropriate contribution rate as set out in these rules. However, to be entitled to any benefit under rules 53, 54, 56 and 57, the members must pay grade-1 or grade-2 contributions for 27 or 53 weeks in a row (depending on which rate applies).

CECRA8

Rule 47a Retired life members

Clause 4, Line 9

Delete "54", Insert "53"

Clause to read:

4 A retired life member will not be eligible for any benefits we provide, except the following.

- a Legal assistance under rule 26, as long as they:
 - are 60 or over;
 - have been a member for 10 years; and
 - are a fully paid-up life member.

If they meet these conditions, they will not need to pay any contributions while we are dealing with a legal claim on their behalf.

- b Funeral benefit under Rule 53.

CECRA9

Rule 48 Qualifying for benefits

Clause 1, Line 9

Delete "eight", Insert "five"

Clause to read:

1 A member will be entitled to any benefits (except the disablement grant, funeral benefit and fatal accident benefit (occupational or non-occupational), paid in line with rules 52, 53, and 56) as long as they are a grade-1 or grade-2 member and a full financial member at the time they claim. The Union will not pay the disablement grant and fatal accident benefit (occupational or non-occupational) until the person has been a continuous member for 12 months and has paid contributions for 53 weeks in a row. Funeral benefit is not payable to any member with less than five years' continuous membership. Whether they are entitled to any benefit will depend on whether they keep to the conditions set out in this rule and the appropriate rules relating to those benefits. We will not pay any benefit if the member owes more than six weeks' contributions on the date they claim.

CECRA10

Rule 53 Funeral Benefit

Clause 3, Line 2

Delete "57", Insert "56"

Clause to read:

3 We will not pay this benefit if a member's widow, widower or relative makes a claim for fatal accident benefit under Rule 56.

CECRA11

Rule 56 Fatal accident benefit

Clause 5, Line 2

Delete "55", Insert "54"

Clause to read:

- 4 We will take any benefit paid under rule 52 (disablement grants), and any funeral benefit paid under rules 53 and 54, from the fatal accident benefit.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, President. President, Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, moving Rule Amendments CECRA 1 to CECRA 11.

All these rule changes, colleagues, are aimed at tidying up the Rule Book. None of them makes any change to the way we do things. It will be easier if I divide them into four groups.

The first group, RA1, 3, and 5, are the ones which correct a grammar mistake or typing error.

The second group results from an exercise we carried out to ensure all rules properly cross-refer to each other as sometimes, where there have been rule changes, the rule numbers mentioned in rules have not been properly updated. This group includes RA2, 7, 8, 10, and 11.

The third group ensures that all branch officers are treated equally in the rules. RA4 and 6 now include the branch race officer in the rules for qualifications for office and in the list of branch rule book officers.

Finally, RA9 brings the rule for benefit qualifications into line with the funeral benefit rule. You decided that the funeral benefit qualifications should be shortened from eight years to five and this corrects the qualification rule.

Congress, please support each one of the CEC rule changes 1 to 11.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Can I ask if anyone wishes to speak on rule amendments? No? Can I now call 1 to 11, all those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried.

Rule Amendments CECRA 1-11 were CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: I will take the next two items together and hear the response after Motion 9.

UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS

CONGRESS DEBATES

MOTION 1

1. CONGRESS DEBATES

This Conference believes that the GMB is a truly democratic organisation and that further clarification of the democratic process exercised at Congress is needed. Building on the 1974 Perivale Branch motion, which states "in order to widen the area of debate and to achieve a more democratic expression of Congress delegates, Pre-Congress meetings should determine their voting intentions, with regard to resolutions from their own Region, and matters reflecting a point of principle. But should not determine an intractable attitude to

resolutions from other Regions until the conclusion of the general debate”, this Conference agrees that no Region should take an intractable attitude to resolutions from any Region – including their own – until conclusion of the final debate.

SOUTH WALES POLICE BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Lost)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can I now move to Union Organisation: Congress. Congress Debates, Wales & South West Region. Can I say this motion is being moved without the support of the region. Thank you, colleague.

SIS. G. BRINKWORTH (Wales & South West): I am speaking without the support of my region but with the support of my branch.

President, Congress, in last year’s omnibus vote of thanks, George Fraser of the CEC praised lay delegates stating that we have been, and I quote: “...elected or appointed under rule to be members of the parliament of the GMB and that you carried out that duty with honour. You were so good that you turned over the CE three times. Colleagues, that is democracy in action; that is democracy alive and well and living in the GMB.”

This is not about undermining the CEC, nor hugely disrupting the workings of Congress but ironing out an anomaly, an inconsistency which we believe to be illogical, unnecessary, and would give those outside our Union some justification in questioning our adherence to democratic principles.

I admit that when I first came to Congress I did not really know what I was doing. I just voted as the CEC recommended, even to the point that, for a while, I thought the whole purpose of Congress was to rubber-stamp their decisions. But over time I came to realise the role of a lay delegate, Congress, is not just to endorse CEC decisions but to really influence GMB policy.

Having looked at the 1974 Perivale motion in detail, you know, the one that says, whilst we will have determined our intention of voting at the pre-delegates’ meeting, we should not form an intractable position until the final debate on motions submitted by regions other than our own, and that got me thinking, why should we not be swayed by the debate about our own motions, I mean, what is the difference.

If the role of Congress is simply to endorse the CEC decisions, what a monumental waste of members’ money. If that really is the case, it could be achieved much easier and by more cost effective means. However, our rule book clearly states that Congress has supreme authority, not the CEC or pre-Congress regional meetings but this forum we sit in today.

If this is where the lay member ruling body of our union decides GMB policy, and I stand here elected to represent my local members, how can my vote be determined before the final debate? We had just two-and-a-half hours to discuss 364 motions at our pre-Congress delegates’ meeting this year. That is an average of less than 30 seconds per motion. Of 37 regional motions we only really discussed two in any detail; at least we did have a fairly robust debate, including several votes on this one, but most go through on the nod based on the CEC recommendations.

It has been suggested that all that matters is the description of the motion which appears in the Final Agenda. If that is the case, why do we put ourselves through the charade of debate? I, for one, do

not enjoy the adrenalin rush of speaking in front of hundreds of people and I can think of much more relaxing ways of spending my Sunday mornings. I am an Archers fan.

I give up my limited precious family time to come to Congress. I do that because I believe in what we do. I want to be part of the Parliament of the GMB. I am sure many of you will have come here having debated this motion in your pre-Congress meetings with the intention of voting in line with CEC opposition. Hopefully, the debate we have here and now will influence you and you can change your mind, but not my own colleagues in the GMB Wales and South West Region because we are bound by the discussion we had in March. They cannot change their minds no matter how persuasive my argument or anyone who comes in on the debate. I am now in the odd position of having argued against the CEC in supporting this motion. I should go back to my seat and vote against myself. I urge you all to do the right thing for democracy for all delegates and vote and support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gwylan, very much indeed. The seconder.

BRO. P. ROGERS (Wales and South West): I am speaking without the support of my region. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, during debate here I can be influenced by something said about a motion being moved from a Chester branch and yet if that motion is moved by a Wrexham branch, only 12.1 miles from each other and both almost the same distance away from my branch, I cannot change my mind. The purpose of the pre-delegates' meeting is to determine the intention of how the region will vote but surely the whole point of this debate at Congress is to deliberate, to consider, to engage in formal discussion, and so by the very nature there must be room for change in our minds.

It has been suggested that if we change the current rule, then all hell will break loose and we will spend days debating the first SOC report. I do not see that because the controversial ones are the exception rather than the rule. Last year we disagreed with the CEC three times, that is less than 1% of motions debated. When discussing this matter with others, a number of people expressed a disillusionment with the current politics expressing the view, "What's the point, the system these days is all about toeing the party line and what I have to say will make no difference because it is already decided by the elite few, and that forums like Congress are about giving an illusion that ordinary people, ordinary members, really have any influence." If you were sitting in another region I can say something here that changes your mind so why is it not the same for my own colleagues in the Wales and South West Region? Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Does anyone wish to come into the debate? Hello, Vaughan.

BRO. V. WEST (London): President, Congress, I am opposing Motion 1. Congress, London Region believes, as the motion states, the GMB is a democratic organisation. We believe that the motion which came from our own region, the Perivale motion of 1974, marked a watershed in extending democracy at this our supreme governing body, Congress, the supreme governing body of the Union. This was achieved to ensure stitch-ups and backroom deals were not the means by which policies were decided but by free and open debate. However, we as a region must oppose Motion 1 as we believe it does little to open debate further. In fact, if you passed this motion we believe we will begin to unpick the very structures of the GMB and the way that we work is founded on a structure based on regions and regional delegations. We believe most strongly that removal of pre-Congress meetings being the place where delegates can take a view as to whether motions that are going

forward in their name should or should not go forward, if they do not do that, then they become little more than a briefing session. Therefore, Congress, I ask you to oppose Motion 1. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Vaughan. Anyone else? (*No response*) In that case, can I now move to Motion 6.

**UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL
CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS
MOTION 6**

6. CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

This Conference puts forward that GMB offices should remain open over Christmas and New Year to assist our members should they require it.

WILKO HARDWARE BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Referred*)

BRO. M. HIRST (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Conference, I move Motion 6: Christmas Opening Hours. Delegates, some of our members, through no fault of their own, have to work the Christmas and New Year holidays. Unfortunately, when problems arise they need expert advice. As things stand now, they cannot ring GMB offices as they close over the festive period. Members pay their membership subscriptions for 52 weeks per year and they should be able to access help and advice for 52 weeks a year. Offices could be open with a skeleton staff, who would work on a rota basis so no one works every Christmas and New Year. A problem may be so serious that it cannot wait until after the holiday break. It may require immediate attention and advice. Opening 52 weeks a year would also assist with the recruitment and retention of members. If members have to work over the holiday period, we believe that they deserve to be able to access their main office during this time. Members expect a first-class service and this is what we, as officers and officials, should be striving to achieve. No one likes to work over this period but, unfortunately, some people have to. Delegates, we ask for your support. Thank you.

SIS. S. FORD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 6. I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Our members may need advice for any issues that may arise during the festive period. We, the GMB, may be their only means of seeking advice so we should be available to them at all times. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. I now ask the mover of Motion 9 to come to the rostrum.

**GMB YOUTUBE BROADCAST (GMB TV)
MOTION 9**

9. GMB YOUTUBE BROADCAST (GMB TV)

This Conference asks the CEC to initiate a regular (monthly) YouTube broadcast about GMB affairs.

We believe that such an initiative have many advantages:

- it gives a great opportunity to contact directly the general public without interference and censorship of the media
- it allows the growing in number internet users to find an alternative source of information and opinions
- it will make our sign, believes and finally faces more visible and recognizable to the people from inside and outside of the trade union movement

- it is cheap – does not involve a lot of investment and resources to keep it going

We recognise that possessing our own medium of mass communication is absolutely crucial these days to effectively perform duties as an active participant of the political life of the country.

MIGRANT WORKERS BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. BARDZ (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Conference, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 9. I was very surprised, although it is not only me, when I discovered that the CEC is seeking withdrawal of this motion. Their proposals seemed to me to be self-explanatory. After consideration, I understood that one should always be ready to explain their view, no matter how obvious it appears to him. It is a very good exercise in democracy.

In relation to the CEC's objections, I will make three short points. First, I would like to assure the Congress and the CEC that broadcasting on YouTube does not need to be expensive and does not demand a lot of resources. It could be started with the expense of one digital camera and it could take 10 minutes. You could ask your children whether or not I am right. I have seen people who are acting single-handedly and are attracting hundreds of thousands of viewers to their broadcast. I think we have more resources and much more to say than them.

The second argument I would like to raise is opportunity. The CEC states that the GMB is already on Twitter, Facebook and even has its own application, but why should we resign from another good way of communication? New technology gives us, in the shape of YouTube, the possibility to speak directly to the general public from within and outside of our Movement. How could we refuse such a chance? We complain all the time about distortions, omissions and exclusions of the mass media when they speak about trade unions and that our voice remains unheard. I think that, in such a case, we should attempt to use any loudspeaker that we can get hold of.

That leads me on to the third point, and I want to call it, which is an obligation. We, as a mass movement, have a real duty to inform and explain the state of affairs to the widest possible audience. If we fail to speak loud enough somebody else will come and fill the gap. I am talking here about the last May elections as a caveat. Please do not shoot us in our own feet and vote in favour of this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am seconding Motion 9. My region, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire, wholly supports this motion and believe it is the way forward for the GMB. I can't believe the outdated thinking of the CEC in seeking withdrawal of this motion. Times are changing, the world is spinning at an ever-increasing pace, and to keep up with this situation the GMB must embrace new and interesting ways to interact, not only with our members but the population in general, as they are our members of the future.

The media takes our words, they edit them and they twist them as they see fit. They do not give the true picture of our ethos, beliefs and values as a union. They do not portray us as a union that works for its members, but a union that will cause disruption of services to the public. So I say let's make the media work through us. The internet is a global organisation, interacting with many on different levels. Best of all, it is free. Free is good. Free means the freedom to promote the Union without bias or intervention. This freedom gives us the chance to show our point of view, our commitment to working-class people and our commitment to make things better. No investment is needed. Little resource will make this work. We can video *this* and upload it within seconds. This is what I did last

Monday. All it took was my iPad, our regional secretary and five minutes of his time. This is now out *there* in the public domain, all done within minutes. It has had a great response and it has been shared countless times. As I said, there is no investment and little resources to make it work. It gives the Union a face, something that others will recognise, the human touch. Having a monthly shot on YouTube would serve this purpose easily. To deny this useful tool is like saying, “We are not going to progress. We are going to stick to the old ways of communicating. Let the press use what they want and hope for the best that people see through their lies and bias.” This is a crucial tool for, effectively, reaching the masses and being active in politics and policies that impact on our day-to-day lives. Stop living in the dark ages of stone and chisel. Let’s move with the times. We, the Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region, second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cindy. Does anyone wish to come in on those debates that we have just had? (*No response*) In that case, I will now call George Fraser from the CEC.

BRO. G. FRASER (CEC, Public Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, replying to Motions 1, 6 and 9. Colleagues, the CEC is asking you to oppose Motion 1, it is asking for Motion 6 to be referred and is asking for Motion 9 to be withdrawn, and if it is not withdrawn we ask for it to be opposed.

Let me start with Motion 1. This motion goes beyond the terms set by the Perivale motion, which has operated for the last 40 years and served this Union well. This motion would prevent regional delegations from determining positions on their own motions or matters of principle relevant to their region. Pre-Congress delegation meetings are part of the democratic process of GMB to allow for delegates to hear arguments on their region’s own motions or points of principle and then reach an agreed decision. As motions are the property of the region, it should, therefore, be for the region to determine, if it wishes, to take a position binding on all its delegates. In addition, in the light of true democracy, the opportunity already exists to move motions without the support of the region, as has happened here.

If this motion was passed, it would prevent regional delegations from determining positions on their own motions or other motions until hearing the debate at Congress. Technically, it would have the effect that all motions could be moved without the support of their region. It is not often that people remember what I say, but I am glad that I was quoted from last year’s speech. There is true democracy in the GMB, and that is because of the collective will of the moving region and persuading the arguments to the rest of the Congress. That is why we triumphed last year. If this motion were passed, it would be a slippery slope to the de-regionalisation of this Union.

Turning now to Motion 6: Christmas Opening Hours. The GMB already has a network in place for out-of-hours contact numbers and for representation assistance at the local and regional levels. However, the CEC would like the region to refer this motion so they can investigate how it is working, and consider whether the Union can look at making better use of new technology to best service our members’ needs.

Finally, I turn to Motion 9 – GMB TV – which calls for the production of a regularly monthly YouTube broadcast. I would remind delegates that *GMB#* is on each weekday morning on *Good Morning Britain*. GMB already communicates our key issues and news stories through press releases and national and regional websites. With the expansion of branch websites, these messages will reach a wider audience. GMB already produces regular magazines, which are available on websites for members and non-members alike, to read. GMB already possesses its own digital media through the GMB app, and it uses social media such as Twitter and Facebook. We have the ability to send

targeted emails and texts at minimal costs. Just look at the launch of Unionline. This motion is incorrect when it says that this technology is cheap. It would involve an additional investment in time and resources, when GMB already has extensive communication networks in place. Also TV is not an instant media. It requires planning and is unlikely to attract the numbers justified for setting it up. Other unions, colleagues, have gone down this route, notably the CWU TV and Unite TV. At best, this was not a success. At worst, it was a costly failure.

So, colleagues, to recap, the CEC is asking the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to refer Motion 6 for further investigation. We are also asking Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region to withdraw Motion 9, and if they do not, we are asking Congress to oppose it, and, finally, colleagues, we are most certainly asking you to oppose Motion 1. Thank you, very much.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Does the mover of Motion 1 wish to exercise the right to reply?

SIS. G. BRINKWORTH: President and Congress, 40 years ago the Perivale Branch sought to enhance the democracy of the GMB. This is only the next step. I have not heard anything that changes my mind, be it from Scotland, Southern or any region than my own, so please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am going to put Congress Debates, Motion 1, to the vote. The CEC is opposing this motion. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show?

Motion 1 was LOST.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Motion 6. Will Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region refer?

BRO. M. HIRST: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Does Congress agree?

Motion 6 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, do you wish the right to reply on Motion 9: GMB YouTube Broadcast (GMB TV)?

BRO. BARDZ: The only thing I can say is to repeat that it does not cost any money. We have our broadcast, you know.... Does the microphone work? (*Laughter and applause*) We are a lot better than Bill Gates. So it is working and it can work for us as well. I think we should use all our resources to communicate with people. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, let me put Motion 9 to the vote. The CEC is asking for withdrawal. Will the region withdraw? (*Calls of "No"*) Okay. In that case, I am asking Congress to oppose. All those in favour, please show? Those against? That's carried. That's democracy at work. (*Applause*)

Motion 9 was CARRIED.

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

The Working Party were provided with comprehensive background information covering recruitment activity and branch participation in GMB democracy over a 5 year period from 2009 to 2013.

The Working Party has met four times.

Following the initial meeting the Working Party formulated a series of questions. Consultation on these questions was wide ranging. A questionnaire was sent directly to every Branch Secretary, and all Regions were consulted.

The Working Party met three times to discuss responses and to formulate recommendations and associated rule amendments.

229 Branches (23%) completed questionnaires which were received by the closing date of Friday 10 January 2014. A further 38 completed questionnaires were received after this date.

A summary of responses to questions, Working Party recommendations and associated rule amendments are set out below:

1. What is the template for a model branch?

Working Party members gave many different views on this question. Key words and phrases from responses to include in any template for a model branch include recruitment, solidarity, activism, communication, training, education, mentoring, organising, campaigning, service, income, support, meetings, strategy, respect, accountable, accessible, promote GMB, participate in GMB democracy, action plan, Branch Committee of at least 9 members, pro-active.

The Working Party recommends this list will formulate a template for a model branch which both illustrates the purpose of a branch and how that purpose is achieved. The Working Party recommends the key issues for branches should be: recruitment, representation, communication, organising, campaigning, meeting and participating in GMB democracy.

A basic outline template for a model branch is attached at Appendix A.

2. Do all branches submit a recruitment plan as per rule 35.1b?

Regional responses show that not all branches submit a recruitment plan.

Although a rulebook requirement not all branches submit a recruitment plan. It was clear from the Working Party discussion that there is confusion between a recruitment plan and a branch development plan. The Working Party recommends that Officers become more involved with branches in submitting a development plan, the development plan should have a standardised template and come with guidelines to assist a branch secretary in completing it. The Branch Development Plan would also be a useful tool to evaluate the activity and performance of the branch.

The Working Party recommends that Organisation Officers become more involved with branches as outlined in their job description:

- “ - Motivating activists, representatives, and Branches to recruit and organise members, monitoring this organisational work, as necessary*
- Establishing recognition, and maintain workplace and Branch organisation, encouraging the highest level of self-sufficiency consistent with high quality representation*
 - Assisting Branches in developing their Recruitment/Organisation plans”*

Officers should focus on non-performing branches and branch performance should become a standing item on all Regional Committee agendas.

Officers must support branches and scrutiny of branch performance must fall to Regional Committees. The Regional Committee will report to each Regional Council meeting.

A basic outline template for a Branch Development Plan is attached at Appendix B.

Working Party suggested Rule Amendment

Rule 35 Branches

Clause 1b

Delete clause 1b: Insert:

“b In January each year, branches will set out a development plan for the year ahead. The development plan will identify:

- recruitment plan*
- schedule of branch meetings including dates and venue(s)*
- union democracy activity*
- branch servicing and retention*
- branch organising*
- branch resources*
- communication*
- training*

A branch recruitment plan will identify:

- the local areas and workplaces in which the branch will make the most effort to recruit new members;*
- the opportunities the branch has to increase the number of members;*
- the resources the branch considers necessary to carry out the recruitment campaign;*
- the branch officials and members who will carry out the campaign; and*
- the timetable for the campaign.*

The branch secretary will send the development plan to the regional secretary for them to register it with the regional committee. Branch development plans will also be referred to the Regional Council.

c A region may set up a recruitment fund to help its branches to carry out their recruitment plans. Branches can apply to their regional secretary for support from the recruitment fund.”

3. Do all branches submit a Branch Financial Return? If not, do they still receive branch commission?

Not all branches submit a BFR. Those that don't do not receive commission.

The Working Party recommends that the National Administration Unit provides a quarterly report to Regional Secretaries identifying branches who have not been paid commission as no Branch Financial Return has been submitted. The Working Party also recommends that rule 34 should make clear that a branch that does not submit a quarterly financial report will not receive commission.

Working Party suggested Rule Amendment

Rule 34 Payments to Branches

Insert New clause 5

“5 Any branch which does not provide their quarterly financial report in line with the timetable set by the National Administration Unit will not receive the next quarters payment from the region”

4. If a branch has not recruited any new members in the last 12 months is it failing?

Working Party members felt that branches which had not recruited in the last 12 months should be looked at on an individual basis to determine why recruitment is not happening. It may be that a workplace branch has 100% membership so there is no room for growth, local issues and/or the local economy may also be factors for no growth in recruitment.

Regional responses show that Regions constantly monitor branch recruitment activity. Where a branch is not recruiting an Officer is asked to investigate why there is recruitment inactivity and report back. Action can then be taken from closing or merging the branch to support, training and development of branch officers, as appropriate.

The Working Party recommends that it should be standard practice for Regional Officers to investigate why a branch is not recruiting and report their findings back to the Regional Secretary and Regional Committee.

The Working Party further recommends that the National Administration Unit provides a report to Regional Secretaries to forward to Regional Committees showing Branches in the Region who have not recruited for six months.

5. If a branch does not participate in the internal democracy of GMB e.g. a nomination for Congress delegate, submitting a motion to Congress or voting in a Regional Council election, is it failing?

Working Party views varied, responses included:

- Branches must participate in Union democracy, if not they are failing
- Branch cannot be failing if it asks branch members the questions relating to Congress. If no nominations or motions are forthcoming this doesn't mean the branch is failing.
- Although a branch appears to be participating, if for example the same member goes to Congress each year as a delegate is the branch failing because a new delegate is not being promoted or developed?

Responses from Regions indicate that branches are monitored and reviewed. If they are not participating they are encouraged to do so, however some Regions feel that a branch cannot be forced to participate if it does not wish to.

The Working Party recommends that it should be standard practice for Regional Officers to investigate why a branch is not participating and report their findings back to the Regional Secretary and Regional Committee, and a report of all non-participating branches is made to Regional Council annually with action taken.

6. If a branch does not meet at least in line with the rulebook is it failing?

The view of Working Party members was mixed. Some felt that a branch is failing if it does not meet at least in line with the rulebook to provide the opportunity for members to partake in the Unions' business and if it doesn't meet it should explain why not to the Regional Committee who may take action. Other Working Party members felt that if the branch is communicating with members in other ways by website, social media, email or newsletter or if a virtual meeting rather than a physical meeting was held then the branch is not failing.

All Regions involve Officers to intervene and investigate why a branch is not meeting at least in line with the rulebook. Appropriate action can then be taken, up to and including closing or merging a branch, if it can't or won't meet.

Below is a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire sent to branch secretaries:

How often does your branch meet?	
Quarterly	44.54%
Less than quarterly	3.93%
More than quarterly	41.48%
As & when required	4.37%
Branch does not meet	3.06%
Unanswered	2.62%

The Working Party recommends that whilst branches must meet at least four times per year in line with the rulebook, the rulebook should not be prescriptive on which months branches must meet in.

Working Party suggested Rule Amendment

Rule 35 Branches

Clause 18

Delete clause, Insert:

“18 The meetings of each branch will be held at least once in each quarter.”

7. Should there be a minimum number of members in a branch?

The overwhelming view of Working Party members is that the minimum number of members in a branch should remain at 20 as per rule.

The majority of Regions use the rulebook limit of 20 as a minimum. Some Regions do not have a position on this and one Region has a minimum of 100.

The Working Party recommends that the minimum number of members in a branch should be not less than 20.

8. Should branches below this minimum number be merged into other branches?

Most Regions will consider merging a branch of less than 20 into another branch but will investigate the individual circumstances before doing so.

The Working Party recommends that subject to investigation, monitoring and discussions with the Branch Secretary a branch of less than 20 members will be merged into another branch.

9. Where and when should a branch meet?

Below is a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire sent to branch secretaries:

Where do you meet?	
Civic facilities	17.47%
GMB Office	18.34%
Social facilities	21.83%
Workplace facilities	12.66%
Pub	10.48%
Local Labour Club	1.75%
Various locations (including work sites)	5.24%

Home address	0.87%
Commercial facilities	3.06%
Other union head office	0.87%
Currently looking for a venue	0.87%
Other	2.18%
Unanswered	4.37%
Why did you choose this location?	
Central location	51.09%
Work site(s)	10.04%
Cheap, good facilities and accessible	4.37%
To encourage / accommodate attendance	1.75%
Free of charge	4.37%
Historical	2.18%
Other	6.55%
Unanswered	19.65%

In addition to the above information, eight branch secretaries suggested that a branch secretary's forum was needed to exchange information and good practice. It has not been made clear whether this should take the form of physical meeting or a forum facilitated using IT and social media.

The Working Party recommends a branch should continue to meet were it is most practical to do so, but in a safe, welcoming environment conducive to the conduct of the branch meeting. However further investigation will be made into the setting up of branch forums, and the use of technology to assist branches to hold virtual meetings via video or telephone conferencing.

10. Should each branch have its own website?

Below is a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire sent to branch secretaries:

Do you have a branch website?	
Yes	15.72%
No	79.48%
In the process of setting one up	2.62%
Unanswered	2.18%
If not, and you were provided with technical support would you have a branch web site?	
Yes	48.47%
No	23.58%
Not sure / possibly	10.48%
Unanswered	17.47%

The Working Party recommends that a package be developed so each branch can have their own website.

11. How many branches are currently under the stewardship of a full time employee of the Union?

According to GMB records at 1st April 2014 the total number of Branches under non-lay member control is 194, covering 49,405 members

Of this total 140 Branches are under the control of an officer or staff member.

The remaining 54 Branches are under no Branch Secretary control.

Many of these Branches are not functioning and exist in name only.

Each Regional Secretary has been sent a list of branches in their Region currently under non-lay member control for them to check and action. This will be an on-going process.

12. Are the branches administered by officers the ones that don't meet regularly, if at all?

Responses from Regions to an initial request for branch activity information show that of the 194 branches under officer or staff control or under no Branch Secretary control only 6 branches are known to meet on a regular basis.

Each Regional Secretary has been sent a list of branches in their Region currently under non-lay member control for them to check and action. Branches should be organised or merged.

13. Should there be better training for Branch Secretaries?

All Regions arrange training for new and existing Branch Secretaries, usually by way of an induction for new Branch Secretaries with the Regional Finance Officer which covers finances and GMB democracy. Regions reported that on-going Officer assistance is provided or in some cases an experienced Branch Secretary is assigned as a mentor. Another Region reported GMB@WORK training is also provided. One Region suggested that a Branch Secretary Handbook is produced so all Regions are providing the same information. The Handbook could also incorporate a Training Programme.

Below is a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire sent to branch secretaries:

Should there be better training for branch secretaries?	
Yes	71.62%
No	13.10%
Not sure	3.06%
Did not know that there was training available	0.87%
Unanswered	11.35%
If so in which areas?	
Finance/accounts/auditing	19.72%
Role & responsibilities of branch secretary	10.21%

Employment Law/Legislation/TUPE	10.56%
Recruitment/Retention/Organising	5.99%
GMB Rule book/Policies/Procedures	2.82%
Health & safety	0.35%
How to address branch meetings	0.70%
Political	0.35%
Publicity & Press	0.35%
Public speaking/speech writing	1.41%
Tribunals	0.35%
Communication skills	3.17%
Admin	4.23%
IT	7.04%
Social Media	0.70%
Congress	0.35%
Other	1.06%
All areas	4.23%
Unanswered	26.41%

The Working Party recommends that a mentoring scheme be set up in each Region and a regionally defined branch secretary handbook be produced which would include contact details of where a branch secretary could seek support from. A branch officer training course for all activists in a branch covering the operation of rules 34 to 43 should be introduced.

14. Does a branch need more or less branch committee positions?

Below is a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire sent to branch secretaries:

Do you think that a branch needs more or less branch committee positions?	
As it is	51.09%
*Additional committee positions needed	9.17%
Less committee positions needed	10.48%
Committee should be dependent on size & nature of the branch	10.04%
Struggles to fill current positions	9.61%
Unanswered	9.61%

*Additional committee positions needed

The following suggestions were included in the responses from branch secretaries:

- Deputy Branch Secretary (4)
- Health & Safety
- Officer for all equality strands (3)
- Treasurer (2)
- Membership Retention Officer (3)
- Community Officer

- Women's Officer
- Training & Development Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Vice president
- Vice Chair

Additional comments in relation to committee positions:

- Some committee positions could be merged
- Race Officer & Equality Officer should be merged
- 'Equality Officer' term out-dated should now be 'Diversity Officer'
- Youth Recruitment Committee needed

The Working Party recommends that outside of the core branch officer positions of Branch Secretary, Branch President, Branch Equality Officer, Branch Member Auditors and Branch Committee members a branch can fill or not fill other rulebook or non-rulebook offices at their discretion according to the needs of the branch. These roles should be defined by a branch by-law and set out in the Branch Development Plan in consultation with and agreement of the Regional Secretary and Regional Committee, bearing in mind the provision in rule 35.3 that each branch will have a committee of no less than nine members.

15. Does a branch need to meet face to face. Can a “virtual” branch meeting be held?

In responses received from the questionnaire, five branch secretaries reported using Facebook to provide branch information and communicate to members. Two reported using Twitter as a means of communication.

The Working Party was provided with an example of very good branch communication where branch members were using the I-pads that are provided to them by the employer to communicate branch business. This way of communication was a solution for branch members who were unable to physically attend branch meetings for reason of geography, shift work and availability.

The Working Party acknowledged the benefits of IT and 'virtual' meetings and the opportunity for communication it offers, but suggested that new rules and protocol will need to be developed and introduced.

The Working Party recommends that ideally branch meetings should be held face to face, but with the permission of the Regional Committee a branch meeting can be held virtually via video or telephone conferencing.

16. If a branch does not meet what is the 10% commission fund being used for?

The Working Party were concerned that if a branch is not meeting to make decisions it should not be spending any money, but recognised that branches may be using commission funds to finance shop stewards even if the branch does not meet.

The Working Party recommends that funds should be used to develop branches and funds held by Regions should be available for branches to draw from so long as there is an audit trail for these requests. In line with current policy Branches can make requests on their Development Plan for additional resources to grow the branch.

17. How can branches embrace technology to allow for online nominations and/or voting?

The Working Party recommended that a strictly controlled limited experiment be carried out to ascertain the merits and/or benefits of online nominations and/or voting e.g. branch committee elections.

18. Should part of the role of a workplace organiser / shop steward be to attend / report at branch meetings?

Below is a summary of the responses received from the questionnaire sent to branch secretaries:

Should part of the role of a WO/SS be to attend / report at branch meetings?	
Yes	58.52%
No	9.17%
Yes - a percentage/min. number should be attended	2.62%
Yes - but it is not practical / possible	26.64%
Unanswered	3.06%

Responses from the branch secretaries' questionnaire included reasons for not being able to attend all branch meetings, these included:

- No facilities time off
- Shift work
- Distance/geographical
- Caring responsibilities

The Working Party recommends that workplace organisers / shop stewards attend branch meetings whenever possible. If they are unable to attend they should submit a report via the Branch Secretary. If the branch has a delegate to Congress that delegate should report back to the next branch meeting.

19. Why don't members vote in elections?

In the case of Central Executive Council elections a number of options are being considered for the next election which it is hoped will lead to greater number of members voting:

- The number of nominating branches being listed with a candidates supporting statement

- A longer election address
- Photographs to accompany an election address
- Limited campaigning to be allowed
- Regional hustings
- Contact members by email or text message to remind them ballot packs are on their way to them in the next magazine mailing.
- GMB App to remind members ballot packs are on their way.

The Branch Review Working Party will continue to meet and will bring their next report to Congress 2015.

OTHER ITEMS DISCUSSED BY THE WORKING PARTY

The Working Party considered four motions referred from Congress 2013, and one motion referred from Congress 2012:

Congress 2013 Motions:

Motion 4 Decline in Number of Delegate Nominations to Congress

The Working Party has taken note of the content of this motion and has considered it in their discussions and recommendations

Motion 5 Women's Under Representation

The Working Party discussed this motion but determined that at the present time it was not possible to implement this motion. However branches should encourage more women members to come forward to seek nomination. The 10% appointment of Congress delegates under rule 8.6 should allow Regions to target the under representation of women delegates. The Women's Task Force are also looking into this issue.

Motion 38 Activist Title

The Working Party determined that as no one title fits all posts the most appropriate title should be used.

Motion 71 Domestic Violence (DV)

In line with the Working Party recommendation on question 14 above, branches can fill or not fill other rulebook or non-rulebook offices at their discretion according to the needs of the branch. These roles should be defined by a branch by-law and set out in the Branch Development Plan in consultation with and agreement of the Regional Secretary and Regional Committee, bearing in mind the provision in rule 35.3 that each branch will have a committee of no less than nine members.

The Daphne Project material would be re-issued and domestic violence information should be added to workplace organiser / shop steward training.

Congress 2012 Motion:

14. CEC Election Procedure

In line with question 19 above, changes for the 2015 CEC elections are being

considered.

The Working Party had detailed discussions on retention which are subject to a Senior Management Working Group and will be reported on separately.

APPENDIX A

(Basic outline template for a model branch)

This list below sets out some of the basic functions a branch should aim to achieve. Whilst it is hoped the branch is able to achieve all these functions the Working Party recognises that what makes a model branch is not always the same and even though a branch may not achieve the entire list it is still considered an active, thriving and participating branch.

Key issues for a model Branch should be to:

- **Recruit**
- **Represent**
- **Communicate**
- **Organise**
- **Campaign**
- **Meet**
- **Participate in GMB democracy**

Other issues a model branch should hope to achieve:

- **Train branch officers and activists**
- **Educate members**
- **Mentor members**
- **Show solidarity with other organisations**
- **Be active in the workplace and in the community**
- **Service members**
- **Retain members**
- **Generate income**
- **Support members**
- **Develop strategies**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Be Accountable**
- **Promote GMB**
- **Be pro-active**

APPENDIX B

(Basic outline Branch Development Plan Template)

BRANCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NAME OF BRANCH:

**BRANCH PRESIDENT:
BRANCH SECRETARY:**

OTHER BRANCH OFFICERS:

**Email Addresses:
Telephone / Mobile No's:
Branch Website Name:
Facebook Address:
Twitter Account:**

Following a review of the previous Branch Development Plan the Branch reports progress on the following activities:

The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats have been identified in the last 12 months:

BRANCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 20__

Recruitment Plan

- 1. In 20__ the branch will concentrate its recruitment work on the following areas and workplaces:**

Name of Target / Employer	Timetable	Target number of new members

- 2. The potential and target membership growth in the next 12 months is:**

- 3. The branch has chosen these recruitment targets because:
(For example: access, workplace expansion, industrial issues, terms and conditions issues in workplace, strong activists, job losses)**

- 4. The following Branch Officers / Shop Stewards / Workplace Organisers and members will carry out the recruitment campaign:**

5. The branch has identified the following resources it considers necessary to carry out this recruitment campaign:
(For example: travel costs, costs of producing leaflets/posters, meeting venue hire)

6. The branch is investing the following costs in the recruitment campaign:

7. The branch is applying to the Regional Secretary for support from the Regional Fund:

Schedule of Branch Meetings

The Branch met on the following dates during 20__ (previous year):

Branch meetings will be publicised and members will be encouraged to attend
Branch meetings on the following dates / time / venue during 20__ (current year):

Union Democracy Activity

The Branch will

- be sending a motion to Congress 20__
- be nominating a delegate(s) to Congress 20__
- be voting in Congress Delegate Elections
- Sending a delegate to the Regional Equality Forum
- Send a delegate to the local CLP
- Send a delegate to the local Trades Council
- Other Union Democracy Activity _____

The branch will (in election years only)

- be nominating for the Central Executive Council
- be nominating for General Secretary
- be nominating for Regional Council

- be voting in Regional Council elections
- be nominating for General Member Auditor
- be voting in General Member Auditor elections

Branch Servicing and Retention
(For example: updating membership records, retention initiatives)

Branch Organising
(For example: filling of Branch Officer vacancies, recruiting more stewards, addressing equality issues)

Branch Resources
(For example: how the Branch funds are spent, admin costs, recruitment material costs)

Communication

The Branch communicates with its members by letter / email / text messages / Branch website / word of mouth / other _____

The Branch proposes to improve its communications with members by:

Education and Training

Branch Office holders and / or Committee members will be attending the following courses during 20__:

Branch Office holders and / or Committee members would like further training on:
(For example: Branch Finances, website training)

SIGNED:

Branch Secretary.....

Branch President.....

Regional Organiser.....

Date:

PROGRESS WILL BE REVIEWED QUARTERLY WITH THE ORGANISER

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CURRENT STEWARDS AND THEIR WORKPLACES

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I will now move to the next item on our agenda, which is the Special Interim Report on GMB Branches. You should all have a copy of this document. I will now explain how I intend to take this debate. The General Secretary will introduce the Report. The Report will be moved and seconded. I will then call for anyone who wishes to speak. We will then move to the vote. The General Secretary, Paul Kenny, will be speaking to the Report. Barbara Plant from the Southern Region will move and Roger Hunt from GMB Wales and South West Region will second. Then I will invite one speaker from each region. You don't have to push to come up. With time being precious as a result of there being so much on the agenda, would those who are speaking on behalf of their regions, and if anyone else has any views on this report please tell the designated speakers, because I will not be going round for a second time. Paul.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President. Good morning, everybody. No, no, no. You can do better than that. We haven't even started. It's Sunday morning now. I'd understand a response like that on Wednesday morning. Good morning, everybody. (*From the floor: "Good morning, Paul"*) That wasn't bad, was it. Three motions out and we are one down already. Thank you very much, Yorkshire & North Derbyshire. I appreciate your demonstration. Thank you very much.

This is the first report back of the discussions we had at last year's Congress about the need to revitalise our branches. Let's be clear, and I have been pretty crystal clear about this from the start, this is not about doing away with branches. I am an absolute firm believer, as is the President, the CEC and the SMT, that the power of our Union lies in the lay members and our branches. The problem is not that we don't have some brilliant, wonderful and fantastic branches in the GMB, but it is that we just don't have enough of them. We just don't have enough branches that nominate and participate in our democracy, that organise, that get information to members, that hold their full-time officials to account and that, effectively, ensure that the Union runs true to its values. So that is what *this* report is about. It says that it is about a future that works for the branches but, actually, the role of the branches is so wrapped up in how the Union is going to function, it is actually about a future for the Union, as well.

I want to thank all of those who contributed to the first year's work of the Task Group; that is those who have sent in some written information and advice, and some who gave us oral support. We have learnt a fantastic amount in our first year. We've had really good discussions, a very lay-dominated Task Group, with lots of good people from the grassroots of the Union, and we learnt a lot. I learnt, for example, in GMB Scotland, where the ambulance workers and the NHS workers, because they are spread out, effectively, across the entire country, they communicated by – forgive me for making this pun but we have actually come into the real age – their own Facebook page. It is a closed Facebook page so they can communicate amongst themselves and get answers instantly. That is the sort of development that we are looking to, to the expansion of branch computer sites and branch technology. That is much, much easier. That is the age we are moving to.

In Rotherham – where is Rotherham? There must be somebody here from Rotherham. There you are. I don't want to hear from you for the rest of the week, by the way – there has been a fantastic transformation of communication skills. So the idea that somehow it is not out there, it is just not out there in the volume and the level of skills that we need. That is its purpose. Barbara and Roger, as key members of the Task Group, will move and second the Report on behalf of the Executive and will explain some more. *This* is dead key. GMB branches are great and they have some fantastic skills. The purpose of *this* is not to dumb down or water down the role of GMB branches in the Union, but to enhance it. Some of you have heard me saying that we don't do shrugging the

shoulders. We don't do that. When people say, "It's not working. What can you do?", that don't work for us in the GMB. If it's not working, if a branch isn't functioning, it's our responsibility, to give it support, to give the activists support, to put the resources in so that it becomes as good as the best we have got in the Union. It is not about recrimination. It's about organisation. That is all I wanted to say in introducing the Report, Mary. It is an interim one. Hopefully, we will have a lot more for next year but to Barbara and Roger, on behalf of the group, thanks.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now call on Barbara Plant of Southern Region to move.

SIS. B. PLANT (Southern): President and Congress, I am a member of the GMB Branches Interim Working Party, and speaking on behalf of the CEC. I am proud to be moving this Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works. Following the adoption of the special report to Congress last year, a Branch Working Party was set up. This was made up of lay members from all regions, the General Secretary and a few key employees. It was chaired by the Vice President. *This* report before Congress is an interim one, setting out the work and recommendations of that working party to date. We recognised and did not want to stifle the fantastic work of branches already active and taking part in Union democracy. Instead, we set about trying to create a structure in which all branches could encourage and widen their members' participation in GMB activities and its democracy.

As promised in last year's Special Report, widespread consultation took place. A questionnaire was sent to every GMB branch secretary and questions to each region for consideration by regional secretaries and regional committees. This was in addition to the discussions and contributions from working party members. *This* Interim Special Report sets out recommendations and rule amendments following consideration of the responses to those questions and the issues identified.

Recommendations include information and guidance, setting up the basic outline functions that a branch should aim to achieve and clarify the confusion between a branch recruitment plan and a branch development plan.

The report suggests a number of rule amendments. By amending rule 35.1(b), Congress will expect all branches to submit an annual branch development plan. To assist this process, the report sets out an outline template. It will be expected that regional organisers would work with branches in their care to oversee the production of their branch development plan and will have to countersign it before submission to their regional secretary.

Regional Organisers will also be required to investigate branches which are not recruiting or taking part in Union democracy, making regular reports on this to our regional committees and regional councils. By adding a new clause to Rule 34, we are reflecting current practice in the Rule Book. An amendment to rule 35.18 will remove the prescriptive nature of the rule on when a branch should meet. This would give branches the flexibility to decide when they should meet, as long as they meet at least once in each quarter.

The working party looked at the size and composition of branches. We recognised that not all branches could fill all Rule Book branch officer positions. It is recommended that outside of core branch officer positions, the branch could choose to fill or not to fill other Rule Book or non-Rule Book positions at their discretion. This is on the provision that both rules are defined by branch bye law and set out in the branch development plan in consultation with and agreed by the regional secretary. It is hoped that this recommendation will alleviate the pressure that some branches face in having to fill all the Rule Book positions, and allows other branches to create branch officer positions to suit their particular circumstances. However, this is bearing in mind Rule 35.3, that each branch committee must have no less than nine members.

The working party looked at the minimum numbers a branch needed to be viable, and recommends that if a branch is left with 20 members, closure or merging of the branch will occur, but only after investigation and discussion. The working party discussed and made recommendations on a number of areas, such as where branches meet, where the branches could hold virtual meetings rather than face-to-face meetings, branches that are under non-lay member control, branch secretary training and embracing technology. We also considered ways to encourage more members to vote in the elections, such as for the Central Executive Council. These recommendations have been discussed and agreed by the CEC. The working party considered motions referred to them by Congress 2013, and these are reported in both the Interim Special Report and the General Secretary's Report.

Congress, the working party has started on the process of creating a structure, through which all branches can evolve, strive and remain the life blood of our Union. It will continue to meet to decide and explore other ways to assist and encourage branches to be active and involve themselves more fully in GMB democracy and will report to Congress 2015. Delegates, please support this CEC Interim Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future That Works, and agree the rule amendments to rules 34 and 35. Help all branches to progress and all branches to engage in new methods of communication but, most importantly, help bring silent branches back to full voice. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. I call Roger Hunt, GMB Wales and South West Region, to second.

BRO. R. HUNT (GMB Wales and South West): Vice President and Congress, I am a member of the Branch Review Working Party, speaking on behalf of the CEC for the first time, seconding the CEC's Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works.

In an ever-changing work environment the branch has always been and will continue to be central GMB life, but we need to look at its roles, structures and responsibilities in the workplace today, organising and communicating with members and being involved in the democracy of the Union, together with the use of modern technology whilst ensuring that the democracy of the Union is not compromised. Congress, during a working party meeting a number of innovative ways came to light, showing how branches and members are using technology to communicate with each other. As Paul has already identified, the Scotland Ambulance Association is using Facebook and Twitter. British Gas, where members are out on the road all day rarely have a meeting together, use iPads to communicate. The working party wishes to help branches that may benefit from embracing new technology, exploring the possibility of holding less face-to-face meetings and recommends that, with the permission of their regional committee, a branch meeting could be held virtually by a video or telephone conferencing.

Congress, I would now like to talk about branch websites. A questionnaire sent to branch secretaries showed that just 15% of branches have their own website, but 50% of branches that currently do not, indicated they would if technical support was available. The working party recommends that a package be developed so that each branch can have their own website. Congress, to that end, Pellacraft has developed three website packages tailored for GMB branches, with three different levels of assistance and development. Pellacraft is holding a demonstration of these website packages this lunchtime in Concourse West on the second floor. If you cannot attend today, please go and speak to Pellacraft at its stand. The working party thinks that this is an excellent product, and to assist branches that may wish to have their own website the Union nationally will pay for the first year's costs of the first 60 branches to sign up for any of the three websites. If branches take up this opportunity, I am sure we would see greater participation of members in the branch activities, as

members will be kept up-to-date with local, regional and national news. The working party will continue to meet and will bring the next report to Congress 2015. The branch and its members are the heart of the Union. Congress, I second the CEC's Special Report. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Roger. Colleagues, I am now going to call regions. Will the regions that wish to speak please come to the front of the hall. I will start with London, Birmingham & West Midlands, Midland & East Coast and Yorkshire & North Derbyshire.

BRO. J. STEVENSON (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire (Sheffield West 38 Branch)): Congress, *this* is brilliant. It is a way forward. It is not about closing branches. It is about supporting branches. It is about getting branches working again. That's what the GMB is about: democracy. If your branches don't work, what the hell are we doing here? Let's be truthful. The branch sends us and we tell *these* nice people what they have got to do, as we've already done today. Let's get them working. Let's get delegates here. Let's move forward for the future. I support. Thank you.

BRO. A. LOGAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am responding to the report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works. GMB Scotland welcomes this report, facing up to the challenges we face as a union and the role of branches, the purpose and how it is achieved in terms of representation, communication, organising and campaigning. What is a model branch? That is the starting point. *This* is a comprehensive look at the branch structures and how they operate. The fact that our branch secs have contributed to the reviews adds significant value to the output which challenges and offers solutions. Yes, it has implications. These can and, I am sure, will lead to branches once again becoming the hub of activity within the workplace and their communities. GMB Scotland supports the interim report and wishes to thank those who anticipated in developing this review. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Will delegates, please, give their region when they come up so that you don't get a second bite at the cherry.

BRO. R. REEVES (Southern): Conference, I am speaking on the CEC Special Report: GMB Branches – A Future that Works. A lot of work has gone into this report. We would like to thank those who sat on the working party that drew it up. It starts from the premise that branches need to be supported, encouraged and grown, and new ones need to be created. I would like to put in a plea for the small branch, for they are the new ones and the ones that find it particularly difficult, for instance, to fill vacancies on branch committees. They need lots of encouragement, not unnecessary burdens, like having nine members on the committee of a branch of 20.

Also, as appears in paragraph 3 of the report, there is a suggested rule amendment stating that if a branch does not return its branch return on time, then they will not be paid. We fully accept that branch returns should be returned on time, but there could be many reasons why this does not happen, especially as the process is going on on line. The present sanction works well whereby no return – no payment. We do not see the need for a rule change. This idea should be dropped. No amendment to Rule 34.

I have a question for the working party. The questionnaire that was sent to branches had no space for ideas. Will the working party accept ideas direct from branches? Can we recommend a standardised branch development plan? We have been doing it in the Southern Region for some time now. Southern Region asks that these points be taken on board in the next report. Thank you.

BRO. S. LOCK (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I am speaking to the region's response to the report of the Branch Review Working Party. My region welcomes what is a thorough and responsibility analysis of the structure and function of branches within the GMB. The report recognises the problems and weaknesses within branches and recommends pragmatic and working solutions for the large part. The branch should remain as the unit of GMB organisation but the inadequacy of it had to be accepted and corrected. Only by adopting an inward-facing approach can branches secure a positive future and take advantage of the opportunities ahead. The GMB draws great strength and pride from its democratic voluntary roots. Our grassroots activism is at the heart of all that we do, and is really indispensable to our Union and its members. The Report, sensibly, does not require a one-size fits all approach, but rather advocates a selective stance to be taken, given proper consideration to the circumstances that prevail at any one point in time. Useful suggestions are put forward regarding branch size, meeting frequency, post holding, training, internal nominations, venues and the requirement of diverse recruitment plans. We also support the involvement of paid officials in helping to nurture and motivate branch activists to recruit, organise and become more self-dependent. The work of the group is to be commended and their recommendations for a workable basis for the necessary renaissance of branches within the GMB. My region commends the report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. J. CLARKE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking on GMB Branches – A Future that Works. After reading the said document, a couple of points stand out from the interim report. I have a little criticism but I hope it is constructive, that being that there is no real mention of branch elections every four years. Yes, development plans are important as are branch recruitment plans, but branch elections are as well. We have the *GMB@Work* agenda in the workplace. If that is working, it should be interlinked with the branch. I don't want to slip back to the days of Recruit, Recruit and Recruit. We've been there with previous general secretaries. We know that this interim report is good work in progress, and we look forward to more consultation with the regions and the branches which will be in the Final Agenda for next year's Congress. Midland East Coast Region supports. Thank you.

BRO. D. SUTCLIFFE (North West & Irish): Congress, my region is supporting the report and welcome it. There are issues, obviously, within the report, which I note from what has been said this morning. It is an interim report and you will be coming back with further things. As a personal-delegate viewpoint, I think there needs to be a lot more meat on the bone, a lot more issues regarding training and the packages regarding the IT, because a lot of branches out *there* may not be full of young trendies who can use IT. I can just about manage emails and texting at the moment. We do need to have that in more detail, but the North West & Irish Regions welcomes and supports the report.

BRO. D. GILL (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I support the GMB document: A Future that Works, in support of the recommendations that the shop steward takes part in each branch meeting. As it is not always possible for the reasons listed in the document for this to be achieved, I welcome the suggestion that there should be further investigations into holding branch reforms through Facebook for providing information to members. I support the need for branches to submit and develop plans to identify future recruitments and campaigns to help GMB become stronger for our members. I support this document.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. Next. (*No response*) In that case, I will call Paul to respond.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, President and Congress. I will just try and deal with some of the comments that were made.

Roy, the reason why the Rule 34 point is included is that that is what happens at the moment. Unless you have a sanction, if people don't comply, then you don't have any sanctions. You have to write it into the rule book. That's the reality of what happens at the moment. There are lots of reasons why things might be late – of course there are – and once they are completed, then the blockage is undone and, of course, the branch commission moneys are paid. So it is not that, "You will never get it if you are a day late, mate." It is an interesting concept, but this is not Unite. (*Laughter*) So don't worry about that. It is firming it up and making it clear that it gives the power to do, but there is no sub-message there.

In terms of advice, we wrote out to all the branches. We did forums and regional committees. Trust me, every scrap of advice is really welcome, and the working group will welcome any contributions on absolutely anything. This is where all of the best bits of brains from across the Union, from the grassroots, is trying to be merged into a document that people understand and can live with which addresses the problems. So there is absolutely no problem about the advice.

Jim, about the branch elections. We did discuss all of this and said that it is already constructed under rule. There is no proposal to change that. I think it could be changed in the sense of livening it up a bit, and I think that will be in the second year about how we get to engage more members when branch elections are taking place. That is a use for some of those new technology methods that we want to promote.

Derek, in terms of the technology and the detail, you are right. I think we recognise that there are lots of people who have not yet got to grips with that, which is why the package on a branch website, which seems very ambitious to some, is absolutely so simple. It really is. You can upload. Despite some colleagues thinking that the CEC is still living in the Stone Age, we do understand that you can do some of this stuff very easily and very effectively. That is why we have struck a deal with Pellacraft and we said that the Union will sponsor the first year for the first 60 branches that go out to Pellacraft during Congress this week and say, "I'll have it." So if I was you, Derek, I'd run out there now, put your name down and your branch will have a website which they will look after for you, mate. That's the beauty of it. It is absolutely uploaded with branch business, regional business or national business. It applies to whatever level you want.

Simon made a very important point, really. It was a good point and a point I just want to illustrate a bit more. It is important that the document spells out in words of one syllable that it is the job of paid officials to support the branch. It is. Somehow there is a clue in the name: "Organiser". That's what this is to do with. Let me be absolutely crystal clear. Paid officials are required to support the building, construction and organisation of branches and to assist lay members in getting to a strong position. However, let's be absolutely clear. It is not the policy of this Union, of this Executive or of anybody else who I know of, that it is the job of paid officials to run branches. That is a lay member's job and it will remain a lay member's job as long as we are up here in the top office. That is the role of the lay member, not the officer. (*Applause*) There are times when officers will have to step in and run branches through illness, a vacancy or whatever, but the truth is that there are already far too many branches relying on full-time officers to run those administrations, which should be done by lay members. Part of *this* document on organisation is getting that done, switching the emphasis to encourage people to take up those roles, not that we get more and more branches run by full-time officials. If you want to know what is bad for democracy. It's bad for democracy if you get to a position where a majority of branches in a union are run by full-time officials. That is not the route for this organisation. It may be the route for others but it's not the route for us, and that is what

this report absolutely strives to get at. This is a lay members' union, and that's what it is going to remain. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Can I now put the report to Congress? All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That's carried.

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

LAUNCH OF UNIONLINE

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we are going to show a short slide while Maria Ludkin speaks. Congress, I would like to introduce Maria Ludkin, the GMB National Officer for Legal and Corporate Affairs, who has been instrumental in negotiating and setting up the GMB's new legal service on line. Maria.

SIS. MARIA LUDKIN (National Officer for Legal and Corporate Affairs): Good morning. As some of you may know, I am a legal officer for the GMB based at National Office. Normally, when I stand up at a conference to speak, I am usually reporting some bad news, such as another attack on employment rights, new limits to trade union representation or access to justice for our members. So it makes a really nice change for me today to stand here and report some good news, which is about our new law firm, Unionline. It is the first law firm in the country owned one hundred per cent by trade unions.

I wanted to take some time today to tell you about Unionline, why we set it up and where we hope to go with it. Firstly, you are probably wondering, "Why does the GMB need to set up its own law firm?" As you may know, this Government have made a number of sweeping changes to the way that legal services are funded and delivered in this country. There have been massive cuts to legal aid, new rules limiting the recovery of legal costs, even if you win a case, and personal injury cases worth less than £25,000 are now pushed through a new portal system where there is little representation available. There have been massive changes in employment law, restricting workers' rights, particularly in unfair dismissal cases, a huge increase in zero-hours contracts and the use of agency workers, leading to more casualisation of labour.

A core part of our work as a trade union has been that we offer legal services to our members so that we can protect their employment rights and represent them if they are injured or sick. In the past, the way we have done that is by building a special relationship with regional law firms around the country, and in return for us referring our members' personal injury work to them, they have given us employment and other legal advice and representation at a vastly reduced rate, or even for free. Two years ago, this Government announced their intention to bring in a new law that made it illegal for any law firm to offer any free or low-cost work if they were also doing personal injury work for that same client. It was a direct attack on the scheme that we used to provide legal services to our members.

All the unions have had to have a look at the way they provide legal services, and face the fact that in future we would all have to pay full price for legal work, a situation which would have cost us all tens of millions of pounds. At the GMB, we considered a wide range of options to try and secure future legal services for our members at a price that we could afford. From the beginning, we were certain that we did not want to start charging members for legal work and, more importantly, we did not want to get into a situation where we were taking money from them if they won a successful damages claim. We felt strongly that if one of our members is awarded £10,000 compensation, they

should be entitled to keep £10,000 in compensation with no deductions. I can't speak for other unions because I know that they have all made very different arrangements, and some of them are still deciding what to do, even though the new laws have already come into force, but in the GMB doing nothing and letting the Government destroy our services to members just wasn't an option. We decided to do something completely new, and that was to set up our own law firm. We knew that if we were going to have to pay for legal services the most cost-effective way to do that was to build our own not-for-profit law firm and provide as much of the legal service as possible ourselves.

I am really proud to tell you that from May 29th our law firm, Unionline, opened for business. It is jointly owned by our partners, the Communication Workers Union, we employ our own legal staff at offices based in Sheffield, and now every new legal case in the country is sent there for initial assessment, advice and preparation. Our own Unionline staff now work with officers to ensure that our members get immediate, quality legal advice about employment rights, personal injury, medical negligence, housing, death, immigration and wills, and almost anything else that we think they might need legal advice with. We are already working on expanding the service into new areas.

We have also partnered with seven specialist firms around the country, firms that we believe share our trade union values and are as committed to representing union members as we are, so that they can provide direct advice and representation in the regions when that is needed.

I am going to be honest with you, Congress. The birth of Unionline has not been without some pain and uncomfortable changes. Some panel firms that we have worked with for many years declined the terms of offer for working with Unionline in the future. We had to accept that they have more valuable contracts with other unions, which they felt would be threatened if they went on under the new terms with GMB. We were sorry to see them go, but we have to accept that the world has changed and we have to adapt if we are going to keep providing a cost-effective legal service for our members, no matter what the Government throws at us. We needed to approach this challenge with fresh ideas and a bold vision, which may would say has been the hallmark of the GMB for the last 10 years. By having our own law firm, we can save, literally, millions of pounds by not having to pay third parties for the legal service. Any legal costs that we recover from running successful cases goes back into Unionline to fund litigation and to extend the legal services to our members. For the first time, we don't have to worry about our legal costs because we don't have massive overheads. We are not paying into any senior partner's pension or bonus. We are just a trade union law firm, focused on quality and customer service, to give our members the legal service they need.

There is no point in us feeling sorry for ourselves because we have had to make changes or lost some law firms that we always liked working with. We have to get on with the job of finding solutions for our members, rather than worrying about the hurt feelings of the patrons or vested interests of the law firms that decided not to go with us. Now we have a solution, which is our law firm – Unionline. So now if you are a GMB member, your employment advice and representation is always free and for personal injury work the advice is free to you and your family. We would prefer they join the Union and we will definitely be encouraging them to join the Union, but the advice and representation for personal injury is free for members and their family. In Scotland, where we previously had to make an admin charge to members for legal services, now that we run the law firm, we have scrapped it. The same rules for legal services apply across Britain. On top of that, we have secured a full refund for every Scottish member who had the admin charge deducted from their awards in the last two years. So that money is going back to them in the next few weeks.

Most importantly, Unionline offers every member with a personal injury case a guarantee that, unlike a High Street firm or one of those adverts you see on the television, we will always give you 100 per

cent of your damages. No other law firm can offer that. So I ask you to put the number in your phone: 0300 333 0303. Check out the website, unionline.co.uk and make sure your members know about it. If you are out recruiting, make sure that people know that by joining the GMB they get access to this fantastic new service. At a time when access to justice is being attacked at every turn, joining a union will probably be the last that ordinary people can routinely get access to free legal advice and representation, and the GMB has created the only long-term solution for delivering that service to members. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, does anyone wish to make any comments? This is history being made.

BRO. J. CLARKE (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I would like to pick up one or two points. You say Unionline belongs to us and it is run by us. Do I take it that they are our employees, that they are GMB employees? Is that correct. Obviously, if they are, as we are a supporter of good terms, conditions and wages, I assume that they are getting the Living Wage, at least, and good stuff like that? I am sad, though, that Thompsons are no longer involved because I will miss their employment updates.

THE PRESIDENT: Thompsons will be carrying on with the cases they have got. It was their choice. Maria, come on. Are they our employees and have they got the Living Wage?

SIS. LUDKIN: Our new staff are based in Sheffield. They are all union members. They are being paid better rates – all of them, across the board – than they were before, and some of them were working for trade union law firms. I know that Tim Roache, the Regional Secretary in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, has been heavily recruiting not just in our law firm but in the other law firms in that building. So I can assure you that they are going to be solidly with us.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now put the report to the vote? All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried. Remember, it is up to you to make sure that our members are aware from the top to the bottom.

The Unionline report was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, you will see that I have been joined on the platform by someone you all know very well through his acting ability, his little pint and his fag. He may not know how to stuff the turkey, but he has stuffed this Government a few times. Ricky Tomlinson is on my left. Ricky, welcome to the GMB Congress. (*Applause and cheers*) Congress, Ricky is going to hear the debate on health and safety, and he will then be presenting the Daniel Dennis awards.

I now call Motions 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47.

**EMPLOYMENT POLICY:
HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT
PRIVATISATION AND COMMERCIALISATION OF H.S.E.
MOTION 42**

42. PRIVATISATION AND COMMERCIALISATION OF HSE

This Conference calls on the GMB senior management team to continue to campaign to maintain an Independent HSE that protects the health and safety of workers. We also ask them to put pressure on Government to recognise that the priorities of the HSE have to be strict enforcement and robust regulations.

It would appear that after four Government commissioned reviews in three years, Young, red tape, Lofstedt and now Triennial review have all failed to back the Governments notion of health and safety being a 'burden on business'. The Tories answer is to ignore the evidence and continue with the increased commercialisation, gradual dismantling and future privatisation of the HSE with less intervention putting our members and all workers at greater risk.

B10 BANBURY NO.1 BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. MACDONALD (Birmingham & West Midland): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and first-time delegate. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 42 – Privatisation and Commercialisation of H.S.E. When it was first announced that this Government had specially selected Martin Temple CBE to head the latest Triennial review of the H.S.E., he had been a former Director General of the manufacturing industry lobby group, the Engineering Employers' Federation, so he is one of their own. We would all have been forgiven for thinking that the writing was on the wall and this would just be another attack on workplace safety and another step closer to dismantling and the privatisation of the H.S.E. Amazingly, when the report was published in 2014, which was three months late because Cameron and his bully-boy cronies were reportedly pushing on him to change its contents, it appeared that Mr. Temple had forgotten the script of the Tory agenda, which was to target, undermine and rubber stamp the dissemination of the H.S.E. as we know it. In contrast to the Government requirements, the report emphasised the importance of the H.S.E and declared unequivocal support for its role and called for a new push for preventative occupational health and safety. It went on to oppose the Tories' passion for dumbing down health and safety legislation, and was also extremely critical of their previous introduction of fees for intervention, which are being used to unplug the funding cuts to the service. It is said that these fees had damaged the H.S.E.'s reputation for impartiality, independence and integrity. The report went on to say that a majority of companies were unhappy that Cameron had also axed unannounced inspections.

The part of the report that was sure to upset the Tory Ministers would have been the complete rejection of their privatisation philosophy by recommending that the H.S.E., which is an independent public body should remain just that and that it was very much fit for purpose. We have seen huge support and agreement from all who have responded to this latest review, which is the fourth one in three years, and you would think that this Government would finally accept that they were simply wrong, but you know that this big-headed bunch won't. They decided to ignore the evidence and pursue the commercialisation and deregulation of health and safety laws, never mind the changes to the health and safety laws that will see employers free from liability, and exclude the self-employed from health and safety laws altogether. Ultimately, this will take us a step back in time. As a society, we need much of the red tape that Cameron is so desperate to scrap. We need the carefully devised documentation that serves to protect us all. It is protection that we need. This lot in Government have made it clear that they will stop at nothing to continue their stupid campaign of deregulation, to rid their mates in business of this so-called "terrible burden". They want to continue erode and gradually grind down legislation, even though many good employers can see, as we do, that this is a foolish and dangerous race to the bottom. Almost everyone can see that all these attacks will do absolutely nothing whatsoever to improve workplace health and safety. The Government regard it as a matter of carrying on regardless.

Brothers and Sisters, I am pleased to say that I am just as proud to be a safety rep as a GMB rep. I am proud to say that the GMB has got an excellent health and safety reputation. On all the courses I have been on, we've always had all the merchandise and everything that we need. We, the GMB,

must, wherever and whenever possible, continue to jointly campaign with other unions and other organisations, such as *Hazards Magazine*, to pressurise any government to maintain our public H.S.E. with tough regulations and stringent enforcement. I move.

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

SIS. H. BALDWIN (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding the motion: Privatisation and Commercialisation of the Health & Safety Executive.

Congress, we all know the response whenever health and safety is mentioned. It is blamed for stopping many fun events; the hanging baskets in Norwich having to be taken down or children playing conkers in the school playground, to name just two. But there are reasons that we have our health and safety laws. Over many years unions have campaigned and fought hard for these rules and regulations to be brought in, to protect our members and all those who work alongside them and to make the workplace a safer place. We all want to feel that we are as safe and protected as possible when at work. The Health & Safety Executive was formed to be independent and must be kept that way. This motion needs to be supported to prevent the H.S.E. from losing its teeth, which will enable us to feel that our members are going to work in workplaces that are safe, with legislation in place to protect them and a body in place that will ensure that the rules and regulations are followed. Please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. London Region.

THROW RESILIENCE OUT MOTION 43

43. THROW RESILIENCE OUT

This Congress is alarmed that the term “resilience” has crept into worker training, employment contracts and now government policy in their well-being at work agenda. Resilience in this context means workers are expected to be capable of enduring bad or harsh working environments such as tolerating long hours, poor shift design, bullying management, high levels of stress etc. with no emphasis on making the job healthier or safer – super-hero workers whose super powers will allow bad employers and the government to get away with treating them abysmally. If this agenda is successful it is likely we will see the resurrection of arguments such as the “egg-shell personality” argument put up as a defence against workers in previous stress claims. Workers who are not resilient enough will find hanging on to a job, taking a case to an employment tribunal, making a claim for compensation or possibly even getting benefits, more difficult.

This Congress instructs the Central Executive Council to run a campaign for all workplaces and work to be made safe, healthy and fit for our members and for our reps and officials to throw out any attempts by employers to insert the resilience agenda in employment contracts, worker training or the health and safety management systems at workplaces. GMB delegates to the TUC General Council should raise our concerns there. The GMB should raise the issue with any relevant groups within Parliament including our supporting MPs etc.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. WOODS (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am very proud to be back in my home town of Nottingham for this week.

Friends, we all know that our members deserve workplaces that are safe, free from physical and emotional harm, but too many of our employers don't know that, and I believe that this Government doesn't know that either. The struggle for decent health and safety legislation was a long and arduous one, and it continues today. Too many of us in this room have experienced a detriment to our health at work or known others who have been injured or even killed in the performance of their duties. A friend of my family is not alive today because their employer believed that following health and safety procedure was an optional extra. This is why we must be constantly vigilant against any and all attempts to roll back workplace protections. That is what makes the increasing use of rhetoric around resilience so worrying. It is about shifting the responsibility and the blame on to individual worker's shoulders, saying that if something goes wrong it's because employees were not strong enough or resourceful enough to cope. This is, obviously, even more sharply felt by those with mental health struggles. Fancy being told that your stress, depression or anxiety, created in your workplace, is down to a lack of your own mental resilience and nothing else? This allows employers to wash their hands of their rightful obligations. We must be alert to it and we must stop it.

Congress, this motion commits our Union to reaffirm our work to making every workplace in the country safe. It ensures that we will be on the lookout for any attempts to introduce the language of resilience into employment contracts, worker training or workplace health and safety policies. The motion also calls for political efforts to guarantee that our influence in Parliament is used to push back against this damaging agenda. Congress, please vote for Motion 43 and let's throw resilience out. (*Applause*)

BRO. T. CHOLERTON (London): Congress, I second Motion 43: Throw Resilience Out. Resilience and bad employers go hand-in-hand. Resilience is a way for bad employers to blame workers who they harass, bully and treat appallingly. Resilience is not used to make people stronger. It is a way of telling people that they are weak when they are abused, and that they are to blame for not being stronger. *This* is an abusers' charter and a way of oppressing the workforce. Companies adopting resilience do so to create fear and make it easier for them to remove workers by making them feel weak or inadequate. Resilience creates an atmosphere of uncertainty in which anyone who dares to speak out becomes an outcast with little or no means of writing a wrong. It not only oppresses the workforce, but it ultimately leads to poor standards and appalling health and safety. Rather than empowering workers with knowledge and experience, it silences and oppresses them in favour of abusers who will do anything to get promoted. I see this in my workplace, where promising people with good ideas and a sense of fairness are left behind by people who undermine and ingratiate themselves with management by putting other people down. I, therefore, believe it is vital for GMB to mount a campaign against resilience and for all branches to oppose it at the earliest opportunity and prevent it creeping into the workforce. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Well done. I call Motion 44, to be moved by North West & Irish Region.

HEALTH AWARENESS (STRESS & MENTAL) MOTION 44

44. HEALTH AWARENESS (STRESS & MENTAL)

Conference, our members are being put under pressure by the cuts to benefits and the effect this is having on their home life and by employers reducing staffing levels and continual cutting costs. As a result there is now a worrying trend where we see increasing numbers of stress related health problems, which in some cases are leading to mental depression. This problem covers all the strands of equality, gender, race, disability and LGBT

and leads to sick absences and loss of earnings. Companies are in the main overlooking this problem and shop stewards are dealing with areas that they have not been trained in.

This Conference calls on the GMB to put pressure on the Government, the Department of Health, to place this as a priority on their agenda and for GMB to look at ways they can educate our shop stewards in this area by putting more emphasis into training and all education programmes. They would give them a better understanding and improve their support of members.

Please support.

X07 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. T. PATRICK (North West & Irish): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and delegate. *(Applause)* One person in four in the UK will have a mental health problem at some point in their life. The World Health Organisation estimates that by 2020 depression will become the second most important cause of disability in the world. It has also been estimated that a total of 12.8 million working days were lost to stress, depression and anxiety. This number is constantly rising as companies are cutting costs by reducing staff levels and, therefore, the employees that remain are under increasing pressure. Worries about job protection, constant assessments and targets have left many colleagues suffering stress, but putting on a front when they are dealing with this illness. As a result of austerity cuts and the impact of recession, there has also been a large increase across the working population. Shop stewards are seeing more and more of their colleagues coming to them when they are unable to continue at work and have to go off sick when management have been unwilling to reduce their workload.

Work-related stress and mental health often go together. If work-related stress reaches a point where it has triggered an existing mental health problem, it becomes hard to separate one from the other. Evidence from LGBT workers has revealed that mental health issues can be even more challenging for LGBT people than the rest of the population. This has a huge bearing on LGBT people in the workplace and the employment rate for all of those with mental health problems is only 10%.

Recent studies have shown that one of the main causes of mental health issues for LGBT people is bullying and harassment in the workplace because of their sexuality. The stigma attached to these problems means that many workers are reluctant to talk to their colleagues or managers, often leaving it until it is too late to avert long-term absence from work, which can lead them to losing their jobs.

While we recognise that mental health issues are covered by the Disability Act, and we can direct colleagues to welfare departments in companies that have them or have access to them, when a colleague comes to a shop steward or a rep, they are the ones who have to deal with the person, and the manner in which they do will depend on the knowledge, training and information they have received. That is why this motion calls on the GMB to put pressure on the Government and the Department of Health to place this issue on their agenda and for GMB to look at ways they can put into education and training programmes which would give the shop stewards and reps a better understanding and improve their support of members. Please support this motion.

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

SIS. A. SARGENT (North West & Irish): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 44. I am pleased to support this motion as, no matter where you work, more and more staff members are becoming stressed leading to depression. Over the last few years, I have seen this situation increase

significantly with members even having suicidal tendencies. Stewards and reps are not equipped to help nor deal with this issue as there has been no training for them. It is imperative that this situation must change. We need guidance and training to give us a better understanding of stress issues and how people feel when under stress. This is not only affecting the person themselves but also their families. Services and colleagues are also affected through increased stress caused when other colleagues are off sick, putting extra pressure on everyone. It, therefore, becomes a vicious circle. One of the ways of dealing with this is effective training and how to deal with the issues in a more sensitive and caring way. After all, we are all in it together.

Therefore, I urge the GMB to support this motion, to put pressure on the Department of Health and the Government, as well as for the GMB to look at ways of training stewards and reps to be able to support our members. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Next is Northern Region.

HEALTH & SAFETY MOTION 45

45. HEALTH & SAFETY

This Conference recognises that smoking is a major threat to the health of UK workers. Therefore, the GMB will encourage employers to work with our union in developing smoking cessation policies.

We further encourage employers to provide their staff with information on Stop Smoking Support Services; publicise available interventions and allow staff time-off to attend smoking cessation services.

D30 - DURHAM GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. THOMSON (Northern): Congress, I am moving Motion 45, Health & Safety. The health and safety of our members has always been a major campaigning factor for the GMB. Also a lot of good work has happened during the past 20 years on helping workers to stop smoking, and this has to be recognised as a good thing in terms of promoting better lifestyles, etc.

Another good example of work at a European level about workers is the discussion that has been taking place to register things like electronic cigarettes, as well as medical devices along with patches and sprays. However, with the stresses and strains that workers have been subjected to during these last few years with the effects of massive cutbacks, pay cuts and the like, it is essential that workers must assist other workers to give up smoking. Congress, the evidence suggests that when employers offer help to their workers to give up smoking, along with the help on available services, such as the NHS, the levels of people giving up are constantly high and above 50%. This is not about the nanny state. This is about promoting healthy lifestyles and to help workers and their families to get the mutual benefit that comes with getting support with a habit that we know causes long-term health problems. Part of that is about getting time off for paid access support, and part of that is about publicising in the workplace other forms of support available.

Those employers who make support available at work will reap the benefits of a healthier workforce and there are all-round benefits of such a policy and, of course, the potential benefits to us all in terms of reduced health spending on smoking-related diseases will allow resources to be freed up and to be spent on vital health and safety work. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Secunder?

BRO. G. DERWART (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. I am seconding Motion 45 – Health & Safety. As the motion lays out, the campaign to help people give up smoking should carry on and needs to be assisted by renewed efforts by employers and the agencies. It is noticeable that studies have suggested that those on a low income are most at risk from smoking-related diseases. It is a disgrace that companies are not doing more to help their employees that need the most help. More than 50 years ago the link between lung cancer and smoking was established, just as with the GMB campaign to help with the effects of asbestos-related diseases. The GMB is a champion of better health and safety at work. It is because of this that so much has been done at a European level.

Congress, we need to continue our good work on helping our members in the workplace who want to quit and need help. We should ensure that the message of support is there and that we are sitting down with employers. Those employers who fail to help and fail to act should be tackled as they are failing in their duty of care at work. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope you're listening, Billy Hughes, because they are talking to you to put those fags out. We now come to Motion 46, the Mesothelioma Bill.

MESOTHELIOMA BILL MOTION 46

46. MESOTHELIOMA BILL

This Congress recognises that the Mesothelioma Bill which ensures some compensation for victims who cannot trace their employer's insurer was a step in the right direction but did not go far enough.

Consequently, Congress instructs the CEC to campaign for an incoming Labour or Labour led coalition to improve the compensation to 100% and backdate this to February 2010.

CAMBRIDGE 2 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. MOFFETT (London): Congress, I am a first-time speaker from the London Region, speaking in favour of the motion. *(Applause)*

Comrades, the GMB has had a long and sometimes bitter association with the deadly dust, asbestos. We led a campaign in 1999 for a UK ban, and we are at the forefront of getting the *Asbestos: Hidden Killer* campaign started up again. We play a leading role in the *Asbestos in Schools* campaign, but, unfortunately, due to the nature of asbestos exposure, the negligence of many employers, historically, and the length of time from the exposure diagnosis, the time period is anything from 20 to 50 years. Many victims have difficulty in identifying their old employer's insurer, either due to lack of knowledge or to the insurers no longer being in business. In the dying days of the last Labour Government – February 2010, to be exact – a consultation started on how a compensation scheme should be set up to look after those who could not trace their original insurers. The GMB was involved in this and our aims from the beginning were very clear. We want 100% compensation starting from the date the consultation began and funded by the insurance industry.

The current administration re-opened this consultation in July 2012 and, in conjunction with the insurance industry, the final outcome was 75% compensation qualifying from July 2012. We don't

accept this. As one Labour MP at the time said, “They took all of our premiums and will now only pay 75% of the adjudged compensation amount.”

Congress, the motion is clear and fair. We want reinstatement of the 100% compensate figure and move back the qualification date to February 2010. We ask – no demand – that the GMB leads a campaign with an incoming Labour Government or a Labour-led Coalition to establish both of these just positions. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Secunder?

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Congress, I second Motion 46. Please let me start by paying tribute to Chris Powell, who died two weeks ago after a long battle with cancer. She was an Essex Public Services branch secretary for a very long time and an amazing lady. (*Applause*) Thank you.

Again, we urge the GMB to fight for the rights of our colleagues who have passed away through asbestos poisoning. Make no mistake, it is a poison. It destroys a person’s lungs and the ability breathe. Yet they are being made to fight for compensation when the Government could make it all so much better for them and protect them from the stress of it all. We urge the CEC to lobby the present and future governments and to give these people the right to compensation without making it a struggle. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Those were very nice words about Chris. It is for London Region to move Motion 47.

FLOOD PREVENTION MOTION 47

47. FLOOD PREVENTION

This Congress bring pressure on the Government to give immediate attention to the Coastal Flood Defences also there is a programme for all rivers and ditches are dredged on a regular programme.

EAST DEREHAM BRANCH
London Region

(*Carried*)

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, I move Motion 47 – Flood Prevention. This motion speaks for itself in seeking action to be taken to prevent the continuation of flooding that is happening every time we suffer torrential rainfall. Houses are continuing to be flooded, affecting their insurances, and businesses have had to close. Some of these properties and owners are still waiting for their insurance payouts so that they can re-open and rebuild. The coastline defences are not adequate enough in keeping the sea at bay. This year Norfolk and other coastlines have taken a real hammering. Congress, I don’t know if you can see it, but *this* is Kings Lynn, around the Customs House, which is just up the road from where I live. It is some 30 miles up the road from myself. That area took a real hammering and lots of properties were flooded.

Congress, we need to restore dredging of our rivers and a ditching programme, which some of our forefathers used to have to do every winter. What has happened? Is it happening now? No, it is not. They are clogged up and weeded up and the water cannot get away.

We are calling for something to be done immediately. Our sea defences need to be reinforced before we are lost to the waters. There are places where houses have fallen off the cliffs and gone into the

sea. People have been left homeless. This is not good enough. This is 2014, so we call on Environment Agency and the National Rivers Authority. We need these defences sorted now, not before we are lost. Six months on, as I have said, there are still uninhabitable properties and businesses closed. Thank you.

BRO. S. FORREST (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 47 on behalf of my region. I am very proud to be able to do so and to be back at the Congress of this very great and proud Union.

The austerity programme that this Government launched in 2010 has hit all of our communities and all sections of our society in the most devastating way, none, perhaps, more visibly than the devastation that last winter's rains brought to our rural communities and seaside towns. We could see that every night on the television. We saw Cameron trying to protect votes in the rural Tory shires. The rains were a devastating natural phenomenon and the result, possibly, of climate change. But due to the £100 million a year cut that this Coalition made in flood-defence spending, the communities were left defenceless against the climate. As in all other areas affected by these cuts, the communities were left ill-prepared and unprotected as a direct result of the cuts. One example is the River Parrett near Barrowbridge in Somerset, which was in line for £300,000 of funding between the years 2011 and 2013. It received nothing. The village was cut off, leaving a hundred people to be taken by boat to get emergency supplies, including vital medication. I urge Congress to vote through this motion, to end these cuts, to protect our rural communities and seaside towns. Let's be honest. We don't trust Cameron and his cronies to do that. The only way that we can ensure that is to elect a Labour Government next May that does reverse these cuts, does protect our rural communities and our seaside towns. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 44: Health Awareness (Stress & Mental). Delegates, I am off work with stress. I never saw it coming. If you catch a cold, you know two or three days in advance, but stress is something else. It was just like hitting a brick wall. Whether it is for ulterior motives or out of genuine concern, my employers actually wanted to know how they could help me, but if I don't know what's caused it, how can I tell them. So if I couldn't see it coming, how the hell am I, as a rep for 20-odd years, able to know how my members are going on? That's why we need this training so we can identify when our members are in stress and give them help, because I don't want anybody to end up like me. Support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Ian. We wish you well. I will be the first in the queue with you. I call Gordon Gibbs to speak to Motions 42 and 47. Gordon.

BRO. G. GIBBS (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motions 42 and 47, each with a clarification. Firstly, on Motion 42, the clarification is that the extent of the commercialisation of the HSE is not yet known. As the mother rightly states, the HSE has been subject to multiple reviews since the Coalition Government came to power in 2010. Every time the work of the HSE in protecting workers and reducing risks has been rightly praised, even Lord Young had to concede that the HSE does a good job, but, as everyone will know, all Government departments and agencies are suffering from budget cuts and financial constraints. Commercialisation may be a way for the HSE to survive the decimation of its budget, at least until a Labour Government is elected, which can do right by the organisation. GMB is well placed to ensure that the commercialisation does not threaten the independence of the HSE as our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, is on the board.

So the clarification is that our campaigning activity be stayed until the extent of the commercialisation is known and the ramifications are understood.

Turning to Motion 47, the clarification here is that there is a need for better scientific analysis of the options available before the GMB can commit to any specific method of flood prevention. The CEC agrees that the Coalition Government need to do more to tackle flood risk, but these efforts must be part of an holistic approach which will consider upward river management, increased forestation and rebinding of the rivers and catchment areas for excess water alongside river dredging. Only when the right mix of these approach has been determined can GMB campaign for the Government to enact change. Congress, the CEC is asking you, please, to support Motions 42 and 47 with these clarifications which I have just set out.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Colleagues, does Birmingham & West Midlands Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*)

I now move to the vote en bloc? I call Motions 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47. The CEC is accepting those motions with the two qualifications on Motions 42 and 47. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

Motion 42 was CARRIED

Motion 43 was CARRIED.

Motion 44 was CARRIED.

Motion 45 was CARRIED.

Motion 46 was CARRIED.

Motion 47 was CARRIED

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I come to the next very important business, there are two issues that I need to speak to you about. One is that at lunch break, would you, please, use *that* entrance over *there* – I am going to do my aeroplane bit now – on the left, as well as those at the back. That takes you out on to the road. I don't want any of you killed in the crush.

Colleagues, we have a visitor here who comes to Congress every year. His name is Percy Power. Percy, will you stand up for one minute. The reason why I have called him out is that Percy is 78, he is leaving this Congress tonight, he is flying to Memphis in America, and he is going to jump from an aeroplane at 30,000 ft. with oxygen. If he does it, he will have broken the world record. This is in aid of the British Legion and our soldiers, and in memory of his own father, who was killed in the Second World War. Percy, I have often wanted you to jump from an aeroplane without oxygen when you were the employer, but this time, please, be safe, keep well and return here. If anyone wishes to donate to Percy's charity, please do so. It is on line. It is David Power – he is "David" at home – and cheques should be made payable to the British Legion. We have already raised £600. I am trying to get round Paul for a few bob more, who knows him well. Good luck, Percy. (*Applause*)

DANIEL DENNIS HEALTH & SAFETY AWARD 2014 (Winner and Runner-Up)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, now let me come to the Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Award 2014, both the winner and the runner-up. Congress, this Award is in memory of a young Welsh teenager, Daniel Dennis, who in 2003 tragically died aged 17 in his first week of working for a roofing firm. He had received no training and had no safety equipment. With the help of the GMB, Daniel's parents took legal action and won a landmark case on corporate manslaughter. Many of you will

remember seeing Daniel's mother and father here speaking on that issue. We will continue to honour the memory of Daniel Dennis and this is the 7th year of presenting this award.

Congress, I will announce the winners in reverse order. I am pleased to announce that the Runner up and Silver Badge goes to: Amanda Burley from Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region. Amanda works at Amberton Staff House in Leeds. She has successfully completed two Health and Safety courses and is now undertaking an Occupational Health and Safety Diploma. She holds regularly monthly risk assessments review meetings with her management. She has ensured that her employer engages in proper consultation on health and safety matters and has focused on lone working issues and has also addressed this in the community. She attends and raises members' health, safety and welfare concerns at the health and safety committee every quarter, helping to enhance the GMB@WORK agenda. Through her efforts, Amanda has recruited over 10 members using health and safety issues as a recruitment tool.

Amanda, I will invite you in a few moments to the platform and ask Ricky Tomlinson to present the award with me.

It gives me great pleasure to announce the winner of the Daniel Dennis Safety Representative of the year, who is: Shani Hocking, from the Midland & East Coast Region. *(Applause)* Together with her employer, the Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust, Shani has challenged staff shortages and the potential for assault with mental health. This has led to a new system of calling on bank staff and ensuring shifts are covered. Shani has become the chair of the Trust's Health and Safety Committee. She has recruited 30 plus nurses and a nurse staff rep. Can you both come to the platform where we will present the awards. *(Applause)* Let us have Amanda first.

(The President, together with Ricky Tomlinson, awarded the Silver Badge and a signed copy of the Health & Safety Reps Handbook amidst applause)

SIS. A. BURLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Good morning, Congress. I would like to thank L18 branch for nominating me for this award, and I would also like to thank Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region for all of their continued support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

(The President, together with Ricky Tomlinson, awarded the Trophy and a signed copy of the Health & Safety Reps Handbook amidst applause)

SIS. S. HOCKING (Midland & East Coast): President and Congress, thank you very much for this fantastic award. It was so unexpected, especially as the solutions to the problems are so simple. Sometimes we look so hard when we are looking to make the workplace safer. Sometimes an off-the-cuff remark, quite literally, snowballs to success. A simple text message notifying all bank staff in Lincolnshire Mental Health of available shifts due to sickness and the admission of high-risk service users was the cure for age-old problems. Who would have thought it would have come to cutting corners on my shift. My arse! *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done to all our health and safety reps, wherever they work. They do a fantastic job. We have to make sure that the Government does not take that away from us. We are protecting employees who should be protected by their employers, but we know different to that.

ADDRESS BY RICKY TOMLINSON

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, I now move to the next item of business. Congress, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Ricky Tomlinson to our Congress. It is Ricky's first time of being at a GMB Congress. I said to him "Well, there's a first time for everything." I'm sure that Ricky is a familiar face to you all. He was actually born in Blackpool due to war being declared but his mum returned to Liverpool when he was four days old. He has never left since.

Ricky is a City and Guilds time-served plasterer. He is an actor who has appeared in Ken Loach's and Roland Jolliffe's political films as well as the TV series *The Royal Family*. All his life he has worked tirelessly for charities, and specifically children's charities. He has a close association with Alter Hey Children's Hospital and Clatter Bridge Hospital, which specialises in cancer treatment.

To trade unionists he is known for his role in the 1972 building workers' strike, which I remember well. Ricky was charged with conspiracy and jailed for two years. Since 1973 he has campaigned to have the conviction overturned. He has been informed by the Mayor of Liverpool that he is to be presented with the Freedom of the City. Ricky is delighted, as this enables him to walk sheep up to the Town Hall! Well done, Ricky. (*Applause*)

RICKY TOMLINSON: Thank you very much. I was delighted when I received the invitation to be here today, because, as you know, I'm going to speak at a little fringe meeting later on to talk about Shrewsbury, and some of you kids here weren't even born when it all took place. Normally, I am quite at ease speaking at meetings like this, but I don't know why but today I seem to be a bit nervous because I'm looking out *there* and I'm seeing rows of people with suits and ties on. The last time that happened to me was when I was found guilty and did two bloody years in jail. (*Laughter*) Do you know what delights me? It delights me to see so many people here today – this hall is jam-packed – who care about other people and the trade union Movement, because when I was sentenced in 1973, I said from the dock, and I'm so glad I said it then, "Will it become a crime in this country in the future to even be a member of a trade union?" The way things are going, it bloody well will unless we stick together and put two fingers up to this bloody Coalition Government. I look forward to seeing you at the fringe meeting. Thank you very much. (*Applause and calls of "More"*) Come to the fringe meeting. (*Calls of "More", "More", "More"*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Go on, Ricky, give us another five minutes. (*Applause*)

RICKY TOMLINSON: Is Irene Turnbull about? Is Irene Turnbull in the hall? *There* she is. She's been a GMB officer for many years. She's done so much work for us. I didn't know she had a legal background when she took over this case because we have been pushed from pillar to post. As I said, for youngsters in the hall, I am going to give you a potted version of what went on. It's a beautiful day outside and you don't want to be sitting here for hours and hours listening to me, but I am going to keep it short. I ramble. I don't make notes so I ramble. If I go backwards and forwards, you'll have to forgive me.

As you know, I'm a City & Guilds time-served plasterer, but at the time of the Shrewsbury job I was actually living in a little council house in north Wales with my wife and two small boys. The only job I could get was as a glorified labourer on the Wrexham By-Pass, but I was classed as one of the safety team. Health and safety in those days – you were talking about health and safety this morning – and we are talking about 1972 and 1973, was such that someone died every working day in the building industry. Every day someone went to work and left widows and orphans at home. It was absolutely appalling. Not only was the death rate in the hundreds, but the injury rates weren't in the

thousands or the tens of thousands, but the injury rates were in the hundreds of thousands – they were serious injuries – and nothing ever got done. We never ever saw a boss in the bloody dock. All they would get, now and again, would be a fine of £200 or £300 and that was it.

Let me tell you that I've got some photographs and we take them round the country. We show them to people about the conditions that we worked in. They were appalling. I was working on a McAlpine's site, and when I show these photographs – I am saying now what I said then – I say that McAlpine wouldn't have been allowed to keep his race horses in the conditions that his workforce had to bloody work in. If you went to work at 8 o'clock in the morning and you wanted to go to the toilet, you either tried to find a local pub in the village or you got a cement bag and went and squatted behind a bloody bush or a tree and wiped your arse on a cement bag. Not only that, after that there was nowhere to wash your hands. It was appalling.

I am going to give you a little instance when I was asked to be the delegate on the site. I used to go round on a Monday morning because the site, although it was in north Wales, was manned mainly by Irish lads, lads from the Midlands and Wolverhampton. Two brothers were working down a ditch and one of them hit his brother accidentally in the head with a shovel. He gave him a terrible gash in the head, and I had the Land Rover there, and I said to him, "Quick, get in the Land Rover. I'll run you to the hospital." Do you know what he said to me: "I ain't going now. I don't want to lose my job. I'll go in my lunch hour." He was not going to go to the hospital until his lunch hour and he was pouring blood like a pig!

On another time, I was going round on a Monday morning collecting the subs, and the works manager was a 6ft. 7inch Irishman called Mick Mee. He was a bully and I don't think he was the brightest bloody spark either, because he asked me – he had a beautiful caravan on the site because he lived there – to make a shield to go round it out of hoardings. I said, "What size do you want this hoarding making, Mick?", to which he said, "One metre, two feet". I still can't bloody work that out. *(Laughter)*

I think he must be responsible for Spaghetti Junction. He must have started it of making it as a fuckin' Panda crossing. "One metre, two foot". It's amazing!

I used to drive round the site on Monday mornings to collect the subs because by the middle of the week the lads would be skint because they had no proper digs. They were living in caravans, huts, cement sheds or whatever, so the only occupational recreation they could have would be to go and have a few pints. So we used to go round on a Monday morning and collect the subs. This was 1972. I was going round one Monday morning and Mick Mee was giving *this* to another big Irishman, a lad called John Lee. He was giving him *this*, and he was f'ing and blinding, so I just pulled in my little Land Rover, waited till he had finished, and I went over to John Lee, and I said, "What was all that about?" He said, "Oh, the big fella's angry with me, Rick. I took yesterday off. I took Sunday off. I didn't turn in." I said, "Well, that's bloody outrageous. He can't tell you off like that for having a Sunday off." "Oh", he said, "it was my own fault. I had too much beer." I said, "I'm not having this. I'm going to see him." He said, "Don't go and see him. It's not the first time I've done it." I said, "Oh, when was the last time." He said, "In 1957." *(Laughter)* Two days off from 1957 till 1972 and he was terrified. Those were the conditions we worked in.

So, obviously, when the strike was called, Big Mouth, although I'm a Scouser living in north Wales..... By the way, the reason why I was born in Blackpool, you may as well know, is that my mother was heavily pregnant, the war had just started and my mum knew that Hitler would be after me. So we moved. *(Laughter)* So when we were visited on the site, of course, we agreed to take part and I was nominated as the delegate, and I went to every single meeting. I am very proud of that

fact. Those lads were tremendous. They gave me all the support in the world. Do you know, it was a splitting tactic, even though it was not intentional. Nine times out of 10 I would be the only one at the weekly meetings who would put their hand up against it. What we were out for was £30 for a 35-hour week and for better health and safety conditions. I don't think that that's asking for the world! Someone said, "Look, there are some firms that are already agreeing to pay that, so if they all throw a pound a week into the strike fund", which got sent to us so that we could have petrol money to go round, "they should be allowed to work." I put my hand up and I said, "I don't agree with it", but I was outvoted, and I was outvoted time and time again. So if you were working and you were living next door to a family where the lad was on strike, because he was paying a pound a week, he was going to work and feeding his kids, yet they were having to struggle. My motto was then as it is now: "One out, we're all out. One back and we all go back!" There's none of that splitting tactic. (*Applause, cheers and table thumping*) They're scum!

Do you know what? I want you to listen to this. My family is a bit of a mystery. My grandfather on my dad's side was black. Now we don't know whether he was an African, black Irish, black Spanish or what. His name was Richard, so he was known as "Black Dick". (*Laughter*) I said to me mum, "Why did they call him 'Black Dick?'" She said, "It's because he works on the tarmac." He worked on the tarmac. I thought that was why he was called "Black Dick", but my grandmother was 5ft tall and 5ft wide, and she was like something out of a Dickens' novel. She was an amazing woman. Yet they were Conservatives! They had no arse in their kecks. My grandmother did no housework – none! But she went to what they called a "wash house" four times a day and washed for the community. She took bloody big bundles of washing on her head.

This might sound strange. It won't sound strange to these guys up *here* because they know all about politics, but this may come as a shock to you. I am going back now because I'm 75 in September. Then religion played one hell of a part in your politics. Where I lived, most Protestants, when it came to election day for the local elections, it would be the Protestant candidate against the Labour candidate. It wasn't Protestant and Conservative. That's where my politics come from. So the family, as I say, were well known. I have three brothers. My eldest brother used to go and collect cards when the local elections were on. Obviously, year after year he collected the cards for the Conservative Party, but one year – he used to get half-a-crown for that, and that's now 12½ pence now, for working all day. He could have done with some negotiating there – he collected the cards for the Labour Party. He had to go and stand in front of my grandmother and explain himself: "What are you doing collecting cards for the Labour Party?" because that's how politics worked, and people can deny it.

I remember when I met my first wife and she had a cross on. I didn't say to her, "What's your name?" It was in the fair, I was 20-odd and Jack-the-lad. I didn't say to her, "What's your name?" or "Do you want to go for a drink?" I said to her, "What religion are you?", because that's the way it was. People can cover it up and pretend it was not, but that's the way it was. So that's how your politics were formed.

Anyway, when the strike came on, we went on strike and it was very, very successful. It was very, very successful, indeed. When the strike was over, I went back to the site at McAlpine's, and a couple of months later I was approached by two detectives, and they said, "Can we have a word?" I said, "Certainly." He said, "Look, there might be some charges brought about that strike because of what went on. We want you to be a prosecution witness." I said, "How can I be a prosecution witness? I was the leader of the group, here, throughout the whole area. I was in charge of Wrexham, all the pickets, the lot. He said, "We know your background and all the rest of it." I said, "Well, you're not on." So then McAlpine's came up with an idea. They said, "Look, we've watched you

working. We know you've got a City & Guilds. We want you to go to Portugal. There's a road being built there. We want you to be a road manager and build this road." But I can't cross the bloody pavement on my own. Honest to God. They wanted me out the way! Anyway, that was it. On the actual day we did the picketing, I got to hire a coach off a man called Tarquin Price. I hired the coach because we were going as far as Oswestry where we had a meeting before. So I had to phone Tarquin up and said, "Tarquin, can I hire a coach off you. I want it to mid-day", because he did the school run, you see, with the coaches. When we got to Oswestry, they said, "Look, we've had an emergency call to go further afield. Go the Brookside and further on", so I had to phone him and say, "Tarquin, I've got the coach. Can I keep it for an extra four or five hours?" He said, "No problem. I'll get another driver to do the school run." That's important, because the prosecution brought him into the trial as a prosecution witness, but he just backed up everything I said, because there was a conspiracy but it was not a conspiracy by a gang of building workers. It was a conspiracy by the Government of the day.

I'll cut to the chase. So, anyway, there were no charges on the day. What's important is that there were six coaches with about 50 pickets on each coach. We went round and, of course, there would be argy-bargy and f'ing and blinding and a bit of swearing. Generally, we got them all to come and join us, until we went to this McAlpine site, the one at Telford. It was the biggest site I had ever seen. In fact, there's a town there now. It's bloody Telford. But we still had a good go. We had a good meeting and the lads decided to come out. There were 80 police with us on the day, and they never took a name an address, no one was cautioned and no one was arrested. Eighty policemen – Britain's finest. But then, thanks to Ilene Turnbull – I call her "the ferret", because she will get where bloody water won't get – she found documents which make a disgrace. I'm ashamed sometimes to be British when you find out some of the documents she's got. We've had these. I've had them bloody blown up into cards that size so every bugger can see them. She found documents which are disgraceful.

What she also found out was that no statements were taken on the day, but all of a sudden they've got 800 statements! Where did they get them from? I'll tell you. They secreted 25 detectives in a hotel on the north Wales coastal town of Llandudno, and they scoured the area, and they took 800 statements. They whittled them down. When we got to the trial, obviously, they couldn't fit them all in, but they used 200 of them to give evidence against us. Out of those 200, 80 were the policemen who were with us on the day. I will tell you what, I've been very lucky in my new profession. I've won loads of awards and I've been very lucky. A few have been for acting and a few for comedy, etc. But I wish I could have acted like those policemen when they came into the witness box. Because the prosecution said, "Why didn't you arrest anyone on the day?", and they said, "I couldn't do it. I was terrified. I was frightened for me life." You shit house! You should have seen them! They were like rugby players. They had huge bloody big shoulders on them and they were crying in the dock. I'll tell you what! They've got to live with that, haven't they, for the rest of their lives. Terrified! Eighty bloody huge policemen.

Anyway, the trial went on. It lasted for 55 days. It cost a million pounds. On the day that the trial was due to start, I was a bit late getting there – I got there at about 5 minutes to 10 – and we've got the photographs. I have brought some with me to show you. The police were actually standing shoulder to shoulder round the court building. Literally, they were standing shoulder to shoulder. There were four thousand police on duty outside the court building, and they weren't going to let me in because I was five minutes late. I said, "Well, please your bloody selves. I'm not too fussy whether you let me in or not." But they did let me in and, as I say, the fire started.

Later on, when I was talking to my youngest brother recently – I didn't know this – he said, "Do you know, on the day the trial started, me and our David", who is another brother, "we were sitting in the public gallery, and a policeman came up to us and said, 'Will you to come out. Get out'", he took us into a room downstairs in the court, and he said, "What's your names and what are you doing here?" David – our David's a big lad – he went, "You know what our name is and you know what we're doing here", and the fellow said, "You'll stay here until you tell me", and he said, "No, we won't", and there was a little stand off. After about half-an-hour he let them go back into the public gallery. Ten minutes later, a fellow with all the pips on and the badge on his hat, said, "Can I have a word with you two, again?", and he brought them out and apologised. He said, "Look, I'm awful sorry but he was out of order." So I didn't know that that had happened at the time – I wish I did – but it would have helped to what we were about to get done to us.

Anyway, the trial went on for 55 days. They brought all of these witnesses, but no one identified any of us. What we found out then was that the man who prosecuted us was a man called Maurice Drake. He was in the same chambers as Quentin Hogg. When Quentin Hogg retired, he took over the chambers, but I forget what Quentin Hogg's position was, he brought out the rule – in the past you had been allowed to ask a jury member coming in what their occupation was – that that was not going to happen for our trial. He said that you can't ask a person what their occupation is. So, obviously, the jury ----

THE PRESIDENT: Ricky, don't tell them the ending. If they want to hear the ending, let them go to your fringe.

RICKY TOMLINSON: Come to the fringe meeting! *(Applause and cheers)*
(The President, Vice President and the General Secretary presented Ricky Tomlinson with a bottle of whisky and a copy of the James Connelly book amidst applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, let me give a real thank you to Ricky. We could be here all day and listen to him. I made the point this morning, didn't I, about the '50s, the '60s, the '70s and that's what we are going back to. The people who lived in the north of England never got justice from the Tories, in fact any Tory. They made sure that they were brought down with no justice.

Let me remind you of the delegate gift of this lovely GMB@WORK T-shirt. These T-shirts come in various sizes and will be distributed on a first come-first served basis and you will need to get in quick. You can collect these from the Ethical Threads stand in the Exhibition Hall. Remember to show your credential badge.

You will see a list of fringe events displayed on the screen.

Please be back promptly at 2.15 pm.

Congress adjourned for lunch

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Conference reassembled at 2.15 p.m.)

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.2

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress please come to order. I call Helen Johnson to move Standing Orders Committee Report No.2. Helen?

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, withdrawn motions. The SOC has been advised that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 74, Zero Hours and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (Extension of Powers) Bills 2013-14, from London Region; Motion 117, Labour Party, from Birmingham & West Midlands Region; Motion 118, Labour Party, also from Birmingham & West Midlands Region, and Motion 119, Betting Anomaly, from London Region. All four of those motions have been withdrawn.

On the subject of bucket collections, the SOC has given permission for the following bucket collections: First, a collection for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice, organised by North West & Irish Region. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the end of the Sunday afternoon session. Secondly, a collection for Joseph Lillywhite's Journey, organised by Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, the SOC recommends this takes place at the end of the Monday afternoon session; and thirdly, a collection for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Association organised by Midlands & East Coast Region. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the end of the Wednesday afternoon session.

Would Regional Secretaries please note that when a collection has taken place the region should provide the SOC with a written report saying how much has been collected so that the President can report this to Congress.

Would delegates also please note that the SOC is continuing to keep the subject of bucket collections under general review and is looking at the system for future congresses? President, Congress, I move SOC Report No.2 (*Applause*)

(The General Secretary was wheeled into Congress in antique bath-chair pushed by a member of St. John's Ambulance Brigade.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. I don't think this man in the wheelchair is well enough to come in, do you? I think we should send him on his way. Banned! Sorry about that, Helen. We can get our own back on him later. They asked me to do that this morning and I said, "Not likely. I'm getting there near enough now so I don't want to trust my luck."

Is there anyone opposed to Standing Orders Report No.2? No? Can you now please vote on it? All those in favour, please show. Thank you very much. Thanks, Helen.

Standing Orders Report No.2 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT (*To the General Secretary*): Are you well enough? Do you want life support?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Mary, that is what happened after the Yorkshire Region turned over the Executive this morning! (*Applause*) Bring me in a wheelchair.

THE PRESIDENT: If you think I'm giving you the kiss of life, you've got another shock coming to you! Malcolm.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Pass!

THE PRESIDENT: There are not even any takers.

POLITICAL: RACISM & FASCISM

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, colleagues, can we now move on to item 1, Political: Racism & Fascism. I will be calling 161. There will be no CEC speaker. Motion 162, 163, 164, 165, and 166. They are Southern Region, Yorkshire Region, London Region, Southern Region, and London. Please come down to the front. First of all, can I have Wales & South West Region to move Combating the Far Right.

While the speakers are coming up I would like to say a warm welcome to Glenis Willmott, who is on the stage with us. Okay, colleagues.

COMBATING THE FAR RIGHT MOTION 161

161. COMBATING THE FAR RIGHT

This Conference agrees that given the Trade Union movement's values of equality and diversity which are built on the principle of the commonality of workers; the xenophobia and racism propagated by the "far right" is both repugnant and contrary to all that Trade Unions believe.

Congress believes that in order for the realisation of a society on the basis of equality and fairness the "far right" must be frustrated at every turn and their machinations, be they in word or deed, be stymied by the workers which they seek to divide.

This Congress of the GMB resolves:-

- That GMB will counter the "far right" in every sphere: print, media and presence.
- To urge GMB branches to forge links with fellow Trade Unionists and anti-fascist groups.
- To assemble an action plan that may be implemented at a branch level to establish the practicalities of a counter demonstration (in conjunction with neighbouring GMB branches and anti-fascist groups) in response to the threat of "far right" marches and demonstrations.

WALES & WEST UTILITIES BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (Wales & South West): I am a first-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, brothers and sisters, "I have come to fight against fascism." So spoke Orwell in 1936 as he and thousands of others fought and bled in a bid to stem the fascist tide. Despite their efforts and victories won in the intervening years, the far right still scuttled back into the fore emboldened by some sections of the media.

I was proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with fellow anti-fascists in Swansea earlier this year demonstrating against the National Front. The National Front were outnumbered and were out-shouted yet they were outnumbered and out-shouted the year prior and still they felt that they could return. We must ensure that our actions are so resounding that they do not return. Let us supply our

branches with an action plan to enable opposition in the most effective manner possible. We cannot allow the work of opposing fascism to be subcontracted out to other organisations. Anti-fascism is, as are all things, at its best when it is in the hands of the workers, and the organised working class in particular. This motion therefore calls for an utter rejection of fascism in the knowledge that xenophobia and racism is anathema to the principles of trade unionism, that the far right be opposed in every sphere, print, media, and physical presence. Aneurin Bevan once said, “We know what happens to those who stand in the middle of the road, they get run down. I say today, as I have said previously, that we stand on the left of the road as trade unionists and as socialists and those who wish to drag us rightwards let them be the ones who are run down by the force of the trades union Movement who recognise kinship with their fellow workers beyond race and creed.” Brothers and sisters, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. P. HUNT (Wales & South West): President, Congress, standing up against fascists and racists who use immigrants as scapegoats for the economic problems of our country must be a major policy commitment for all GMB activists and branches. The trades union Movement has a commendable record of helping those in other countries who have been subject to oppression. Take, for example, the support given at the time of the Spanish Civil War when fundraising, voluntary labour, and fighting in the international brigades were features of the assistance given to resist Franco’s fascists. In 2014, the opponents are different but the responsibility stays the same for opposing all racist and fascist organisations who infiltrate our communities and workplaces.

In Britain and Europe we have witnessed spiralling racism in the run-up to this year’s European elections. We have seen the Home Office *Go Home* vans, the hostility shown towards Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants, and the shocking comments about the Roma in Sheffield, all of which feed the far right’s agenda of xenophobia and Islamophobia. As trade unionists we take pride in being part of an inclusive body and our values and ethos have no place for those who are at odds with democracy and respect for others. We have to face up to the fact that there are fascists who want to, and do, join unions and try to use any influence they might have to discriminate against certain social groups. It is our job as activists to prevent this and the damage it can cause.

The motion calls for independent and cooperative action to challenge these groups and that must be the right strategy to adopt. Colleagues, the support and strength of feeling are there. It is just a question of organisation and mobilisation. The 10,000 people who took part in the *Stand-up to Fascism and Racism Day* in March this year at events in London, Cardiff, and Glasgow, were evidence of a sterling demonstration of Britain’s diversity, multiculturalism, and unity against hatred in all its forms. Every time the EDL or any other fascist organisation decided to take to the streets to distort the truth about the causes of low pay and poverty, we must be there as well. We have to be there with other unions, faith groups, community bodies and anti-racist groups, making it clear to the likes of the BNP and EDL they cannot and will not win. Conference, hate and prejudice can never be allowed to prevail in any civilised society. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak on the resolution?

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London) speaking in support of Motion 161, said: I think what we have seen in these last few months is the defeat of the BNP where they held their seats as MEPs in the north and, I think, trade unionists in that area are to be congratulated on the fantastic work they did there in stopping Griffin and Brons from being re-elected. (*Applause*) I think the fascists are a bit on the back foot and that can be dangerous because they can be violent and it is only their street thugs that are

active. I think we do need to train our reps in how to deal with the threats that we face when they organise marches. I think what we need to be concerned with now is the rise of UKIP. We are going to see different tactics. They are going to try and mainstream their racism. UKIP are not fascists but they have the far right ideology and we need to adapt our tactics to confront them and to ostracise them from our communities to say that their racism is not welcome here. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matt. Anyone else?

SIS. T. CHANA (London) speaking in support of Motion 161, said: President, Congress, imagine the fear and isolation you feel of seeing the rise of the far right in the recent European elections with nine far right groups, including Golden Dawn, Front Nationale, and UKIP. Imagine how our comrades feel when they go to work and are forced to promote and sell racist World Cup paraphernalia, a wearable England flag. It is a racist outfit. It will be used by the far right groups to incite racial hatred. It is not rocket science. Asda, like many other companies, have scant regard not just to BME customers but the BME workforce by dismissing the issue of offence. I complained to Asda saying I found it offensive. Their response was, "We are sorry you are offended." They did not remove the item. Asda refuses to remove the outfit. It is up to the discretion of the individual stores and their managers. Congress, we need to counter such racist and fascist tools which will be used by the far right groups and campaign to remove it and support all our brothers and sisters in solidarity who are forced to sell this offending article. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Anyone else? Can I put it to the vote, please? The CEC are supporting it. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 161 was CARRIED.

POLITICAL: IMMIGRATION & MIGRATION

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now ask for the mover of 162, Internationalism, Southern Region to move and second.

INTERNATIONALISM MOTION 162

162. INTERNATIONALISM

Congress notes

- That the working class of any two nations have more in common with each other than the working class and the ruling class. It is an age old trick of divide and rule to turn two groups of working class people against each other and exploit their differences to distract them from fighting together for better social and employment conditions

Congress further notes

- Political parties in the UK such as the Conservatives and UKIP have been trying to pit migrant workers against British born workers
- Reports in 2013 by the Centre for Research of Migration at UCL and the National Institute for Economic and Social Research debunked right wing myths about migrants having a negative economic effect on the UK
- That there is a reciprocal benefit to migrants who join the UK Trade Union movement. Both for the conditions of the migrant worker and the Trade Union Movement as a whole.

Congress resolves

- That the GMB should always put itself at the forefront of tackling right wing prejudices around migration
- That the GMB is truly an International Socialist trade union
- That we continue where appropriate to show solidarity with our trade union brothers and sisters whatever country that they reside in
- If any MP we support within the Labour Party takes a stance in contradiction with this motion then we ask for their support to be reviewed straight away.
- Lobby the Labour Party not to be drawn in to anti-migration rhetoric with other political parties.

M27 LB MERTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. ADIGWE (Southern): I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress notes that the ties of common experience and aspiration that bind the international communities of the working classes are a bond that supersedes national affiliations between the subject workers and the ruling rich. The ruling classes recognising the transformative power of a common purpose pursued by a united people deploy at every opportunity the evil tactic of divide and conquer and a bid to foment division and so frustrate the legitimate aspirations of working people to better social and employment conditions.

Congress observes that there are certain political parties in our country, the Conservatives and United Kingdom Independence Party, have sought to distract attention from their ruinous social policies by demonising immigrant workers and setting them in opposition to their British counterparts, but certain studies from respected academic and advisory bodies have debunked right-wing myths that migrant workers are a drag on the UK economy. The truth is that migrant workers are cut from the same cloth as British workers. The aspiration for better working conditions, to fair pay, and a safer working environment, is the same for the Polish worker, the Somali, and the Englishman. Anyone who says different is lying.

Congress resolves that this organisation, the GMB, should always seek to be at the fore of campaigns to counter right-wing prejudices and misinformation about migrant workers. Congress asserts that the GMB is a progressive, radical, international socialist trade union. We resolve to stand in solidarity with our trade union brothers and sisters wherever in the world they may be and we reserve the right to withdraw support from any GMB-sponsored MP who does not back this motion. We commit to strengthening the bonds of common purpose and shared hopes that unify the working classes in every section of the globe. I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

BRO. A. ACHI (Southern): This is my first time at Congress and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* The Conservatives and UKIP are trying to divide us in this country. I am not British. I was born in the Ivory Coast. I have French nationality. I came from the Ivory Coast to France to here. What is the difference between me and anyone else here? I am here fighting for workers' rights. There is no difference so we need to stick together. *(Applause)* Whatever they are saying is not going to work. That is why today I am here to support this motion because otherwise nothing is going to work. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, colleague. Well done. Okay, 163, Migration, moved by Yorkshire.

MIGRATION MOTION 163

163. MIGRATION

This Conference notes:

1. In Britain migrants make up 9 per cent of the population, which is the average for Europe. Britain has a smaller proportion of migrants and lower rates of net immigration than the US, Canada, Australia and several large European countries.
2. Migrants (including refugees) contribute to public services through their tax and national insurance contributions. They make a net contribution to the UK economy of £3 billion. Migrants are often young, healthy, and skilled, their use of public services is actually very limited.
3. Migrants help deliver many of our public services, working in the National Health Service, education and social care. It is a fact that the NHS could not function without migrant workers.
4. That, contrary to claims in the media, only 1.8 percent of social housing is occupied by those who have been in Britain less than five years. Research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission dispels the myth that immigrants jump the social housing waiting list. This found that 60 per cent were privately renting, 18 per cent were owner occupiers, and only 11 per cent were allocated social housing. The research found no evidence of abuse of the system nor of 'queue jumping'.
5. Research commissioned by the Home Office concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that asylum seekers had detailed knowledge about the UK benefits system.
6. The number of asylum seekers that Britain receives is average for Europe, ranking 14th out of 27 when looking at asylum seekers per head of population. The UK receives fewer asylum applications than France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Belgium. As of January 2012, the UN estimated that the number of refugees, pending asylum cases and stateless persons made up just 0.33 per cent of the population
7. Asylum seekers do not have access to the mainstream benefit system. They receive £36.62 a week or £5.23 per day, which is 52 per cent of Jobseeker's Allowance and well below the UK poverty line. Those who are refused asylum cannot access any benefits.

This Conference believes:

8. The economic crisis is the fault of bankers, politicians and bosses, not of immigrants. As the Mirror wrote in an editorial "Austerity, not migration, is why living standards and real wages are falling."
9. Pandering to anti-immigrant rhetoric moves the political agenda to the right, giving confidence to racists, and helping to legitimise the views of far-right groups. It also helps to fuel the growth of UKIP.
10. Migration is vital for the functioning of our society. With a rising elderly population and decreasing fertility rates, we will depend even more than we already do on migrants to provide tax revenues and services.
11. Racism against immigrants, including refugees and people seeking asylum, divides workers, hampering struggles to defend wages and conditions.

This Conference resolves:

12. To produce material for members exposing right-wing myths about immigration and asylum seekers.
13. To campaign to defend immigrants and asylum seekers, and to encourage them to join trade unions.
14. To support broad-based organisations campaigning against racism and scapegoating migrants.

LEEDS GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. SHIELD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): In Britain migrants make up 9% of the population, which is the average for Europe. Migrants contribute to public services through their tax and national insurance payments. They make a net contribution to the UK economy of £3bn. A lot of

these workers are temporary and seasonal but the vast majority are fully employed and help grow the economy of this country. Migrant workers help to deliver many of our public services, working in the NHS, which would struggle to function without them.

Congress, the GMB welcomes migrant workers but insists they must be paid the proper rate for the job, the same as UK workers deserve. We must stop the exploitation by rogue employers. Generally, EU migrants are much less likely to claim unemployment benefits than British nationals. Most of these people are owner-occupiers or rent privately, a very small amount allocated social housing. Many are highly if not over-qualified and have to work in lower skilled jobs for which some are often underpaid. With each wave of migration into this country the GMB has welcomed these people into our Union and supported them by ensuring their employment and social rights. In Yorkshire we have our very own migrant workers branch.

Following UKIP's showing at the Euro elections immigration is a very sensitive issue both in UK and Europe. We must encourage our members to trust their own judgement and principles and to question what they hear in the media. There must be no pandering to the anti-immigration rhetoric that gives confidence to racists and helps to fuel the growth of UKIP. We must take the fight to the bigots and racists of UKIP and give support to organisations which campaign against racism. Let's let everybody know that all the problems of this country cannot be blamed on migrant workers. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder.

BRO. B. BARDZ (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I am seconding the motion 163. We should have in mind one thing, no matter what is our position on the subject of immigration, that many of the people coming to this country are simply the victims of wars, victims of local politics, victims of the global economy, and now they have become victims of wicked and unfair attacks as alleged cause of unemployment, a housing crisis, and so on. I resent the idea of making victims the culprits just because it is so easy to attack the voiceless. If I wanted to assess the level of arguments I hear from the cries of the media, I would say Britain deserves better than that and we immigrants deserve better. I am speaking on behalf of Polish working people who do not want to be divided from English and British working people. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Bartłomiej. Well done. I now ask London Region to move 164.

IMMIGRATION MOTION 164

164. IMMIGRATION

This Congress affirms its opposition to all attempts to scapegoat immigrants for the economic crisis and for the on-going attacks on working class living standards.

Contrary to the myths peddled by the right-wing press and their political representatives, Congress recognises and is proud of our union's tradition of fighting to support those who come to Britain, looking to improve their lives and the lives of their families and fulfil their potential. Recent research by academics at UCL has found that rather than being a "drain", immigrants' contribution to public finances and the British economy has been "remarkably strong". The research has also found that immigrants from outside Europe contribute more in taxes than they receive.

Congress believes our union should be unashamed in making an openly progressive case for immigration, based on the facts, and for the benefits that it brings our country. GMB believes the multicultural diversity of our union and of our country is a strength, not a weakness. We also call on the GMB to advocate policies for a future Labour Government that do not fuel anti-immigrant racism, and to embed a strategy for the unionisation of recent immigrants and allocate substantial resources to this effort.

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. WOODS (London): Delegates, as we have already heard from the speakers this afternoon, in recent months we have witnessed a dangerous escalation of anti-immigrant rhetoric. The majority of the mainstream media, as well as politicians of all stripes, say that all they want is an honest debate and that they should be allowed to talk about it but, Congress, they never shut up about it. It is all we ever hear about. What we should hear more about is the reality of immigrants' experiences in this country, racial harassment, bureaucratic obstacles, and a torrent of demonisation in the media. Perhaps the most shocking step taken by the Coalition Government on this issue is the sending of vans into working class and migrant communities telling people to go home and whipping up fear and hostility.

It is this toxic climate that has fuelled the ascent of UKIP. The cutting edge of the rise in UKIP support is this racism and, Congress, as our national President said this morning, it is why we have to redouble our efforts in the months ahead to stand up to racism and to stand up to UKIP. We cannot be afraid to speak up for our vision of a society in which immigrants from around the world are welcome to this country, where the contribution they make is recognised and celebrated, and where they become an integral part of our trades union Movement and its struggle for decent work for everyone.

That means being an unapologetically anti-racist trade union and we can all be proud that GMB is at the forefront of the movement against racism, xenophobia, and bigotry. But, sisters and brothers, there is always more that we can do. In March GMB backed an impressive demonstration on the streets of London, trade unionists came together, with immigrant welfare centres, and campaigners, and they turned out thousands to say in one voice that they reject the politics of division. They called on all politicians to end the constant barrage of concessions to anti-immigrant sentiment and instead to put forward a positive agenda based on our collective human rights.

Shamefully, judging by the response by a small minority of Labour's MPs to UKIP's policies last week, not everyone got that message. This coming Saturday a conference in London will bring together everyone who wants to roll back this tide of racism. I would say that if you are around and you are not completely knackered from Congress by then, you should come along. The movement against racism needs us, it needs the GMB like never before. Congress, pass this motion. Let's send a positive and defiant message to the racists and let's stand up to racism. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, George. Secunder.

BRO. J. COLES (London): Congress, as some of you may well know, my love life has been the subject of a political pawn for the last two years as the Home Office repeatedly refused to let my wife into the country. On May 8th it came to crunch time when we had a tribunal and either this was going to be my farewell conference, if it did not go for us, or I was going to be happily with my wife. Actually, it is neither because fortunately, yes, we did finally win the tribunal, thanks mainly to the evidence of my Mum but the Home Office is now dragging its heels about actually issuing the visa

and are going to take as long as possible before they do it. This is a global world. I should be allowed to love and marry who I like. It is not North Korea. *(Applause)* We have the internet, we have global communications, and surely we should be able to love a person wherever she comes from and not be used as a political pawn. All she wants to do is come here, work, pay her taxes, and that is a damned sight more than some of the people who tell us they should not be coming here. Please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jonathan. Can I now ask Southern Region to move 165.

BULGARIAN AND ROMANIAN WORKERS MOTION 165

165. BULGARIAN AND ROMANIAN WORKERS

This conference deplors the scaremongering by the British press and the right wing leading up to the changes allowing Bulgarian and Romanian people to live and work in the UK without restrictions.

GMB considers that all workers are legitimate and welcomes migrant workers to the UK. Our priority is to ensure that as many new workers as possible to the UK join the GMB.

The scaremongering about benefits claiming, crime, and undercutting British workers is the worst type of prejudice. This debate is a complete distraction from the real issues affecting our economy tax avoidance and evasion, excessive high pay and a lack of investment.

L17 LB LEWISHAM BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. ALADE-ODUMOSU (Southern): Good afternoon, Congress, President. At one time it was the black and the Irish. Then it was the Polish and the Albanians. I do not know about you but I would not know a Bulgarian or a Romanian worker if he or she does not introduce themselves as such. The fear that has been generated by the right-wing press is, in my opinion, just a smokescreen to cover all the silent robbery going on with the multinationals stealing us blind. The skills and abilities of those coming into the UK have been neglected for a cheap political shot at this group of migrant workers. Let the focus be on the tax evaders who are bankrupting the country with their greed and I say welcome to Bulgarians and Romanians, if they are willing to make a valuable contribution to the UK. If anyone of you here has ever tried to claim benefits, you will see how difficult it is. At times it seems that they are demanding blood for the kind of benefit that everybody has and that you are entitled to as a worker. They are claiming that crime is high because we have an influx of migrant workers. The crime is already here but it has been perpetuated by the multinationals and the greedy politicians who support them. So, please do not let these people speak off our backside any more. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done.

BRO. A. ACHI (Southern): First-time Congress, second-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am here to support this motion. As you can see me, I am here. Do I look like a criminal? (“Yes.”) You said it! I do now look like a criminal. I work, I pay my taxes, and when I am going to leave this country my taxes I will not get back. So, we are just in this country, and the Bulgarians, and as my colleague was saying, before it was the Jamaicans, before it was the Africans, they are invading the country. When you see Nigel Farage and his colleagues go like *this*. *(Peering into the distance)* “Where is the invasion? I don’t see them. Do you see them?” That is what you need to do. There is no invasion. Why we come here, and the Bulgarians, we come here to work. We pay the taxes; that is it. We do

not come here to kill anyone. They do not come here to kill anyone, so let them work. Again, do *this*. (*Peering into the distance*) There is no invasion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. It is the Government that are the criminals, not us. Okay, can I have 166?

REGULATING GLOBALISATION MOTION 166

166. REGULATING GLOBALISATION

Congress is requested to campaign and lobby to seek legislation to treat immigration and emigration equally. Anything less is tantamount to a throw-back to a colonial past that seeks advantage and exploitation over another country.

This currently gives personal freedom for us, but not for anyone else in another country to come here, which doesn't just ignore inequality by actually promotes inequality with rampant and unrestrained globalisation.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): This is a huge subject but it is only one section we are going to be looking at. Congress is requested to campaign and lobby to seek legislation to treat immigration and emigration equally. Anything less is tantamount to a throwback to a colonial past that seeks advantage and exploitation over another country. All the talk is about restricting immigration, or leastways you would think so given the disproportionate amount of media exposure that UKIP received in the European elections. It is about equal treatment, though, but well done, Nigel Farage. He could not have received any more media attention if he had thrown a brick through the window of an immigrant shop window, which, metaphorically is exactly what he did. He could not have done it without the complicit right-wing press and media, a media wedded to anything different from the mainstream, and bugger the consequences.

With the complicity of the aforementioned, all the conversation is going to be centred on restricting immigration rather than austerity up to the general election. From the media's point of view, austerity as a topic is fast getting past its sell-by date, if we let it. How many more stories on food banks could they possibly run, anyway. I think there has already been a celebrity food bank episode. Do not laugh. Do not underestimate the power of the media in all this. The press and the media have a virtual monopoly on informing the public on how to think and what to think. They are not thinking about austerity as much because its yesterday story, so far as the media are concerned, anyway.

Many of our members are still living through austerity. It is not yesterday's story at all. We are living through it, but not for the privileged few who are hell-bent on deflecting attention away from the self-centred divisive view of the world and how they live it by first heaping responsibility on the financial crisis, on the benefit claimants, and now onto migrants. Shame on them. Hardly surprising they want their cake and eat it. No change there, then. Not surprising they want the right to go stomping into other countries but not allow anyone to come here. We used to frown on that sort of thing in the 1930s. I am not too chuffed about it now, actually.

Congress, we cannot take the lead from politicians, either, on this subject, especially the ones who tell us one minute we are better together and the next that we need to be out of Europe. Talk about mixed messages. What kind of leadership is that? All we need to ask ourselves is, is this worker my

brother, my sister, and the correct answer is yes and we treat them accordingly, equally. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

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

Motion 166 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak in this debate? No? Thank you very much. Can I call Kathleen Walker Shaw on Motion 163. Kathleen.

SIS. K. WALKER SHAW (European Officer): President, Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting Motion 163 but with a qualification. The CEC applauds the comprehensive way that the motion dispels the dangerous myths and lies increasingly peddled about migrants and asylum seekers regarding their impact on the economy, social welfare, and benefits. GMB will always challenge those pandering to anti-migrant rhetoric, which only fuels far right parties and the growth of UKIP. We know who is to blame for the economic crisis, and it is not immigrants.

The qualification is that the motion requests GMB to support broad-based organisations campaigning against racism and scape-goating migrants, which is not sufficiently specific. Moreover, such requests also have to be referred on a case by case basis to the CEC Finance and General Purposes Committee for agreement. However, the main thrust of this motion is, of course, in line with GMB policies and actions. GMB has long been actively involved in organising and supporting migrant workers and has produced a lot of materials and briefings exposing the myths about immigration and asylum seekers. And let's be clear, migrant workers are not stealing anyone's jobs. They are being actively recruited by unscrupulous employers bent on exploiting migrant workers and driving down your terms and conditions in the workplace, and we have to challenge that and politicians and the right-wing media in this country have to start exposing that, because that is the crime.

We currently work closely with a number of organisations, including *Hope not Hate* in campaigning against racism and scape-goating migrants. GMB jointly presented the *Hope not Hate* petition not in my name to the European Parliament in 2009 in protest to the two BNP MEPs taking seats they should never been allowed to win. This year we saw them, rightly, kicked out. Therefore, Congress, please support Motion 163 with the qualification that I have set out. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kathleen, very much. Does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Can I now put 162, 163, 164, 165 and 166 to the vote, with the qualification that has been accepted by the region. The rest are supported. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried. Thank you, Congress.

Motion 162 was CARRIED.

Motion 163 was CARRIED.

Motion 164 was CARRIED.

Motion 165 was CARRIED.

Motion 166 was CARRIED.

GLENIS WILLMOTT, MEP ADDRESSED CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I move to the next item, number 3, and this is someone I work with and who is sitting on this stage, so it gives me great pleasure to welcome Glenis Willmott to Congress and congratulate her on her success in the recent European elections.

Glenis is well known to us at the GMB as she was a Senior Organiser and Political Officer here in the Midland & East Coast Region. She has been a Labour MEP since 2006, and Labour's Leader in Europe since 2009. I am aware that she was elected again last week in Europe. As a member of the European Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee, she has campaigned tirelessly for a new EU Health and Safety Strategy. Her other areas of focus include fighting for more environmental protection measures, regulating pharmaceutical and cosmetic products, and taking measures to ensure our food is safe and properly labelled.

Glenis, you have been a loyal and valuable friend to the GMB, supporting many of our key campaigns: against the blacklisting of trade union activists; promoting EU working time rules; calling for more socially sustainable public procurement, and standing up for our EU employment and social rights, including stronger rights for posted workers.

Glenis, we appreciate your support and leadership in the EU and look forward to working with you and your MEP colleagues over the next five years. Glenis, it gives me great pleasure for you to address Congress.

GLENIS WILLMOTT: Thanks very much. Thanks very much, President. (*Applause*) Good afternoon, Congress. Colleagues, I am really pleased to be speaking to you today. I am even more delighted that the GMB has come to the heart of the East Midlands, Nottingham, and the region that I represent. It is not just because I live not too far away and it only took me 20 minutes to get here, but being here does give me a chance to say a huge thank you to my union, the GMB.

Thank you for everything you did to help Labour candidates in the European elections, nationally, regionally, in terms of funding and other resources. We would not have managed without you, I am telling you. Thank you, too, for your commitment to *Unions Together*, whose activity has helped to galvanise support of working people against the twin threats of the Tories and UKIP.

Thank you to the thousands of individual GMB members who gave their own time and commitment in May's elections. We thank you for all of that and, above all, a personal thank you for what you have done for me over the years, not just the resources to aid my own political work but the support, political, personal and moral, you have given me as an individual and, above all, the comradeship and friendship I have gained from being part of the Union.

I also want to pay tribute to the Union's voice in Brussels, the GMB's Brussels office, so ably led by Kathleen Walker Shaw who does a truly magnificent job of keeping us informed and, as you will expect of Kathleen, keeping us on track. Now, let's be honest, we all know the European elections were, shall we say, difficult for all progressive parties on the left. They always are.

Against a background of Euro scepticism, feeding off dissatisfaction with austerity, what did we see, the media, not least disgracefully the BBC, making a celebrity of Nigel Farage. We had to fight to get a hearing for the real issues about jobs, about rights at work, about taking on the bankers and the tax evaders. You know it was an uphill battle but let's just remind ourselves how well we did. You would not have thought so from the media the following day.

Labour increased our number of MEPs from 13 to 20, an increase of over 50%. Believe it or not, our share of the vote increased by well over 60% and, I will tell you what, I am really proud that 11 out of our 20 MEPs are women. (*Applause*) In our key seats, like Northampton North, or Lincoln here in the East Midlands, we were 10 points ahead of the Tories. That shows we have the support

necessary to win in 2015 and that was a pattern across the country. That is what we need to do if we want to change the government next year.

It was Labour who had people on the doorsteps and on the phones. We made something like seven million contacts with voters across the country, more than the rest of the other parties combined. Of course, we wanted to do even better; of course, we did. But against the often overwhelming tide of UKIP hysteria make no mistake, this was a successful election for Labour, and absolutely key to the success was the role of the trade unions. Why, because the trade unions get Europe. You know all about health and safety protections. You know all about working time and guaranteed holidays. You know all about maternity and paternity provision. You know all about equal treatment, part-time, temporary and agency workers. You know about it all. You know where it comes from and you know which of us voted for them, and you also know exactly who is trying to take it away from you.

Labour MEPs will continue to fight to ensure that does not happen but more than that we will fight to make sure Europe addresses those other issues affecting working people, closing those loopholes in the agency workers and posting of workers directive, stopping those abuses that undercut wages and conditions, and undermine collective bargaining agreements, and we will take action on zero-hours contracts once and for all. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, the political landscape has changed. We already know about the tradition of Tory efforts to take away the rights of people at work but now we have the cynical, depressing, no-hope politics of despair from UKIP with their simplistic “blame it on the foreigners” story. It is really sickening and I was glad to hear the earlier debates. We need to show that UKIP does not have the answers and, by the way, what a damned cheek to call themselves the people’s army. The people’s army? They are just the Tory Party with bells on, that is all they are. *(Applause)* Turning up at the Newark by-election in their Bentleys and Range Rovers, who are they kidding? The people’s army? Don’t you think it is really patronising to think that being constantly filmed with a pint and a fag will appeal to working people? I do. I think it is really patronising.

It is not that we should dismiss or ignore the fears that people have, of course we should not, but we need to understand the underlying reasons for those fears and deal with the issues behind them. We have to better explain to people how we would address them with our policies and with our actions, may I add. We have to replace fear with hope. To do this we need to put a social Europe right back at the very top of the political agenda. We really must have a Europe that is more than just a single market for business, that is just not good enough. It must be a Europe that defends working people, a Europe that looks after the interests of women, a Europe that protects minorities, a Europe that is about jobs and growth, and, colleagues, it needs to be a Europe that benefits many not just the few. Your Labour MEPs are determined to deliver just that. Thanks very much, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Glenis. Glenis, just for you. Don’t drink it all together!
(Presentation amid applause)

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to item 4, Employment Policy: Rights at Work, Composite 7, Exploitation of Agency Workers on Short Term Contracts. This encompasses Motions 85, 86 and 87. Birmingham Region to move and GMB Wales and South West Region to second, and Midland & East Coast Region if they would like to come in as they did withdraw their motion in favour of Composite 7.

EXPLOITATION OF AGENCY WORKERS ON SHORT TERM CONTRACTS COMPOSITE MOTION 7

C7. Covering Motions:

85. SHORT TERM CONTRACTS AND THEIR EFFECT ON AGENCY WORKERS (*Wales & South West Region*)
86. AGENCY WORKERS (*Birmingham & West Midlands Region*)
87. EXPLOITATION OF AGENCY WORKERS (*Birmingham & West. Midlands Region*)

EXPLOITATION OF AGENCY WORKERS ON SHORT TERM CONTRACTS

This Conference is fully aware that agency workers should be treated the same as direct employees, but already some companies are changing their approach to agency workers by offering short term rolling contracts resulting in a two tier workforce being created.

This Conference agrees that the Agency Workers Regulations are found wanting even before the 'paint is dry'. The last Labour Government bought in regulations that should have seen agency workers that worked for a company for twelve weeks or more having the same rights and be earning the same wage as full time employees. Disappointingly the Regulations were passed while containing this loophole that allowed the agencies and employers to do deals that made agency workers, no longer agency workers becoming employees of the agency. This takes away their rights to equal pay and enables the continued exploitation of these workers keeping them on minimum wage and almost zero hours contracts.

It has now been reported that the Labour leader Mr Ed Milliband has assured us that 'The next Labour Government will work with British business to close this loophole and ensure that agency workers cannot be used to undercut non-agency staff'.

We call upon the CEC to lobby Parliament to end the two tier workforce created by this and ensure all employees are treated equally.

The GMB calls upon a future Labour Government to go further than this by pledging to include in its election manifesto reforms to the derogated agency opt out and to changing as a matter of urgency the way the UK interprets the Agency Workers Directive.

This Conference calls on the GMB to campaign and seek the real commitment of the Labour Party to take measures when back in Government to close the Swedish Derogation loophole in the Agency Workers Regulation.

We also ask that we are given a commitment by Labour when dealing with this issue, that they will listen to the Trade Union who speak for the vulnerable workers and act in the best interests of the workers and not that of big business who will only wish to continue to use the law to take advantage of and abuse low paid workers.

Birmingham & West Midlands Region to Move Wales & South West Region to Second

(Carried)

BRO. A. THURSFIELD (Birmingham & West Midlands): First time speaker. *(Applause)* This Congress agrees that the Agency Workers Regulations are found wanting, even before the paint was dry on the agreement. Imagine two workers carrying out the same job and exactly the same function but two different contracts, one working for the parent company and the other working for the agency. One is earning the company's negotiated rate of pay and the other considerably less. One is

enjoying enhanced holiday entitlement and the other having to take leave without pay or not at all. One has a company bonus and the other nothing. Don't forget, both in many cases are carrying out exactly the same job. Just imagine how frustrating and demoralising this would be.

The Agency Workers Regulations on EU Directive was implemented in October 2011 and came into force in January 2012. They were designed to protect the working and employment conditions of temporary workers and a number of contractors and freelancers. The Act was specifically to stop exploitation and abuse of the system where workers were legally paid less, treated poorer, and given less rights by their employers. Now under the proposals after a 12-week probation period an agency worker shall be entitled to the same basic rights as a co-worker; simplicity in itself. Out of government the Conservatives, the LibDems, and even the Confederation of British Industry, back the stalwart work of the Warwick Report and the bodies who drew up those proposals. The lack of worker protection afforded to agency staff has always been controversial but the Agency Workers Regulations set out by Parliament was a great move all round, or was it? Unfortunately, the Derogated model sprung from nowhere to scupper all the work and watered down the wage structure. It is underhanded and backed wholeheartedly by the ConDem Government desperate to reduce wages and terms and conditions of employment. Now the parent company is the agency and the employer is hired by a third party who calls the shots no matter what is said by the agency. They tend to be powerless where discipline and grievances and are involved, being cajoled into the decision by the paymaster. Take time off following an illness, and invariably you are finished; not able to keep up after minimal training, and you are finished. Unable to work shifts because of family commitments or medical conditions, and you are finished. That is the reality and that is what really happens, which puts immense pressure on workers who feel ill but still have to go into work. Full employment rights are now two years in coming as it is without a watered down contract as well. Graded pay scales prolong equal pay as it is so it is nothing short of cruelty and exploitation extending an agency worker's opportunity to earn full pay for longer and longer. To Ed Miliband, you have openly stated an abuse of the system needs to be reviewed. Too right it does and the Agency Workers Regulations are the answer so put your money where your mouth is and outlaw the Derogated contracts. Don't be flannelled by the offer of full-time employment with the agency because it does not pay the bills or provide any kind of security. Yes, it may give cover between assignments, which is a rarity, but it does not give equality of wages or terms and conditions. It does not give equal holidays but what it does is angry workers, pitted against their fellow workers. We need Ed Miliband to act and stop the Swedish Derogation which has bastardised and made impotent the excellent theory behind the Agency Workers Regulations and allow workers to work with dignity and equality. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done, Adam. GMB Wales and South West Region.

SIS. S. HARRISON (GMB Wales and South West) President, Congress, most people would be appalled if the person working next to them is paid more for doing the same job and yet agency workers on these contracts are still being treated unfairly. Short term contracts are being used to undermine the Agency Workers Directive and help line pockets again of the corrupt and scrooge employers.

Kevin Green, the Chief Executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, made a statement saying that the issue of agency workers had been consulted upon and the issue was not a loophole but a legitimate part of legislation and agency workers have benefited since these rules came in. Congress, the only people benefiting is the greedy employers who are abusing the legislation.

The Protection of Employees' (Fixed-Term Work) Act 2003 applies to most employees on fixed term contracts. However, the Act does not apply to agency workers. There are tens of thousands of agency workers being paid less than permanent staff. The TUC has gathered evidence that agency staff are paid up to £135 a week less than permanent staff. Under the UK's regulations agency workers should be paid the same after doing the same job for 14 weeks. However, a Swedish contract exempts the agency from having to pay a worker the same rate of pay as long as the agency directly employs the individuals, and guarantees to pay them for at least four weeks during the time they cannot find them work.

In Sweden where these contracts originate workers still receive equal pay once in a job and 90% of normal pay between jobs. However, in the UK workers have no equal pay rights and are paid half as much as they received in their last job or minimum wage rates between jobs. Agency workers can also have their hours cut and receive as little as one hour of paid work per week. Evidence gathered shows that these types of contracts are used regularly in call centres, food production, logistics firms, and manufacturing.

The Temporary Agency Workers Directive was implemented in the UK in 2011 as part of the Europe-wide legislation to give equal treatment to agency workers. At that time, business lobby groups feared legislation would lead to heavy job losses but as with the minimum wage these predictions have proved to be completely wrong and the number of agency workers has increased despite the recession. Agency workers in the UK have increased by 15% since the recession, faster than any other form of employment. Congress, I work next to colleagues who are being paid less. They have no job security and are used to cover overtime and causes upset with permanent staff. These have become friends, and they work hard.

THE PRESIDENT: Sharon, would you like to wind up, please?

SIS. S. HARRISON (Wales & South West): Congress, in lobbying and campaigning, please support this motion and join together. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Does Midland & East Coast Region wish to come into the debate? No? Thank you very much. Does anyone wish to come into the debate? No? Sorry.

SIS. H. BALDWIN (Birmingham & West Midlands): Still a first time delegate and getting used to speaking. (*Applause*) I would like to talk in support of this motion. The Agency Workers Directive was brought into the United Kingdom in 2011. It was going to prevent the exploitation of agency workers. However, the so-called Swedish Derogation is a loophole in this Directive. This loophole allows many agency workers to be paid less than permanent staff, despite working in the same place and doing the same job.

The number of workers on Swedish Derogation has grown rapidly. Around one in six agency workers are now on these contracts with no job security, poor career progression, and more than often low pay. The person on this type of contract cannot plan or budget from one month to the next as their income is not guaranteed. This, along with the short-term contracts, means we are facing the problem of a two-tier workforce. We believe that agency workers should be treated the same as direct employees, not used as cheap labour. This is 2014 and we must not allow the employers to exploit agency workers legally under this Directive and push this country's workforce back to the dark ages of master and slave.

We, the GMB, must insist that a future Labour government pledges to include in their election manifesto reforms to the Agency Workers Directive to close this loophole and a real pledge to listen to us, the trade unions, who speak for the vulnerable workers and act in the best interest of the workers, and not to the bosses who only wish to continue using loopholes in the regulations to take advantage and exploit unprotected workers. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Heather. We are supporting Composite 7. All those in favour, please show. Any against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 7 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: EDUCATION & TRAINING

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I would like to take the next two items together and we will hear from the CEC speaker after Motion 182. Can I call 26, London Region; 27, Yorkshire; 28 Southern; 30 London Region; 29 Wales & South West Region; and then 182, Birmingham Region. Would you all like to come down, please?

TRAINING REPS READY FOR THE WORKPLACE MOTION 26

26. TRAINING REPS READY FOR THE WORKPLACE

Congress proposes that by the time representatives complete their education training courses, they are fully equipped with all the necessary law and rights at work literature.

Currently with the funding pressure on branches it is not possible for the branch to provide them and therefore Congress agrees they should be supplied on completion of the courses.

IPSWICH & DISTRICT BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. JAMES (London): Comrades, I am moving this motion as I am fed up with regular requests from reps, through no fault of their own, asking the branch for money so they can purchase a copy of the appropriate law and rights after they have completed their GMB training. With the current funding pressure on branches, small branches like mine simply cannot afford to purchase this essential material. This breaks my heart and also makes me very angry and frustrated. Why is this great union sending our workplace reps out to represent our members ill equipped? Sometimes they can find themselves in hostile situations and not having the appropriate material to hand could make or break the case against one of our members. Word will soon get around that GMB trains their workplace reps half-heartedly and you will be better off having a mannequin sitting in a disciplinary defending you rather than a GMB rep, and it is much cheaper.

This is not a dig at our reps that do a great job despite not having the appropriate material at hand. It seems bizarre to me that we spend good money on training our reps to represent our brothers and sisters in the workplace yet we do not give them the material to complete the task at the end of their basic training. Regional offices have plenty of money to keep posting duplicate letters and appeals to branches. Wouldn't sending this literature be cheaper by email rather than post; that way we can divert the money back to the Education Department and spend it on the materials that our reps require.

The reason I first joined a trade union was to be represented in the workplace, if I was unfortunate to be in trouble or have an accident. I would expect to be represented by a GMB rep that has full training and has the appropriate literature. All I say is that I do hope that I do not get any bother at work as I have no confidence in the present system. If I can see the problems in the education of our reps, so must our members. I urge Congress to pass this motion and make the GMB an unbeatable force in workplace negotiations. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, seconder.

BRO. S. GARELICK (London): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Be gentle. The ACAS trade union representation in the workplace guide, dealing with TULRA, TUPE, collective bargaining and other aspects of a representative's job, is a fine publication that would and will help all reps dealing with member issues, but the reality is that there is not one individual in this room, I would imagine, has not had situations that are unique to the trades that we work with. Improved documentation that helps reps and is available to branches is not only a cornerstone of any union's role in educating and nurturing but an embodiment of the role that representatives who provide member support need to provide to keep members' confidence. Changes to legislation are frequent and in many cases a minefield.

A provision of literature and training are of overriding importance to the work we do and we should not have to beg, we should not have to beg. To leave those who do this work to their own devices or are unable to do the valuable work is akin to running a baton race with both your hands tied behind your back. Small branches sometimes feel disenfranchised and unable to respond in the timescale that members expect nowadays, especially if their organiser is not readily available. Nowadays, in most cases, most hearing this message will agree that there is an expectation of immediacy even when trying to placate a nervous or concerned member. Reps that can refer to literature at least have a fighting chance to alleviate the concerns and fears of members and to combat the stress they are confronted with when unable to answer members' questions with authority and immediacy. On this basis it is not only practical to offer a solution to reps of getting immediate literature, it is a key part of the work of those who are looked to for direction and solutions, but an honourable responsibility being fulfilled by the Union for the greater good. Please accept this as the only viable and logical way forward to extend the token protection with all the tools possible at a representative's disposal. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, please, when the red light comes on finish because when we are stuck for time it is unfair to those who would have formally to move and second. Thank you. Yorkshire.

LANGUAGE BARRIER MOTION 27

27. LANGUAGE BARRIER

This Conference we call upon to provide relevant training in languages for stewards that have large numbers of migrant workers. This would enable shop stewards to recruit and retain these people in their workplaces to build an effective GMB organisation.

YORK GENERAL BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. SHIELD (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, we call upon this Congress to provide relevant training in languages for stewards that have large numbers of migrant workers. This would enable stewards to recruit and retain the people in their workplaces. The CEC said, and we understand, that the GMB@Work is built on the principle of self-organisation and we could seek to identify potential leaders among migrant workers. These leaders would then recruit and retain within their own language groups. But we as stewards want to get involved and make migrant workers believe we are prepared to make the effort and learn their languages, not for them to be a separate section on their own in our branches. Where I work we have organised English-speaking courses for these people, mostly Polish, which were very well attended and very successful. This shows that they are prepared to learn our language so why can't we go further and give our stewards the skills needed to communicate in some small way. There is no need for us to be fluent speakers. We agree that due to the wide range of languages spoken by migrants, any training would best be delivered locally according to need. If we have GMB staff and officers with the relevant foreign language skills let's use them to provide some training to stewards who want to learn. This is about equipping our stewards with the best possible skills to organise in their workplaces. If we can do this, then the respect we would get as a union would be immense. I move. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder.

BRO. S. MARTIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First time delegate, first time speaker. (Applause) Conference, think of the headline, "Language opens the door for shop stewards, a catalyst for change to a diverse GMB organisation, Union Learning Reps get on board an opportunity to increase skills, build confidence, and getting the message out there for migrant workers." Migrant workers would in turn speak of the help GMB gives to their community. Word of mouth is a fabulous tool. There should be an ongoing programme to retain as a dripping tap effect potentially to create a wave across the country for migrant workers in building a GMB organisation. I second the motion, Language Barrier. (Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 28, Domestic Violence, Southern Region to move.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MOTION 28

28. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This Conference:

Believes that:

The GMB as an employer should:

1. Join the 'The Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence', whose aim is to "*raise awareness and to provide employers with practical support and tools to take positive actions in the workplace to end domestic violence.*"
2. Sign up to the Department of Health's Pledge on Domestic Violence that commits an employer to supporting their own employees when they raise the issue of domestic violence.
3. The GMB should also provide training for its officers and reps on the issue of domestic violence. They in turn can then better support GMB members by ensuring that employers best support their workforce.

L17 LEWISHAM BRANCH

(Carried)

SIS. B. PLANT (Southern): President, Congress, domestic violence, physical or psychological, does not discriminate, it happens regardless of age, culture, gender. One in four women and one in six men experience this, 750,000 children a year witness it. It is the main cause of depression in women resulting in self-harm and even suicide. We will all know someone who is either a victim or a perpetrator. Every workplace, your workplace, will be touched by this issue, therefore it is in the workplace that people will find help, support, and protection.

Congress, as reps we may meet a member who is the victim of domestic violence, failing capabilities, time off work with stress, or poor work performance. We are often the first people to hear someone's real story. Reps and officers need to be fully aware of the issues around domestic violence and be able to show management the best way forward. We want our members to stay employed and we want the employer to fulfil its legal duty of care. A good employer will have policies in place but domestic violence goes beyond bullying and harassment, it needs a separate policy based on best practice.

The Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence is a registered charity that works with UK employers to raise their awareness and provide them with practical support. It will, for example, give training to personnel and managers, provide policy templates, and signpost both victims and perpetrators to other support organisations. Its members already include the likes of BT, Simpson Millar, the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, and NHS employers. Our Union should proudly add its name to those. By becoming a member it shows that the GMB takes its duty as an employer seriously and sets an example for others to follow.

Congress, we need to encourage all employers to sign up to this charity and to the Department of Health's public health responsibility deal, a simple pledge that commits employers to do everything they can to prevent stalking, violence, or abuse, and its effects in the workplace. Does your employer have a domestic violence policy based on best practice? I ask you, please, to check when you return to work. It could save a life. The GMB should show the way by joining The Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence and provide training for its reps and officers so that we can best support our members. I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Secunder.

BRO. P. SONY (Southern): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* For someone like myself who as a child was affected by domestic violence, both direct and indirect, and as an adult know people, both friends and family, who are both heterosexual and LGBT who have been affected by domestic violence. This is why I feel we as a union should join The Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence and get our officers and representatives trained in how to support and guide our members who have been affected.

Let's not forget that as well as children and heterosexual people, LGBT people are also affected by domestic violence. According to statistics, in 2008/2009 8.9% of bisexual and gay men were affected by domestic violence and 17.3% of lesbian and gay women were also affected by domestic violence. We as a union must show that we care and understand, and support our members when they are in trouble and need help on domestic violence. Get our officers trained and let them know we care as a union. I second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Motion 30, London Region to move.

UNION LEARNING FUND (ULF) IN ENGLAND AND IMPACT ON GMB MEMBERS WORKING IN TUC AND TRADE UNIONS
MOTION 30

30. UNION LEARNING FUND (ULF) IN ENGLAND AND IMPACT ON GMB MEMBERS WORKING IN TUC AND TRADE UNIONS

Congress notes that:

- 1) The Union Learning Fund (ULF) in England has been reduced in the 2014/15 period resulting in project worker redundancies.
- 2) The remainder of the ULF projects in their current form are likely to end in 2015.
- 3) The GMB Union represents ULF project workers across different trade unions and in the TUC itself.

Congress believes that:

- 1) The ULF and project workers employed by the TUC and affiliated unions have achieved outstanding outcomes, engaging hundreds of thousands of workers, transforming their lives with opportunities, the attitude of the employer and resulting in the stabilisation and growth of union membership in many sectors.
- 2) This is yet another attack from an out of touch, uncaring Government.
- 3) Despite the blame lying squarely with the Con-Dem Government, GMB Union has a responsibility to those it represents working on fixed-terms contracts funded by ULF monies.
- 4) There are considerable inconsistencies in the terms and conditions and circumstances of the ULF project workers the GMB represents.

Congress resolves to:

- 1) Oppose the cuts by the Con-Dem coalition to the ULF and will lobby for its continuance particularly through our GMB Labour link in the lead up to the 2015 General Election.
- 2) Bring together a network of Project Workers who are GMB members and their representatives with a view to providing consistent guidance to those facing redundancy, disparity in terms and conditions and an uncertain future. This could include good practice in respect of:
 - Redundancy rights and fixed term contracts
 - Retraining and redeployment
 - Terms and conditions, including redundancy pay.

GMB@PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): Congress, the Union Learning Fund was established in 1998 by the then Labour government to promote and embed a culture of learning in our workplaces. The overall aim was to transform people's life chances through access to learning during their working lives. Since 2007, Union Learn, the learning arm of the TUC, has administered the fund and provided support on a national and regional basis to its affiliated trade unions. To date the fund has supported

more than 50 trade unions in over 700 workplaces training thousands of Union Learning Reps and engaging many thousands of learners. No doubt some of you sitting here today are Union Learning Reps or have Learning Reps on your branch committee, or maybe have benefited from one of the many learning projects. You will know then the value of union learning and the change it has brought to the lives of trade union members, and their families. You will also know that this work has brought through a new layer of activists from diverse backgrounds, many of whom have gone on to take up other roles in their unions, like workplace reps, or branch officials.

Union Learning Fund projects have also brought other benefits to our workplaces, such as improved relationships with employers, increases in membership, and the organisation of under-represented workers. The value of this work, then, is unquestionable. However, I am saddened to say that sometimes this value has not always translated into value for some of the staff who have worked in trade unions where the Union Learning Fund has been secured. Some staff deployed on these projects have faced themselves years of insecurity and in some cases lesser terms and conditions than their permanent counterparts. For example, many have been employed on fixed-term contracts for numerous years, with some employers keeping the same staff on these contracts throughout the whole period they have had funding. In some instances, there are staff who have been on these contracts for 10 years and there are many elsewhere who have been employed on successive fixed-term contracts for more than four years as projects have been refunded and contracts then extended. There is no objective justification for keeping people on these contracts and in the event of funding being reduced or ended then it would be a redundancy situation irrespective of contract type. Some employers have, though, to be fair, ensured that these staff are able to apply for permanent posts when they arise and have offered training support to enhance their job and career prospects.

One of the other key issues of concern regards disparity in terms and conditions. For instance, there appear to be cases where these staff are being denied the same redundancy terms as permanent staff and the employers attempt objectively to justify this difference or claim that a custom and practice has not been established. To explain, in some unions where headcounts have been reduced for financial reasons, many employers have offered voluntary redundancy or severance schemes. Some learning staff have not been allowed to apply as they are not deemed to be part of the headcount as their posts are externally funded. Also, the permanent staff that have been released have in most cases been paid enhanced redundancy terms, i.e. more than the statutory rate. Some employers have argued that these rights are not applicable to learning staff.

Congress, these are just a few examples of where there are inconsistencies. They should not have to suffer a detriment compared to their permanent counterparts and have to endure the insecurity that fixed-term contracts status brings. We know the Union Learning Fund has been cut and we have already seen 30 redundancies in the TUC and it is also likely to be ended under this anti-union Tory-led government, which will place many staff in a precarious position with many forced into redundancy if they should not be able to secure a permanent post with their employers.

Congress, there is no doubt we must oppose the cuts to the Union Learning Fund and lobby for its continuance but we must ensure once and for all that workers on these projects are treated equally and have the opportunity to secure redeployment. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Secunder.

SIS. M. BARTLETT (London): The Union Learning Fund has helped many people in this room, I am sure. It helped me with a discount on university fees. It has helped over 600,000 projects and the staff that have supported this have been excellent. If any of you have met them, they are people that

will work hard and they are all supporting our Movement and pushing us forward. It is such a shame that staff doing such a wonderful job are being treated like second-class staff in so many areas. As Helen was saying, they have been treated differently with redundancy rights and fixed-term contracts. It is disgusting the way they have been treated. I know that if I was the ConDem government I would not want to support them either because they are all pushing us forward as a union movement. So, the only thing we can do is push and support this motion and I urge Congress to do so. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Wales & South West Region.

COVERT SURVEILLANCE OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT MOTION 29

29. COVERT SURVEILLANCE OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

This Conference recognises the ever incessant increase in various forms of electronic subversive surveillance systems that is being implemented into our workplaces and therefore is calling upon the CEC to produce a GMB generic policy and an information pack for workplace stewards to use as a tool to firm up protection for our members subjected to such workplace surveillance.

We should like to see a GMB Stewards pack developed that gives guidance covering legal and welfare concerns in regard to all forms of electronic monitoring or surveillance and how long such information should be stored: that covers a proper and recommended use of CCTV, Vehicle Tracking, GPS on any electronic hardware, RFD Chips, and systems that monitor workers using telephone and keyboard equipment.

RHONDDA CYNON TAFF
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. ESTEBANEZ (GMB Wales and South West): Surveillance is the monitoring of activities of a person or group of people. Covert surveillance is different, generally used when a crime or act of terrorism is suspected. New opportunities for mass surveillance are opening up daily. Technology has advanced at such a pace that it has become readily available for employers to purchase and install. Use of packet-sniffing and key stroke logger software can analyse electronic communications even when the user has deleted files and documents. They enable access to emails and instant messages that have been sent and received without the user knowing. They also enable the use of web filters and barring of sites. Why employers feel the need for this obtrusive invasion is unclear. Is it a trust issue? The law says it must be open and for a reason. How many notices to this effect have you seen? Is this being used covertly?

Surveillance is not restricted to the office. Use of smart AD systems and CCTV are on the increase. Vehicle tracking can be used to identify types of driving skills, fuel consumption, driver activity, location, and in some cases transmission of messages. Refuge vehicles use cameras in the cab and externally. They are used in accidents, monitoring employees' activity and how long a vehicle is stationary. This information is constantly being monitored by an operator. RSD trips are used as security to locate and to monitor how equipment is used. Covert surveillance can involve cameras, GPS, telephone bugs, and computer biometrics.

It is not all bad. Vehicle tracking can be used to track deliveries of parcels to customers. Street CCTV can be used to deter crimes and locate missing people. But where do we draw the line? There is no absolute privacy rights for an individual but a variety of legislation that will have an effect on the use of surveillance equipment, including various acts, regulation of investigators' powers, traffic

management, road traffic offenders, protection of freedom, human rights, covert surveillance, to name a few, along with the code of practice issued by the Secretary of State that at present is voluntary.

We are aware that guidance and legalities on information and protecting employees has been negligent. For this reason we request GMB to pool its expertise and develop a generic workplace policy that will firm up such protection issues. This could in turn produce a good code of practice covering use of such technology. This would be used to assist reps in their negotiations and may even be adapted by employers in their policies. As a rep we need to know what, if any, surveillance is being used, why it is needed, how it will be used, is it appropriate, how long can the information gained be kept for, and how long can it be stored for, what are the company's policies, and what do the Government's codes of practice say about the use of this guidance? We would like to see a GMB steward pack that would give us guidance on legal and welfare concerns to enable us to cover any issues that involve the use of surveillance. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Carol. Secunder.

BRO. C. PUCKETT (GMB Wales and South West): President, Congress, Big Brother is watching over us so take cover. I do not mean the celebrity cast who set foot in the house and compete with one another to win the prize on the programme. I am referring to the symbol of party dominance, characterised in Orwell's famous novel, *1984*, whose presence is everywhere, on posters, coins, tele-screens, and even on cigarette covers. Big Brother, together with O'Brien and Mr. Carrington, is a prominent member of the all powerful thought police who preside over the torture and degradation of Winston who was the central character in the book. First published in 1949, set in a world of ever present government surveillance, it has a chilling similarity to the secret monitoring activities of employers referred to by the previous speaker.

For Oceana substitute any number of employers where the clock often strikes 13 for those workers that are subject to their intrusive practices, checking out employees by the way of monitoring what is on your computer screen, your internet activity, email content, online chat conversations, reading personal mail, and even voice messages, fast becoming almost standard fare in British industry. Add to that list the use of GPS in company vehicles and implanting of computer chips in workers, and you really do get an accurate and very worrying picture of how privacy rights are being eroded in this country. Surveillance places workers under great strain by using electronic equipment to keep track of where they are and how hard they are working. More than half of the employees now claim that their bosses use systems to log their work. No surprise that these tend to be in the lower ranking jobs where people tend to suffer the worst effects of monitoring with some having to record every bit of work that they do. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): I want to come in on Motion 30, President, in relation to the Union Learning Fund projects. I can accept the principles of the motion. I think the real problem here is this stupid year on year funding for education and training not just affecting Union Learning but affecting education in general; it devastates a lot of the training sector, it is devastating the community sector, and it is forcing people to put employees onto short-term contracts.

Can I just balance it up by saying I applaud the work that is being done inside the GMB to coordinate the work between the three regional projects and thanks to the work of Colin Kirkham, as National Coordinator, who helped us meet as a project team every month. We coordinate with each other, we

bring project workers together, and in the last couple of years we have had a training session, a three-day training session, over at Wortley Hall bringing the Union Learning projects staff and the managers together to plan and develop the work for this Union.

What is going on with Union Learning funding is a challenge but we must integrate other ways of funding that work as we go forward. It is too important to lose it. I accept the principles of the motion but I think the work that is being done in GMB is particularly superb and is a model of good practice. I thank the national team and all those who have worked on it. It is very good work bringing real results. Thank you, Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Kevin, that was really powerful and good. The only thing was that I hadn't called it yet.

BRO. K. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): You've got it, anyway.

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: I know. Can I now go back to the agenda. I am glad you pushed it along, Kevin. Birmingham Region to move 182. Birmingham? You know you are going to get a cut in time. You should have been down here. Give him the red light to start with!

CCTV CAMERAS AND SURVEILLANCE MOTION 182

182. CCTV CAMERAS AND SURVEILLANCE

This Conference believes Britain is rapidly becoming the 'big brother' state of the world. The intrusive nature of surveillance is becoming a problem in certain areas of society. We instruct the CEC to lobby various bodies to minimise the use of CCTV so as not to fall foul of impact assessments, data protection and privacy.

R35 ROCESTER JCB BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. THURSFIELD (Birmingham & West Midlands): CCTV, a good thing or not? Using CCTV can be privacy intrusive as it is capable of placing law-abiding citizens under surveillance as they go about their everyday movements. It is a fact that Britain is fast becoming the Big Brother state of the world and there are no real laws that give us proper privacy and unless someone can prove intent to maliciously spy, then neither the Crown Prosecution Service nor the police will take up the case. Now it has been established that we will struggle to stop neighbours filming parts of our property. What about being filmed in the street or in your car, or at work? What about being filmed in the toilet? What about being filmed on a rally or a picket line?

There are numerous occasions when CCTV monitoring is definitely for the greater good of the community and can act as a deterrent against crime. That is to be applauded but do they really need a sledgehammer to break an egg. There are numerous occasions when CCTV monitoring is a pain in the backside becoming more and more intrusive by the day, following unsuspecting citizens and workers wherever they go. Who watches the films, who stores the information, and who are they passed on to? If it was only the police, then why is so much information not processed and publicised for the scrutiny and assessment of us, the very people being filmed? It definitely is not just the police who study us in some bizarre Orwellian experiment using us as a sample under a great microscope. In a lot of cases improved lighting and tidying up of an area can be of more benefit than

a man watching an event after the horse has bolted. In this way permanent lighting improvement installed has economic payback much more effectively than a spy.

Don't forget technology is improving at a rapid rate and by improving I mean getting better, not nationally making our lives better. On the contrary, the lives of ourselves can be made much worse. It is estimated that there are just over 2.5 million CCTV cameras in operation in Britain with high definition cameras becoming the norm. Technology has actually overtaken the ability to regulate it and backlash from the public is approaching. Your face can now be isolated out of a crowd and cross-referenced against a database of millions of known faces but for what purpose? Gait analysis of our walking patterns along with facial recognition is becoming fast towards space age forensic style monitoring and what is the end result? The answer is, we do not know.

Authorities should check whether or not breaches of the Human Rights Act could happen, in particular Article 8, the right to respect privacy and family life. In fact, the police have already had to apologise when they have become over-powering in certain areas following a concentrated campaign in the West Midlands against a part of the Muslim community who felt sufficiently harassed to complain. Big Brother watch estimate 400-plus councils are using over 50,000 cameras and schools are using over 100,000 cameras to monitor classes and keep a check on the teaching staff. Then why are we bumbling about and letting the, "If you are not doing anything wrong then you have nothing to worry about," argument allow it to happen.

Birmingham spend £14m, Westminster £12m, each year on CCTV which brings me to the next debate, which is who pays for all this equipment and the answer to that is when local business and women turn councils down then it is us, the very people who are being watched and do not want them in the first place. We as taxpayers are footing the bill which could go on better schooling and better roads and more facilities for the young. Talking about this makes it sound conspiracy theorist but nowhere in the world is there the surveillance that goes on in the UK. We need to battle this affront to our liberty now and challenge the need for so many cameras filming us going about our daily lives. Remember this, a camera never stops someone hell bent to cause trouble or rob someone, or abduct, or bully, or rape, or murder. A camera never stops anything, it just records it.

We are not in any shape or form saying that in some circumstances it is not beneficial to have a watchful eye and make people safer but surveillance is not our conscience and never will be. So, please, let's instruct the relevant bodies to curb the CCTV camera and quit before they are installed in the pub, your house, work, and everywhere. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adam. Secunder.

BRO. A. STEVENSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I am a first-time speaker and delegate. (*Applause*) Thank you. Fact: 25 million CCTV cameras worldwide, 2.5 million cameras in the UK alone. It is one camera for every 14 citizens. We are filmed anywhere from 70 to 300 times a day, more for some people driving around. It cannot be right that councils and the police can film our every movement. I for one do not want to be filmed all the time. Why are we so complacent about this? They certainly do not seem to deter the criminals or the antisocial behaviour. What they seem to do is to use it as remote policing. Actually, all they do is reduce the police patrolling the streets. Also, there is not enough legislation covering users: 54 CCTV cars in operation by 31 councils, which is just another Tory stealth tax.

We need to resist encroachment into our liberty. We need to resist Big Brother. What is next, DNA scans, retina scans, or chips in your toes? Are we being looked after or are we being persecuted? A

country the size of China has the same number of cameras as the UK, that is one camera for every 420,000 people. Did you know there are more cameras in Croydon than there are in New York? If there is a recognised hotspot, then fine, that is where they are needed, that is what they are there for, but we as a union need to ensure that where they are unnecessary they are removed and stop the spying, and we must lobby to achieve this. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Now I will go to the part that Kevin jumped. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? Yes? Anyone else?

SIS. C. CAMPBELL (GMB Scotland) speaking on Motion 27, said: Conference, the practicality of this motion is nearly impossible. Coming from me where English is a bad language is rich. I know what you are thinking, how can you even stand there and say this is not going to work. The reason why I say it is not going to work is that I came here in 1995 and although I come from a country where we have English as an official language, Scottish English was another whole different level. *(Laughter)* I tell you, I joined the college and in the class I kept on interrupting the teacher because I could not understand what she was saying. So one day she decided to call me a dough ball. I knew I was not a ball. I checked the “dough” and it was not coming on. So I kind of, “Mmm, this is not working but I don’t understand the word ‘dough ball’”. Nobody would tell me that she had called me stupid. It took a few months actually to realise what she meant was, “You are so stupid you cannot understand a word I am saying.”

What I am suggesting is, although I am supporting this motion, I am suggesting that we should have easy access to ESOL classes, which is English for speakers of other languages. It is easier to allow the migrants to have English language in colleges than it is to train one shop steward to learn at least 10 international languages. It is going to cost money and years of studying before you actually think, “At whose expense is this migrant worker going to be trained? We are also spending money to train shop stewards.” I am supporting this motion but I want you all to think, is it possible for one person to learn over 10 languages. Support the motion, please. *(Applause)*

SIS. K. HUMPHREYS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of Midland & East Coast Region, supporting the motion on CCTV. I just want to highlight that there are benefits to CCTV. The brother mentioned about the recordings of the rape, murders and things like that. It is a recording but it is also a line of investigation, so, please, support the motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anyone else? *(No response)* Can I call June Minnery on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. J. MINNERY (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 27, 28, 30 and 182, all of which we are supporting with a qualification.

On Motion 27, my colleague from Scotland covered quite a bit of it, the qualification is that with dozens of different languages spoken by GMB members across the UK, such language training would need to be tailored to fit the needs of each workplace and be aimed at assisting workplace organisers identify workplace leaders from the migrant communities to promote self-organisation.

On Motion 28 – Domestic Violence – the qualification is that, as well as obtaining detailed advice from Birmingham & West Midlands Region on best practice in this area, the call for a new affiliation to the corporate alliance against domestic violence will, first, need to be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee.

On Motion 30 – the Union Learning Fund – the qualification is that the network of ULF project workers, who are GMB members, that the motion calls to be convened, would also include the 20 project workers who are GMB employees. Care would need to be taken to avoid any real or perceived conflict between the Union’s dual role, as both representative and employer, in this area.

Finally, on Motion 182 – CCTV cameras and surveillance – the qualification is that clarity is needed as to which bodies the GMB is being asked to lobby. It is also unclear from the motion as to how the need for security in our communities should be balanced with the need for personal privacy. Congress, with these qualifications, please support Motions 27, 28, 30 and 182. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Congress, June has been elected as President of the STUC. Congratulations, June, and well done. *(Applause)*

Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

Does Southern Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

Does London Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

Does Birmingham & West Midlands Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)*

Can I now put them to the vote, with the acceptances of the qualifications? All those in favour of Motions 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 182, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

Motion 26 was CARRIED.

Motion 27 was CARRIED.

Motion 28 was CARRIED .

Motion 29 was CARRIED.

Motion 30 was CARRIED.

Motion 182 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT & ORGANISATION

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Item 7, Union Organisation: Recruitment & Organisation. This section includes Motion 12, Wales and South Western Region to move; Motion 13, Organising Around Equalities, Southern Region to move, and Motion 14, Membership Records, Southern Region to move.

ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BECOME MEMBERS OF TRADE UNIONS MOTION 12

12. ENCOURAGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BECOME MEMBERS OF TRADE UNIONS

This Conference calls on the CEC to produce literature that will encourage, promote and educate young people in the UK of the values of Trade Unionism in their daily life, both at work and within their communities.

PONTYPRIDD GENERAL BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. HAMBIN (GMB Wales and South West Region): Conference, I move Motion 12 – Encouraging Young People to become Members of Trade Unions.

Sisters and brothers, the youth of today are charged with many things. Some accuse young people of apathy when they are refused to engage in a political process which has deserted them. Most tellingly, the youth who do engage are frequently dismissed as idealists. We are called “idealists” for

stating that workers require a living wage. We are accused of being idealists for asserting that public services should remain in the hands of the people they serve, and we are decried thrice more as idealists for believing that society should exist for the betterment of all its members, rather than the fiscally corpulent one per cent. It is my believe that the trade union Movement affords the best route for young members who wish to improve not only their own lot in life but those around them. The privations of austerity bear down on young members of society. The trade union Movement must, therefore, reach out to our youth and supply them with the knowledge and information of the gains made in their name and in the name of their forefathers and mothers in the trade union Movement. The trade union Movement must, in turn, enable them to have access to the tools in order to make gains for the present and future generations. Please support this motion.

BRO. I. BOUNDS (GMB Wales and South West Region): Congress, I am seconding Motion 12. President and Congress, most research shows that union-joining rates decrease with the passage of time. Most workers join a trade union within the first few years of entering the labour market or they will never join at all. There is, therefore, a very strong incentive for the GMB to market its services to young workers in their first job. In recent years, we have made some progress towards this but we are nowhere near to being over the line. Union-density rates within the younger age groups are inadequate at best and pretty woeful at worse. The business case for trade union membership amongst the young is an irresistible one, but it is not being developed quickly or fully enough. We know that young workers are a crucial target group for us, so the emphasis must be placed upon how we can market our services to them. The practical reality is that they have a quite limited awareness of the union Movement, so we have to work towards raising both perception and increasing relevance.

There are many theories that try to explain the lower propensity of young workers to unionise. Most workers entering the labour market at the age of 18 today, if they can find a job, are Blair's children, not Thatcher's. You can't talk to 18-year olds in the same way as those who have been in the world of work for 20 years or more, as it won't work. That applies to members and potential members alike. That is why we have to be more innovative and communication methods are critical to us in getting our message across. That is why it was such a good move this morning to pass the motion on using YouTube. Young people must remain a key organising target for us, so our offer must be based on what we can do to tackle the more traditional issue of problems at work. To do this, however, we need to get them into our Union.

Congress, we must be better prepared to meet this challenge. Please support.

ORGANISING AROUND EQUALITIES MOTION 13

13. ORGANISING AROUND EQUALITIES

Consideration should be given as to how the union can organise around equalities when there is insufficient data gathered to be able to identify members from all equality strands.

This conference calls on the CEC:

1. To Investigate the opportunity to gather more equalities data on the GMB joining form
2. To look into whether the union could include equalities data in their new joiners survey
3. To launch specific projects to gather equalities data within specific branches, workplaces or amongst groups of members.

L26 LB WANDSWORTH BRANCH

(Carried)

SIS. N. PETRIE (Southern): Congress, I am speaking on Motion 13: Organising Around Equalities. In our pack we all got an equalities form to fill in, so at the end of Congress, Congress will know how many males are here, they will know your gender, what age brackets you are in, providing you put the right age down and not lie, whether you are disabled or not, your religion, etc. At the end of Congress, the Union will know how many people fit into particular criteria. So when they start preparing for next year's Congress, they will be able to make sure that all groups are represented here.

President and Congress, GMB is rightly proud of the diversity of our membership and our workplace reps. We know, as we look around this conference hall, that we have come a long way in terms of representing minority groups. However, we also know that it is difficult to quantify this achievement because, other than in a limited situation, we don't systematically record equality data. In general, we do not ask members to self-identify as women, LGBT members, disabled, black or ethnic-minority members, or any group. This means that we cannot record the progress we are making and promote what a brilliantly diverse union we are. More importantly, we cannot use this data to run campaigns on the specific equality strands. For example, if a region wants to develop a BME network in their region, it is not possible, as things stand, to directly contact our BME members because when we get a branch list it does not tell us anything. It just says your name, address and whatever.

If we want to survey the experience of LGBT members in the workplace, we would have to circulate information to all members and hope it makes it to our LGBT members. Trying to get information to members on specific equality strands is especially difficult, because it is not obvious that someone has a disability. Asking a member to self-identify this strand will help. Getting this information is especially important to ensure that, as an increasing number of women, BME etc., join the Union, we also need to monitor whether these members are making it through the structures of the Union. We have known that for many years it was, predominantly, men who were in this Union and sitting on the top table, but, obviously, Mary changed that. How well are our young LGBT members and disabled members represented amongst reps? I'll bet we will only find a few of them on the regional committees, the CEC, etc.

Many branches and equality officers run equality campaigns in specific workplaces or branches. The Union should support branches to undertake these projects, but also ensure that information gathered is properly recorded. I have this problem with my Southern Region sometimes. It will be difficult and potentially expensive to gather data for the whole membership in one go but at least we will start gathering information for new members. So we can improve our records for the future. Let's consider the best way of gathering equalities data so that in the future we can measure our success in terms of diversity and also target campaigns. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. M. DOLAN (Southern): Congress, I am seconding Motion 13: Organising Around Equalities. This motion calls upon the Union to investigate ways to improve our record of diversity of our membership. We recognise that it will be a long-term project. However, it will be a valuable and worthwhile exercise to undertake. Other unions record this data and we are losing out. We know that we are a diverse membership. Let's gather the information and show off about it. With more information about which members come with equality strands, we can target communication and get

feedback from membership on equality issues. Regions have worked hard in developing self-organised groups with excellent engagement from memberships. Imagine how many people would get more involved in these initiatives if we could directly contact all of our members and self-identify as members of the equality strands.

The very exercise of asking members the question will show how important equality and representation is to the Union from day one, as well as developing specific projects in local branches and workplaces. We are not dictating how equality data should be gathered, but asking the Union to look into and identify the best way forward. These proposals will be a vital step in the continuation of the excellent work that the GMB does in promoting equality. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much. Membership Records, Motion 14, to be moved by Southern.

MEMBERSHIP RECORDS MOTION 14

14. MEMBERSHIP RECORDS

Congress notes

- The current membership records which are kept by regions aren't accessible to branches.
- For branches to keep a current list of their members they have to update a separate list every time there are leavers or joiners. Alternatively they can request updated spreadsheets from region; however these details have to be pulled from the regions membership records.
- Other large unions give their branch access to membership records

Congress believes

- Up to date membership lists are integral to the work a branch does
- Time is currently wasted in either branches duplicating records already kept by the GMB or by GMB staff pulling off membership records off for branch
- GMB members that may further the work of the GMB may not receive communications on internal GMB events due to lack of up to date membership lists. This is to the detriment of individual members & the GMB as a whole

Congress resolves

- To commission a report in to the benefits of allowing branches 'read-only' access to membership records currently held
- In the same report consider whether there could be a system of updating records by branches that needs to be validated at region. This could be a further time saving.

M27 LB MERTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. ADIGWE (Southern): Congress, I am from the Merton M27 branch, moving Motion 14. President and Congress, the existing arrangement by which membership records are updated by region and then distributed to branch officers is, I believe, inefficient, wasteful of time and can actually put new members at a disadvantage. Currently, each time a person joins or leaves their branch, their region, on a good day, will be informed. Membership records are then updated and, if a request is made from the branch, the up-to-date records are then sent to the branch, but even if a branch office retains its own record or members, each time there are joiners or leavers the branch

records will have to be updated and the records kept at region will also have to be updated. This, I believe, to be a needless and time-wasting duplication of work.

Congress recognises that up-to-date membership lists are an integral part of the work of the branch. The existing practice is inefficient and wasteful of time and, moreover, new members, who are the lifeblood of any organisation, may not receive important branch communications because the branch does not possess up-to-date membership records. This, I believe, is detrimental to the individual members and also to the GMB as a whole.

Congress resolves to commission a report into the benefits of allowing branches 'read-only' access to the central database of members' records. In addition, the report should undertake a feasibility study to establish a system whereby branches are able to obtain membership records subject to validation by region. Congress believes that such measures are timely and represent a beneficial and positive change to current practice. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. S. SANCHEZ (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) In support of this motion, up-to-date, full branch records are crucial to the efficient running of branches for checking membership before representation, organising in line with the GMB@WORK and to ensure that branches and the wider Union is always ballot ready. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sheena. Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? (*No response*) In that case, I call Martin Smith to speak on Motions 13 and 14.

BRO. M. SMITH (National Organiser): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 13 and 14, both of which the CEC is supporting with a qualification.

Congress the GMB@WORK strategy for our Union has worked well for eight years, producing membership growth both in boom and bust, when other unions have, sadly, declined. It is based on building membership and workplace organisation from the bottom up and not from the top down, thereby giving you the tools to build the Union where you work, to take on your employer and make them make work pay.

Motion 13 is focused on one of the key objectives of GMB@WORK, namely, our reps knowing more about what is going on where they work than their bosses, specifically in terms of equalities data. The CEC qualification to Motion 13 is that the regular survey of new members conducted in Southern Region should be considered as an organising strategy by other regions first and consideration given to how equalities questions could also be inserted going forward.

The second part of the qualification is that equalities questions currently on the GMB joining form have not proved very effective in gathering the information required. Care should also be taken to streamline the recruitment process.

Motion 14 focuses on another key objective of the GMB@WORK policy, which is putting branches in control of the information on the members they represent. This provides a foundation of effective workplace mapping, the planning of branch organising campaigns, retention work and industrial balloting. The CEC qualification on Motion 14 is that branch access to the membership database is currently being considered as a result of previous Congress decisions, and very careful consideration should be given in the report that the motion calls for on the specific areas of the membership records

that branches will be able to update and amend. Please support Motions 13 and 14 with those qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 13? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 14? *(Agreed)* Colleagues, I now put Motions 12, 13 and 14 to the vote. With those qualifications having been accepted, all those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 12 was CARRIED.

Motion 13 was CARRIED.

Motion 14 was CARRIED

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, before I move off the stage, I have a message. The original 63 branch websites have been snapped up. The Union is now going to provide 40 additional ones which will be free for the first year. If you wish to do that, go to the Pellacraft stand. *(Applause)*

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

The National Women's Task Force Membership;

Ann Lafferty	Secretariat to Task Force, National Office
Mary Turner	National President, and Chair of the Task Force
Kathy Abu-Bakir	National Equality Committee member, Southern Region
Sheila Bearcroft	CEC member, GMB Wales & South West 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, North West & Irish Region
Sue Hackett	Organiser and Regional Equality Officer, London Region
Sharon Harding	CEC member, Birmingham & W. Midlands Region
Mary Hutchinson	CEC member, Northern Region
June Minnery	CEC member, GMB Scotland
Desiree Risebury	Senior Organiser, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region
Nikki Sharpe	CEC member, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region

Kath Slater CEC member, Midland & East Coast Region

Karen Smith Membership Manager, National Administration Unit

Cath Speight Head of Political Department, National Office.

Kathleen Walkershaw European Officer, Brussels Office.

Executive Summary

This report is produced for endorsement by GMB Congress 2014 and to update Congress about what has happened since the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' was carried by Congress 2013 by the National Women's Task Force which was formed after Congress 2013.

The Task Force will address issues that effect woman's involvement throughout the GMB. There is still a pressing need for GMB to ensure that equality is included in all its organisations negotiations and representations

The report details the work the National Women's Task Force has undertaken within its various sub-groups and makes initial recommendations. These recommendations cover a wide spectrum of issues which were identified by the sub groups such as: data gathering, development and introduction of mentoring systems, introduction of alternative methods of training and ensuring GMB is equality proofed. The recommendations can be found throughout the report.

Our general approach has been to pick up the recommendations identified in the 2013 Report to Congress and look at GMB as a union (Section A) and as an employer (Section B). The report also identifies the five sub groups formed to undertake various elements of their work.

Section A of the report "GMB the union" covers the Task Force work relating to;

- A sample of GMB post holders
- Training provided for GMB post holders
- The proposal of an Annual Women's Conference
- Women at Congress
- Women in Branches

Section B of the report "GMB the Employer" covers the Task Force work relating to;

- Identifying Key principles
- Women's Progression within GMB
- The appointment systems
- Women's progression to the post of Officer
- The assessment and Training of new officers
- GMB Employee Training
- Flexible employment practice

- Internal Staff Communications

The Report concludes with a stated intention of future work.

Introduction

The CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' endorsed by Congress 2013 contained a number of women's equality based recommendations. Where applicable the Report has been quoted in italics.

The overarching objectives 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..."

In order to implement the recommendations to the achievement of a GMB roadmap to equality of opportunity, a Task Force, reporting to the General Secretary, was created.

The Women's Task Force is made up of female GMB Lay Representatives, GMB Regional and National Employees, the National President, Mary Turner is the Chair of the Task Force, and Ann Lafferty the Secretary. Paul McCarthy, Regional Secretary, North West & Irish Region, has been appointed from the Senior Management Team by the General Secretary to act as intermediary and assist the Task Force if necessary.

The Task Force have met regularly since July 2013. Their first achievement was the creation of a set of aims and objectives (Appendix 1) which has been agreed by both the SMT and CEC.

The Women's Task Force will always focus upon their overarching objective in all aspects of its work.

"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"

The Task Force formed five sub groups to undertake work in the following key areas pertinent to the Task Force remit:

1. Compilation and evaluation of questionnaires, data and statistics.
2. Lay structures policies and procedures
3. Employee structures policies and procedures
4. Training, support, development and mentoring for employees and lay reps
5. Communications for employees and lay representatives

The Women's Task Force recognises that there are two clear strands to the achievement of a GMB roadmap to equality of opportunity:

- **GMB 'the union'** - The need to address the historical and structural barriers that exist in the lay activist structure to ensure the union is truly an inclusive organisation at every level, that provides equality of opportunity.

This is contained in Section A

- **GMB 'the employer'** - The need to address the institutional and historical barriers to equality of opportunity for its entire workforce. To ensure GMB is truly an equal opportunities and inclusive employer.

This is contained in Section B

Whilst full implementation of the Task Force's aims and objectives needs to be achieved within 5 years, this interim report highlights the work undertaken, and makes **recommendations** to Congress.

"Interventions to tackle representation of women should be applied with consistency across regions"

In making the recommendations the Task Force recognise that some regions have made progress in these areas already. However, to fulfil the above excerpt from the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' and achieve consistency throughout the union, the Task Force will address issues for national implementation. This document also details Referred Motions from Congress 2013 which the Task Force has addressed.

The Task Force recognises that now is the time to build on the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project', our union has the opportunity to demonstrate to its employees, activists and membership that it is serious in creating an inclusive GMB roadmap to equality of opportunity that addresses the issues of under representation and progression of women within the union, it is essential and recognised that significant progress needs to be made. The key challenges are well versed and understood; the Task Force recognises the problems and are more than willing to provide the solutions. Clearly a high level of commitment and engagement from the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Central Executive Council (CEC) is required in delivering the solutions that the Women's Task Force have set out.

Zero Tolerance Statement

One of the overarching recommendations in the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' was for the introduction and communication of a Zero Tolerance Statement which would cover both GMB members and employees.

The Task Force agreed a Zero Tolerance Statement which has been endorsed by the SMT and CEC.

GMB Zero Tolerance Statement

In today's modern society all form of discrimination - including intimidation and behaviour patterns, words and or actions that harm or undermine a person's wellbeing or career is unacceptable.

GMB will not tolerate any form of discrimination and will have no place in its organisation for those who would seek to discriminate.

GMB also hold as core principles the right to equality, dignity, and fairness in industry and society as contained within the Rule book 'Our Purpose' states: 'We will aim to end exploitation, discrimination and injustice.'

GMB policies also state that our union will not tolerate any gestures, verbal or written or electronic communication or physical act that can reasonably be perceived as being discriminatory

Any persons within GMB who are subjected to such unwanted behaviour cannot function properly and are impeded from giving our membership the high quality of service that they deserve.

Harassment and discrimination, even in their most subtle forms, directly conflicts with the law and GMB policy and will not be tolerated at any level throughout the union. No employee or member of the GMB at any level should be fearful of reporting acts of discrimination.

GMB will treat all complaints of discriminatory behaviour seriously and will independently investigate them promptly, efficiently and in confidence.

GMB is furthermore committed to promoting respect and non-discrimination through on-going training, education and awareness-raising programmes at all levels of the union lay and employee structures

This statement applies to;

GMB members

GMB post holders

GMB employees - direct or indirect workers performing functions in relation to GMB

The Task Force **recommend** that this policy is given the widest possible distribution and it is shared with:

- New members via the new starters pack
- New and long standing GMB post holder via GMB@Work training conducted regionally and nationally
- Existing members, activists and post holders via inclusion on GMB web pages and GMB magazines
- All employees via internal communication and inclusion in employment policy.

The Task Force will address issues that effect woman's involvement throughout the GMB. There is still a pressing need for GMB to ensure that equality is included in all its organisations negotiations and representations.

Section A

GMB: The Union

A1. GMB: what our data tells us

“The gathering of data, to use this to measure progress in areas such as the gender breakdown of workplace reps, GMB@Work training participants, other training undertaken, Branch Officers, Regional Committees, Officers, Senior Officers, CEC, National Officers, Regional and National Secretaries.”

The Task Force collated national and regional data on the gender of post holders and employees in order to obtain an accurate picture of women’s participation within all aspects of GMB. This information will be used to measure future progress.

The Task Force identified inconsistencies with the inputting of data on the GMB membership system.

The Task Force **recommend** that a robust and consistent approach should be adopted by Regions to ensure that the data is always accurate and up to date.

The Task Force focused on the following key posts: Workplace Contact, Shop Steward / Workplace Organiser and Branch Equality Officer.

A2. The role of the Workplace Contact

The role of workplace contact whilst informal is an important role for activists and can often be a stepping stone to taking on a formal GMB post. Where these roles are prevalent we need to encourage and support these activists to taking on a more formal role.

The data demonstrates that this group is made up of a disproportionate number of women, part time workers; Over 5,000 GMB members are workplace contacts, of whom nearly 90% are women.

The Task Force **recommends**;

- Recognition of the value of the role of Workplace Contact, and acknowledgement that this should be a stepping stone to becoming a Shop Steward / Workplace Organiser.
- Development of targeted training harnessing regional best practice.

The Task Force has produced and circulated a questionnaire to all workplace contacts in order to better understand their views, thoughts and needs. Once this information is received the Task Force will be better able to formulate further recommendations to encourage workplace contacts to make the move to GMB post holder.

A3. The role of GMB Representative

“The culture of the union derives from its history, purpose and operating environment. There are many aspects of it that are seen as strengths. We have explored it only from the perspective of this project. In that regard, the Culture is

identified by a large number of women as something that is exclusive and a barrier to fairness. It is often described as, male, working class, and old fashioned.”

The Task Force in addressing the role of GMB representatives, focussed on the post of Shop Steward / Workplace Organiser. Our data demonstrates that 26% of GMB “Shop Stewards”, 16% of GMB of “Senior Shop Stewards” and 21% of GMB “Convenors” are women.

Whilst the Task Force are not recommending that the duties performed by GMB representatives need changing, they do recognise that the skills and attributes required to be effective GMB representatives can be better communicated in such a way as to encourage more woman to come forward to undertake the role.

The Task Force **recommend**

- the creation of materials, posters etc. explaining why workplaces need GMB representatives, what GMB representatives do and encouraging women to become GMB representatives
- The production of an advisory booklet and a DVD aimed at women giving the positive side of being a GMB Representative.

A4. The role of Branch Equality Officer

The GMB Rule Book identifies that the role of a Branch Equality Officer is to be responsible for promoting equal rights within the branch’s activities. The Task Force analysed the data gathered and were concerned at the high number of branches who do not have a Branch Equality Officer, less than a third of branches have a Branch Equality Officer in place and of these just over a third are women. The Task Force recognise the importance of this rule book position, and will work with the National Equality Forum to create national guidelines to encourage a greater take up of this position.

For each of the key Rule Book positions identified, the Task Force noted the inconsistent approach by Regions towards identifying and supporting women to take up these roles.

The Task Force **recommend** the development and introduction of mentoring systems to support and encourage more women to take up these posts.

A5. Training for Post holders.

“Ensure that effective education, training and/or skills development are integrated into the core programme for the organisation”

The Task Force requested data from each region on the type and number of educational courses they held, the number of places they had allocated to students on external courses, and the gender of the students, regions were also asked to identify any special arrangements that had been made to promote female participation. The training data was analysed and clearly demonstrates the majority of students attending GMB training events or being allocated places on to external courses are male.

The Task Force identified that women post holders face a number and variety of hurdles when attending training events some of which are:

	Observation	Taskforce Recommendations
Course times and dates	There are more women part time members who are post holders than male. Not all Regions identified a provision of part time or weekend Courses	GMB weekend training to be provided and a trial of courses to suit part time workers should be piloted.
Location of Training	In some instances, the training venue required considerable travelling	Where possible workplace based training should be held (as introduced for British Gas Workplace Organisers) Greater consideration to be given to the accessibility of venues via public transport. Link up students and encourage them to share transport where possible.
Childcare	Statistically more women than men have childcare and elderly care responsibilities. Perception that, neither childcare nor childcare allowances were available for GMB students.	The provision of childcare facilities or payment of childcare facilities be fully promoted throughout all Regions.
Course Content		All GMB courses are equality proofed and cover understanding equality issues.
Course attendees	Feeling uncomfortable attending an event that was male dominated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training organisers strive to achieve student gender balance. • A trial of women only courses • A consistent approach towards the use of dignity and respect guidelines
	Branch Equality Officers and Workplace Contacts not having the right to paid release to attend GMB training.	Consider development and early implementation of online training.
Non attendance	Numbers of members fail to attend courses. Some regions follow up to determine reasons for non- attendance	More consistent approach to surveying non- attendance. If problems relating to course attendance are raised, assistance

		should be offered were possible to overcome them.
Training Funds for members and activists	Different provision of funds or bursaries in regions to support members in training or study. Details, provisions and benefits relating to these schemes vary considerably.	Exchange best practice and innovative approaches across GMB with a view to the introduction of a standard scheme which would be promoted and implemented consistently.
Membership Records	Different ways of recording training statistics. Need to achieve and maintain a robust and up to date national data base, containing training related data	Need consistent approach to maintain and update information on the education section of the GMB membership system. Data to include all regional statistics such as courses held, gender of students, action taken to assist post holders declining basic training

The Task Force recognise that women encounter different problems, therefore a range of mechanisms should be put in place to encourage and enable more women to participate within training events. Once these mechanisms are implemented and established, the Task Force will continue to monitor progress as part of its on-going work.

A6. Annual Women's Conference

Motion 67 from Congress 2013 was referred to the Task Force, calling for GMB to;

“Instigate an Annual Women's Conference as soon as possible”

The Task Force noted that various events have been held by self-organised groups and a number of Regions.

Of these events the annual Woman's two day Conference organised by the North West and Irish Region was recommended as the example of best practice with a proven record of success over a period of nearly 10 years.

A number of the Task Force members have had an input into the North West and Irish Region's Women's Conference. Several Task Force members attended the 2013 Conference and witnessed first-hand the way in which the attendee's confidence was built, their political awareness increased and participation within the union's democracy encouraged.

The Task Force recognise that the success of this event lay in a number of factors; the enthusiastic way in which the event was organised, the fact that it is not motions based. That it deals with issues of interest to women through the careful selection of subjects and speakers, throughout the event tactics are used to encourage the participation of those attending. This creates an opportunity for the region to spot, nurture and encourage new activists.

The Task Force **recommend;**

- An Annual Women's **issues based** Conference be held by within each region.
- The funds required to organise these Conferences should be budgeted for, and sponsorship gained were appropriate.
- The success of these events should be subject to a review and discussions with the Task Force before moving to a national conference.

A7. Women at Congress

GMB rule 8; *“Congress (Ordinary or Special), made up of representatives from the regions of the union, **holds supreme authority**”*

The Task Force believe that GMB can do more to ensure that Congress becomes truly representative of its membership with all regions having the required gender balance to reflect its membership makeup.

The Task Force recognise there has been a rise in the ratio of women delegates to Congress and are mindful of the top up arrangements introduced in 2011 to allow Congress to be more inclusive and more representational of the membership as a whole. However this has not fully addressed the gender imbalance that still exists. For example Congress 2013, still only comprised 31.5% of women.

The Task Force believe that further work still needs to be done to improve the gender balance if their overarching objective is to be met;

“Ensure that, the GMB’s profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the Union.”

The Task Force **recommend;**

- That a requirement is placed on each region to ensure the gender balance of their delegation reflects their membership.
- A wider promotion of GMB Congress detailing who attends, how it works, how delegates are elected to it and a greater focus be placed on this in training for new shop stewards
- Guidance be sent to Branches on creating a greater awareness and transparency in their dealings with Congress nominations
- The organisation and promotion of a pairing system, allocating new Congress delegates to experienced ones who can offer support and assistance.
- The organisation and promotion of a reception at Congress for new delegates

A8. Women in Branches

The Task Force recognise that the gender balance of Congress delegates, Regional Councils, Regional Committees and the Central Executive Council cannot be addressed in isolation without looking at the role of the Branch. The increase of women's participation

within GMB democracy is dependant upon their participation in the Branch. The Task Force acknowledge that attendance at Branch meetings is extremely low and focused upon identifying barriers faced by women in particular, these were identified as.

- GMB not communicating sufficiently the importance of the branch and its functions within our democracy.
- Branch meetings being held at inconvenient times and places
- Branch agendas perceived as not relevant
- The over use of trade union jargon
- Branches not welcoming new attendees
- The absence of Branch Equality Officers

The Task Force recognise that these issues are not relevant in all branches but are aware that some or all of these issues relate to the majority of our unions Branches.

The Task Force acknowledge that there are some excellent examples of Branch and Regional good practice:

- Branches working hard to create a vibrant atmosphere and using equality and inclusion to increase the level of Branch activity.
- Regions holding Branch weekend schools with an equal number male and female attendees and ensuring GMB Officers work closely with Branches.

Branches have the potential to try new ideas to encourage branch participation this could include, moving the meetings around their patch or holding meetings in the workplace or having interesting agendas to generate greater branch participation and create opportunities to spot, nurture and encourage new activists.

The Task Force acknowledge the importance of the work currently being undertaken by the Branch Review Working Party and would welcome a joint approach in areas of mutual interest.

Section B

GMB: The Employer

B1. Key principles

This section of the report focuses on GMB 'The employer'. The Task Force believe that the road map to equality of opportunity can only become a reality if and only when a number of key principles can be agreed. The agreed principles will underpin and map out short, medium and long term objectives. These will be the objectives that will create the conditions and structures that will underpin a culture that will allow all GMB employees to progress on their merits.

It is without doubt confidence is needed in the current proceedings and it's critical that progress is made to demonstrate that the issue of under representation of women at senior levels within the union is being taken seriously and that there is a determined commitment

to drive and manage the change and practical steps required to achieve the shared objectives and goals that were adopted at Congress 2013.

It is crucial therefore that the key principles that will sculpt the short, medium and long term objectives are agreed. This will enable the union's workforce to have confidence in the process and the on-going work that will be required to deliver equality of opportunity as a priority within in a realistic and acceptable time frame.

The Task Force believes that an agreed strategic plan and timetable has to be in place. With each identified objective and goal being assessed and monitored so that employees have confidence that GMB 'the employer' is serious in delivering and responding to the report tabled at Congress last year.

By adopting agreed key principles and objectives this will ensure that a strategic work plan can be demonstrated that will drive the delivery of those objectives and goals.

The Task Force recognise that without this road map for equality of opportunity for employees there is a real danger GMB 'The employer' will continue to expose itself to potential risk and potential challenges by employees who feel they have not been treated fairly and with dignity, equality and respect.

So how do we create the conditions to allow individuals to achieve 'real' equal access of opportunity to progress to senior levels within the union?

The Task Force in focusing on what GMB 'The employer' is doing to ensure that any institutional and historical barriers that prevent and hinder women progressing to senior levels in the organisation are eliminated, and that all policies, procedures and practices that effect employees and appointment procedures are equality proofed and stand up to scrutiny.

The Task Force, SMT and CEC have already addressed the adoption a robust stance to ensure any institutional sexism is rooted out of the organisation, through the zero tolerance policy, The Task Force believe GMB must now put the practical steps in place to drive and implement change.

The Task Force **recommend** that five key principles and objectives are adopted and developed, these will form the 'spring board' needed to effect change.

The five key principles:

1. The Task Force will assess and audit GMB policies and procedures currently in place and where appropriate provide recommendations on areas of improvements as to how GMB 'the employer' can improve and strengthen policies and procedures which will help deliver the objectives of the women's task force.
2. All GMB policies and procedures on recruitment, induction, appointment, employment, training, progression and promotion will be reviewed and harmonised across the union, adopting best practice and introducing new appointment procedures which will form national standards

3. Variations of policies and procedures that impact on the appointment procedures, employees working arrangements, environment and terms and conditions will be eliminated and brought in line with the agreed national standards.
4. Auditing and governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure all aspects of the union apply the national agreed policies procedures and standards in a consistent and fair manner.
5. GMB 'The employer' will develop an equality advisory panel consisting of employees, employer and National Negotiating Committee (NNC) representatives that will oversee and monitor the implementation of equality and wider policies and procedures to ensure that they are 'equality proofed'

The Task Force **recommends** the adoption of these five key principles, which will allow the Women's Task Force to work with the SMT and HR department and other colleagues to undertake the detailed work needed and to bring about the changes. With the view to agreeing implementation timetables, identifying and developing policies, procedures and training that would need to be put in place.

Women's Progression within GMB

B2. The Appointment Systems

“Existing equalities procedures around appointments at national and regional level including further training and support be refreshed to ensure universally consistent application”

The Task Force analysed data regarding GMB employees, their job role and gender and recognised that whilst improvements have been made, male and female job divides are still visible in this data.

Women represent 55% of GMB's entire workforce and yet only 28% of GMB's Officers are women

The Task Force recognise the limited opportunities available to activists in gaining employment in GMB and for career progression within GMB for its workforce this is exacerbated further due to the very low turnover of employees.

It is essential therefore that when opportunities do arise all activists and employees have equal access of opportunity and confidence that there is open and fair competition, and that GMB 'The employer' has an equality proofed appointment process that ensures appointments are based on merit allowing the *'best person for the job to progress'*

The Task Force are concerned about the major differences that currently exist in regional practices within the appointment process.

The Task Force welcome the “Appointment Systems Review” exercise currently being undertaken by SMT, along with the opportunity to participate. The Task Force will use the opportunity to recommend reform and change needed to allow talented women in the organisation to progress through a fair and transparent appointment process that is fit for purpose and free from bias, a process that will allow women to progress on their merits.

That said the Task Force believe that the appointment process review is an issue which should be covered by the key principles and recommendations outlined in this report.

B3. Progression to Officer

“Maintain, develop and expand the staff to officer programme that has been undertaken”

Whilst the Staff to Officer Scheme has been implemented throughout the union with some considerable success, the Task Force note the absence of a National Policy which has resulted in inconsistencies across the regions.

The Task Force **recommend**;

- The development of a National policy the contents of which would cover as a minimum; terms and conditions, resources, training and assessment programmes afforded to these employees.
- The extension of the ‘Staff to Officer Scheme’ to include senior management and leadership.

During contacts with various Regional Equality Forums concern has been raised that the introduction of the Staff to Officer Scheme has the potential to have a negative effect detrimental to GMB representatives making the transition from Post Holder to Officer. The Women's Task Force believe support should also be given for the transition of lay activists to staff and officer positions for those wishing to pursue this route. The Task Force are aware of arrangements in various parts of the union in which a “seconded” has successfully acted as Officer.

The Task Force **recommend**;

- The introduction of a similar scheme for post holders, whereon attempts are made to negotiate release to allow GMB post holders to try out the role of officer.
- The Task Force in making this recommendation are aware of the difficulties and complexities of introducing such a scheme and for that reason believe that a pilot scheme may be required initially.

B4. The Assessment and Training of new officers

The Task Force;

- Acknowledge that initial training and support is provided, by Regions for new officers but are concerned that different standards operate across the union.

- Recognise that a national course for new officers has been in place since 2009 training to date 120 Officers, but are concerned that this course lasts only two days.
- Acknowledge the new National Office appointment relating to national training and the fact that the Senior Management Team are addressing this issue.

The Task Force recommend;

- The minimum provision of a programme delivered consistently throughout the union to all new officers comprising of a personal assessment by a senior regional person who would evaluate training needs. Based upon the outcome of the evaluation, a bespoke programme of training commence as soon as is practical. This training may consist of in house and/or external courses as well as one to one sessions, shadowing etc
- The production and provision of guidelines for those involved in delivering one to one sessions.
- The individual training programme to be provided as an addition to standard national training for new officers, and training covered by review meetings
- The national course for new officers be expanded to a minimum of 5 days.

B5. GMB Employee Training

“The development and promotion of a programme of support for staff and officers that recognises the specific barriers that women face”

The Task Force acknowledge that in various parts of the union some GMB employee training is provided the Task Force believe a consistent approach is required.

The Task Force recognise the benefit derived from a well informed and motivated workforce and acknowledge the importance of all GMB employees understanding the ethos behind trade unions generally and more specifically the principals held by GMB. The Task Force believe that often a greater understanding of GMB encourages a greater involvement of employees. This was borne out when a number of women participants in the Staff to Officer Programme told their stories at Congress last year.

The Task Force recommend;

- Training for all staff covering the role of trade unions and GMB principals
- Briefing for all employees on key Congress decisions
- All employees be given the opportunity to attend regional based training for Officers
- GMB@Work training be made available upon request by employees

B6. Flexible employment practice

“There are issues – not unique to the GMB – around caring responsibilities that fall to women..... A universally applied and transparent approach to how the particular caring responsibilities that affect women (but also men) would be beneficial “

The Task Force analysed membership data by gender and grade, woman represent 49 % of our total union membership.

GMB female membership is split fairly evenly with 45% on grade 1, whilst 77% of male membership is on grade 1.

Recruitment figures show that the GMB consistently recruits more women than men and for Grade 2 recruits, over 80% are female and of the Grade 1 recruits around 40% are female.

To protect the union against potential risk of allegations of indirect discrimination (by not providing lay representatives and staff the opportunity to make the transition to Officer whilst retaining part time worker status) the Task Force believe that GMB should introduce flexible employment practices.

The Task Force **recommend** the introduction of a pilot scheme of employing part time Officers which would involve filling a number of posts with 2 people who would in fact, job share.

B7. Internal Staff Communications

“GMB institute an internal staff communications bulletin and process throughout the union including each region”

The Task Force believe that the union would benefit from the construction of an internal staff communication bulletin that would create a vehicle to circulate best practice and improve internal communications throughout the Union.

The Task Force collated and considered examples of best practice from regions.

In December 2013, the National HR Department produced the first “All Staff Bulletin” and it is intended that this communication will be on-going.

Conclusion,

The Task Force seek endorsement of this interim report to Congress.

The Task Force will continue to undertake work relevant to its remit with a view to submitting further recommendations in a more substantial report to congress 2015. Were necessary this may involve recommending amendments to the GMB rule book.

GMB National Women's Project Appendix 1. Task Force Aims and Objectives

Overarching Objective

The GMB Women's Task Force aims to develop and recommend policies, actions and structures that will ensure that within 5 years the GMB's profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the Union.

Practical Aims and Objectives to deliver the overarching objective

1. The Task Force will examine the rule book and other policy positions in the GMB which currently create obstacles to the progression of women in the organisation, equal representation of women on Regional Councils, Executives and CEC, and make recommendations for overcoming these.
2. The Task Force will analyse recruitment, training and development procedures for lay and employee positions at national level and across all regions and make recommendations based on best practice to ensure they are implemented and applied consistently across the organisation towards achieving balanced representation.
3. The Task Force aims to examine the scope for flexible approaches to developing women in lay representative roles and as employees at all levels of the organisation. This will include considering role sharing and team approaches to workplace representation. The aim is to encourage talented women to come forward whilst respecting their other commitments, and to help them make the most of both.
4. The Task Force aims to make recommendations on developing a positive structure of mentoring, support and development of women in to new roles and positions to be applied consistently across the organisation.
5. The Task Force will, on an on- going regular basis, submit recommendations for implementation to the Senior Management Team and/or CEC.
6. The Task Force aims to present a package of recommendations for consideration and agreement at Congress 2014. All recommendations will be accompanied with timelines for delivery.
7. The package of recommendations to Congress, if agreed, would be implemented and acted upon according to its relevant strands. It would also be rolled out in a training programme for all post holders and staff, and incorporated in to membership training programmes so the aims and culture are clear to all.

The Task Force may decide to establish subgroups to concentrate on various issues

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we will now move to the CEC Special Report on the GMB's Women's Project. The CEC's Special Report will be moved by Mary Turner and seconded by Ann

Lafferty. I will then call any speakers in the debate. I will then ask the General Secretary to sum up and then we will take the vote. I will now call Mary Turner.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC for the first time on this motion – the National Women’s Taskforce. Today I am pleased to present the National Women’s Taskforce First Congress Report. Last year I had the pleasure of presiding over Congress when a most important subject matter was addressed: the Special Report on the GMB Women’s Project.

After a lengthy debate, Congress wholeheartedly supported the project, but I want to remind you all today of a few things that were said during that debate. In introducing the report, David Evans, from the Campaign Company, told Congress: “It is not designed to kick things into the long grass but to grip the issue and drive it forward.” His forecast was that implementing the project would not be without its controversy. Absolutely right! Very little that is worth doing is without controversy. The General Secretary moved the report, and in doing so he made the following clear statement: “The project is not about cheap gimmicks or patronising women in the GMB.” Referring to the many times that GMB has talked about women’s participation within our structures but not acted, he said: “We’ve had enough chat. It’s time for action.”

Congress, Paul Kenny said that the Women’s Taskforce will include women from various levels and roles in the Union, and that they will be charged with producing ideas. They will come from all areas of experience and also look at our ongoing procedures and practices to ensure that they are consistent, encompassing and fit for purpose. Paul made it clear that the challenge for the Taskforce is to unlock and harness the great energy, passion and life experience of our women members. Our General Secretary recognised that implementing the Women’s Project would present a challenge. He went so far as to say that some within the GMB would feel threatened by it.

Having reminded you about the debate, which led to the adoption of last year’s Special Report, which created the Women’s Taskforce, that I am proud to chair, it gave the Women’s Taskforce a set of recommendations to implement. I will now focus on the report that you are being asked to consider today. It is an interim report reflecting work undertaken and recommendations made to date by the Women’s Taskforce. Each recommendation contained in the report represents and reflects the Congress decision made last year. Each recommendation has one aim, which is encourage women’s participation within the GMB. The report covers two areas. In section A, it is *GMB the Union*. In section B, it is *GMB the Employer*. Yes, colleagues, the Taskforce does make some recommendations in section B concerning *GMB the Employer*. In doing so the Taskforce responded to the remit and rose to the challenge they were given last year. Our recommendations do not change employees’ terms and conditions, neither do they seek to exclude those parties whose responsibility is to negotiate and agree GMB policies and procedures. The recommendations address matters of principle and good practice, which impact upon everyone in our Union, from the General Secretary, to officials and to the newest member. The good practices are to ensure that checks and balances are in place. The Taskforce, whilst addressing *GMB the Employer*, has limited themselves and provided detailed supplementary documents to the Senior Management Team.

The report before you provides recommendations on how GMB can and should communicate its Zero-Tolerance statement, gather and maintain data, support GMB workplace contacts, encourage women to become post holders, offer support and mentoring to post holders, encourage more women to attend training, engage with women activists through annual congresses, encourage more women to go to Congress and develop the Staff-to-Officer scheme.

Congress, we also wish to develop a similar scheme of post holder-to-officer, to give support and training to new officers and ensure that GMB operates in a consistent manner, adopting and implementing best practice. We must review, harmonise, apply and manage policy and procedures across the Union in a consistent and fair manner, including the appointments procedures. Yes, some of the recommendations contained in the report do reflect best practice, which is already happening in one or more of our regions but not throughout the GMB. We are a national union. We need to make it easier for women to go to meetings, attend course, have their voices heard and advance on to become employees. Shouldn't we do these things throughout the entire Union and not just here and there? If each recommendation contained in the report is implemented, we will have honoured the commitment made at last year's Congress, and GMB will take a tremendous step forward on its journey of attaining its on-going commitment to ensure equality for all of its people, the same equality that we have been fighting to attain and protect for our members for years.

Congress, the Women's Taskforce has played their part. We have worked hard on the creation of the interim report, and the CEC has played its part. We have studied and supported the report. Now it is time for you, this Congress, to play your part by adopting this report. I would like to thank all those officers and staff and lay members who took part on the Taskforce. Thank you very much. I move.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Ann.

SIS. A. LAFFERTY (National Office): Congress, I am seconding the GMB Women's Project report. During the past 125 years, GMB has done much to be proud of regarding its role in the field of equality. We have played a key role in the formation of equality-based employment legislation. We were the first union to pursue a case of equal pay for work of equal value, and we have won thousands of pounds in compensation for our women members in equal pay claims. But, Congress, like any organisation, GMB has its problems. One such problematical area is that GMB statistics regarding its officials, activists and decision makers does not reflect our proud record. Consider the following facts. Women represent 49% of our membership, yet women only make up 26% of our shop stewards, 16% of our senior shop stewards and 21% of our conveners. Women represent 55% of GMB's workforce, yet women only make up 30% of officers, 16% of senior officers and, of course, we all know that we have never had a woman as a regional secretary or general secretary.

The interim report that you are being asked to support today is not a radical document. It does not contain recommendations which require changes to our rule book. It is a stepping stone to assist our Union's internal equality-based goals. It is an opportunity to build on the foundations of our great Union and further develop the visions of equality so clearly advanced by women in the GMB, women from Eleanor Marx to Mary Turner. The report is not about the exclusion of men within our Union. It is about the integration of women. It is not about the removal of power at any level. It is about empowerment at all levels. It is not about changing rights of passage. It is about ensuring that everyone gets a fair chance, irrespective of their gender, race or sexual orientation. It is not about having quotas. It is about making meetings relevant and training accessible. It is about providing encouragement and support, but not just in one or two regions but throughout the GMB. The report reflects work undertaken by some of our Union's most senior women activists and employees, who make up the National Women's Taskforce. The Taskforce takes seriously the opportunity provided to them to redress any form of inequality that exists within GMB today. They have met regularly and worked hard towards ensuring that the only thing that is contained in the long grass are outdated and outmoded restrictions barring women from full and equal participation in all aspects of our Union.

Congress, as a union that has fought so hard for equality, we must practise what we preach, and it is with those sentences that we commend this report to you. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Would colleagues come to the rostrum if they want to take part in the debate.

SIS. M. JENKINS (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) President and Congress, as has already been mentioned by the President, the National Women's Taskforce looks at GMB as a union and as an employer. Equality is to be at the forefront and included in all of GMB's organisations, negotiations and representations. This report to Congress, the Women's Taskforce, set up through the Women's Project, recognises that there are two clear strands to achievement on a GMB roadmap to equality and opportunity. The first is to address historical and structural barriers that have existed. These will ensure that the Union is, truly, an inclusive organisation at every level and provides equality and opportunity. The second is to address institutional and historical barriers to equality and opportunity for its entire workforce and, once again, to ensure that the Union is truly an inclusive organisation at every level and provides equality and opportunity.

The GMB Women's Report proposes several recommendations. Some of these are that GMB has a zero-tolerance statement. It will not tolerate any forms of discrimination. It asks that this Statement is reinforced. Also, it has to ensure that data is robust and consistent, it has to recognise that the workplace contact is important, it has to create materials explaining why workplaces need GMB, it requests the development of and introduce a monitoring system and support and encourage more women to take up these points. The report goes on to mention many other points, but the Women's Taskforce asks that GMB post holders are given the opportunity to negotiate release for them to try out their suitability for their role as an officer. Training programmes must be established and training is covered by review meetings. Briefings are to occur to all employees on Congress decisions.

Lastly, the Taskforce recommends that GMB brings in a pilot scheme which will allow officers to be employed on a part-time basis, thus filling a number of posts with two people who would, in fact, job share. The Taskforce seeks endorsement of this Interim Report to Congress.

SIS. J. INGLEBY (Birmingham & West Midlands): President and Congress, Birmingham and West Midlands Region welcomes the report. Gender balance is important and vital to reflect on its membership. We have to breakdown the barriers that hinder women progressing to all levels within the organisation, and we look forward to the adoption of the five key principles outlined in the report to bring about the changes needed, including training and support, changes that can enable women to grow from branch positions and with reassurance to grow through the structure, and to fully reflect our membership. In turn, it will realise equal numbers of organisers, senior organisers and, who knows, the first female general secretary. (*Applause*)

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC Special Report: GMB Women's Project. I am pleased to be speaking on this report and the role of women within our Union at Congress today on behalf of our region. We are very supportive of the recommendations made in this report and see it as a way of moving forward with our Union. Unions are still viewed by some as a men's only club. With the world of work evolving as it is and more women in work, this image is changing for the good. Equality of opportunity is paramount and the report states that the GMB will have a zero-tolerance policy against all forms of discrimination. The recommendation is that this information is disseminated down to all new and existing members is a welcome one. The recommendations made are going to be a huge task, and something, I know, that

our region embraces wholly. We need to show that our Union is welcoming and encourages diversity.

More women are becoming workplace contacts or organisers, particularly in the part-time workforce. The training for post holders and the identified barriers that women have to attend such courses has been highlighted in this report, and the recommendations being made that this should aid these to be overcome make it easier and more accessible for our women representatives. This will only mean retention and engagement of women post holders and promote a positive picture for those who are thinking of taking a more active role. Juggling children, family and a job has always been a barrier for women and can often be seen as a huge hurdle to overcome.

I am pleased to say that within our region we have a 60%/40% split of women versus men in employment. More women are being actively encouraged to take up more senior roles, and this is having a positive effect on our membership. This can actually be seen in our delegation today with just over a third attending Congress on behalf of our region. Give yourself a clap, ladies.

(Applause)

This situation also supports the recommendation shown in this report. It is our hope that this report will develop the GMB for the future where all are involved and encouraged. Thank you.

SIS. C. SIBLEY (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, GMB Wales and South West Region believes that this Women's Interim 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. The zero-tolerance statement is transparent and makes clear the commitments that the GMB holds. Core principles aim to end exploitation, discrimination and injustice. The statement, furthermore, gives commitment in promoting respect and non-discrimination through on-going training, education and raising awareness programmes throughout the GMB structure.

Section A of the report highlights inconsistencies with the inputting of data on the GMB membership system. We support the Taskforce recommendation to implement a robust and consistent approach to be adopted generically throughout regions which would ensure that collecting accurate information would contribute to measuring future information and progressive with constructive, factual data.

The Taskforce has recommended the focus of recognising the value of workplace contracts, acknowledging that, as a Union, we should be doing more to develop these individuals through stepping stones in becoming shop stewards and workplace organisers.

The questionnaire which has been produced and circulated to all workplace contracts gives the Union a better understanding of their views. This will produce information on which corrective actions and further recommendations can be implemented again from factual-correct data. We believe that the role of the branch equality officer is imperative moving forward to promote equality and diversity within workplaces. These are core values of the GMB and we support the Taskforce recommendations to develop and introduce a mentoring system to support and encourage more women to take up these posts. The report commits to ensuring that effective education, training and development are integrated into the core programme of the GMB as an organisation. It has identified a number of hurdles which prevent women from attending training events, and clearly states creative actions to eliminate non-attendance of women at training events.

The report makes constructive approaches and addresses many of the points raised by the external auditing professionals, such as the gender balance, union staff to officer scheme, a national policy and an annual women's conference. North West & Irish Region holds their regional women's conference, and it builds attendees' confidence and belief that they can achieve anything if they were given the opportunity. We support the recommendation of an annual women's conference to give many more female delegates the encouragement, mentoring and self-belief to ensure that the GMB's profile at all levels of the lay and employees' structures reflect the number of women members within this great Union. Wales & South West Region support the principles, aims and objectives to deliver the recommendations of the Women's Project Taskforce. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SIS. A. DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): President and Congress, GMB Scotland welcomes the CEC's Special Report on the Women's Project. Given that the membership is now over 50% female, there is now a more important role for women to be progressed within the structures. These rules are fundamental for securing the future. Please endorse the report. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Annette. I now call on the General Secretary to sum up.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: President and Congress, I think that this is a very historic moment on a journey. A lot of progress has been made during the past few years. Thanks should also go to the SMT, which has been driving a whole range of changes because they can see the inequality in the upper strands of the management of this organisation every time we meet and look at each other. So we are aware of the problem.

I think it was pretty indicative of most of the comments that the progress on this report so far is to be welcomed. The Women's Conference, I think, will be a big success. I think we will work out how we plan it and how we do it, but in the way in which the equality conferences have grown to be a fantastic asset to the Union, I see the Women's Conference as doing something similar. The idea, really, came from when the North West & Irish Region invited people to come to the conference that they call each year, which is a fantastic success.

Cindy, from Yorkshire, said it is a huge challenge, and it is. We don't live in a simplistic bubble about this. We know the difficulties and the challenges but, really, what we have to do is not to take our eye off the ball here. We have to make sure that when the Taskforce comes back next year, and they will, the progress we are hoping for has been made, and that those new ideas are seen. We are, actually, making some in roads. The opportunities provided from the staff-to-officer programme has meant that we have seen lots of people making that transition, and making it quite easily, breaking down those barriers between the old-style staff and officers. In the GMB, as it was, staff were women and officers were men. That is just how it was. We have seen a massive change. There has been a big change in the ratio of women officers. More women now will be appointed as officers. We have now managed to equalise and take the best practice from across the regions and have a consistent appointment and interview process across the entire Union. That is a big step forward from where we were. We have seen an increase in the number of women being appointed as senior organisers, and that is, obviously, again, a big step forward for confidence and experience. It is work in progress. The situation now is that we have not even got the walls up. We have just got the plans laid. We've just got the footings in. We've got some really good stuff to do, but I make this plea to you as the Congress of this Union.

This is going to take a few years to do. What's going to fall on you is the responsibility to make sure that the things that we have talked about, the things that are in our hearts that we want to see when we talk about equality – this is not a cliché but a real equality across this Union – where it won't look

strange if there is a woman general secretary but it will just seem normal. If we want to do that, then you have to make sure that there is a diligence about Congress, that the demands for the changes you know this Union has to make are actually carried through. On that, I look forward to the work over the next year. I pledge that the Women's Taskforce will have the full 100% co-operation from the Executive and from the SMT. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against. Carried.

The CEC Special Report: GMB Women's Project (Interim) was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm, and thank you Congress. We now move to the next part of our business, which is item 9, which includes Motions 15 and 18. Southern Region will move Motion 15 and London Region will move Motion 18.

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

YOUNG MEMBER RESERVED SEATS

MOTION 15

15. YOUNG MEMBER RESERVED SEATS

Congress notes

- It is paramount that the GMB has representatives from every equality stand throughout its lay members structures
- Some great work has been done by the GMB to promote diversity in its lay member structures
- Young workers often face unfair working practices and precarious work and may not be aware of all their workplace rights
- It is imperative to ensure the concerns of our young members and issues in the labour market that affect them is paramount and represented in our democratic structures

Congress further notes

- There is no-one on the CEC aged 27 or under.
- That for a young member to be represented on the CEC it is practically impossible due to the levels of lay structures that a CEC representative has to come through before they can put themselves forward for election on the CEC.
- That other trade unions such as UNISON already have reserved young member seats on their National Executive
- Youth members may feel a disengagement with the GMB due to the lack of representation of Young Members on the CEC

Congress resolves

- To produce a report looking in to the feasibility and appropriateness of having a reserved Young Member seat on the CEC
- To continue the support for Young Member representation on all lay membership committees
- That branch plans should include a section on the Youth Officer's work or what the branch will do in the forthcoming year to recruit a Youth Officer

M27 LB MERTON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

BRO. J. ADIGWE (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 15. President, Congress recognises the importance of encouraging representatives from every equality strand throughout its lay members' structure. Congress also notes that young members are vital to the future of this organisation, that they are often exploited in the workplace and often unaware of their workplace rights. Congress appreciates the hard work and dedication of the CEC but does note that there are no CEC members under the age of 27. In fact, if you examine the multiple levels of lay structures that any young person has to negotiate before they can put themselves forward for election, by the time an ambitious young person has worked their way through the dense undergrowth, they will, in all likelihood, be on the verge of middle age. This is not how a progressive organisation encourages participation from young and enthusiastic activists. If other unions are able to accommodate reserved seats, surely, we can, too. How this is implemented need not be complex.

Currently, GMB branches have provisions to elect a youth officer. If a seat is reserved on the CEC, branches can be invited to send candidates to be assessed. Perhaps a sub-committee of the CEC could be appointed as an assessment panel to interview and select one of the candidates.

Congress requests that a report be commissioned to examine the feasibility of having a reserved Young Member seat on the CEC. We ask that young members are encouraged to participate in all lay membership committees and we also request that the work of Youth Officers and the recruitment of Youth Officers be given greater prominence at branch level. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Well done. Can I have a seconder?

The motion was formally seconded from the floor.

AFFILIATION TO NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS' NETWORK MOTION 18

18. AFFILIATION TO NATIONAL SHOP STEWARDS' NETWORK

The National Shop Stewards' Network (NSSN) was formed in 2006 to help build an active network of trade union reps across the UK. It is supported by 7 national unions, PCS, CWU, RMT, BFAWU, POA, NUJ and NUM.

Congress believes that the National Shop Stewards' Network has a vital role to play in the fight against the vicious, ideological attacks on working people and the current programme of austerity measures. It provides solidarity and support for local disputes and helps to strengthen Trades Councils. It has held a series of successful conferences each year, helping to shape the anti-cuts movement.

Congress agrees to:

1. Affiliate to the NSSN
2. Encourage branches to affiliate to the NSSN
3. Encourage all GMB Reps and Branch Officers to individually join NSSN
4. Actively publicise NSSN events and meetings.

GMB@PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. K. HENDRY (London): Congress, I move Motion 18. The National Shop Stewards' Network was set up in 2006 by the RMT and the late, great, Bob Crow. Seven national unions are now affiliated to or support the NSSN, as do countless union branches. The RMT set up the National

Shop Stewards' Network because it recognised the need for a campaigning organisation to build solidarity and links at shop-steward level. In the years since, the NSSN has played a modest but important role in publicising workers' struggles, including GMB members, and arguing that national co-ordinated strike action is a serious strategy to defeat austerity.

Next month the NSS Network holds its eighth national conference in London just five days before an estimated 1.5 million public-sector workers, including GMB members, takes strike action against this hated Government's pay cap. The conference will be a brilliant opportunity for shop stewards to prepare for the second biggest strike action in Britain since the Second World War. It will also give them the chance to link up with others struggling to build a better future. The National Shop Stewards' Network also organises demonstrations, attends picket lines to show solidarity and publishes a weekly bulletin to thousands of shop stewards across Britain. In my branch, we actually publish the bulletin on our website because we find it an invaluable source of information. On a number of issues dear to the heart of GMB members, the NSSN has given solidarity and support. For example, on blacklisting, the NSSN has published a campaign in its weekly bulletins. Each week there is a section on blacklisting in this week's publication – this is taken directly from the GMB web pages – which means that thousands of reps in other trade unions find out about the GMB campaign. The NSSN has also joined in protests outside the High Court in a legal battle. It has also visited the picket line of GMB members at Ealing Hospital, it has supported GMB construction members in their fight to defend national agreements at Lindsay Oil Refinery, Saltend and Capenhurst. It is also working with others campaigning against bogus self employment and NSSN representatives have spoken alongside Ricky Tomlinson at the 25th anniversary of the Shrewsbury picket line dispute.

Congress, this motion is being referred and the CEC will consider the request for affiliation, but the NSSN is not just about a formal joining. This motion is also about a general strengthening of links with the GMB and other shop stewards. So I urge delegates to check out the web pages, to sign up to the weekly bulletin, and if you are in London on Saturday, 5th July, then consider attending the national conference and building for the biggest public sector dispute since 2011. Congress, we are facing the biggest attack in generations on working people and the rights of institutions that we built; the right to strike, the Welfare State and the NHS. At such a time, we need to maximise solidarity amongst working people, and the NSSN plays a small but modest role us in helping us to do that. I hope, once they have considered the motion, that the CEC will conclude that it is in the best interests of this great union of ours to accept its recommendations of this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

BRO. M. HUSBANDS (London): Congress, I second Motion 18. The National Shop Stewards' Network is supported by seven national trade unions: the RMT, which created it, the CWU, PCE, POA, the Bakers' Union, the NUJ and the NUM. All of these fellow unions recognise that solidarity is the backbone of the trade union Movement, and a core part of the GMB values. We also recognise, as Paul Kenny said this morning, that a strong trade union is a member-led trade union, that the most important people are us, the shop stewards, and us, the members.

The existence of a national network of shop stewards puts that principle into action. Kim talked about the active support that the NSSN has provided to GMB brothers and sisters, helping to spread our message far and wide. Congress, we are entering a period of increased struggle against the Coalition Government's austerity cuts. The National Shop Stewards' Network is playing a unique campaigning role and one that I applaud. Hopefully, the CEC will conclude that this is an organisation we should affiliate to, providing valuable support in future battles. I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Does anyone wish to speak in the debate?

BRO. M. SAYWELL (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of Motion 15. What could we say about the CEC? They are very experienced. What I have noticed in my branch is that we now have a Youth Officer. She has been doing a fantastic job, recruiting in the workplace and our union branch meetings are much more interesting. They have new vibrancy. Think how it would benefit the Union as a whole if we had a reserved seat for our Young Members on the CEC. They are out *there* doing that job day in and day out, the same as anybody else, but, as my comrade rightly says, it takes so long to get on to regional councils and then being eligible to get on to the CEC that they are going to be too old by the time they get there. We want our leadership to reflect our Union, and our Union needs to be led by our members. Young members play an important part. Let's get them on the CEC. Let's get a radical voice there and let's do that now.

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Matt. Is there anyone else who wants to speak? (*No response*) Then I call Kevin Buchanan to speak on Motions 15 and 18 on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. K. BUCHANAN (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, who are seeing reference on both Motions 15 and 18.

Firstly, on Motion 15 – Young Member Reserved Seats – the general principles on this motion are reasonable, and it is calling for Young Member seats across all committees of the Union. In relation to branches, the CEC agrees that the Branch Development Plan is, as outlined in the CEC Interim Special Report, should look at the work of young members and whether a branch youth officer is required, as this is a rule book position. However, research has shown that this position is not being filled by the majority of branches.

There are also practical difficulties with determining positions which are age related, as someone could be under 27 at the time of election but over 27 at the end of their term of office, so what would the consequences be? The motion asks for a report to be commissioned for representation on the CEC. Congress, there is no need for this report as the CEC agreed in early 2014 that two young members could attend CEC meetings as observers, and they will be able to contribute their views. The CEC is looking to refer this motion to review how this works in practice.

Finally, on Motion 18 – Affiliation to National Shop Stewards' Network – as has already been mentioned, the Network was founded in 2007 by the RMT and it now has national support from PCS, CWU, NUM and POA as a stand-alone members' network, and branches can affiliate for £25. However, it is possible that key policies of the NSSN may conflict with our policies and, in general, the GMB does not affiliate unless the organisation supports our aims and objectives. Therefore, the CEC would wish this motion to be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee for consideration and discussion.

Congress, please accept reference of both Motions 15 and 18 for further discussion and examination.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Does Southern Region accept reference on Motion 15? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept reference on Motion 18? (*Agreed*) All those in favour of Congress accepting the reference? (*Agreed*)

Motion 15 was REFERRED.

Motion 18 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: In answer to Matt, our two young observers, our two young members on the Executive – I think Hazel, who is at the back of the hall will be getting an award later, and Joanne Hepburn – I did ask Joanne last night how did she enjoy the CEC. She said that she enjoyed it very much because it was far more relaxed than she ever thought it would be. We do hear their views. It was Joanne's first one. In a few minutes, I will be asking Young Members in this room to stand up so that Joanne and Hazel can communicate with you as the Young Members' Forum. So I will be doing that after Kamaljeet speaks.

Can we now move to the next part of our business, which is the GMB Equality Agenda. Before Kamaljeet speaks, we are going to show a short video on Regional and National Equality Events. (*A video was shown*) (*Applause*) Kamaljeet, will address Congress and update us on the GMB Equality Agenda.

GMB EQUALITY AGENDA

BRO. K. JANDU (National Equality Officer): Thank you, President and Congress. I will define in the next five minutes the good, the bad and the ugly that we have had to deal with in recent times. We meet at a time when some good things have happened. For example, we campaigned for equal marriage and we now have in place the legislation to support that. We also, finally, have two people now in prison for the murder of Stephen Lawrence. (*Applause*) We also have the announcement of an inquiry into the police undercover operation that was planted within Neville and Doreen's family to find out who was with them. Here were two parents mourning the death of their child and yet the police were behaving in this way. We have the promise of that inquiry and let's hope it delivers very quickly.

We have also experienced the bad. I am absolutely astounded that we are one of the richest nations in this world but today, tomorrow and next week, there are people and families queuing up to go to food banks to get a parcel of food to feed their children. That should not be allowed at all in this day and age. That has led to more than five million children living in poverty. The austerity measures have hit working people the hardest, and it has had a disproportionate impact on different groups of our people, as outlined on *that* list.

We also have seen the good, the bad and the ugly. Our President outlined what we thought about UKIP this morning. We started this journey following an agreement, which you were part to, on a review of equality structures within the GMB. In 2009 we launched the GMB's Equality Through Inclusion strategy with five strategic priorities. We now have a National Equality Forum that has representation from all the regions and six equality strands, namely, women, migration, visibility, LGBT, race and young members. This structure leads to the focus and the integration of our equality work into the GMB processes.

We have also witnessed recently the legislative changes that have happened, which have resulted in the diminishing of the Equality Act 2010, the employment tribunals fees, the downgrading of equality questionnaires, third-party discrimination and dual discrimination. This means that if, in your workplace, a third party or a member of the public is racially or sexually abusive to you, there is nothing you can do unless it has happened on three occasions. This is what this Government have been doing to equality. This Government have reduced the budget of the Equality and Human Rights Commission as well as its power and duties. Finally, and I am sure that virtually every person in this room will have realised, the attack on facility time has had an impact on the way that we have been able to organise around equality and other areas.

Given this background and context, we have travelled some distance in our journey, and I will highlight a couple of examples of some of the things that we have achieved. That was shown within the film that you saw earlier. We have the President's Leadership Awards for Equality. That recognises commitment and achievement from members, from regions and from branches. The National Equality Forum is now responsible for the National Equality Conference. We have held six such conferences, and it is growing year on year. At the last conference, all regions gave an 8 or a 9 in terms of how they felt the conference had gone. We also have nine regional equality forums. Again, they are responsible for their own regional equality conferences. We have the emergence of a number of self-organised initiatives. We have already mentioned the example of putting "T" back into LGB, but also GMB Sisters, Young Members and BEM GMB as well. So things are happening; activists are organising, issues are being raised and the GMB is creating a space for them to come forward. Also we have participated in all the TUC equality conferences. Often at those conferences, it is our motions that have gone on to the full TUC Congress. Again, we talked earlier about supporting the Women's Development Programme.

In terms of campaigning, *there* is a list of all the campaigns that we have participated in and supported. I will highlight a couple of them. We have been involved with the Campaign on Equal Pay, Valuing Maternity Campaign but also campaigning on issues like *Are You Man Enough?*, which was led and developed by the Midlands Region.

In terms of our strategic priority of increasing membership, we had a project on Leadership in the Migrant Communities some years ago, but also we supported the Carillion workers in Swindon Hospital. However, our work on Asda and Young People will focus on organising people into the trade union. In terms of enhancing our profile, we have been represented in a number of public events, including the Women's Match Makers' Festival in east London, at the TUC Congress, and also we regularly now have press releases highlighting our point of view on a range of equality matters.

Friends and colleagues, the next steps! How do we make the leap? Where is the next quantum leap that we need to make? One of the things that we have identified in the last few years is that there are some absolutely fantastic best-practice examples in many of the unions – incredible stuff – and what we need to do is to identify those and learn from those so that every region takes on board some of that best practice. In terms of the National Equality Forum we are going to be updating our *Equality Through Inclusion* strategy in the next period. But the real engine, the real drivers and the real achievers have to be and are our members, activists and branches. What we need to do is create the space for activists to come forward on issues that they are passionate about so that we give them that space, but also support, develop, intervene and make the changes that we want. That, President and Congress, is the way that we will empower our members and grow the GMB. Thank you.
(Applause)

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, can we now move on to the next business, which will involve Union Organisation, Equality and Inclusion. It involves Motion 32, to be moved by London; Motion 34, to be moved by London; Motion 35, to be moved by London; Motion 36, to be moved by Wales & South West Region; plus Composites 1 and 2, to be moved by London.

RAISING THE AGE OF YOUNG MEMBERS MOTION 32

32. RAISING THE AGE OF YOUNG MEMBERS

Congress, with education becoming compulsory up to the age of 18 and the youth unemployment rate at 18%, many young people are not gaining meaningful employment until their mid-twenties. Unless they have belonged to a Student's Union, or family members are in the Union, they will have no experience or knowledge of unions and will not understand the benefits of an organised workplace.

With GMB Young Members taking off we will need to expand our search for active young people who share the same interests and problems and the best way of doing this is opening our doors to those aged 27-30.

BARKING & DAGENHAM LGO BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

SIS. M. BARTLETT (London): President and delegates, this motion on Raising the Age of Young Members is a very basic request to Congress that, as part of the Young Members' Network we find it really difficult to bring in members and then hold on to them as well. Because people are not getting into employment until later, obviously people are required to stay in education for longer, and then when people gain meaningful employment, possibly in unionised areas, they are beyond the age that we can recruit them as young members. So we are having real difficulties in maintaining the group, and raising the age to 30 is not unreasonable. There are other unions that have the upper age limit of 35. We should really be considering it so that we can carry on building the Movement. As we all move along, we all need to bring in the next generation and this is the best way that we believe we can do it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. C. LEE (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)*: I am seconding Motion 32. President and delegates, the disastrous economic policies of this Government have seen a generation of young people left without a job, left without the prospects of a job and, worst of all, left without hope. It must, surely, be the economics of the madhouse to dump all that talent on the scrapheap. Furthermore, colleagues, these policies are having an effect on the trade unions, too. So many young people out of work means that so many young people are not joining a trade union. We are seeing so many young people with no knowledge of the benefit of trade union membership. So many young people are unable to learn negotiating skills, health and safety knowledge, current legislation and collective bargaining. It is to this Union's credit that we have such an active and vibrant young members' network. This allows our young members in work to communicate, learn and, perhaps, be activists both now and in the future. Congress, it is a fact that when young people do find work in their mid-20s they will have very little time in the young members' network, not enough time to engage with the network and not enough time to learn the skills needed to be a successful activists. By increasing the age of young members, this Union will be giving them the opportunities that this Government have denied them for so long. Let us use the increase in the age limit to help young members develop and, in doing so, help the GMB at the same time. Congress, I am happy to second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)* Also there is a fringe meeting tomorrow lunch time for young members in the Conference centre.

THE PRESIDENT: I call London Region to move Motion 34.

WIDENING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAME MOTION 34

34. WIDENING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BAME

Congress is requested to campaign and lobby the Labour Party to extend the Equal Opportunities policy relating to women members on the boards of major public companies to include ethnic minorities also being represented on such boards in proportion to their percentage of the population.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Motion 34 – Widening Equal Opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. Congress is requested to campaign and lobby the Labour Party to extend the Equal Opportunities policy relating to women members on the boards of major public companies to include ethnic minorities also being represented on such boards in proportion to their percentage of the population. There is, currently, a drive to increase the number of women on the boards of FTSE 100 companies, and rightly so, even though how we go about it might vary, some arguing that it should be achieved voluntarily, others that there should be more of a mandatory element. It's been voluntary so far, and there has been some measure of success. The proportion of women on FTSE 100 boards topped 20% in January of this year, raising hopes that the UK Government's target of 25% female membership by 2015 will be met voluntarily. Positive though this direction of travel might be, it is not good enough. It is not good enough from the women's point of view and not good enough from an equal opportunities point of view in respect of black and minority ethnic members of the population, which is not even part of the push for more balanced company boards but only in respect of gender. In reality, we are being generous in acknowledging progress to date which, in terms of achieving social justice, has been glacial. Middle-aged and middle-class men appear to us outsiders to be fighting rear-guard action.

However, this augurs ill for any prospect this century of achieving equitable representation on FTSE 100 boards for black, minority and ethnic communities. For this reason, the fact that social justice for the GMB is not an optional extra to be voluntarily sought but an obligation, an obligation that is recognised. However, it is something that some would prefer to pass on. For this reason, there need to be a mandatory element to achieve a fair representation for people from black, minority and ethnic communities on FTSE 100 boards. Thank you.

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

SIS. T. CHANA (London): I am seconding Motion 34. President and Congress, we need to smash the glass ceilings which house all male and non-BME board members. We seem to have an informal quota of non-BME members on boards of major public companies who nominate non-BME members, who in turn choose non-BME members to fill the posts and the cycle continues.

A report by the Runnymede Trust concluded that only 1 per cent of board members were from black, ethnic and minority backgrounds. Congress, we are all treated equal and ours should be an equal society. Race must always be on the agenda. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 35, to be moved by London Region.

BME & LGBT HATE CRIMES

35. BME & LGBT HATE CRIMES

Congress, due to the increasing amount of BME and LGBT hate crimes and international murder, we call upon Lesbian, Gay, BiSexual, Transgender groups together with black and ethnic minority groups and the GMB:

- Campaign nationally, raising awareness of BME LGBT domestic violence
- Increase awareness and understanding of what hate crime is and its effects across GMB nationally.
- Engage in an intervention campaign to attempt to reduce BME LGBT murder
- To investigate and campaign to support LGBT BME people seeking asylum in our country due to fear of death,
- To lobby MPs and MEP's to put pressure on all countries that consider LGBT BME marriage to be illegal.
- To network with BME LGBT groups to increase support for our members

FULHAM 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. T. CHANA (London): Congress, we all know that the letters LGBT stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and we have heard speeches right *here* on the day-to-day struggles that we face. We have also heard the term “domestic and sexual violence”, but many do not think that these terms apply to the LGBT community.

Congress, have you ever thought about the impact of being a victim of domestic and sexual violence while in a same-sex relationship and being black or from a minority ethnic background? The common response is no. In 2008 a YouGov. Survey found that the BME LGBT community received double the amount of physical assaults, homophobic hate crime, identifying the worst areas as the Midlands, the north of England followed by London. A survey last year showed a decrease in physical and homophobic hate crime being reported due to a lack of trust in the police by the LGBT community.

Looking outside the UK, you can only describe the situation as shocking, disgusting and unbelievable, as acts of domestic and sexual violence, hate crime and murder happen on a regular basis, leaving victims, if they are alive, with no one to turn to as the police and the Government do not care, which means that victims have no choice but to run for their lives.

Congress, imagine that you are running for your life after being tortured to the point of near death by your own brothers for being in love with another woman. You are lucky enough to escape, to seek refuge in the UK, you have not been here before, you do not speak English and you need international protection. You are placed in a detention centre where the staff are all male. They cannot understand your needs or signpost you to the specialist support service that you need, because there may be lack of funding. They do not recognise that you will face stereotyping, language difficulties, conflicts between religion and sexuality, if you are allowed to stay. We must now act to save the lives of the BME LGBT community internationally by lobbying MPs and MEPs to exert pressure on countries not recognising same-sex marriage and not challenging the physical and sexual assaults, hate crimes and murder of the LGBT community. We must research and campaign for the LGBT BME communities seeking asylum and refuge, and work in solidarity with other BME groups. We must raise awareness nationally across the Union on BME LGBT hate crime and sexual assault. It is disgusting. It affects our members and their families. It could even affect you. It is happening here, it is happening now and we can stop it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): Congress, I second Motion 35 on behalf of London Region. Congress, imagine being scared or anxious to walk down the street for fear of being called names, spat at, threatened, physically attacked or sexually assaulted. Imagine being bullied, harassed or victimised because of you who are. Imagine not being able to hold the hand of the person you love or having to live a lie. Sadly, this is all too often the reality of life for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people around the world today, and in our own society. But it is even more the reality if you are also from a black or minority ethnic background. Like me, you will, no doubt, know of someone who has been the subject of such hate crime and, no doubt, like me, it makes you angry and sick to the stomach to know that our family and friends are exposed to such disgusting treatment.

Last year, in a YouGov poll commissioned by Stonewall, one in six LGBT people reported being the subject of hate crime in past three years. That figure doubled if you are from a black or minority ethnic background. The Stonewall survey also found that one in 10 of those who had experienced a homophobic hate crime had been physically assaulted. Almost a fifth of victims had been threatened with violence and one in eight had experienced unwanted sexual contact. The picture which emerges from the survey is of a society in which many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people feel unsafe in their own homes and communities. Two-thirds said that they felt a bigger risk of being assaulted or harassed than heterosexual people.

Congress, no one should live in fear of verbal or physical violence or of losing their life because of who they are and because they are not perceived to fit into the norms of a certain group, community or society. We know that ignorance and prejudice are the root causes, but we cannot allow hate crime and murder to be ignored, excused or justified. We must use all of our available resources and means to make sure that our LGBT sisters and brothers are able to live their lives freely, without the shackles of prejudice and hate making them prisoners in their own homes, communities and societies. We must challenge and stop this hate. We must support freedom, respect and dignity. Thank you. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I ask GMB Wales & South West Region to move Motion 36.

**THE IMPACT OF THE PRESS BASED BULLYING OF THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY
MOTION 36**

36. THE IMPACT OF THE PRESS BASED BULLYING OF THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

This Conference upon the CEC to lobby the Government to strengthen legislation to protect the rights of those transgender members of society going through the gender realignment process.

We note the disgraceful articles penned by Richard Littlejohn in the Daily Mail in December 2012 around the gender realignment process of school-teacher Nathan Upton.

CARDIFF & DISTRICT BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. I. BOUNDS (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I move Motion 36, entitled: The Impact of the Press Based Bullying of the Transgender Community.

President and delegates, many buses in Cardiff carry an advertisement on the rear end of the vehicles with a photograph of two building labourers, overwritten with the words: “One of us is gay. If that gives you a problem, then our work continues.” Sadly, prejudice and discrimination against people because of their sexuality or sexual orientation is still a part of society. Consequently, our work as caring, equality-focused trade union must also continue.

Many of us will recall with horror and contempt the sickening article written in the *Daily Mail* in which Richard Littlejohn described Lucy Meadows as being in “the wrong job and of putting her unselfish needs ahead of the wellbeing of the children she taught.” Three months later, Lucy committed suicide.

Congress, what makes it very easy for the tabloids to print this vitriol is that transgender people are often unlikely to fight back and are, essentially, easy targets for humiliating and sensationalist reporting. Clearly, colleagues, the *Daily Mail* response in offering to remove the article from its website showed that nothing of any value had been learned from the *Leveson Inquiry* or the subsequent report. Ruining people’s lives for entertainment is nothing less than despicable and a blight upon any civilised society. Of course, gender-reassignment discrimination is unlawful in this country. The law relating to such behaviour is governed by the Equality Act 2010. However, too many people still face harassment, bullying and discrimination throughout their daily lives.

Although the Equality Act protects those who undergo or who have undergone a reassignment process, and whilst it covers them at work and when accessing services, still the actions of too many service to create a hostile environment and violate a person’s dignity. All too infrequently, however, are transgender people consulted on equality policies. Neither is transgender equality embraced within equality-impact assessments.

Despite advances made previously, there remain gaps in the availability of legal protections. These are evident with transgender people who do not intend to transition; for example, those who are cross-dressers and in the provision of gender-specific services, including the calculation of insurance benefits for transsexual people who have undergone reassignment.

Conference, we must keep up the pressure for these shortfalls to be corrected and build upon the progress achieved so far. All of our activists must be willing and suitable trained to help trans members to receive equal and non-discriminatory treatment at work, and to ensure that they are respected for the gender in which they live.

Moving away from one’s birth gender to a self-identified one is a right that should not be undermined by ridicule or victimisation, and self-regulation of the press will never give the necessary protection for minority groups, so stricter laws are required to fulfil this objective. We have seen strides made in combating the serious challenges facing transgender people but more still needs to be done. Let’s campaign for a strengthening of existing laws to permit the protection of transgender people, both in the workplace and beyond. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Seconder?

SIS. L. MOORE (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, I second Motion 36. President and comrades, Lucy Meadows was a 32-year old school teacher in the north of England who committed suicide in March 2013. Salacious and sensational press coverage had been a big factor in Lucy’s decision to commit suicide. Lucy, who was born Nathan Upton, had gone through gender realignment and had been supported by her school during her treatment. Lucy was subjected to front-

page coverage in the *Daily Mail* after her return to work in the same school. Lucy's supportive head teacher had written to the families of all the pupils at her school advising that teacher, Nathan Upton, had recently made a significant change in his life and will be transforming to live as a woman. The *Daily Mail* columnist, Richard Littlejohn, chose to write disgraceful articles condemning Lucy's decision and the decision of her head teacher to support her.

Trans Media Watch say it is our view that the British press continues to make a very powerful contribution to a reduction in the quality of life of a group of people who face significant personal changes and seek only the happiness and privacy enjoyed by others. Leveson, in his report into media standards, said: "There is a marked tendency in a section of the press to fail to treat members of the transgender community with sufficient dignity and respect." Leveson recommended that a new regulatory body should consider the protection of minority groups and that anyone should be able to make a complaint under the new regulatory system of an alleged breach of the code of practice. A Royal Charter was agreed allowing the press to self-regulate.

We call on the CEC to press the Government to introduce legislation to prevent this form of press based bullying. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I ask London to move Composite 1.

**AFFILIATION TO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION (ILGA)
COMPOSITE MOTION 1**

C1. Covering Motions:

- 37. AFFILIATION TO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION (ILGA) (*London Region*)
- 38. INTERNATIONAL, LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION (*London Region*)

AFFILIATION TO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND INTERSEX ASSOCIATION (ILGA)

Congress recognises the important work that the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) has undertaken in the field of LGBT and intersex rights over many years. The recent developments in countries such as Russia in re-criminalising LGBT people, shows that campaign is far from won. The GMB can play a vital role in ILGA campaigns and in raising awareness of LGBT human rights to our own members.

ILGA's aims mirror ours in terms of lobbying for the decriminalisation of LGBT people and the need to promote and fight for LGBT equality and human rights in our workplaces, in society, at home and in our democratic structures, whether here or overseas.

Congress therefore agrees and instructs the CEC to affiliate to the ILGA at a cost of 300 Euros per annum and to take an active part in developing its work.

**London Region to Move
London Region to Second
(Referred)**

BRO. B. SHAW (London): Congress, I am proud to be moving Composite Motion 1: Affiliation to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association. ILGA campaigns and

lobbies for LGBT and intersex people around the world. Whilst the last Labour Government extended rights in this country for LGBT people, including, specifically, hate crimes, we have seen, especially in the last few years, a situation internationally deteriorate significantly. Just look to Putin's Russian, Jamaica and Uganda for what LGBT people can face.

A staggering fact from the recent survey that ILGA undertook found that 2.7 billion people live in countries where being LGBT can lead to prison, corporal punishment or even death, seven times as many as those who live in countries with same-sex marriage. Another fact they found was that no country in the world – I repeat, no country in the world! – enjoys equal legal rights with their heterosexual counterparts. Just look at the Same Sex Marriage Act in England & Wales that was introduced by the Tories, while posh boys don't get equality. Whilst ILGA has mapped the legal situation around the world, it has also looked at the increasing violence based on sexuality, that trans or intersex people face. This is where we see countries like Uganda, that is increasingly using existing legislation to persecute LGBT people and encourage violence against perceived or "out" LGBT people. Russia, which introduced a new law, similar to Thatcher's section 28, that we had in this country, and has seen violence against LGBT people increase, often with the police standing by or joining in.

GMB has a proud tradition of working internationally, standing up for social justice and equality. That is why the time is now right to affiliate to ILGA and take an active role in the organisation. Affiliation costs Euros 300 per year, which is 0.000486 of a euro per member, but it sends a very important message that this Unions stands up for LGBT people, not only in Great Britain and Ireland but internationally as well.

ILGA runs campaigns and supports LGBT groups around the world, not only to ensure legislative change but also cultural change, breaking down barriers and achieving more tolerant countries. They also lobby institutions like the United Nations, the EU and the Commonwealth to seek international agreements supportive of LGBT people. Change will not come easy but the GMB needs to be part of ILGA, and actively taking part in ILGA Europe. We need to ensure that the regions and branches are taking part in campaigns run by ILGA. As a person who has been beaten up because of my sexuality and had my home attacked because of my sexuality, I feel passionate to see that others do not face what I have faced or worse. That is why we need to support those facing persecution in other countries but, more importantly, giving them a voice internationally. LGBT rights are human rights. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The seconder.

BRO. J. OSBORNE (London): Congress, I second Composite Motion 1. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) is an international organisation bringing together more than 750 LGBT and intersex groups from around the world. It continues to be active in campaigning for LGBT and intersex rights on the international human rights and civil rights scene and regularly petitions the United Nations and other governments. ILGA is represented in over 110 countries across the world. ILGA is also accredited by the UN and has been granted NGO – which is non-governmental organisation – status. ILGA was founded as the International Gay Association on 8th August 1978 during the Conference of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality in Coventry at a meeting attended by 30 men, representing 17 organisations from 14 countries. It changed its name to the International Lesbian & Gay Association in 1986. We must unite and fight for all equality and, for this reason, I ask that you fully support this motion for the GMB to affiliate to ILGA. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Composite Motion 2.

CLASS AS A STRAND OF THE EQUALITY ACT COMPOSITE MOTION 2

C2. Covering Motions:

40. PUTTING CLASS BACK ON THE AGENDA (*London Region*)
41. CLASS AS A STRAND OF THE EQUALITY ACT (*London Region*)

CLASS AS A STRAND OF THE EQUALITY ACT

Congress calls on the CEC to run a branded campaign around income inequality. The inequality of opportunity income levels creates huge barriers in peoples' lives, but the lack of empathy shown by the current Government and media forces a large amount of the population to be unsympathetic. It is essential the public have access to information which exposes the downfalls of the capitalist system we live in rather than demonise and scapegoat certain groups of individuals.

Congress to campaign and lobby to have class, defined by a person's socio-economic status, included as a strand in the Equality Act. The campaign should include the following:

- Collect facts and figures about the extent of poverty (especially in-work poverty) in the UK and its effects, and post them on our webpage and social media sites.
- Gather research on the effects of how low income on living standards and opportunities (including the effect on our economy) and distribute the findings to all MPs and any businesses we can.
- Publish easy read articles challenging negative propaganda about welfare claimants/working class and distribute to branches to put in their newsletters. These should be available at request in different languages too as immigrants are more likely to be suffering poverty
- Create a webpage which breaks down important government policies in an easy to read way, also available in other languages
- Offer free basic politics training to members to encourage them to challenge income inequalities in a constructive way.

This motion also asks the CEC to consider whether class should be an equalities strand.

London Region to Move London Region to Second

(Carried)

SIS. M. BARTLETT (London): Congress, this motion, Putting Class Back on the Agenda, is, I think, a really important and vital one for us. We have already had this go through in at the London Region's Regional Equality Conference. Actually, this is something that needs to come to Congress because it is a big task to take on. We don't really consider class like we do in the equality strands. It is, sort of, not talked about as much, which is why I was really pleased that it had been composited with another region that had been having the same discussions, obviously. We know that what class you come from is going to have an effect on your educational attainment, your social mobility and so many other areas of your life. Your health is one example. It is just endless. We do not talk about it like we should.

The composite is quite comprehensive because we need all the research, we need the facts and statistics so that we can get out *there* and campaign for things that affect the working class in a negative way, like the benefit changes. We know that those changes have affected a certain class in a

certain way. If social-economic status was part of the Equality Act, then you would be able to challenge on that basis. Congress, please support the motion and please get talking about class. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Melanie. Seconder?

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, I second Composite 2: Class as a Strand of the Equality Act. We ask that Congress campaigns and lobbies to have class, defined by a person's socio-economic status, included as a strand in the Equality Act. In terms of equal opportunities, class is the elephant in the room. Some don't like to talk about it or admit that it exists any more, whereas others do think that it still exists, but we are all middle class now, anyway. Congress, class exists, and it will not come as a surprise to hear me say that we ain't all middle class either.

Congress, Motion 40 is right in that there is a lack of empathy from the Government, but it goes further than that. It seems that some on our side of the fence haven't got the level of empathy for the class struggle that you might have expected. We have been here before. A previous Congress voted to increase the number of working-class MPs. We voted on it and we acted on it. Boy, did we act on it. Boy, didn't we touch a nerve in the Labour Party? Hence, the schism between the Labour Party and trade union funding. Make no mistake. Class matters. Social class is still the most accurate predictor of disadvantage and inequality in the UK. Even in aspects of race, gender and disability, the influence of social class is enormous.

For example, in social class 1, the most affluent social class, only 6% of women are reported as disabled, yet among the poorest – social class 5 – the level of disability is 24%. There is a connection between social class and other aspects of disadvantage. Congress, class matters. I second. *(Applause)*

SIS. R. WINSON (London): I am a first time-delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am speaking on Motion 32, Raising the Age of Young Members. As a secretary of GMB Young London, I can tell you from experience that the current cut-off age is a huge hurdle to us mobilising and organising young workers, which is something that I believe should be one of the highest priorities of this Union. Half of Young London's core team are fast approaching the age by which they will no longer be able to be part of our team. If we lose them, we and our campaigns are going to be decimated. With a cut-off age of 30, I could go into my workplace alone and double the number of people currently active in Young London's core team. Currently, I am forced to exclude people with valuable experience and resources, and these people who we exclude want to be involved. They feel that they are young workers and they do not understand why GMB does not think so. 28, 29 and 30 year olds have the same problems as other young workers, the same problems that I have. Please pass this motion to give them the opportunity to help GMB help them. I support, obviously. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone else? *(No response)* In that case, I will call Cathy Murphy.

SIS. C. MURPHY (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, supporting Motion 34 with a qualification and asking Congress to refer Motion 32 and Composite Motion 1.

Firstly, on Motion 34, on Widening Equal Opportunities for BAME, there is a strong lobby for having greater representation of women on the boards of companies and extending the strength of ethnic minorities. Representation has merit. However, the qualification covers the real issues faced

by GMB women members and potential members. This is not about representation on company boards but being able to raise their heads above the skirting board. Issues of decent pay, job security and caring responsibilities remain high for working women.

Coming to Motion 32, Raising the Age of Young Members, the CEC supports the sentiments in this motion on the need to embrace the young active members. GMB has established a Young Members' Network, which includes representatives from every region. The network will give a lead on engaging young people and young members in the GMB. In addition, you will have heard that the CEC has agreed to have two Young Members as observers to its meetings. Congress, we ask for this motion to be referred for consideration by our Young Members' Network.

Finally, on Composite 1, which concerns affiliation to ILGA, this organisation is recognised by the UN and the EU. They campaign, lobby and support specific legal challenge in the EU in support of LGBT in the fields of asylum, education, employment, families, freedom of assembly, hate crimes, health, multiple discrimination, human rights and trans and intersex issues. However, as with all requests for affiliation, the CEC would wish this motion to be referred to the CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee and then referred for consultation to the National Equality Conference.

Congress, please refer Motion 32 and Composite 1 and support Motion 34 with the qualification that I have outlined.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Cathy, it's good see you back. Does London Region accept reference back to Motion 32? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept the qualification to Motion 34? (*Agreed*) I am moving to Composite Motion 1. Does London Region accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) With the regions accepting the qualification, can I now put Motions 32, 34, 35 and 36, Composite 1 and Composite 2 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 32 was REFERRED.

Motion 34 was CARRIED.

Motion 35 was CARRIED.

Motion 36 was CARRIED.

Composite Motion 1 was REFERRED.

Composite Motion 2 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Will all Young Members in the hall please stand up. Hazel and Joanna, where are you? All right. I can see you. Face your two reps on the CEC and go and meet them.

PRESIDENT'S LEADERSHIP AWARDS FOR EQUALITY

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, we launched the President's Leadership Awards for Equality at Congress 2009, so this is the fifth year of recognising the exceptional work of our regions and branches. There are four categories with awards given to those who have inspired and championed various aspects of the Equality Agenda. 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. Before I do, Congress, the President's Awards are for lay members and it is sad that we had to take out some good awards when the nominee was an

office. It is for lay members of the Union to participate and get that award. I am extremely sorry for that.

I would also like to see all regions participate in this, because some of you have some of the greatest issues going on, making people aware, such as Young Members' equality. Next year I hope to see all the regions participating within the President's Awards for Equality.

The first award is for the Most Inspiration Equality Project for Organising goes to the National Young Members' Network. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, next is the award for the Most Inspirational Project For Making A Difference At Work, which goes to Kerry Humphreys from the Midland & East Coast Region for her work on the "Man Enough" domestic violence campaign. Kerry. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Next is the Most Inspirational Regional Equality Forum goes to the London Region. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Next is the award for the Most Inspirational Individual on Equality in the GMB or at Work, which goes to David Braniff Herbert of the London Region for his commitment in regional and national initiatives for the GMB Young Members Network. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The winners of the Highly Commended awards will be able to collect their framed certificates from their regional secretaries, not from the platform, but I will read out their names now so that Congress can acknowledge them.

Awards for Highly Commended Individuals on Equality go to Farzana Jumma, from the Yorkshire Region, for her work on domestic violence, and also to Barbara Plant, from Southern Region, for promoting women in the GMB. *(Applause)*

The Highly Commended Equality Project for Organising: Putting the "T" back into LGBT goes to the London Region. *(Applause)*

The Highly Commended Project For Making a Difference at Work goes to Declan Downes, from Birmingham Region, for his work on disability awareness and LGBT. *(Applause)*

The entries for all of these awards have been inspiration and motivating. However, Congress, could I please ask all regions to submit a nomination next year.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, very much, Malcolm. We intend to end Congress in a few moments. That leaves us tomorrow with three motions and one composite motion to deal with. It is now getting late. If you had not asked for Ricky to come back, we would have been out earlier, so that is your punishment.

We now move to the bucket collection in aid of the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice. It is a very worthwhile charity. The North West & Irish Region is always committed every year to these charities. Please give generously. I will put in a cheque from me.

Congress is now closed until 9.30 in the morning. All of those who are having their receptions tonight, please have a good time. I will see you bright-eyed and bushy tailed in the morning. Thank you. *Congress adjourned at 5.55 pm.*