

GMB

CONGRESS 2011

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

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Held in:

**The Brighton Centre,
Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 5th June, 2011
Monday, 6th June 2011
Tuesday, 7th June 2011
and
Wednesday, 8th June 2011**

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**PROCEEDINGS
DAY THREE
(Tuesday, 7th June 2011)**

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**(Transcript prepared by:
Marten Walsh Cherer Limited,
1st Floor, Quality House,
6-9 Quality Court, Chancery Lane,
London WC2A 1HP
Telephone: 020 7067 2900
email: info@martenwalshcherer.com)**

THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
TUESDAY 7TH JUNE 2011
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please. Congress, I hope you are all bright eyed and bushy tailed this morning. Colleagues, we have an extremely busy and important day today, although it will be a bit more relaxed. I hope everybody enjoyed seeing their pictures in the press.

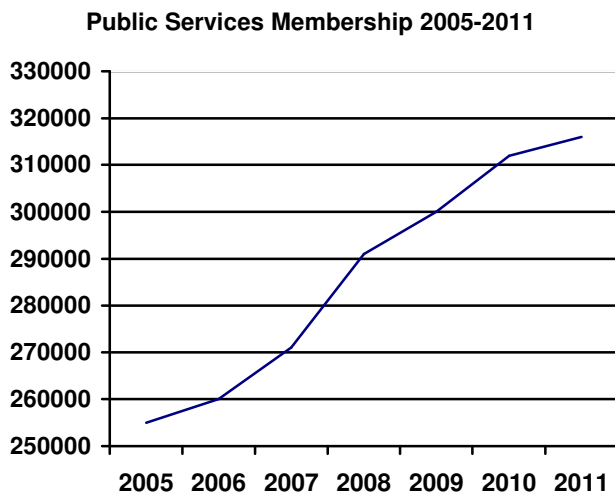
First of all, announcements. I would like to inform Congress that the bucket collection taken on behalf of the Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice raised £647.13p. (Applause) After consultation between the General Secretary, myself and Malcolm, we would like to make it £1,300. (Applause)

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION REPORT

PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

1. PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Public Services Section grew to more than 316,000 by the end of 2010, up from 312,501 at the start of the year. The chart below shows the Section's consistent membership growth.



After the General Election in May, the new Tory-Lib Coalition took an axe to public services.

George Osborne's Emergency Budget and Spending Review made huge cuts across the board. By December, 80,000 posts were under threat in local government alone. That number has since more than doubled.

The Coalition is attacking on all fronts: public-sector pensions are under serious threat and the NHS is being dismantled before our eyes.

So 2011 will be the most challenging year for public services since the fall of Thatcher. GMB's workplace organisers, branch secretaries, other lay activists and full-time officers, are working tirelessly to save services, jobs, and terms and conditions.

As the cuts bite, GMB is at the forefront of the campaign to fight the cuts and defend our public services. To succeed, the campaign has got to generate workplace activity and bring non-members into GMB membership. There are still hundreds of thousands of non-organised workers in the public sector. This is the most important time imaginable to get them involved and organised.

2. NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The role of the National Committee is to consider and determine policy issues and Public Services Section activities at national level. The Section is fortunate in having an active and committed National Committee chaired by GMB President, Mary Turner.

As well as matters raised by themselves, the Committee also receives and scrutinises reports from the National Secretary, National Officers and GMB Regions. Current issues in national negotiations are discussed in particular detail. Minutes of National Committee meetings are approved by the CEC and distributed to branches via Regions.

The main points dealt with by the Committee in 2010 were:

- Organising and growth in the Section
- Public sector pensions
- Social care crisis
- School Staff Negotiating Body
- Southern Cross
- National pay negotiations
- Cuts and job losses
- NHS Reforms
- Contractors Forum
- Academies
- Justice sector

The National Committee membership is:

Mary Turner	-	President - London Region
Elizabeth Blackman	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Dana Bruno	-	North West & Irish Region
Linda Clarke	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Gary Doolan	-	London Region
George Fraser	-	London Region
Gordon Gibbs	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
David Hope	-	North West & Irish Region
Pamela Hughes	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
James Jones	-	Northern Region
Kevin Jones	-	South Western Region
Evelyn Martin	-	London Region
June Minnery	-	GMB Scotland
Peter Murphy	-	Southern Region
David Noble	-	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Lorraine Parker	-	Southern Region
Vivien Smart	-	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Billy Tonner	-	Southern Region
Michael Widdison	-	Midland & East Coast Region
Peter Dow	-	MPO Representative
Heather Starr	-	MPO Representative
Steve Rice	-	ASU Representative
Barry Lambert	-	HE Representative
Rory MacQueen	-	FE Representative
Ronnie Hill	-	Schools Representative

Our National Office staff are Brian Strutton, National Secretary; Sharon Holder and Rehana Azam, National Officers; Justin Bowden, on Regional secondment; Mick Hubbard, Productivity Services

Officer; Tom Hazeldine, Research & Policy Officer; Angela Sayer, Section Administrator and PA; and Rita Compton and Carol Ferguson (transferred from merger with CDNA), PAs.

3. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF NEGOTIATING BODY (SSSNB)

The School Support Staff Negotiating Body was created by the Labour Government in 2009 following a long and successful GMB campaign. Before the General Election in May 2010, it had made real progress towards designing a national pay framework and a core contract of employment for school support staff in England. The SSSNB gave us an opportunity to push for the fair, consistent and transparent terms and conditions that our schools members have so long been denied.

But the new Tory-Lib Government immediately suspended the work of the negotiating body. Shortly afterwards, news came via a newspaper leak that they planned to abolish it. GMB strongly argued the case for saving the SSSNB. But as usual, Tory Education Secretary Michael Gove wasn't listening. In October he confirmed that he would abolish the SSSNB "at the earliest opportunity". His new Education Bill, introduced in January 2011, puts this into effect.

Support staff will not therefore be moving to a new national terms and conditions framework. GMB is adamant that the Tories are wrong to say the SSSNB wasn't needed, and Gove was reckless to abolish it before it even had a chance to put forward recommendations.

Losing the negotiating body is a big disappointment, but there is still lots to do. GMB will continue to campaign for and with our school support staff members, the unsung heroes of the school workforce. For that reason, the Public Services Section National Committee has agreed that the National Schools Committee should continue to meet, with a new focus on policy and campaign issues. The National Schools Committee is a lay committee made up of schools members from across GMB. It is chaired by Ronnie Hill from Birmingham and West Midlands Region. It previously oversaw the work of the SSSNB.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government cuts

The national Tory-Lib Coalition is making huge cuts to public spending. Central Government funding to councils is especially hard hit. Funding will fall by an average of 11% in 2011-12. Once this became known in the second half of 2010, councils up and down the country began preparing multi-million-pound budget reductions.

At the time of writing, a multitude of council restructurings and trawls for voluntary redundancies were ongoing. Over 160,000 redundancy threats have been issued. The spectre of compulsory redundancies is real. Several councils also began to impose detrimental changes to pay and conditions by issuing dismissal and re-engagement notices, effectively sacking people and re-employing them on worse terms.

The job-loss figures alone can't convey the enormous pressure, worry and alarm that local government workers have been experiencing in the past few months. GMB nationally has issued advice and guidance to officers and activists about how to scrutinise local authority budgets and how to negotiate around redundancies. We have also produced a campaign guide. The emphasis is to ensure that local authorities are doing everything in their power to minimise cuts. The majority of local government is Tory-run, and we can't assume that any council will make the right calls unless they are held to account. GMB has challenged job losses and dismissal and re-engagement techniques wherever they have occurred.

At the CEC in autumn 2010 it was agreed that we should carry out a trial industrial action ballot to cover GMB local government membership. This will prepare us for any future call for industrial action.

Local Government pay

For 2010-11, GMB and the other local government unions had submitted an NJC claim for a £500 flat-rate increase or 2.5%, whichever was the greater. The employers responded early in 2010 by announcing that there would be no pay offer whatsoever for the NJC, Craft or Chief Officers. They also said that they were not prepared to enter into any discussions. To make matters worse, the employers had also produced a guidance book on how to cut staff pay and conditions and sack people cheaply. GMB, Unison and Unite registered a formal dispute over these matters in July. The employers refused to agree to refer the dispute to ACAS.

For 2011-12, GMB and the other trade unions submitted an NJC claim in October for at least £250 and a review of outstanding terms and conditions improvements previously lodged by the TU side. In February 2011 the employers responded by saying that once again they will not be making an offer - not even the £250 promised by the Government for the low paid. GMB has expressed complete disgust at the employers' decision. At the time of writing, the issue will be argued over at a full NJC meeting.

5. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Following the election in May 2010 of a Tory/Lib Dem Coalition Government, the NHS has seen unprecedented instability and uncertainty for many members of staff working in the NHS.

The Coalition, in its announcement of the Spending Review Settlement for the period 2011 – 2015, claimed NHS expenditure would be protected in real terms, provided, however, that, in common with the wider public sector, productivity savings of between £15bn - £20bn would have to be made during the same period, with the aim of these savings being made available for re-investment in the provision of frontline healthcare.

In July 2010, Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, published a Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS", unveiling a programme of reforms which, if implemented, would lead to the most dramatic change to the provision of healthcare in England, as we know it for example.

GP's, instead of Primary Care Trusts, holding NHS budgets to buy healthcare. The abolition of PCT's and Strategic Health Authorities. Hospital trusts forced to convert into independent not-for-profit 'social enterprises' outside the NHS. Moreover, the white paper opened the doors to a pro-competitive market and the comprehensive privatisation of clinical healthcare, potentially leading to the end of the NHS as a National Service.

GMB, in its response to the consultation White Paper, and in line with GMB Policy motion PS Comp 4 endorsed at Congress in 2010 has strongly opposed the proposals.

Since the health policy reforms form a key plank in the Coalition Government's reform programme across the Public Services Sector, neither the Tories or Lib.Dems. included these proposed plans in their manifesto. In fact, the Tory Party and coalition partners solemnly pledged to no more "top down re-organisation of the NHS", only two months before the white paper publication.

Andrew Lansley, in his haste to publish the White Paper, left many unanswered questions about how the re-organisation would work, especially on the question of democratic accountability. Meanwhile, the implementation of the reforms hold risks for patients, in clinical safety, staff and the public at large, and, overall, there is no evidence that the new system is likely to be more efficient than the current system.

Health unions, including GMB, have subsequently mounted campaigns, politically and locally, in defence of the NHS, in line with GMB policy, motion PS22 endorsed at Congress in 2010. Shadow Cabinet opposition progress, however, has been slow to develop, largely because new Labour is constantly being blamed for laying the ground for everything the coalition Government is planning to do in the NHS, the consequence of which GMB warned the previous Labour administration would happen.

NHS Membership

The NHS combined membership took a small decline in 2010 from 26,008 to 25,233. The challenges likely to effect NHS organisations and hospital trusts in 2011 mean that there will be strong grounds for increasing GMB membership.

National Advisory Group

Pam Hughes, CEC member and Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region senior NHS representative, took over as Chair of the National Advisory Group from Richard Passmore, Birmingham & West Midlands Region representative at Northampton Health Care. The Group thanked Richard for his time as Chair and wished him all the best for the future.

In 2010, the National Advisory Group considered and gave advice on NHS employment policy issues/concerns and provided support and guidance in developing key recommendations to underpin proposals to mount an organising campaign in the NHS. The issues included:

- NHS membership
- Third year of the multi-year pay deal
- NHS pilots
- Pay Review Body submission for 2011/12

It must also be noted that the NHS National Advisory Group, in January 2011, faced with the prospect of redundancies and a freeze on pay, rejected proposals by NHS Employers to a two-year freeze on all pay progression, in return for a guarantee of 'no compulsory redundancy' for some NHS staff; strongly resisting to surrender their right to pay increments under Agenda for Change in line with GMB policy PS29 carried in 2010.

Current membership of the National Advisory Group consists of:

Phil Baldwin (N.West & Irish Region), Neil Collinson (Northern Region), Mick Coppin (Mid. & E.Coast Region), Mary Finn (Scotland), Joss Guittard (N.West & Irish Region), Tony Hackett (Birmingham & West Mids. Region), Martin Jackson (Yorkshire & N.Derbyshire Region), Gary Lock (South Western Region), Jill McCarthy (South Western Region), Alma Stewart (Northern Region), Ray Stewart (Southern Region), Maya Venkatasawmy (Southern Region) and Keri Webb (London Region).

Healthcare Conference

A GMB Joint NHS, CDNA and National Ambulance Service Healthcare Conference was held in Birmingham on 7 & 8 November 2010, the first joint Conference of its kind for GMB in the healthcare sector. The aim of the Conference was to equip delegates with the knowledge and enthusiasm to organise in their workplaces with practical plans on the way forward in the NHS.

Terms and Conditions:

The NHS Staff Council and Executive have dealt with a number of issues, including:

- Agenda for Change, Knowledge and Skills Framework Review
- NHS Staff Council Work Plan and priorities
- The Quality and Productivity Challenge
- Mileage Review
- Review of On-Call
- Job Evaluation
- Pensions Choice
- NHS Injury Benefit Scheme Review
- Partnership for Occupational Safety and Health in Health Care
- Independent Review of the National Recruitment and Retention Premia
- MARS (Mutually Agreed Resignation Schemes)
- Right to Raise Concerns at Work (Whistleblowing)
- Scoping the Pay Structure
- Review of Professional Registration Fees

- Application of unsocial hours under annual leave

NHS Social Partnership arrangements continued after the Coalition Government election in May. The Partnership arrangements, to engage on Government/Departmental policy and its implications for staff, are now limited to low-level consultation and no longer command a satisfactory level of opportunity to influence policy. Key issues, however, consisted of:

- Ministerial Portfolios – Coalition Government
- Partnership Working
- 'Speak Up for A Health NHS'
- The Government's health White Paper *Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*
- NHS Operating Framework and HR Framework
- MARS (Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme)
- Education and Training Commission Consultation

Ambulance Service

Our total membership across the 14 UK Ambulance Services reached just short of 7,000 by the end of 2010, having grown steadily - month on month - throughout the year. There have been particularly strong performances from our Teams in South East Coast Ambulance, North East Ambulance, East Midlands Ambulance, London Ambulance and West Midlands Ambulance.

Alongside growth, the national priorities over the 12 months have been to strengthen our organisation by raising our profile using the media and to support regions in issues-led campaigns. These have included: publicising the appallingly high incidence of violence against ambulance workers; attacking the removal by government of the 19 minute response time for ambulances to arrive at the scene of incidents not immediately life-threatening; assisting Yorkshire Region in their battles with Yorkshire Ambulance; and fighting the outsourcing of the patient transport service in South London NHS Trust. This strategy has been generally successful and GMB is now seen by the press and the public very much as the voice of ambulance workers and, importantly, indications are that our membership will continue to grow.

Profile and use of the media have tied in with the other key aim of achieving recognition from the five Ambulance Services who did not recognise us (Yorkshire Ambulance, Scottish Ambulance Service, Great West Ambulance Service, South West Ambulance Service and South Central Ambulance Service). On New Year's Eve last year we gained recognition, for the first time, at Great West Ambulance - the culmination of a dogged and determined team effort involving the GWAS Branch, Southern Regional Officers, and National Office. At South West Ambulance our destiny is now in our hands after the employer conceded they will give us recognition subject to us having 10% of the workforce as members.

Our Ambulance Service monitoring arrangements have been redesigned to give us an overview by employer, rather than just GMB Region. This restructure links in with national office's mapping for regions of every ambulance station in each Ambulance Service (with in many cases details of the numbers and occupations working from each) to aid systematic recruitment and organisation.

The National Ambulance Committee of Lay Members and Officers is meeting regularly to drive the agenda and strategy for growth and in October we had the first ever, and very successful, GMB National Ambulance Conference in Birmingham.

CDNA

Following transferring its members to GMB in April 2010 the Community and District Nurses' Association has continued to operate through its National Executive and offer authoritative professional resources for nurses in the community. Now working closely with GMB Regions the CDNA representatives are able to exploit the membership growth potential that clearly exists.

6. SOCIAL CARE

GMB has mounted a rigorous defence against local authority budget cuts imposed by the Tory/Lib.Dem. Government, bringing to the public's attention the number of local authority job losses taking place across departments, including social services.

The Health & Social Care policy, arising out of the Coalition Governments White Paper "Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS", plans to transform organisational boundaries between health and social care and to do more to integrate teams within the NHS and between the NHS and local Government. Contrasting this with the decision to cut local Government funding for 2011/2012 by £6.4bn and the negative impact this cut in funding will have on services across all local authority departments; i.e., home care services being cut, care homes being closed or outsourced and staff being made redundant, how does this reflect a commitment to integrated health and social care provisions between the NHS and local Government? Contractual terms with private sector care providers are also being re-negotiated.

Southern Cross, the largest, independent care home provider in the UK, relies largely on local authority funding for its client groups. As a result, local authorities preparing for this year's funding shortfall, have, in some instances, proposed a freeze in client cost for 2010/2011, impacting heavily on the company's willingness to offer a pay increase for care staff above the national minimum wage.

The outcome of GMB's Southern Cross pay bargaining consultation for 2010/2011 resulted in an imposed pay award, effective from 1 January 2011, of the following new minimum rates for care staff on Southern Cross contracts :

£6 per hour, increasing to a minimum of £6.15 per hour, upon achieving NVQ2 and £6.25 upon achieving NVQ3 level and above. Senior carers: A minimum of £6.20 per hour for unqualified staff increasing to a minimum of £6.30 per hour for qualified staff.

The far from satisfactory 2010/2011 pay talks highlighted the need to organise more effectively in this sector if we seriously want to proceed to a mandate for further action to influence pay talks in future.

In response to rapid changes in social care over the last couple of years, GMB developed a 'Care Charter for the Elderly'. Within the Charter, GMB expressed concern that the personalisation agenda was leading to fragmentation of social care provision and, as a consequence, lowering of quality standards of care. In the Charter, GMB calls for the creation of a National Care Service providing national care standards, assessment and eligibility. Also, within the Charter, GMB calls for a national education, training and career structure in the social care sector with clear career development opportunities and career pathways, along the lines of the NHS Agenda for Change Career and Pay Progression System, linked to the development of knowledge and skills.

The Charter provides a framework through which training and development of our members can be formalised and employers enforced to achieve national standards of quality of care throughout the social care sector, including those providing care to those using personalised budgets. At the time of writing this report, GMB still intends to promote the Charter in order to achieve its aims of enhancing the knowledge and skills of our members, to improve the quality of care throughout the sector and to enable recruitment of membership from a better regulated provider network in accordance with GMB policy PS1 and PS2 endorsed by Congress in 2010.

7. MOD

In July, the new coalition Government proposed legislation to cap redundancy payments for the Civil Service at twelve month's pay for compulsory redundancy and fifteen month's pay for voluntary redundancy. At the same time it indicated that it would seek to amend the 1972 Superannuation Act to allow it to change the terms of the Compensation Scheme without the agreement of all the unions.

Following extensive negotiations with the Cabinet Office, counter-proposals were put to the Government and formed the basis of a final offer:

Voluntary redundancy. For those below normal pension age - accrual of one month per year of service up to 21 months, plus 3 months notice. Employers will have discretion to increase this accrual with Cabinet Office approval.

For those above normal pension age - accrual at one month per year of service up to a maximum of six months' pay.

For all releases, either compulsory or voluntary - three months' notice which can be taken as pay in lieu of notice, in addition to payments based on service.

Staff who have reached their minimum pension age (50 for members who joined the civil service before 6 April 2006) can choose to opt for early retirement with no actuarial reduction.

Compulsory redundancy. One month per year of service up to a maximum 12 months' pay. All staff faced with compulsory redundancy are guaranteed the opportunity to exit under voluntary terms.

No one can be made compulsory redundant without first being offered the maximum voluntary terms.

Pay thresholds. All staff earning less than £23,000 (on an FTE basis) will be treated as if they earn £23,000 for the purpose of calculating redundancy payments. An upper pay threshold of £149,820 is also introduced. Staff will have their salary capped at this figure for the purposes of calculating their redundancy payment. These sums are linked to the ONS Annual Salary Hourly Earnings (ASHE) 'Annual Pay: Gross' table, and will be up-rated annually.

Following a members' consultation ballot on the Reform of the Compensation Scheme held in December, GMB members in the MOD voted to accept the revised terms.

After the election of the Coalition Government in May, the MOD undertook a revised Strategic Defence and Security Review. Full details of the outcome of that Review are still being realised in departments and in MOD agencies, in particular the Defence Storage Group Agency (DSG) which, as a result of the review, may be sold in the future to the private sector, and the Defence Support and Distribution Agency (DSDA) which had its agency status remove

8. LEGAL SERVICES COMMISSION (LSC)

The LSC continue with their major plans to transform their business delivery. Over the course of the last year the GMB continued to receive HR1 forms which amounted to over 200 redundancies. In total the LSC were looking to make 600 staff redundant. The GMB's successful intervention in suspending a 90 days consultation due to the absence of an Equality Impact Assessment had been testament to the fact that the GMB Reps in the LSC are working tirelessly to challenge the employer's cuts programme every step of the way. GMB is also pleased to report that the three year restructure plans have finally been withdrawn as the headcount reduction is simply not achievable. The GMB challenged this restructure from day one and although there has been some success in the short term the LSC will not be immune to the austerity measure all Public Sector areas are facing.

Over the coming year the coalition Government is likely to cut the Legal Aid budget and this will have a direct impact on how the LSC organises itself. Currently the LSC is awaiting a Bill being laid before Parliament to disband its status as an organisation and establish it as a Non Government Departmental Body. This will mean the LSC will be brought into the Ministry of Justice and many of the current LSC employees will become Civil Servants.

On pay, the LSC as with all Public Sector Departments had to follow the Treasury's position on Public Sector Pay. After some negotiations the £250 was secured in consolidation for LSC employees earning

less than £21K. In addition a 0.5% non consolidated amount was secured for all other staff. Finally after much protracted negotiations pay progression was honoured despite the LSC making a claim that this was not contractual.

GMB organisation remains central to the industrial agenda and nationally full access facilities have been secured for reps to organise GMB membership. Each GMB Workplace Organiser continues to be tasked to achieve full membership at all LSC sites. The GMB Senior Reps meet every quarter and the annual conference has ensured that all GMB Reps participate in the process of agreeing the industrial and organising strategy.

The National Chair Peter Earley who works at the LSC South Tyneside Office and Vice – Chair Martin Benham who works at the LSC Birmingham Office have both provided strong leadership and dedicated support to all the members in the Commission. Both Peter and Martin are an asset to the GMB and should be congratulated and thanked for their unstinting support in the organisation of GMB members and retaining jobs at the LSC.

9. THE PRISON SERVICE

Negotiations are conducted through the Prison Service Joint Industrial Council (PSJIC), which includes Unite and UCATT. Our members in the service include maintenance, catering, cleaning and other relevant occupational groups linked to industrial workers.

Discussions in 2010/11 have been dominated by the Job Evaluation project. The project began in 2006 but Trade Unions have been kept at an arms length without meaningful involvement. Throughout the process, there has been a lack of purpose and leadership from the Prison Service and responsibility for the project has passed from one management team to another.

This has led to discussions being protracted and difficult as management teams have displayed a sheer lack of knowledge and understanding of job evaluation. Throughout the project, GMB has led the PSJIC discussions with the various management teams. Our major concern with the Job Evaluation project has been about the structure of the job evaluation factor plan, which we believe is not fit for purpose. The Job Evaluation scheme excludes factors that are a significant feature of an industrial type role, meaning that our members will be disadvantaged when it comes to scoring the jobs. At the time of writing, PSJIC, along with other bargaining groups, are considering the withdrawal of all co-operation and involvement in the JE process.

On another matter the Prison Service has also given notice to withdraw trade union facilities some months ago but have not really engaged in any meaningful discussions as to what could be put in its place. This is just another attack on hard-won, negotiated rights for Trades Union Representatives. Discussions continue on this issue and GMB will need to secure appropriate agreeable facilities to allow our reps to undertake their duties.

To support GMB consolidation of the service a Regional Officers' Briefing was put together to outline the key issues for Prison Staff. The briefing included a list of all the Prisons together with details on how to access the sites. Nationally after discussions with the employer access has been secured at the various sites with the employer giving a commitment to overcome any problems incurred locally in gaining access to workplaces.

10. HIGHER EDUCATION

The future of Higher Education and the long awaited Browne Review recommendations have potentially created significant inequalities in access to Higher Education. The government's determination to increase tuition fees is likely to have devastating effects on families who wish to access Higher Education in the future.

The GMB has been proud to be part of the trade union campaign to highlight issues affecting HE Staff and Students. GMB has consistently supported the Student Union Movement in raising attention to the consequences of the raising of tuition fees and cuts to HE Funding. There is a crisis in Education and the GMB with the support of the other four unions have launched a campaign entitled '5 Unions 1 Demand' with a simple message, 'Defend Higher Education'.

At the time of writing over 100 institutions have announced job cuts and yet the UCEA, the employer's association, still refuses to enter into a meaningful dialogue and develop a national agreement to avoid compulsory redundancies.

The 0.5% pay deal which was concluded for the pay year 2009/10 was certainly a backward step for the sector after one of the best three year pay deals secured in the Public Sector. 2010/11 unfortunately continued with the same theme - the claim that any pay increases would mean job cuts - a line that the GMB alongside the other four unions has robustly challenged. A 0.4% offer was tabled and finally accepted on the proviso that a national agreement is seriously discussed on job security.

GMB Regions are actively encouraged to engage and develop the campaign. Further details of the campaign can be found on www.defendhighereducation.org.uk

The GMB Higher Education Committee continues to support the aims and objectives of the Public Services Section and brings direct attention to the PS Committee of the activities of the GMB Higher Education Section. The GMB HE Committee have met regularly and supported all the activities around the campaign to defend Higher Education, and a number of GMB HE activists made up the numbers of protestors that were 'kettled' by the Police at the recent demonstrations.

The GMB HE Committee is made up of the following:

- John Brannan (London Region)
- Alan Budd (Midland & East Coast Region)
- Jim Finucane (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)
- Les Goodyer (Northern Region)
- Barry Lambert (Southern Region)
- Fred McDwyer (North West & Irish Region)
- Patrick Maddock (Yorkshire Region)
- Vacant (South Western Region)
- Tom Young (GMB Scotland)

It will be appropriate to thank the Chair of the Committee, Barry Lambert, for his experienced guidance in chairing the activities of the Higher Education Committee and his active involvement in the recent demonstrations.

11. FURTHER EDUCATION

In England the vast majority of colleges are members of the Association of Colleges (AOC), an employers' organisation which negotiates with the GMB alongside other recognised trade unions to produce recommendations for individual colleges to adopt. There continue to be difficulties around settlements that only carry a recommendation to implement. As a result many colleges in England have fallen behind the nationally agreed pay scales.

The thrust of GMB activity has been to continue to encourage regions to improve local FE college organisation. To support this activity regions have been provided with a list of colleges, the recognition agreement, model letters to initiate contact with college principals and details in how the 'time to pay up' campaign can be applied to support the industrial and organising agenda of the GMB. Unfortunately despite best efforts organisation in FE remains patchy. The GMB recently took an active role in

developing a campaign to 'Save the Education Maintenance Allowance'. The scrapping of this fund will directly impact on the number of staff at colleges particularly if student numbers start falling.

On pay the AOC recommended a final offer of 0.2% with a £50 underpinning. Many of the GMB FE Colleges do not implement the recommendations and those colleges that responded reluctantly agreed to accept the offer.

12. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The majority of GMB membership is held by the Southern Region and the two national reps Terry Sadler and Mike Sutton are also based within the Region. National negotiations on pay and conditions are carried out through the National Negotiating Group (NNG) where the GMB has one seat.

The agency recently launched a Voluntary Early Release Scheme (VERS) and from the numbers that applied there have been demonstrations that the people working at the Agency are fed up with how things are being run. The employer is currently going through a process to work out how many staff they require going forward and discussions are ongoing.

The national reps continue to secure engagement across the regions by regularly updating all members on all issues discussed within the Agency.

13. POLICE STAFF

The terms and conditions of Police Staff are negotiated through the Police Staff Council (PSC). The GMB has one seat on the PSC which is currently held by Fergus Murchie of Devon and Cornwall Police.

The sector is currently in a three-year pay deal which commenced in 2008 and the pay deal will be concluded this year. The offer consisted of pay increases retrospectively of 2.6% in year one, 2.6% in year two, and in the year three the increase will be 2.58% on all PSC pay points and allowances. Year three would see the deletion of the pay points 2 and 3. Deletion of the bottom pay points is a significant step to end low pay in the sector. In addition a strong statement was agreed by the PSC with a view to develop a strategic approach to explore a national grading structure for all Police Staff in England and Wales. Unfortunately this work has made little progress and the PSC are currently reviewing how best to move this forward.

Nationally the GMB continues to seek to work with Regions locally to strengthen GMB force organisation and a Organisers' Briefing was put together outlining the key issues affecting Police Staff together with details of all the Police Forces and how best to commence consolidation of membership.

14. CONTRACTORS

As expected, the externalisation of services by local government and the NHS has continued since the general election, and with renewed vigour. At the same time, the jobs and terms and conditions of our contractor members have been under attack in a way not seen since the days of CCT.

Contractors have been a national recruitment target since September 2009. The first target - Verdant/Biffa - started in November 2009 and since then Enterprise and Veolia have been added.

Regions have been asked to conduct a mapping exercise of all the existing local government contractors in their area and from that identify Regional targets for consolidation and growth.

The establishment of a National Contractors Forum, and in most cases Regional Forums, have provided an important opportunity for lay member input into the development of contractors. However the recruitment and organisation results so far suggest the benefits of these are not yet clear.

What is clear is that there are plenty of national and regional opportunities both to consolidate our existing membership and to exploit issues as they arise. Results from both the national and regional targets have been variable. If the growth and organisation of contractors is to realise its full potential then national and Regional targets will need to be followed up, prioritised and resourced accordingly.

15. PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

As well as mass redundancies and pay freezes the Tory-Lib government has launched a direct attack on public sector pensions. Fuelled by the hysteria of the right-wing media and in ignorance of the facts the Coalition government has commissioned John Hutton to review benefits while in the meantime slashing the future value of pensions and imposing a pensions tax on public sector workers.

The shift to CPI indexation from RPI was imposed by government and at a stroke knocks around 15% off the value of public sector pensions. The plan announced in the October CSR to levy a pension tax on public sector workers (adding an average 50% to the contribution for individuals) is unfair and unnecessary.

GMB has campaigned tirelessly to defend all public sector pension schemes and actively communicates through bulletins and workplace meetings on this vital issue.

16. PROGRESS ON MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS 2010 AND PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION CONFERENCE 2010

Motion 3. Black Hole

The request for Sections to report on their motions was already implemented by the PS Section in 2010.

Motion 87. Pro Rata Pay

Calling for a cap on senior pay the motion was passed with qualification. Since then GMB has continued to campaign against excess at the top and participated in Will Hutton's review on this subject.

Motion 94 Public Services Cuts

The argument that cuts are not the best way to tackle the deficit has been actively promoted by GMB across many fronts.

Motion 152 Chaplaincy

Spending on chaplaincy services in different part of the public sector has been generally redefined and redistributed to reflect the need to move to multi-faith provision. Despite attacks by the National Secular Society overall spending has been maintained.

Motion 177 Defibrillation Equipment in Children's Hospices

The motion called for public funding of portable defibrillation equipment in children's hospices. However, Children's Hospices UK has pointed out that most hospices already have specialist equipment and if they could secure public funding for extra equipment and training they would prefer their hospices to decide how to allocate that.

Motion 183 Deaf People in Hospital

The motion, calling for all doctors and nurses to be sign language trained, was qualified by the CEC. All hospitals are required to provide sign language support if requested and to have signers on standby for emergencies wherever possible.

Motion 184 Privacy and Dignity

The CEC qualified this motion that complained of patients being unable to have relatives present in Day Patient Units as a result of the NHS privacy and dignity policy. In fact DPU attendance by relatives is discretionary and varies according to available facilities and the treatment being undertaken.

EM1 Unity Across the Public Sector

GMB has campaigned hard to fight against public sector cuts and has actively sought to do so in conjunction with other trade unions and organisations at national and local level. GMB has worked closely with the TUC which is co-ordinating the TU campaign nationally.

PS1 ISA Standards for Social Care Workers

GMB has been active in the TU campaign to highlight the difficulties involved in the ISA registration scheme including costs, across all sectors. The scheme is now being fundamentally reviewed by government.

PS 2 Social Care Personalisation Budgets

The motion rightly highlights the dangers inherent in personal care budgets which have now been extended in principle by the coalition government to many more areas of public provision. GMB has strongly pointed out the dangers of poor standards of service provision to personal budget holders and has included this as part of the "Charter for Care".

PS3 School Support Staff Negotiating Body

The motion queried the government's influence over the remit of the SSSNB, now overtaken by the decision to cancel that body.

PS Comp 1 The Effect of the Private Sector Financial Crisis on Public Sector Workers and their Pay

GMB has spoken out vociferously to defend public sector workers against the unjustified attacks by Ministers and some sections of the media.

PS8 Local Authority Workers

GMB nationally has taken every opportunity to put in the public domain the range of local authority employees that provide our vital, front line community services.

PS Comp 2 Anti Academies Alliance

As requested by the motion GMB affiliated to the Anti Academies Alliance and we work with other unions to campaign against this Coalition policy.

PS11 Pensions for First and Second Generation Local Authority Workers

Through the Contractors' Forum and our 2-tier training and in our direct dealings with contractors, GMB pushes for open admission agreements where possible.

PS Comp 3 Defend Public Sector Pensions

The motion is right to highlight attacks on the LGPS and GMB has done more than anyone to promote and defend this pension scheme and those in other parts of the public sector.

PS16 School Support Staff

The motion calls for fairer treatment of HLTAs through the SSSNB - that body is now defunct and so HLTA pay remains a local matter.

PS Comp 4 Defend Public Services Against Privatisation

The motion sets out some of the arguments against privatisation and outsourcing which GMB continues to campaign against at all levels.

PS20 Monitoring Motions Passed

The Public Services National Committee acts on Section motions passed as quickly as possible, as set out in the motion.

PS21 Care Staff

The appallingly low levels of pay in the private care sector are rightly highlighted in this motion and as well as being the focus of negotiations needs maximum effort from the GMB at all levels.

PS22 Protect our NHS

The motion calls on government to support the NHS, sadly overtaken by the events set in train to virtually privatise everything in the public sector. GMB will not rest in its campaigning against this anti-public pro-profit policy.

PS23 Local Authority Employers Move Away from the National Negotiating Body

At national level GMB monitors the effects of authorities undermining national conditions, pay and jobs. However it is absolutely clear that in addition it is the national employers themselves who deliberately flout the national agreement and GMB has been clear in its condemnation of the employers.

PS24 Contractors - Third Party Some Other Substantial Reason - Dismissal

The motion called on the Union to highlight cases of clients demanding dismissal of contractor employees and to campaign accordingly; however no such cases have been provided to act on.

PS25 Local Authority Budgets Cuts

The motion strongly advocates not only campaigning against cuts but also making public the real effects on local services. This has been a priority in GMB campaigning nationally and at Regional level.

PS26 Proper Monitoring of Outsourced Local Authority Contracts

The action to monitor contracts at local level is best carried out by GMB Regions who can assist the workplace reps as requested by the motion.

PS27 Sickness Absence Policies and Procedures

This motion refers to sickness monitoring policies in police forces which is a matter for each individual police authority where GMB is able to negotiate.

PS28 Core Funding for Police Community Support Officers

GMB has supported the introduction of PCSOs alongside police officers and it is a damning indictment of the Coalition government that they have failed to maintain law and order spending that would help ensure security of PCSOs.

PS29 Agenda for Change

GMB does not accept contractor excuses for failing to apply relevant Agenda for Change agreements and as well as raising this nationally with contractors we work at local level to ensure members are not disadvantaged.

PS30 0844 Telephone Numbers

Government has introduced 030 numbers to replace 0844 numbers for the public sector but has not obliged GPs to switch. This is because an estimated 1500 GPs were sold new telephone systems (to improve patient communications) together with 0844 numbers to recoup the cost. However the Audit Commission points out that it is possible to use 0844 numbers without an extra charge, as they do. The danger is that with government plans to hand more commissioning powers to GPs the likelihood of more stealth charges will increase.

PS32 Funding for Further and Adult Education

GMB supports proper funding for the whole of the education sector and shares the concerns in the motion regarding the cuts announced in 2009. The pressures have been worsened by the overall budget cuts now being imposed by the Coalition government and GMB will continue to campaign hard to protect this vital sector.

PS33 Public Sector Cuts

At every level GMB has fought hard to show that the financial crisis has been caused by bankers not public sector workers.

PS34 Public Sector Alliance

The motion's call for GMB to work with the TUC over forming alliances with other public sector unions is met through the Public Services Liaison Group which the TUC organises along with a number of joint campaigning events.

PS Comp 5 Tetra Radios in the Ambulance Service

GMB has publicly raised the issue of potential health risks arising from the use of Tetra radios and has carried out independent research to support this.

PS Comp 6 Local Authority Pay and Grading

The call for local authorities to "level up not down" is GMB policy to be pursued in all single status negotiations.

PS EM1 Public Services and the New Coalition

The motion was a reaction to the election of the Tory-Lib Dem government and ensured that GMB was clear in its opposition to their slash and burn policies on pay and pensions.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move into the Public Service Section Report. I call Brian Strutton to move his report, pages 85-97. Brian.

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary): Formally move.

THE PRESIDENT: I will go through the report. Pages 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96 and 97. Are there any questions on the Report? *(No response)* Thank you. Can you second the Report formally?

The Public Services Section Report was formally seconded.

**INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: ECONOMY
PUBLIC SPENDING: FIGHT THE CUTS**

**RESTORATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES
MOTION 164**

164. RESTORATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

This Congress calls upon the GMB to press the Labour Party to oppose cuts in public sector funding which is virtually privatisation by the back door, and also to oppose the privatisation of services like the Post Office.

When the Labour Party is next in power to restore public accountability for vital public services.

SHEFFIELD LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. WARWICK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 164 – Restoration of Public Services. The experience of outsourcing and PFI has proved very expensive and public sector money has been poured into private sector

profit rather than reinvestment into public services. In many cases, this has also removed public accountability in the delivery of our valuable public services. Excellent examples in the past have increased prices and profits which should have gone into public services, such as gas, electricity, water, and the Government are now talking about privatising the Post Office. Would a private company provide a national service at the same charge to an urban address as a rural area? I think not. However, we are not suggesting – I hope nobody every misunderstood this – the nationalisation of services which have been privatised in the past and the re-introduction of Clause 4. We recognise that that is not a realistic proposition. In any case, there are plenty of considerable threats at the present time. The NHS is under severe threat of privatisation. In education, academies will surely break-up local provision and LEAs as we know them. There is likely to be further outsourcing. So when the Labour Party are next in power, they should consider which essential public services should be brought back into public accountability. Congress, I ask the GMB to press the Labour Party to restore public accountability in essential services. Please support. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder?

BRO. K. GILBERTHORPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I speak in support of Motion 164 – Restoration of Public Services. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Well, Vince, I'm shaking but I'm amongst friends here. *(Applause)*

President and Congress, we've seen this Coalition Government in power for more than a year now, and in that time we have seen attack after attack on our vital public services on the back of the banking crisis. Thousands of our members are being threatened with losing their jobs, while the very fabric of the public services are destroyed or privatised just to save money. We cannot let our vital services be destroyed by outsourcing and privatisation. We cannot stand by and see our members put on the dole. Good quality services need to be properly funded by central Government. When the Labour Party is returned to power to govern this country again, we need it to commit to rebuilding good quality public services, and all properly funded by central Government. We must start by urging the Labour Party to reject all forms of privatisation. The ideology that has prevailed over the last few years has been as long as it is a good service, it doesn't matter who provides it. Let me tell you this. It does. We have witnessed changes to the NHS that even the medical profession cannot justify and the care of the most vulnerable in our society being farmed out to the lowest bidder. Colleagues, please support this motion, as we will all have to rely on one of these services one day. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ken. Thank you.

COALITION CUTS MOTION 165

165. COALITION CUTS

This Congress deplores the fact that due to the massive cut backs being imposed on Local Authorities, it is envisaged that some 250 Sure Start Children's Centres could close within a year, whilst many more will face a cut to their budget and have to run a reduced service.

The loss of this service set up by the Labour Government to help families with parenting and childcare, will impact on the most vulnerable in our society who depend on Sure Start Children's Centres to help get their children off to the best start in life.

This is another case of a total lack of concern that the contraction and in many cases the removal of this high quality service of early years support could have a lasting impact on many children's lives and their future development.

Congress agrees that a campaign is mounted to protect these services so that many young people can develop and make sure they can have a good quality of life and become well rounded and adjusted citizens.

TORFAEN BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. P. PHILLIPS (South Western): Congress, I am from the Merthyr Tydfil Local Authority branch, moving Motion 165, entitled Coalition Cuts.

President and Congress, Sure Start was a Government initiative launched in 1998 with the aim of giving children the best possible beginning in life by way of improvement in childcare, early education, health and family support. Colleagues may recall that the programme was originally intended to support families from pregnancy up until the children were four years old. It was then extended to the age of 14 or 16 for those with disabilities. Whilst there may have been some historic problems linked to funding per head and a change from child development to child care and getting mothers into work, it is generally held that Sure Start represents a valuable source of high quality early years support, which reconciles with the wider goal of reducing child poverty. The centres have a wide range of services to meet the needs of both parents and children. They are somewhere for children to make friends and learn whilst they play and where parents can get advice on health and family matters. The parents can learn about training opportunities or just socialise with other people.

Congress, now all the good work achieved is seriously in jeopardy by cutting funding from central Government to local authorities. A survey of 3,500 centre managers found that more than half of those responding were expecting to run reduced services, whilst up to 250 centres could actually close within one year. Both the reduction in the level of the Early Intervention Grant and the removal of protection around Children's Centre funding will inevitably impact on families right across the country, particularly the most vulnerable who rely on the centres to help their children achieve the best start in life.

Colleagues, this is yet another example of how children and young people are having to bear the human cost of the country's financial deficit. Sure Start helps those aspirational families who want to improve life for themselves and their children. It is designed to prevent them from suffering the same fate as their parents.

Congress, Cameron's promise to protect and build upon Sure Start has not been honoured. Parents and mother goods have admirably protested against these cuts. This motion calls upon our Union to follow their example and to campaign against this disgraceful disinvestment in such a socially vital service. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Seconder? Is it formally seconded?

The motion was formally seconded.

EQUALITY GROUPS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS MOTION 166

166. EQUALITY GROUPS & COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

This Congress notes that the Con-Dem Government cuts to national and local spending will have a devastating affect on community organisations providing services across the equality area. Congress, there has already been funding cuts to organisations such as Remploy and Broken Rainbow and more will follow.

This GMB Congress therefore instructs the CEC and NEF to ensure that the equality dimension are central to our resistance to the cuts by trade union and community groups and that we campaign to support all equality groups facing cuts in grants etc. In addition, the GMB will seek to ensure the different equality areas are aware of the impact of the cuts and take an active part in the ongoing campaign of resistance.

GMB@PCS BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. BOWMAN (London): Congress, I move Motion 166 – Equality Groups and Community Organisations. I am here as a member of the Big Society. The Big Society was entrenched within our communities long before David Cameron discovered it as a buzz word. For you, me and our members, this is a reality and not a media moment. Across the country we are seeing our equality support groups decimated by the vicious ideological cuts, cuts forcing these very essential groups to cease to exist. I want to know where are the equality impact assessments? The Single Equality Act is law. When these services are eroded it is unlawful. 75% of disabled women and 70% of disabled men are at the bottom end of Britain's income scale, living in poverty. The Equality Act says that it is okay to give disabled people special treatment that would indicate an improvement for our disabled members. The Government is redressing this situation by making cuts to social care, cutting funds to all Government departments, to reduce the service to the equality strands. While they are at it, why not sack all the disabled workers at Luton? We are all aware of the ongoing Remploy campaign.

We are seeing the destruction of groups like Women's Aid losing women's refuge centres. Colleagues, we all know how important these services are to women and children who are victims of domestic violence. This is a vital service offering a safe haven and support. When you think about it, funding has been made out to vital services, such as Broken Rainbow, which gives help and support for domestic violence in same sex relationships. Experience of colleagues shows that the police don't always take any serious notice of domestic violence between two men. How difficult is it for men to find help when suffering domestic violence? Broken Rainbow provides a vital service for these victims. Funding has been cut to groups like Gallop, who act as a liaison between the gay community and the police.

Most people have heard of the Terrence Higgins Trust and their work on HIV. We need this organisation to exist. We don't want the Terrence Higgins Trust to fall. We know that the cuts will hugely affect black and minority groups. We have fought hard over the years to eradicate racism and to see our black and ethnic sisters and brothers as equal in our society at large. However, we all know that we have an awful long way to go. All too often we see in our workplace that black and ethnic members are not the managers or executives. They are the people creating the wealth but not sharing in the profits. We all know that they will be the first to go and then re-employed with their terms and conditions slashed.

With the cuts to the Youth Service, we can only see an increase in knife crime that is plaguing our inner cities. The attacks on our elderly through the cuts to our Winter Fuel Allowance, £50 to the over 60s and £100 to over 80s, are disgusting.

I call upon this Congress and the NEF to ensure that we keep equality at the top of our agenda and campaign to support all equality groups facing cuts in grants that that the GMB make these equality areas aware of the impact of the cuts by taking an active part in the ongoing campaign of resistance. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mavis. Secunder?

SIS. S. WALDRON (London): Congress, I second Motion 166.

THE PRESIDENT: Sharon, I hope you had a nice birthday yesterday. Belated birthday wishes.

SIS. WALDRON: I did. Thank you everyone who signed the card. (*Applause*) This Congress asks the CEC and the NEF to campaign against Government cuts to funding and grants which are fundamental to the survival of community organisations and equality groups. Due to the recent decrease in the settlement figures that Newham has received from central Government, Newham has made the decision to remove funding from some of the community organisations which are quite valuable and which will affect women and the poorest the most. One of the projects, in particular, that funding has been removed from concerns families evicted for anti-social behaviour or who are at risk of being evicted. They work with families in council houses or in privately rented accommodation. The project attempts to keep families in their homes and children from going into care. They provide an invaluable service to Newham which saves millions of pounds. Although only a proportion of their funding is derived from the local authority, the project can no longer work.

Overall London boroughs provide more than £1 billion of support to the voluntary sector annually, and their grants programme is a small but significant part of this. London councils agreed a new budget of just over £20 million for the pan-London programme this year. The previous budget amounted to £30 million. These cuts have a wider impact as demonstrated by a recent report by the Institute of Public Policy and Research, which showed that income distribution is fairer across the north of England compared with the south-east of England, where inequality is rising.

The report strongly indicates that more divided city regions have weaker social cohesion and a less sense of belonging. In other words, they found that where equality

is greater, the fabric of society is weaker. What is interesting about the report is the recommendation for local authorities and local enterprise partnerships to take the lead and return the region to its former economic growth.

Congress, the issue of inequality is at the forefront of the work that we do. Everybody should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribution to society.

In conclusion, the GMB Congress, therefore, instructs the CEC and the NEF to ensure that the equality dimensions are central to our resistance to the cuts and that we campaign to give support to community groups facing cuts. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon.

WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY MOTION 167

167. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

This Congress notes that as the economic crisis deepens, workers, their families, and their communities face unprecedented challenges.

Congress is alarmed that Government proposals to counter economic gloom characterised by stagnant growth and inflation, consist of brutal cuts, driven by ideology, that will decimate the public sector workforce, affecting both workers and those who depend on public services.

Congress believes that the livelihoods of all workers are under attack, but that low-paid working women will be particularly affected by cuts to public spending. This is happening at a time when families are increasingly reliant on the wages of women, and in which women still suffer the lifetime effects, including pensioner poverty, of pay inequality.

Congress notes that the Equality Statement attached to the draft Scottish Budget 2011/12 indicates that the Scottish Government is aware of the negative impact of its spending proposals on low-paid public sector women.

Congress supports the *There is a Better Way* campaign, which challenges the aggressive cuts agenda, and calls on the General Council to:

- Continue to highlight, through *There is a Better Way*, the gendered impacts of cuts, both on working women and on services;
- Continue to engage with the *Equality and the Budget Advisory Group* to ensure that budget processes are gendered;
- Continue to campaign for a Scottish living wage, which will have particular impact on the pay of the lowest paid workers, many of whom are women.

SOUTHERN CROSS BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(*Carried*)

SIS. E. MARTIN (GMB Scotland) Congress, I move Motion 167 – Women and the Economy. As the economic climate deepens many workers' families in communities will face many challenges. Government cuts to the public sector will affect both workers and those independent public services, which are predominantly the most vulnerable groups in the community. Low paid working women, many of whom are

on the minimum wage, will be affected. Carers, support workers, cleaners and teaching assistants are a few examples. Most of these women are working to supplement the family income and are keeping the family out of poverty. Workers' livelihoods will be severely under attack, but it is believed that women will be particularly affected. According to the Office of National Statistics, the number of unemployed females has increased to 462,300, the highest figure since 1996.

Severe cuts to public spending will have a knock-on effect in other areas, for example, my own employment, which is in the care sector. Money will be in short supply to pay for the elderly to go into care homes, thereby threatening the jobs of yet more low paid women. Many working women balance looking after a family, a house and going to work. Now they face the added stress of possibly unemployment with the prospect of financial hardship.

Does it easier when women retire? No. They then face pension poverty caused by pay and inequality again leading to the prospect of financial hardship. Government Ministers, who have been challenged about cuts to the public sector and unemployment, have said it is hoped that the private sector will pick up some of the people out of work. Many private businesses are struggling at the moment, so this is unlikely to happen, Southern Cross being an example. This financial crisis will cost the jobs of the 43,000 staff, many of whom are low paid women.

Congress supports the *There is a Better Way* campaign, which challenges the aggressive cuts agenda, and calls on the General Council to continue to highlight the gendered impacts of cuts, both on working women and on services; to continue to engage with the *Equality and the Budget Advisory Group* to ensure that budget processes are gendered, and to continue to campaign for a Scottish living wage, which will have particular impact on the pay of the lowest paid workers, many of whom are women. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

The motion was formally seconded.

PUBLIC SPENDING MOTION 168

168. PUBLIC SPENDING

This Congress believes that the Con-Dem Government's decisions on spending cuts will adversely affect older people as measures to make people work longer before they can access a state pension coupled with VAT rises and other austerity measures takes effect. Congress calls on the Government to reverse these decisions, to provide support to older people for Labour politicians to be more vocal and robust in attacking the Government and calls on the Labour Party to pledge to reverse this policy as part of its internal policy review.

SUNDERLAND NO 9 ENGINEERING BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. S. O'CONNOR (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 168, Public Spending. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, recent

surveys have suggested that cuts in public spending will lead to the biggest fall in income levels since the 1920s. Just look at what has happened since the Tory-led Coalition came to power. Pensions are linked to the Consumer Price Index, charges for services have gone up, VAT has gone up and we have seen massive cuts in public spending. Public transport provision has also been cut. George Osborne likes to claim that we are all in this together, yet the rich millionaires in the Cabinet do not know what it is like for us. It seems that many of these special advisers have done nothing with their lives except drink themselves senseless at universities. It used to be said that MPs needed to have done some hard graft before they started telling the rest of us what to do. Many older people will never have seen such Tory-led cuts in their living standards. Tories and the Lib-Dems have sold their souls for power. What we need is for these cuts to be reversed and fast. We need support for older people to be maintained at the 1997 levels.

The Labour Party should be more vocal in attacking this Government's policies that affect the vulnerable. We need the Labour Party to give a solemn pledge that they will reverse this Government's decision on public spending in writing its next manifesto. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. M. SISTERSON (Northern): I second Motion 168 – Public Spending. Congress, a recent survey by the Association of Directors of Adult Services said that spending cuts led to rising care costs for pensioners on low incomes. We know about provision for older people as we have recognition in councils and private companies that provide services. We also know that older people face a double hit with this Government's cuts. Charges have gone up, income levels have fallen and returns on assets are at an all time low. We also have people working longer for their State pension. Congress, we know what happens with the Tories and the Lib-Dems in coalition. They want us to pay more, work longer and take less. This is what we had when the Tories and the Lib-Dems last ruled together. The need for a real alternative has never been greater. The Labour Party came into being by working people seeking an alternative from the Tories and Liberals. The Labour Party needs to recognise that fact again. Only yesterday, on this very stage, it was pointed out to Ed Balls that the Labour politicians need to set a course that will win back the trust of the poor and the vulnerable in Great Britain. They can start by guaranteeing to reverse these cuts. Please support. Thank you.

RESISTANCE TO THE CUTS MOTION 169

169. RESISTANCE TO THE CUTS

This Congress recognises that the cuts in public expenditure by the Coalition Government represent one of the greatest attacks on working class living standards in modern times. Whilst the full effects of these savage cuts have still to be felt we note that resistance to them is imperative.

We therefore resolve to support all Labour Movement initiatives to oppose these cuts, including both those nationally organised by the TUC and others and local organisations

We pledge the support of the GMB both financially and organisationally to that struggle and instruct the CEC to prioritise such activities, utilising both the general and political funds of the union to their maximum.

Specifically we call on the union nationally and all regions to provide all available assistance to those engaged in resistance to the cuts.

HOLBORN BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. COLES (London): Congress, I move Motion 169 – Resistance to the Cuts. I have not prepared a script this morning. What with the cuts, I couldn't afford a scriptwriter. Nor did I get any Coalition partner to write a speech for me. There were times yesterday when I walked into the hall and I thought I was coming into Thatcher's Britain. That wasn't just when Doug Rigby speaking from a dictionary. That reminded me when the Tories were in Parliament. If they didn't like something, they used to read from a telephone directory or a dictionary just to time things out rather than have a proper debate and find solutions. These cuts are a bit like Thatcher's Britain. Instead of the miners, we've got public services. There is a synergy there, really, because with open cast mining and the cuts now, it is like cut and cover up.

This motion says that we have got to resist the cuts. We don't like people going on strike. We've got a simple solution. There's been a really big invention over the years. It's called the table. Then we have things like chairs and we sit round the table and discuss things. Then you find solutions. We don't strike for no reason. The reason why we had the march on 26th March was because if we don't like something, we do something about it. If they won't sit down and talk to us, we'll do something. I never imagined that I would standing here agreeing with Ed Balls a few years ago, but he is right. If they are making cuts over three years – you can have the argument whether they should be making those cuts – but you don't front load them in the first year. You sit down, you come to solutions and you actually work out what you are going to do. You work out how you are going to provide those services. Can you provide those services and make sure that people have alternatives and can find other work. You don't just cut and run, and that is what this Government is doing and what our local authorities are doing.

Those of you who pressed "1" yesterday to say that you had actually read the website in the last week would have seen that my borough of Redbridge has actually been on there. We had a headteacher of a secondary school who decided to cut some support staff posts. Only 80% of your costs for the school should be in staffing. "Oh, I think I'll make some cuts", but not because the budget needed cutting but because he could make some cuts. What did he do? He cut some of the support staff posts, despite the guidelines saying that no more than 20% of your staffing costs in a secondary school should be spent on school support, although it was only 17%. In a consultation exercise, you are supposed for ideas from your staff. They said, "Instead of paying the teachers extra to do lunchtime cover, we'll do it as part of our time. We'll go to lunch a bit later and do it as part of our time." "Oh, no, we couldn't have that." That was nothing to do with the fact that he is taking some money from it. We will soon find out how many other head teachers are doing that because my colleague, Richard

Smythe, who is a first-time delegate this year, is putting in a freedom of information request for all head teachers in the area to see how much they are actually getting. We have MPs with their expenses and now we will have head teachers with their expenses. It is a scandal. We've got to stop it.

This motion calls on us to put all of our resources into resisting these cuts. We must do it now. I think there is a qualification. I am sure the CEC will say that they are doing this. We do need to do more. We are all in a united front, whether we are pissed-off with the Lib-Dems or Labour. We need to go together in the labour Movement and the socialist Movement. I am a socialist. I'm a liberal socialist. We need to go and fight these cuts and campaign on these issues to stop these cuts. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Jonathan, when you ask for that freedom of information information, ask how many chairs of the governing bodies of academies get paid for doing the jobs? I am talking about the Big Society. I think that would be interesting. *(Applause)* Can I have a seconder to Motion 169?

BRO. R. POLE (London): President, I am seconding Motion 169 – Resistance to the Cuts. Comrades, there is no need for me to speak at any length re the proposed cuts. We know the terrible damage they are doing to society and will continue to do so unless stopped, as our excellent *Fight the Cuts Campaign* book highlights. Our public service members are going to feel the full force of this jobs holocaust, causing a devastating impact on working conditions, pensions and communities. This resolution concentrates on resistance, a resistance that started with the magnificent 26th March demonstration which the GMB played such a major part in. That, however, should just be the starting gun. We need that repeated everywhere where the cuts are being implemented. If needs be, we need industrial action to defend our jobs and conditions. Hopefully, on 30th June, workers in the Civil Service, education and local councils will be taking strike action. We need to give them full support and, more importantly, we need to be with them fighting together. We have seen momentous events worldwide as people fight for democracy and against austerity measures caused by the bankers' and the capitalists' crisis, ranging from the Arab spring, to Wisconsin USA, to the mass movements in Europe, in Greece, Spain, Ireland and in other places. We need to be part of this movement.

Comrades, let me give you a word of warning. It is no use to say, "Let's wait for Labour to rescue us", because that will be too late. In all honesty, can we rely on them in this situation. Let's go from here determined to back up fine words with the action needed to resist the cuts, to support all those fighting the cuts. Remember, there is an alternative, and with united action and resistance, we can win. Support this resolution, please. *(Applause)*

CAMPAIGN AGAINST PUBLIC SERVICE CUTS

COMPOSITE 13

(Covering Motions 170 and 171)

- 170. THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC SPENDING CUTS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT *(North West & Irish Region)*
- 171. FIGHT THE CUTS *(North West & Irish Region)*

CAMPAIGN AGAINST PUBLIC SERVICES CUTS

This Congress is deeply disturbed at the ConDems public spending cuts and the impact it will have on workers and the most disadvantaged communities who rely on public services.

Congress recognises there are significant difficulties currently in the economy, however Congress also recognises there are alternatives which put people's needs at the centre of economic regeneration as opposed to an approach based on neo-liberal ideology, which created the crisis in the first place, and clearly is a self serving ideology of the wealthy elites .

This Congress should support the workers' right to have meaningful employment that gives a good public service to local communities. Our members are to be cast onto the dole queues and told by the Government that 'it's fair' and there is no other option. GMB should be at the front of any opposition to these cuts and our banners should be in the media at every opportunity to enforce our support of people's right to dignity and work

Congress instructs the CEC to use all its resources and influences, both financial and political, to build an alliance with other liked minded groups and Unions, to mount an effective campaign to robustly challenge the need for this slash and burn approach and to expose it for what it really is - an attack on public services, an attack on the workers and an attack on the most disadvantaged communities in the land.

(Carried)

BRO. J. WATSON (North West & Irish): Comrades, I move Composite 13 – Campaign Against Public Services Cuts. Brothers and sisters, I believe that the largest demonstration against the Government's cuts in London on March 26th signifies something important. Firstly, that hundreds of thousands of people were prepared to take time and effort to make a point which they felt was important to them. Secondly, that there is significant opposition to the spending cuts that are beginning to unfold, as a result of the Government's policy of deficit reduction. Thirdly, that this movement of people, although based on strong heart felt feelings, unfortunately lacks meaningful leadership from the labour Movement.

No movement will be effective in the long term unless it has both intellectual substance coupled with determined and skilled leadership. GMB must be to the forefront in providing both the leadership and intellectual substance.

Let us take the intellectual substance first. The Government wishes to eliminate the "structural deficit" by 2015. But what is this structural deficit? The simplest way of looking at it is by thinking of the remainder of the gap between expenditure and income after expenditures incurred by a downturn in the economic cycle have been taken into account. The total deficit currently runs at 60% of GDP, a figure which is moderate by historic standards.

This country has run a "structural deficit" since the 17th century without coming to serious harm. The harm done to the economy has arisen from misplaced private investment and blinkered and obstructive industrial policy, not from unsustainable public debt. The idea of eliminating the structural deficit is ludicrous and has no warrant in economic practice. In effect, Osborne – the man who said we should

follow the economic model pursued in the Republic of Ireland several years ago -- has been bamboozling the public with bogus economic theory and getting away with it.

Even in its own terms the Government's strategy is nonsensical. As Compass showed last year, reductions in government expenditure will lead to increased public sector unemployment, reduced tax receipts, increased expenditures on social security and have similar effects on those extensive sections of the private sector that are directly or indirectly dependent on government expenditure.

All of this before the less obvious costs associated with the social damages caused by increased unemployment are taken into account.

The claim that private sector investment is crowded out by public expenditure is economically illiterate. There is no reason to suppose that significant sectors of the economy could switch away their investments from dependency on public expenditure to make up for the shortfall in their turnovers arising from reductions in public expenditure.

The key point of the Government's ideological driven economic policy is to undermine, if not destroy, the welfare state and to reverse permanently the percentage of GDP that is devoted to public expenditure. It is nothing more than a crafting application of the Thatcher strategy of the 1980s, being carried out under the cover of a bogus economic crisis. This time round it is being supervised by Cameron, a skilful public relationships artist, who has worked up rhetoric about the Big Society as another way of bamboozling the public as to what he is really up to.

It would be quite possible to advocate a long timescale for the reduction, rather than the ridiculous elimination, of the structural deficit by maintaining growth through public expenditure and bearing down on the harmful waste such as PFI, the wasteful employment of consultants and bloated senior salaries. In addition, redistributive taxation, which erodes the discretionary expenditure and savings ratios of the rich and targets it directly at the employment generation, would do wonders for reducing this deficit. There is a need for a more progressive income tax directed at higher earners, a revision of council tax to ensure that high value properties are taxed at a fair percentage of their value and the introduction of a modest property tax.

Unfortunately, it appears that the Labour Party is frightened of these kinds of measures although they would benefit the so called "squeezed middle". The other unpalatable fact for us is that the current Labour Party leadership accept the Government's premise on the deficit and differ only in the detail of the cuts. So we have not only to provide the intellectual substance but we also need to provide a determined and skilled leadership to tip the balance back in favour of the greater number of working people in this country.

The GMB or the Great, the Magnificent and the Beautiful, as we call ourselves in Belfast, has always been about the creation of the fair society, the just society and the good society. Our presence and above all our capacity to provide the leadership and intellectual substance to the labour and trade union Movement are arguably more crucial now than at any time in recent history. I urge you to support the motion.

BRO. K. FIRTH (North West & Irish): President and Congress, I second Composite 13. We call upon Congress to support the motion and fight the public service cuts. As a union, we believe it is fundamental for the workers to have the right for meaningful employment. Why should the workers be cast on to the bonfire of these dogmatic public service cuts? Why should we, as trade unionists, be expected just to stand back and accept Cameron's and Osborne's view that it is fair and that there is no other option. We have to make the cuts to clear up the mess. Well, let's put some real meaning into this.

People in this country pay their taxes to have good public services. We have the right to expect our streets to be cleaned, bins emptied and libraries open for the public. We have a right to have our children educated without putting that future family into debt for life. However, this Government is not cutting back just on essential services, but it has completely taken away the services that generations of working class people have fought for through paying taxes. We pay taxes to get services. Cameron and Osborne say it's fair. How would they know? They don't need to go to the local library or walk in the park. Their libraries are across the hall, and probably they live in the park from their privileged ivory towers of wealth. They don't have a clue how working people live. Worst of all, they just don't care who struggles or who goes under as they squeeze us to the limit. They say that the cuts are down to the last Government and the mess that Labour left, but they never mentioned the role of their friends in the banking industry. Yes, Labour did borrow and, yes, they did spend, but their mistake was not to regulate or, better still, nationalise the banks.

The leadership now has one choice – join the GMB in the fight to save jobs and be proud of it. Let's see the GMB flags and banners held high as the GMB takes the lead in this battle to give people of all ages the dignity of work. Oppose the life that the Tories are planning for workers in this country, which is a life on the dole. Our motion is simple. We fight the cuts, we fight for public services, we demand dignity at work and fairness for all. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, does anyone else wish to come in on the debate? Come on, Terry.

BRO. T. FLANAGHAN (London): Congress, the comments I am making are not on behalf of London Region. They are on behalf of me. I would like to support the motion that we moved – 169 – and comment on a couple of contributions that I heard. We don't want to return to Clause 4! Yes, we bloody do, and the sooner the better! Let's get back to the socialist party that we are supposed to be, not a grovellers and lick spittle outfit.

Renationalise! We don't to renationalise? I want to see the snouts out of the trough. I want everything renationalised. Let's get stuck in. We are socialist party and we need to have some socialist policies, surely, for God's sake.

The 26th March was a great day out, but it was a Saturday afternoon. If anyone is listening from the TUC or anyone who organises marches, I am sick and tired of marching deserted cities and having no impact. If we are going to have some demonstrations, let's have them in the middle of the week, in the middle of the day

and bring the bloody nation to a stop! Let's make some bloody impact on this nation! (*Applause*) You are hearing the speech of a dinosaur, according to some. Let me give you an interesting fact about some MPs. They are four times more likely to go to prison than you! What does that tell you? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Terry. One dinosaur to another.

BRO. L. WOODWARD (South Western): Congress, I am a proud Remploy worker and, according to our comrade, a dinosaur. Comrades, let's get away from all the smoking mirrors about these cuts. These cuts are purely ideological. Let's go back to 1945. We had finished the war. We were skint. We didn't have a pot to pee in. Yet what did we do? I'll tell you what we did. We built hospitals, we built council houses, we formed the NHS, we formed the welfare state and we formed our public services.

Comrades, you all know that I work in Remploy. I will tell you this as a Remploy workers. We not only manufacture but we are also end users of the public sector. As long as there is breath in my body, I will fight tooth and nail, shoulder to shoulder, with any comrade that takes these cuts on and defends the public services. We will fight and defend. We will fight classroom by classroom, ward by ward, library by library, swimming pool by swimming pool and leisure centre by leisure centre. We are in the fight of our lives, Comrades. This is a fight we cannot shirk from and we must not shirk from. We must come up to the plate and show these millionaire – I was going to swear then – bastards (*Cheers*) that we are sick and tired of being the crap on their shoes. Support the motions. Let's get out there and show that the GMB is a Great, Magnificent and a Beautiful animal, and we won't be intimidated by that jumped up Lib-Dem who was here yesterday telling us that if we go on strike he is going to smack our arses. (*Cheers*) Now, Comrades, let's get some fight in us. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Les.

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am just filling in my industrial claim, if you don't mind. Well done, Les. That was fantastic.

I was not going to speak on this composite, but I would like to congratulate the London Region on bring this composite to Congress and bringing it to our attention. The particular slant which I have been aware of is the collapse of the services which have been provided for years by the charity, Mind Centres, throughout the United Kingdom. Troubled as they are by many of the closures nationally, they are umbrella organisations to drug counselling, drink counselling, to Rape Crisis as well as for an LGBT organisation, which I helped to run in Scunthorpe. We were quite astonished – that is the only word I could use – to find that in Leeds and in Lincoln both of the centres are to close because the actual properties were rented. Therefore, with the increases in rent, they could not afford to continue. All of these umbrella organisations to them would simply fold. We are fortunate in Scunthorpe in that we own the building. It makes a big difference.

Part and parcel of the way through some of these things for the charitable organisations that have provided services to people for so long is to band together and

hold together the organisations that you run. This is a question: where can people go, in particular with mental health problems, that the people with those problems are asking at this moment? These charities have, since Thatcher, provided public services. What I would ask as the vice-chair in the Midlands & East Coast Region of our regional equality forum is the hope that the National Equality Forum and the GMB nationally will ask the Conservative/Liberal-Democrat Government the same question.

Normally, when you close and the red light is on, I ask you to support the motion and you give me a round of applause. Please, I ask you, not for me but for people with mental health problems, for people who need those services like Rape Crisis, or whatever, support them because that is the crisis that they are in. Thank you very much. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I support this group of motions. President and Congress, the Tory cuts to local authority budgets have already raised concerns with economists. The Tory's slash and burn approach looks like it will result in the crash and burn of the economy and our society in general, with the working class paying a price more than those at the top, who are trying to run the show. We must fight these cuts. I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Gary Doolan to respond on Motions 166 and 169.

BRO. G. DOOLAN (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions cover 166 and 169. No one could argue the purpose and directions of both motions 166 and 169, which encapsulate the slash and burn intentions of this Tory-led Government, driven by a blinkered Chancellor and a manic Communities Secretary, who are hell bent on savage cuts to public service budgets, reducing benefits, services and reducing State regulated support to an absolute minimum.

Congress, bear in mind that both of these resolutions were submitted in the New Year in accordance with rule. They were both absolutely correct in respect of their intentions and effect of the cuts, which increase day by day with ever more damaging consequences, despite the statements from Vince Cable yesterday.

Congress, we all know that it will be people like Eddie Costello, the disabled worker from Luton, who was made redundant and has already been affected by these Tory cuts. It will be people in care homes. It will be children in our schools, not the Tory, friendly, high rollers, like Sir Philip Green or the toffs from Eton.

The CEC supports both resolutions 166 and 169. However, with the necessary and following qualifications. Motion 166 asks the GMB and the National Equalities Forum to support all equality groups facing grant cuts. In an ideal scenario, this would be existing policy, but in the current climate, with difficult choices to be made, there could be circumstances where more local flexibility is necessary. Nor could we, practically, commit to support every group and every circumstance.

Similarly, Motion 169 asks the GMB to organisationally and financially support all resistance to the cuts by other organisations. As a Union, we cannot give such a

blanket commitment because we have to deploy resources as appropriate and where the situation arises.

In summary, Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Motions 166 and 169 with the qualifications I have set out. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Does London Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Congress, I now put Motions 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169 and Composite 13 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are all carried.

Motion 164 was CARRIED

Motion 165 was CARRIED

Motion 166 was CARRIED

Motion 167 was CARRIED

Motion 168 was CARRIED

Motion 169 was CARRIED

Composite Motion 13 was CARRIED

CEC STATEMENT: IN DEFENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I ask Mary Turner to move the CEC Statement: In Defence of Public Services, and Brian Strutton to second.

GMB CONGRESS 2011

CEC Statement - In Defence of Public Services

The Coalition Government is slashing annual public spending by £99 billion by 2015. This includes an enormous 28% front-loaded cut to local-authority funding; the harshest ever funding settlement for the NHS, and more besides. The repercussions of Tory-Lib austerity are being felt across the entire public sector.

GMB maintains that these cuts are unnecessary, dogmatic, extremist and vindictive. The Tory Prime Minister and Chancellor, aided and abetted by the abject Lib Dems, intend to finish what the Conservative Party started in the 1980s: the privatisation and ultimate destruction of our public services. They are exaggerating the budget deficit and refusing to consider positive ways to address it in order to justify their attacks on public services.

The spending cuts directly affect the services that are needed by children and young people, the elderly, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups in our society. These are just a few examples:

- 63% of English councils are cutting their Sure Start budgets. 15 out of 17 Sure Start centres in Bromley are threatened with closure.

- Elderly residents in Southampton are facing proposals to pay 38% more for their meals-on-wheels, an extra £1.31 per meal.
- 1 in 5 councils in England have cut services for deaf children.
- The Lincolnshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service has lost its team of specialist social workers, after Lincolnshire County Council terminated its funding.
- The Norwich Unthank Centre, which provides specialist support for children who have experienced trauma or abuse, has been cut by Norfolk County Council.
- Hertfordshire County Council is cutting its funding to an Action on Disability charity and eight sheltered housing schemes for the elderly.
- All 7 children's homes run by Essex County Council may be closed, affecting 44 vulnerable children.
- Lancashire County Council is seeking to raise the eligibility threshold for adult social care from “moderate” to “substantial”, and is closing respite centres for children with disabilities.
- Buckinghamshire County Council is shutting around 20 day centres for the elderly and disabled.
- Special needs children in Cambridgeshire are losing their transport to school.
- The LuDun disabled sheltered workshop in Dunstable has closed after Central Bedfordshire Council cut its funding to save £200,000.
- Home-Start Preston, which supports lone, disabled and teenage parents and their children, is on the brink of closure after losing its funding.
- The Grange Day Centre for physically disabled adults in Shropshire is being closed by Shropshire Council.
- More than 700 Building Schools for the Future projects have been cancelled by Michael Gove, everywhere from Brent and Blackpool to Liverpool and Lambeth.
- Disabled people in residential care are set to lose their mobility allowance, one of a number of Government cutbacks on disability benefits.
- In Nottinghamshire, speech and language therapy for children over six with autism has ended.
- 13 of the 26 youth centres in Oxfordshire may close after the council withdrew funding.

- 500,000 primary-school children from low-income families have lost their free school meals, once again thanks to Michael Gove.
- Michael Gove has also scrapped the Education Maintenance Allowance, which helped disadvantaged 16-18 year-old students pay for textbooks and transport.
- New families across the country have lost the baby and toddler elements of Child Tax Credit. The Sure Start Maternity Grant has been restricted and Child Benefit frozen.
- 50 per cent of homeless services in England have had cuts to date, in many cases forcing services to close or reduce their provision.
- In the NHS, treatments are being rationed and waiting times are lengthening, thanks to a four-year real-term budget freeze and £20 billion of “efficiency savings”. This is on top of Andrew Lansley’s dangerous “reform” plans. See the CEC Statement on the Future of the NHS for a full analysis.

The above list is only a small sample highlighting the damage being done by the Tory-Lib cuts. The withdrawal of benefits and support services such as transport is essentially confining elderly and disabled people to their homes. Families struggling on low incomes are no longer getting the support they need either. These are the cruelest as well as the deepest cuts the country has seen for at least a generation. And the victims are the most vulnerable members of society.

As well as hitting front-line service users, the spending cuts have of course taken a massive toll on jobs—at a time when there are already 2.5 million people on the dole. GMB has tracked 227,599 public-service jobs under threat or already lost. This figure includes 171,709 local authority jobs and 49,682 in the NHS. A great many public bodies have achieved cuts in posts by deleting vacant posts and accepting volunteers for early retirement and redundancy. In some cases there have been compulsory redundancies. Some of the posts under threat are due to go later in further rounds of cuts up to 2014 or 2015. Every post deleted is a job that will not now be available to the nearly one million young workers who are unemployed. The devolved administrations are not immune from the cuts either: Northern Ireland, which is heavily reliant on public-sector employment, has had its funding cut by £4 billion.

Fighting back

The Tories and Lib Dems need to be reminded that building hospitals and schools didn’t cause the deficit, it was the bank crash. Public spending actually kept Britain afloat during the 2008-09 recession when the economy was on the brink of a 1930s-style depression. The vulnerable people who rely most on public services are not the culprits and they don't deserve to take the rap. The CEC Statement on the economy makes clear that the economy can’t cope with these cuts and that there is an alternative. As a union and a champion of our public services and the welfare state, we must speak out.

Amidst the wanton destruction of services and jobs, there are many examples of communities fighting back. For example:

- The disabled residents who successfully overturned Birmingham City Council's proposal to restrict funding for adult social care to those with the severest physical needs only.
- The 6 local authorities who fought and won against Michael Gove's decision to scrap their school rebuilding projects.
- The Cambridgeshire residents who are mounting a legal challenge to their council's decision to cut local bus services, potentially leaving elderly people in rural areas completely isolated.
- The 8,000 disabled people and their families who demonstrated on behalf of "the hardest hit" in London on 11 May.
- The library users in Oxfordshire who forced the council to restore library funding for 2011-12.
- The Suffolk campaigners who have forced their Tory flagship council to think again about cutting school crossing patrols and outsourcing services.
- The Shopmobility customers in Southampton whose campaign has won a reprieve for the local mobility scooter centre.
- The half-a-million trade unionists and community groups who "Marched for the Alternative" in London on 26 March.

GMB members have been campaigning in and out of workplaces up and down the country to protest against the mindless destruction of jobs and services. The budget decisions of every public body are open to scrutiny and challenge. No public-service provider who thinks that cuts to vital services can be "pain free" should be allowed to peddle that myth. Trade unions have an important role to play in promoting alternatives.

The message is clear: we do not have to take these cuts lying down. GMB will be there for members and service users in the community, and we will fight tooth and nail to defend the vulnerable. With vision, commitment and good organisation, we can make a difference.

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Congress, during the previous debate a lot was said – a great deal – but, Congress, we have to keep saying it, over, over and over again. They are our public services. They don't belong to anyone else. Therefore, we have to keep the pressure up. We know that the Con-Dem Government would take the axe to our public services, and they have been doing it with a vengeance for the last months. This is not only an attack on jobs, terms and conditions, but it is an attack on the services that our communities rely on. It is not just about cuts. The

point is that we know that the Tories and their Lib-Dem poodles are going to privatise everything they can lay their hands on, including the NHS, which they have been dreaming of privatising for years. The free schools aren't free, by the way, because the money has been taken from other schools to fund them.

Congress, all in all, this Coalition Government has realised our worst fears. Hundreds of thousands of public service workers have been laid off, adding to the 2.5 million people who have already been thrown out of work and on to the dole, including a million young people who have come straight out of school or college. Those young people have never had the chance to work and, probably, unless we stop these cuts, never will have. Instead, David Cameron had the cheek to say, "We're all in this together." Well, we're not. We've seen Easyjet Dave, looking like he was one of us, going off to Spain, or wherever he went – he should have stayed there – but we have heard from Nick Clegg, and yesterday in this hall we heard from Vince Cable, saying that front line services would not be touched. They said that people delivering front line services would not be removed. As far as this Union and myself are concerned, every single worker delivering a public service is a front line service worker. *(Applause)*

What does this Government of millionaires know about the struggles of ordinary people, when council workers haven't had a cost of living rise since 2009, when even the lowest paid cleaner, teaching assistant, secretary and school dinner lady haven't had the £250 they were promised. I heard the claptrap yesterday from Mr. Cable, "Well, we've given them a tax relieve." Ninety per cent of them never pay tax, anyway, but they have still had to pay the cost of gas, water and electricity. Just because they are a low paid workers, it doesn't mean that they get that on the cheap. They get no refund for that. More and more people have been outsourced and have seen their terms and conditions slashed. We have been there. This Union had to fight damned hard to uncover the TUPE regulations that had been in effect in Europe since 1975. That is how Thatcher got away with cutting us and privatising us in the 1980s and also reducing our terms and conditions. Now that is under threat we know what will happen. There will be no minimum wage about "We've raised it." There will be no holidays and sick pay that we've managed to achieve for those individuals who had it taken away. That is what this means. The truth is that the Tories are enjoying what they are doing to public services. They have ruthlessly targeted the cuts of Labour councils and in deprived areas.

When I saw the Tories and Lib-Dems cheering George Osborne last year when he was announcing all the cuts, it made me sick. I never wanted to be back in Thatcher's Britain, but that is now where we are. Make no mistake, the cuts are politically motivated. Cameron and Clegg are among the privileged few who think they can afford to live without public services, who think it is okay to let their friends in the City take multi-million pound bonuses from banks that are still taxpayer owned or supported. Well, it's not okay with me, it's not okay with you and it's not okay with this Union. That is why we won't accept the divide and rule tactics of the Con-Dems, and that is why we will stand together to protect our public services.

Congress, this is only the beginning of the Con-Dem cuts. More are on the way next year, the year after that and the year after that, unless we can force them out of office. The Tories are going to privatise everything they can and try to steal our pensions,

too. Congress, I don't know where these gold-plated pensions have been all of these years. If so, I've missed out very badly. We pay in local government 6½% towards our pensions and always have done. They now want to add another 3%. Neither me nor my members have had a pay rise for the last two years. As a matter of fact, they had a pittance the year before that and the year before that. As we know, 10% of nothing is a lot to our members. We have to fight to make sure that our pensions are not damaged. It is vital for us to stand up for what we believe in. If the Government won't listen to any alternatives, we will have no option but to take action. Yesterday, we heard all the hype about bullying and threatening if we go on strike and then changing the laws. The point is that they will give our members and other members who work in public services no bloody alternative but to down tools and fight for their rights. Let's go and fight the cuts and defend our public services. Please support this Statement.

Congress, I'm told we don't have any money in the economy, that Labour left us with a terrible debt. The banks caused the debts and Labour had a bit to blame, too. It's funny that we can find money for war and oil, but we can't find money for our public services. (*Applause*) I move the Statement.

BRO. B. STRUTTON (National Secretary, Public Services): President and Congress, I speak in support of the CEC's Statement In Defence of Public Services. Thanks to all the speakers in this morning's debates so far. All of you, in those speeches, have shown that the devastating cuts to public spending are about real people and real lives. These are the innocent victims of the Tories ideological mission to take hold of the helping hand of the State and replace it with the iron fist of the market. What hope is there for the homeless, the jobless, the elderly, the underprivileged children and the disabled if the State isn't there to help? That is the dismal philosophy of this Government that doesn't care about the consequences of its actions. The point is that the governing elite doesn't see the rundown council estates, the warn out schools, the unemployed hanging around town centres, certainly not in their constituencies. For them, it is out of sight, out of mind. That is why all of our motions are absolutely right, to say that we have to constantly speak up for the victims. When we talk about defending public services, we are talking about defending the people who rely upon those services. Let us not forget the people who provide the services, the millions of public sector workers who are constantly attacked by an hysterical media, deliberately whipped up by Government Ministers and right-wing pressure groups like the Tax-Dodgers' Alliance.

The GMB has told the public the truth about the relentless march of job cuts. We have logged 228,000 job losses in the public sector. The Ministers don't like it. They say that we make it up, that it is a figment of our imagination. It is because it is spoiling their message that the cuts are painless, but it is real people and real jobs.

So our CEC Statement: In Defence of Public Services, which is before you, is in support of all the motions we have heard this morning, with the qualification that Gary Doolan gave. It strongly supports the fighting-back mood of our motions. It reflects the fantastic campaigning that we have carried out throughout this Union, with the GMB playing a leading role up and down the country. It also reflects how hard our branches and our activists have fought to protect their services and their members. The point is that in GMB we know, however cynical the cuts and however

bleak the prospects of challenging may appear, it is our duty to try. Take heart from the four disabled people who took on mighty Birmingham City Council when the mad Tories there decided to cut adult social care to those only with the severest need, taking five thousand people out of care support. One of the four, known as “H” for legal reasons, is 30 years old, has always lived at home with his parents, who care for him, has severe learning disabilities, is autistic, profoundly deaf, prone to be violent and to self-harm. He can’t attend a day centre because of his behaviour and he has specialist care workers who take him out daily, so that he has a chance to meet people and do ordinary things. It also gives his parents a deserved break. But Birmingham’s reclassification of needs would mean that “H” would no longer get those trips out. His parents said that they wouldn’t be able to cope with him all day, every day, and “H” himself would become unmanageable. He would have to leave his home and go into permanent, controlled residential care. I don’t care how hard line anyone may be about the need for cuts, but I think anyone should find that unacceptable. The good news is that the court agreed. Birmingham has got to go back to the drawing board and “H” can stay at home with his loving parents.

The lesson is that no one has to take these cuts lying down. We call them for what they are, political cuts to front line services, affecting the neediest and most vulnerable. We campaign, rally, demonstrate, argue and fight with every council, every NHS Trust and everywhere else. The Tories destroyed public services for a generation once before. I call on them to change course now before they do it again. Please support the CEC Statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, we will now go to the vote on the CEC Statement. All those in favour, please show? Those against? Carried.

The CEC Statement: In Defence of Public Services was CARRIED

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress, and thanks to all the speakers and their regions for the wonderful work they are doing to fight off the public service cuts.

I now move to Item 4: Industrial & Economic Policy – Economy: Public Spending: Co-ops and Mutuals. This section covers Motions 175, 176 and 177, the movers being Yorkshire Region, Southern Region and Midland Region. Then I will call Peter Kane.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY ECONOMY: PUBLIC SPENDING: CO-OPS & MUTUALS

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES MOTION 175

175. SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

This Congress, the GMB should adopt a national strategy to fight the coalition’s plans to increase Social Enterprises.

This attack on our public services is just back door privatization. In Local Government, staff face risks to their terms, conditions and pensions.

Social care will be devastated rather than improving services and standards of care. The public will be at the mercy of private companies looking for profit to give to shareholders. It is the intention of this arrogant and out of touch Government to create 'the largest social enterprise sector in the world.'

BARNESLEY GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. GARSIDE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 175, Social Enterprises. It is the intention of this arrogant and out-of-touch Tory-led Government to create the largest social enterprise sector in the world. Social enterprises are a face-saving way for the Coalition to privatise public services. This is an ideological drive to privatise and not to save money. Well established and accredited health and social care provision for our elderly and disabled, provided by local government, needs to be protected. The Coalition's attack on our public services is just backdoor privatisation. Staff face risks to their terms and conditions and pensions. Social care will be devastated. Rather than improving services and standards of care, the public will be at the mercy of private companies looking to profit and looking for profit to give to their shareholders.

Barnsley Council's three star excellent rated Home Care Service has already gone because of the Coalition's cuts with no regard to the service users and their families. Home care is now provided by private companies paying the minimum wage. Health and social care should not be run for profit. Our services should not be outsourced, especially to lesser providers.

What happens when a social enterprise business, established with taxpayers' money, fails? Who bails them out? The GMB must adopt a national strategy to fight the Coalition's plans to increase social enterprises. Thank you.

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 175. To Phil Soper of the Midlands & East Coast Region, I'm just up this once, mate.

President and Congress, despite what the Lib-Dems would have us believe, the country is under a right-wing Tory Government, a right-wing Tory Government with a philosophy of every man for himself, unless you went to the right school or daddy knows someone. It is a philosophy that says if you are old, ill or unemployed, and you haven't bothered to take out insurance for it, tough. It is a philosophy that says if you want to use a library, if you want your streets cleaning or your road gritting, pay for it or do it yourself. David Cameron hides this philosophy behind the idea of social enterprises, but he can't teach us about social enterprises because we are the ones behind the Co-operative movement. Unfortunately, his idea of social enterprise is the very antithesis of what co-operatives stand for.

Cameron says he wants social enterprises run on business lines for philanthropic purposes. Since when did big business have a concept of philanthropy? Does he really think that there is going to be investment in companies that are not out to make

a profit? No, he doesn't. He wants bit business to run public services. He wants to replace doing public good with making private profits. It will mean reduced terms and conditions for workers, it will mean reduced services at higher cost to the public and it will mean more Southern Cross's, not just in care for the elderly but in all social care provision. I am talking about street cleaning, road maintenance, libraries and museums, in everything that makes a society civilised.

This is not just scaremongering, comrades. Social enterprise was used in the 1930s. I've got family members who remember the unemployed being forced to put ash on the roads in winter and doing building work, including the house that my father grew up in, just so that they could get the dole money while the construction companies made profit. That's what social enterprise means. It means exploitation and profiteering.

Providing public services is not only about ideology or economics, but morality. The morals of this Government are lower than a snake's belly. Where we see the helping hand, they see a chance to exploit. Where we see life enhancement, they see a profit. This is not the unacceptable face of capitalism. It's the evil truth of the market let loose on everything that is good, right and decent in this country. Comrades, support Motion 175. Fight to keep public services public. Defend public service jobs. Protect the public. *(Applause)*

WORKING WITH THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SERVICES MOTION 176

176. WORKING WITH THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC SERVICES

It is clear that the Coalition government intend to impose draconian cuts to public services in the UK. These cuts are clearly driven by ideology and not the needs of the nation. Cuts in the public sector will affect the poor and needy far greater than those on high incomes.

This congress believes that the GMB, along with local authorities, should look to ways of protecting public services for the poor and needy without cutting pay and terms and conditions of the workers that provide these services.

One way of protecting these services rather than close them or sell them off to the highest bidder is to allow the workers to form a co-operative. However, this is not easy and done wrongly can cause workers to lose money and involve them in complicated administration processes and costly legal requirements.

This Congress believes the GMB should explore with the Co-operative movement ways and means of assisting groups of workers, enabling them to take over services by providing and helping them with administration and legal requirements. Thus enabling workers in these sectors to continue to protect and provide services for the poor and needy.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Referred)

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 176 – Working with the Co-operative Movement to Maintain Public Services. It is clear that the Coalition Government intends to impose Draconian cuts to public services in the UK. These cuts are clearly driven by ideology and not the needs of the nation. Cuts in the public sector will affect the poor and needy far greater than those on high incomes.

This Congress believes that the GMB, along with local authorities, should look to ways of protecting public services for the poor and needy without cutting pay and terms and conditions of the workers that provide these services.

One way of protecting these services rather than close them or sell them off to the highest bidder is to allow the workers to form a co-operative. However, this is not easy and done wrongly can cause workers to lose money and involve them in complicated administration processes and costly legal requirements.

This Congress believes the GMB should explore with the Co-operative movement ways and means of assisting groups of workers, enabling them to take over services by providing and helping them with administration and legal requirements. Thus enabling workers in these sectors to continue to protect and provide services for the poor and needy. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The motion was formally seconded.

KEEP THE PUBLIC SERVICES PUBLIC MOTION 177

177. KEEP THE PUBLIC SERVICES PUBLIC

This Congress is committed to supporting our members who work in the public sector to keep the public sector in public ownership and not the John Lewis type co-operative organisation that buys into the corporation with profit before service delivery and those profits being taken out of the system to line the pockets of the shareholders, rather than surplus monies being ploughed back into the service.

There is no appetite from the public sector workforce or the public generally for these so called co-operatives. It is insulting to think that these DIY co-operatives, set up on the cheap, can replace a well established and joined up public sector service provider.

NOTTINGHAM 5 BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. GREEN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Motion 177 – Keep the Public Service Public. This Congress is committed to supporting our members who work in the public sector to keep the public sector in public ownership and not the co-operative partnership type of private organisation that the Government are promoting that buys into the corporation with one thing in mind: profit before service delivery. These profits are being taken out of the system to line the pockets of the shareholders, rather than surplus monies being ploughed back into the service.

There is no appetite from the public sector workforce or the public generally for these so called co-operatives. It is insulting to think that these DIY? Co-operatives, set up

on the cheap, can replace a well established and joined up public sector service provider. You can think of all the different service areas that exist within a local authority, for example, housing maintenance to waste management, from children's support services to wardens, that look after the poor and elderly residents in our society, especially in our social care homes.

We are already hearing from other delegates who are reporting what is happening with our colleagues in Southern Cross and what privatisation means. It means profit before people. I will say that again: profit before people. How can these local authority services be equated with the values of these co-operative-type organisations that have their roots in other markets like retail?

We have already experienced how the Housing Maintenance Service has been taken over, taken out of most, if not all, local authority control and TUPE's over to these private companies under the guise of arm's length management organisations. Terms and conditions are being attacked, workers are being made redundant, private companies are moving in undertaking the work that was done by local authority workers. These private companies are giving a sub-standard service. They are not loyal to the local authority, whereas myself and my work colleagues have been there for years. We are the loyal, caring workforce. Keep the public services public. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. RALSTON (Midland & East Coast): I second Motion 177 – Keep Public Services Public. President and Congress, we don't want our public service employees exploited and taken over by these so-called co-operatives from the private sector. We are now seeing the start of what might lay ahead under these so-called co-operatives. They drive down our pay and terms and conditions by using words like "economic", "technical" and "organisational". They put forward business cases that we need to make the cuts, cuts in the workforce to keep the business afloat, cuts in our pay, increased workloads, with fewer staff, longer working hours with no extra pay.

Further proposals have arisen, forcing employees to pay for parking spaces that they are not guaranteed to have. Do you know what management are saying to us? They are saying: "Think yourself lucky you've got a job" – what bastards – while all surplus profits fill shareholders' bank accounts. We know the agenda. All they want to do is crush the power of the trade unions in the public sector, eradicating membership and making it difficult to earn a decent living. They try different tactics, usually altering terms and conditions, and they discipline our members and stewards on jumped-up charges. When we challenge these attacks and put in grievances, they go nowhere. As Mr. Cable said yesterday, he wants to reduce industrial tribunal cases.

We aren't blind. We can see what the Con-Dem lot are about. They are hell bent on erasing workers' rights. This type of management organisation wants total control. They want to rule by fear. Listen hard, Con-Dems. There's no fear here. Keep up the fight. Keep public services public. I second. (*Applause*)

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

SIS. M. LOWERY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Madam President, Congress, I would like to speak in support of Motion 177 – Keep the Public Services Public. The vast majority of us in this hall will have been or will be affected by the Government's cuts, be it because you are a public sector employee or a user of the services that are being cut back. We have two choices. We either sit back and take what the Government wants us to, or we fight back, and we will fight back. On March 26th this year I was a proud member of the GMB and of the trade union Movement. Don't let that fighting spirit be a one off. By fighting back, both locally and nationally, we can and we will make a difference to those whose jobs are affected and for the vulnerable in our society who are seeing their essential services being cut back. I urge Congress to support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maryann. Well done. Can I call Peter Kane to respond to Motions 175, 176 and 177.

BRO. P. KANE (CEC, Commercial Services): President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, covering Motions 175, 176 and 177. The CEC supports, with qualifications, Motions 175 and 177. The CEC ask you to refer Motion 176.

Firstly, on Motion 175, our qualification is that we don't oppose the principle of social enterprise per se. We know there are worse kinds of business models. However, it is just that we don't want social enterprises used as Trojan horses for privatisation.

On Motion 177, which opposes co-operatives that would replace public-sector provision, is in line with current GMB policy. But don't forget, co-operatives come in different shapes and forms. John Lewis, for example, is not shareholder based. Our current position means that we can support co-operatives taking the place of profit-driven private enterprises.

Turning to Motion 176, which calls on us to explore assisting public sector workers to form co-operatives, the CEC knows that the principles of co-operatives are a good socialist ideal. As you know full well, the GMB fully supports the York Disabled Workers Co-operative. However, we also remember the shameful actions that the directors of the Co-op took, in the name of all its members and shareholders, in the Co-operative Funeral Care Division, when they de-recognised the GMB.

The CEC appreciates the sentiments of the motion, and although we believe our resources are better focused on opposing the sell-off of public services, co-operatives are a growing phenomenon. We need to consider our position thoroughly. Please refer Motion 176 so that we can do this.

In summary, the CEC is supporting with qualifications Motions 175 and 177 and is asking you to refer Motion 176. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peter. Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Does Southern Region accept reference back? *(Agreed)* Does Congress agree to that? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Midland Region accept the qualification to Motion 177? *(Agreed)* Thank you. I put Motion 175,

Motion 176 with the reference back and Motion 177 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Against? That's carried.

Motion 175 was CARRIED

Motion 176 was REFERRED

Motion 177 was CARRIED

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I do think I have to say this at this time of the week. I think our new delegates who have come to this platform since we started have been a credit to themselves, and it shows you the commitment that they have made. I know that won't change the rest of the week. I know that some of them are terrified. But to give them a chance of hope, some old delegates are also terrified when they come to the rostrum. Well done to you all. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Motions 131, 133, 134, 137 and 138.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY PUBLIC SERVICES

CHANGING THE CULTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MOTION 131

131. CHANGING THE CULTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This Congress supports the need to highlight the waste of public money, which could be utilised to save our members jobs and protect current terms and conditions.

The GMB believes that savings can be made in Local Government before our members become casualties of the cuts. Millions of pounds are wasted on consultants and agency workers. The discrepancy between our members pay and the CEO's and Corporate Directors has grown wider than ever.

There have been several years of interference from central government, with meaningless targets imposed and government have introduced a culture of bean counting, instead of providing Public Services. This has cost a fortune and drawn finance away from front line services.

This cannot be allowed to continue, the GMB call for a fresh look at the financing of Local Government.

KIRKLEES BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

BRO. N. COLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I move Motion 131 – Changing the Culture of Local Government. We must fight the Draconian cuts in public services. These cuts are destroying the accepted way we understand how public services work. They will change for ever our relationship with local councils.

CEOs, many of whom are paid more than the Prime Minister, are detached from reality in their ivory towers. Their only priority is targets set by central Government. This means passing down the line their rigid commands to tick every box. In reality, what happens? Managers spend all their time filling out forms and reports fearful of

deadlines. This leads to the bullying of staff and no one caring about service delivery. We have a culture of compliance, not service.

New Labour – what did you create? What comes next? We could have, as some Tory councils have proposed, a two-tier system. If you can afford it, you will receive a first class service. If you can't then you will receive the bare minimum. This is totally unacceptable. Some of us will remember the last Tory Government, which was obsessed with the flawed ideology of reducing the size of the State. The Thatcher Government left a legacy of crumbling schools, rundown public services and outsourcing to greedy, incompetent companies, who remorselessly cut the pay and pensions of their workers. This Government is hell bent on finishing the job. George Osborne gleefully announced in the Budget that he would cut £81 billion from the public finances.

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, recently said, "I didn't come into politics to make cuts. Neither did Nick Clegg. But, in the end, politics is about the national interest." It looks like telling the truth wasn't one of his priorities for entering into politics. Hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs are likely to go, causing misery to many. Public sector workers are not highly paid in comparison to the private sector. The average pension for local government workers is about £5,000 for men and about £4,000 for women workers.

Public sector workers have worked for many years on lower pay than their private sector counterparts, working hard and conscientiously for the good of patients, service users and communities. This public service ethos had been undervalued by a succession of governments for several years, like many institutions that have been dismantled under the banner of so-called change and progress. The public will not realise the value of what they are about to lose until it is all too late.

We call upon GMB, other trade unions, the Labour Party and anyone else who really cares to take a fresh look at public services and challenge the madness of what they have become, that's if there is anything left after Osborne's ideological cuts. Changes in the future will have to be made for our priorities. We will fight to the last to defend our public services. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

BRO. S. WELLINGS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): I second Motion 131. I think you have heard this one before. We are all in this together. The Tory-led Government of Cameron, Clegg and Osborne trumpet this sound bite every time to try and justify their plot to put people on the dole. When have or will these Front Bench multi millionaires ever be in this with us? Never. They never will be. The only people who are in this together are us and our GMB members.

Let me give you a little fact. Sheffield City Council has a chief executive who is on £184,000 a year. He has just presided over a decision taken in January to axe 63 senior support workers. This entire tier of staff provides care to the most vulnerable. These members were called to a meeting without any indication why to be told, "You're job's been made redundant. You're now vulnerable. We have given your responsibilities to your supervisors." Charming! Meanwhile he goes on BBC Radio

Sheffield and proudly announces, “I’m taking a 5% cut from £184,000 to £175,000.” The facts are that he had a choice. The other staff didn’t. He gets 700% more than the senior support workers. He also has six deputy chief execs on £141,000, but they decided not to take a cut. It is very clear that the financial masters look after their own. We need to stop that. Therefore, it is imperative that the finances in local authorities are scrutinised. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, did you say six deputy chief execs?

BRO. S. WELLINGS: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Who are they looking after, the bloody world? It must be the biggest council going. They look after their own, though, never mind the rest of us. Can we have the mover of Motion 133?

STAFF HEALTH AND WELFARE MOTION 133

133. STAFF HEALTH AND WELFARE

This Congress deplores the fact that many Councils have announced massive job cuts in line with swinging budget cuts but state these cuts can be achieved by ‘efficiencies’ and ‘smarter’ ways of working. In all of this what is missing is where these cuts are being made and that whilst teams are facing drastic reduction in staffing levels the work is still expected to be delivered with significantly less staff.

Many of our members are now facing stress related illnesses, depression and anxiety. Mental health is now one of the key reasons for sickness experienced by many Council workers, yet there is still a stigma associated with workers suffering from mental health issues.

Congress calls upon the CEC to consider undertaking a survey into the level of mental health illness experienced by Council staff.

BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. PUCKETT (South Western): Congress, since the ConDem Government came into power every time the public sector is mentioned it is in a negative and derogatory manner. Local authority workers are being constantly labelled by the ConDem Government and their media cronies as incompetent, always off sick, and wasting public resources, yet many council workers are trying desperately to continue to provide a good quality service whilst having to cope with the negative media image and constant criticism from the government minister, Mr. Pickles. The Local Government Association in their 2006 and 2007 sickness absence surveys in local authorities in England and Wales cited stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue as the most important single causes of sickness absence at 23%. In 2010, research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development showed that one in three employers stated stress-related workplace absence was rising over the last year. Many councils are now reducing staffing levels yet still requiring smaller teams and workforces to maintain in some cases increased service provision. This is putting enormous pressure on all levels of workers trying to achieve unrealistic targets. Many workers are too afraid to go off sick for fear of being put on a managing attendance

sanction which would ultimately lead to dismissal on the grounds of incapability. Many of our members going off with stress, anxiety or depression, are being made to feel they are not experiencing genuine illness. Workers are made to feel guilty and weak for going off ill. Sickness absence can also be triggered by the increased pressurised working environment, combined with a bullying culture in order to meet the constant demands.

One of our members working for a local authority was off sick with RSI to her wrist and was offered adjustments in order to continue in paid employment. A few years later she experienced bullying and harassment by a manager partly due to reductions in staffing levels. This triggered issues from the past resulting in her being off sick with chronic depression for a period of time. She even took annual leave in order to reduce her total period of absence. This was actually promoted by personnel: take annual leave, don't be sick. Both occupational health and her GP requested the employer to make reasonable adjustments. Personnel persuaded the management not to make these adjustments because they were concerned for her mental health, even though all the medical opinion was supporting the adjustments. No one had bothered to undertake stress risk assessments or any other form of assessment yet the council upheld the personnel advice and dismissed her. Because of the member's emotional state an employment tribunal was lodged but before it came to a hearing a compromise agreement was signed. The member was fearful of having to go in front of the ET panel, which was making her mental state worse, and our solicitors were concerned about her ability to stand up to questioning. The member received some compensation but she is left feeling distressed and let down by her employer, with little prospect of finding alternative employment.

Many employers know their workers will be reluctant to take formal action as they are generally at their most vulnerable and because of this we are seeing a growing trend of management targeting staff suffering from depression and/or mental health issues. Many more workers are now on long-term prescription medication and in some extreme cases have contemplated suicide. A few years ago this would have been rare. We therefore request the GMB collate information into the level of mental health in the illness experienced by council staff. I move this motion. (*Applause*)

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Motion 134, Local Government Redundancy Notices Section 188.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REDUNDANCY NOTICES SECTION 188 MOTION 134

134. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REDUNDANCY NOTICES SECTION 188

Congress agrees to campaign to change the legislation which allows employers in Local Government to select employees for redundancy by manipulating the laws on consultation within section 188 of the Employment Rights Act.

Many of our members in Local Government will face the traumatic situations of having to face redundancies due to the Coalition's savage cuts to public services.

Many Local Authorities have announced redundancies in excess of 100 employees, yet they fragment these maths redundancies into small bite sized chunks so as to avoid the legislation on consultation rights.

Where it is the law that where there are proposed redundancies of more than 100 employees in those employees are entitled to notice of three months. By breaking this down to smaller sections as printed in Section 188 Notice is a method that can only be described as avoiding formal consultation rights to those members faced with redundancy.

All we are asking is that these loopholes close and employers abide by the letter of the law. Should they be found not to do so then the law must be there to protect individual workers in Local Government from being treated unfairly and thrown onto the unemployment scrapheap.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. WALDRON (London): The employer has legal obligations to consult over collective redundancies if proposing to make 20 or more employees redundant. However, there is no need for collective consultation in issuing a section 188 if it is less than 20 people. If more than 100 staff consultations should be for at least 90 days. The original concept of this was for timely consultation in terms of medium to large scale redundancies and was not designed to delay ultimate date of dismissals. It was specifically designed to provide both the employer and the trade unions the opportunity to consider meaningful alternatives to dismissal, possibly by means of transfer to different departments and voluntary redundancies so as to avoid compulsory dismissals. In light of this it is vital to have meaningful collective consultations so that viable alternatives to job cuts can be found. Consultation should allow trade unions generally to exercise their influence and to have sufficient time to respond to proposals by avoiding or reducing dismissals and mitigating the consequences of redundancies.

Clearly, the original concept of 30 to 90 days consultation is much more viable for larger firms, especially those of local authorities and the NHS with their large numbers of employees covering a wide range of departments and services, and involving varying skills. These employers can accommodate dismissals. Conversely, smaller employers have less opportunity to find alternatives. Alternatives are difficult to achieve where there are a number of unscrupulous employers, particularly those in local authorities and other such large organisations who seek to circumvent the need to consult from 90 or even 30 days.

Congress, these employers are deliberately and cynically wrongly issuing section 188s without revealing their true intent, which is to save money by job losses. One of the incentives for this unscrupulous behaviour is that they also seek to evade sanctions or potential awards which can be given out and awarded by tribunals for lack of consultation. Congress, this is nothing more than underhanded. By breaking up the number of staff to be made redundant into small groups, departments or cohorts, an employer is removing the union's ability to mitigate the effects of the proposed redundancies. An example is where an employer intends to make 150 staff redundant and splits them up into small groups of three; therefore, there is only a need to consult for 30 days. An employer who breaks this group up into even smaller cohorts of, say, less than 20, does not have to consult at all.

Congress, this is unacceptable. We need to protect our members' rights. Colleagues, do they think we do not know what they are up to? Those of us who work in local authorities will recognise the sneaky tactic. This action severely affects our ability to look for alternative strategies for a better outcome whilst also allowing the unscrupulous employers to demerit the original intent of the section 188. Congress, this motion asks you to agree to campaign to tighten up the loophole. I therefore ask you to agree to this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon.

BRO. M. FOSTER (London): Colleagues, public service workers in general and local government workers in particular are paying a disproportionate price for the bankers' mistakes and this Government's ideological policy to abolish public services. Thousands are being made redundant on a daily basis and although local authorities estimate these redundancies some are making them with more relish than others. Some are following the rules, some are bending the rules, and the unscrupulous ones are downright breaking the rules.

Congress, the law is clear, more than 100 being made redundant is a 90-day consultation. The reasons for these time limits are many fold — alternative proposals, redeployment, or other opportunities. Councils who want to make over 100 staff redundant but split them into groups, such as 50 in children and families, and 50 in environment, to avoid the 90-day consultation periods are behaving like spivs in the City. Not only are they taking away our members' jobs, they are taking them away too fast and taking away their rights. Congress, it is a bloody scandal and it has to be stopped. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: 137, Yorkshire.

**ABOLITION OF THE SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF NATIONAL
NEGOTIATING BODY
MOTION 137**

137. ABOLITION OF THE SSSNNB

This Congress calls upon the GMB to press the Labour Party when next in power to reinstate the SSSNNB. It is sad after all the work that went into getting the SSSNNB on the statute book that one of the first acts of the current government was to abolish this body.

The creation of national pay scales for support staff and the avoidance of school/regional variations has been an objective for many years.

The decision by the government illustrates:-

- a. The lack of value of support staff in schools
- b. The determination by the government to allow individual governing bodies to make all decisions, and eliminate the influence of LEA's.

SHEFFIELD LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. G. WARWICK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): It was a sad day, now nearly a year ago, for members working in schools when one of the first decisions of the ConDem Government was to abolish the School Support Staff National Negotiating Body. It had taken many years and considerable hard work to create the body which would give our members the same rights as teachers, that is, national pay and conditions, and avoid the school regional variations which was often to the detriment of our members. How many times in local bargaining have we heard the phrase, "We can't afford that." When we point out comparison with teachers their response is, "Ah, but it is their national conditions." In retrospect we should have pressed the Government harder and avoided the many delays in setting the body up which, unfortunately, then allowed the abolition to be that much easier.

Colleagues, I ask why this was one of the first decisions of an incoming government faced with many national pressures and priorities, when over 13 years of the previous Labour government there had been an increasing recognition of the value and importance of support staff. Workforce reform had increased the number of support staff, increased their role and responsibility, and many schools now have more support staff than teachers. The new government clearly wanted to start cutting education budgets and to do what most governing bodies do when faced with the need to make cuts they look at the support staff part of the budget, hence the decision to abolish the School Support Staff National Negotiating Body. This is a clear indication of the Government's lack of appreciation of support staff in schools.

Consider the following issues which the SSSNNB could have been involved in: the move to academies and related contracts, greater delegation to governing bodies which often is still a detriment to members, the 5% cut in local government pay in the last two years, and the 3% tax on pension subscriptions. What is really alarming now is we have recently received a paper called, Classroom Deployment, from the Audit Commission. I will read a quote from it: "In some cases the use of teaching assistants can hinder the progress of those pupils they support. As a result reviewing the use of teachers' assistants may hold the greatest potential for efficiency savings from classroom deployment." What a terrible indictment. The GMB now has a significant number of members working in schools and it is vital for retention and recruitment that we make the reintroduction of the SSSNNB a priority for the GMB and ensure that it is also a priority for the next Labour government. Please support. *(Applause)*

BRO. D. McLEAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, some of you will recall that last year I moved a motion on giving our members on the SSSNNB the power to walk away if it is not doing what it said on the tin. Unfortunately, quite a number in the room thought I was calling for the scrapping of the SSSNNB. This was not the case. Brian Strutton quite rightly stated he thought the motion was about empowering our members on the SSSNNB to decide if what they had was workable. It did provide a lively debate on the floor, especially from my colleagues in the Southern Region. Even though they did not seem to understand the point I was making I was pleased to see such passion from these undervalued support staff for their jobs and the SSSNNB. They fully understood the difficulties of negotiating with the individual heads and governing bodies and the need for the national terms and conditions.

The new Academies Bill has made it more imperative we have national terms and conditions for our members as academies are able to change support staff roles and duties as they see fit. Teachers have the Burgundy Book that quite clearly sets out the terms and conditions which schools and local education authorities have to abide by and which is why when a teacher moves from a school in Cornwall to a school in Newcastle they know exactly what their terms and conditions are going to be. A teaching assistant can move to a school less than a mile away and find their role and responsibilities are totally different. There are no consistencies in pay from one authority to another. Support staff job titles and descriptions are tweaked and changed from school to school. Teachers' conditions are not as local authority schools and even academies have to adhere to the teachers' Burgundy Book. This, colleagues, is what we are wanting for our support staff.

Congress, this motion calls for us to press the Labour Party to reinstate the SSSNNB when they get back in power. I am sure Brian Strutton and his team are well aware we need to be lobbying MPs now. Let us not forget that it was under Labour's watch that it was delayed and further delayed. As more and more schools can become academies and free schools, it is now that we need a SSSNNB to give our support staff national terms and conditions to safeguard and protect them from Mickey Mouse contracts that are bound to come. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: 138, Yorkshire.

**SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTUALLY FORCED TO
ADMINISTER MEDICATION TO PUPILS
MOTION 138**

**138. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTUALLY FORCED TO ADMINISTER
MEDICATION TO PUPILS**

This Congress calls upon the CEC to campaign to stop the increasing pressure put on support staff to administer medicines to pupils.

There is no legal obligation for school staff to administer medicine, but due to the increase in pupils with specific needs attending main stream schools, staff are expected more and more to administer medication to pupils and some are being forced contractually to take on this duty.

It is nationally accepted that teachers can volunteer but do not legally take on this duty.

It should be the same for our members in schools and we should make sure that we have rigorous policies re: risk assessments and full training in place for staff who volunteer to take on this duty.

LEEDS SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. GAVIN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) In this instance the term "support staff" covers all teaching assistants and classroom and learning support assistants in schools. Congress, brothers and sisters, it is with a heavy heart I stand here before you representing the

support staff, of which I am one, who have a great love and passion for the job we do because it certainly is not for the pay. Had I been told 10 years ago I would be standing here I would have laughed at you. Support staff were regarded as the mums' army, paint pot washers, nose wipers, and general dogsbody. Times have moved on and we still do the latter but with the added extra of delivery, nay, teaching literacy, numeracy, English as an additional language, and more under the tag line at the head's discretion.

I can tell you now that support staff across the country are not laughing. Were it a simple case of giving little Tommy his inhaler, this would paint a very different picture. This is not the case. Support staff are being bullied and forced into medical interventions, such as tube feeding, catheterisation, changing colostomy bags, monitoring life sustaining equipment, and much, much more. The school population has changed with the specific needs of the pupils becoming more complex. If I and others like me had wanted to go into nursing we would not be working in schools.

Paragraph 16 of the document, *Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Year Setting* states, "There is no legal duty that requires a school or setting staff to administer medicines" yet this is being placed, burdened, upon the shoulders of people who do so because they care for the pupils they come into contact with. Teaching staff would not be put under this type of pressure. Their colleagues and unions would be up in arms, and rightly so. Is it not fair that support staff be afforded the same consideration? Head teachers have been and will continue to stab at the hearts of support staff with their sharp claws of emotional blackmail and have them unknowingly accept contractual changes and be administering life-sustaining intervention under the hooded disguise of administering medicines. They are abusing our morals, values, and principles.

I have witnessed the pressure, stress, and emotional rollercoaster that support staff, paid at level one, have been tumbled through when a pupil's life support system failed and they had to intervene, thankfully with success, yet we cannot apply sun cream to young pupils, we cannot comb the hair on a child's head that is so full of lice the child is constantly scratching and sore, for child protection reasons. It is madness. In the *Times Educational Supplement* it described an incident where a member of support staff who was responsible for giving medication to two brothers was absent and the class teacher stepped in because she had observed it done on a few occasions — same medication, two different doses. Said teacher got this wrong. Thankfully, there were no major consequences to this. The teacher was patted on the head and no action was taken. Would it be the same for support staff? I think not.

Government guidelines say staff must be properly trained before carrying out any medical procedures. Support staff receive routine first aid training every three years, at most. Rightly so, staff are worried that mistakes will be made and even more so about the safety of the children. It is only a matter of time before tragedy strikes. It is totally unacceptable that provision of essential support is pressurised onto staff whose remit is to support the teaching and learning of pupils in schools. Keep the administering of medicines a voluntary role, put in place comprehensive training, policies, and better pay for this. Let us do what we do best, let us support the education, education, education of our next generation, not medication, medication,

medication. President, Congress, please support me in Motion 138. Thank you. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cindy. Secunder.

BRO. D. McLEAN (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): President, Congress, at the moment there is no legal obligation for school staff to administer medicine. The Teachers Union makes this quite clear to their members and it is nationally accepted that they do not have to administer medicines. This should be the same for support staff but more and more it is expected that support staff should do this task and it has also been added to their job descriptions. In many cases there are no risk assessments, no clear guidance set, and more importantly little or no training given. Most are just given basic first aid training and then expected to administer medicines, some of which are lifesaving drugs which should be given accurately, and some are intrusive such as rectal Valium. The problem with this is that we now live in a blame culture society and there are a number of cases where staff have been disciplined, sacked, and in at least one case taken to court. Support staff have been held accountable when something has gone wrong yet the head teachers who put their staff in this position with little or no training do not carry the blame, even though it is ultimately their responsibility. We are not saying that support staff cannot administer medicines but it should be voluntary not contractual and, more importantly, proper training risk assessments done; also, they should be remunerated for this extra duty and responsibility. It is in fact the parents or carers who should be responsible for the administration of medicine to their children. In my experience, many pupils brought medicines to school which could have been administered before and after school. As more and more pupils with specific medical needs are going to mainstream schools then maybe it is time we thought about the reintroduction of the school nurse. Congress, protect our members from being contractually forced to administer medicine. It has always been voluntary and it should stay that way. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. I now call on Viv Smart of the CEC to speak on Motions 131, 133, 137, and 138.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 131 and 137 with a statement, and supporting Motions 133 and 138 with a qualification. Motion 131 argues that more public resources could be redirected to protect jobs and services. However, referring to the waste of public money could be seen as supporting ConDem policy to cut council budgets. The CEC does not believe that this was the intention behind the motion but the distinction needs to be made clear. On Motion 133, precisely because there is still a stigma associated with mental health which can affect a person's employment prospects, the CEC wants to look at the best way of gathering this information. This may not necessarily be through a survey but through the use of other GMB resources or external resources instead.

Motion 137, meanwhile, is rightly critical of the Government for abolishing the SSSNNB but with the SSSNNB gone we cannot predict on what conditions any future negotiating body might be established. The situation would have to be judged on its merits at that time. The CEC would want to keep its options open for the future.

On Motion 138 there is no doubt that medical support in schools has escalated out of all proportion. The CEC believes, however, that voluntarism is not a sufficient solution. Too many of our members are volunteering to carry out procedures that should be done by a medical professional. We want to see a more comprehensive overhaul of the medicine system in schools with full regulation and more responsibility on healthcare professionals, and clear and reasonable limits on the basic medical duties that support staff may undertake.

In summary, Congress, please support Motions 131, 133, 137 and 138 with the statements and qualifications I have set out. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Colleagues, we will now go to the vote. Motion 131, does Yorkshire agree the statement?

BRO. D. JOBSON (Midland & East Coast) President, Vice President, Congress, some of us suffer from depression and anxiety because of the way our brains were wired up from the start and for this there was nothing we could do. For me as a local authority worker who cannot rewire his brain it is a concern and worry to have members plunged into depression, often from situations that could have been prevented by their managers. Because of the stigma still attached to stress-related illness in the workplace staff are reluctant to come forward more often than not until the very last moment. We need to find the true extent of this issue which will help us to see just how big the problem is and therefore the level of campaigning needed to address this and improve conditions for everyone working in local authority. I support and urge you all to do so as well. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David.

BRO. G. DOUCE (London) I just want to add a little bit of weight behind this. It is clear that it is an attempt to reduce trade union representation and bring into question equality and fairness. We do not have that anyway. I have a couple of examples. I work in a special school in a local authority that does not recognise us and has no intention of doing so. I work in IT support and I am paid peanuts, but if I were to be in another school, even in the same authority, with the same job content, my salary would be doubled. Clearly, this is not the right situation. One of my colleagues who is a learning support assistant, if she was doing the same job in another authority her job content would be graded at Grade 5 rather than Grade 3. Again, this is not fair but I wonder if this is an attempt to keep the sweetheart deals that some authorities have. We had a formal TUPE consultation where the head teacher denied access to my official from the London Region. She opened the meeting by introducing the Unison representatives that were there. She said, "For those of you who are not in unions or your representatives are not here, you can join Unison." This is not acceptable. We need to get the School Support Staff Negotiating Body sorted out so we can have fairness and representation across the board. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gareth.

SIS. S. MEMMOTT (Southern): Madam President, Vice President, I work in a special needs school, and am supporting Motion 138. For the administration of

medicine in a special needs school, especially where I work, you have to be signed off by a paediatric nurse after several hours of mentoring and training before you can actually even administer some of the medications that mainline school support staff are being expected to do after being told about it for about five minutes. I had a colleague in a Kent school who had to apply rectal Valium. The child had a fit in the classroom and the teacher would not take the children out of the classroom, so this assistant was expected to administer rectal diazepam in the corner of a classroom. This is a disgusting situation and I think there should be a general policy that no one should have to administer medication without the proper training and remuneration. Congress, I ask you to support 138. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 131, Yorkshire Region agree the statement? (*Agreed*) Motion 133, South Western agree the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Motion 137, Yorkshire Region agree the statement? (*Agreed*) Motion 138, Yorkshire Region agree the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Colleagues, all these motions have been supported with either a statement or a qualification that has all been agreed. I will now take the vote. All those in favour? Anyone against? They are all carried. Thank you.

Motion 131 was CARRIED.

Motion 133 was CARRIED.

Motion 137 was CARRIED.

Motion 138 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. Can we now move on to item 6, Emergency Motion 1, ConDem's Broken Promise to Protect the Low Paid?

CON-DEM'S BROKEN PROMISE TO PROTECT THE LOW PAID EMERGENCY MOTION 1

GMB CONGRESS 2011

EMERGENCY MOTION NO. 1

CON DEM'S BROKEN PROMISE TO PROTECT THE LOW PAID

Congress is dismayed that on 31st March 2011 the Secretary of State for Local Government wrote to GMB and the other Trade Unions refusing to implement the promised minimum £250 pay rise to Local Government Workers; further that on 10th May 2011 the Secretary of State for Education declined to exercise his statutory power to pay the £250 to School Support Staff. As a result Local Government is the only part of the Public Sector where the lowest paid will not get a pay rise, affecting 200,000 GMB members.

Congress endorses the steps taken by GMB to insist that the Chancellor's promise to protect the lowest paid should be carried out and deplores the shameful refusal of both local and national Government to pay up.

Congress calls on GMB to urgently pursue this with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor before the summer Parliamentary recess.

**BRISTOL PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
SOUTH WESTERN REGION**

(Carried)

SIS. G. BRINKWORTH (South Western): President, Congress, local government workers have always been the poor relations of the public sector despite the invaluable service contribution they make, whether it involves the collection of refuse, the cleaning of our streets, or the care of the elderly and vulnerable in our society. Someone said, or sang, a few elections ago, "Things can only get better." Well, Congress, with four more years of ConDem political bias and prejudice to come then things can only get worse for council employees. Let me explain.

As we all know, council workers have already been made the scapegoats for the Government's flawed fiscal policies, cutting jobs in telephone directory numbers is both a social ill and an economic disaster. Sadly but predictably putting people on the financial scrapheap comes as easy to Cameron and Clegg as it did to Thatcher and Major during their years of power. Both our members and the wider general public have denounced these deflationary policies for their economic madness that they are, but the Government presses on regardless. Now, colleagues, on top of the loss of countless jobs in local authorities, the resulting increase is in workload for those who remain and with the attack on their pension scheme comes a further whammy of a pay freeze, a pay freeze, Congress, that follows on from no increase being awarded last year and below inflation increases in the previous two pay rounds which has caused many of our members to live on or below the poverty line.

It is worth noting the relative pay position of town hall workers with the lowest rate of £6.30 an hour, the worst in the public sector by a distance, 200,000 earning less than £12,500 a year and 67% falling below the £21,000 threshold. The Daily Mail often refers to council employees as enjoying gold-plated terms. Well, colleagues, I am not sure where the gold plate is but I do know you would have to dig pretty deep to find it. Now, although the recommendations for the pay review bodies have been accepted this year for prison officers, teachers, the Armed Forces, and Health Service employees, the Chancellor has disgracefully broken the promise to apply the minimum increase of £250 a year to our members in local government. £250 may only buy four or so rolls of fancy wallpaper in the Osborne & Little households but to our members it may be enough to pay the quarterly fuel bill.

Congress, how can anyone justify council workers being worth less than those they work alongside, like teachers? The simple answer is this differential treatment cannot be justified. Let us not forget that three out of four of the people covered by the Green Book are women, so there is a strong equality issue here as well. Congress, we condemn the derisory treatment of our loyal and dedicated workforce by this Government and also we should expose the actions of those employers who have declared a standstill or reduced council tax level at the expense of the pay position of GMB members. This motion calls upon our campaigning union to continue to pursue this critical issue with the Prime Minister and Chancellor before they retreat to their ivory towers and summer palaces for the recess period. The cry must be, *Fair pay*

and fair play for local authority workers. That is no more than what the Chief Secretary to the Treasury pledged when he said a fair increase should be awarded for the lowest paid. Colleagues, our members expect and deserve nothing less; an increase is justified and affordable. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder? Formally. Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone wish to come in on the debate? I put it to the vote. All those in favour please show? The CEC is supporting. Anyone against? That is carried.

Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, in the previous debate London Region believes that the vote was not called on 134 so just to make sure that happens, all those in favour of 134 please show? Against? That is carried. Okay, George?

Motion 134 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I now move to Social Policy: Education & Training, and I call Composite 23, Motion 217, 218, 219, and 220. While I am waiting for the delegates to come to the rostrum we have two fringe meetings today, one is *New Labour is Dead, Where Now for Labour*, in Syndicate Room 3, and Sadiq Khan, Shadow Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice, Chuka Umunna MP, PPS to Ed Miliband, Karen Buck MP, Shadow Minister for Welfare Reform, the chair is Iain McNicol. Please attend if you can. The second one is *Awareness of Diabetes Two, Diabetes Research and Wellbeing in the Foundation* fringe meeting in Syndicate Room 2, the Chair is Dr. Alastair Leakey. That is very, very important and to which we have contributed a great deal, as you know from last year.

SOCIAL POLICY: EDUCATION & TRAINING

OPPOSITION TO ACADEMIES

COMPOSITE 23

(Covering Motions 215 and 216)

215. OPPOSITION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF ACADEMIES IN THE STATE SECTOR

(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)

216. ACADEMIES *(South Western Region)*

OPPOSITION TO ACADEMIES

This Congress calls upon the GMB to continue to oppose the introduction of Academy Status to schools in the state sector; but also to press the Labour Party to reject the principle of Academy Status from Labour Party policy.

There were serious credibility questions about the previous Labour Government's policy to introduce Academy Status to help failing schools. The current government policy of offering

Academy Status to every school will destroy public accountability in education and the maintenance of equal opportunity for each child.

This Congress is aware that many Local Authorities are working towards a reduced schools infrastructure, on the basis that both primary and secondary schools will become academy schools.

Congress agrees to continue its excellent work opposing the break up of the State Education system.

(Carried)

SIS. M. O'NEILL (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* This Congress calls upon the GMB to oppose the introduction of Academy Status to schools in the state sector and to pressurise the Labour Party to reject the principle of the Academy Status from the Labour Party policy. When David Blunkett first introduced the academies it was to help sort out the 10 or 11 worst schools in the country that were constantly failing and were in special measures. These schools have been given lots of support and were still in special measures so they were taken out of the system, given new powers, new school buildings, and a bigger budget. Blair then tried to expand the academy programme to all schools in special measures in the belief that these academies were the solution for all failing schools. There was no accurate statistics to prove this; in fact the opposite appears to be true worldwide. This latest Academy Bill is part of the ConDem dismantling of the public sector. This will change our education into a two-tier system where inner city schools that have a large number of pupils on free school meals are at a disadvantage to schools that have parents who can afford to pay for books and other services. This has given the middle classes an opportunity to send their children to an affordable private-type school leaving the rest to fend for themselves. Cash-strapped schools that did not originally apply for academy status are now being bribed to become academies with the money that is taken from the budget by the authority used to pay for the services they provide to schools across the authority, such as building support, pay roll and pensions, curriculum support, governor support, risk management, special needs support, financial and budgeting; the list can go on. As far as most schools become academies the less local authorities will have to spend on extra services.

Do governing bodies have the technical expertise and the time to take on all new responsibilities to protect the schools, pupils, and staff in areas such as finance, employment law, etc.? Have they done long-term business plans that take into account the reduction or removal of funding? Will they be able to afford all the services from elsewhere? Where are the academies going to turn when things go wrong? Who are they accountable to if they are failing our pupils? Who is responsible for ensuring that they are teaching proper core subjects? Will they get them into a job with prospects, or into further education? We are already seeing Mickey Mouse subjects that guarantee a pass and keep the schools exam pass rates up. What are they worth to young people trying to secure their futures on these worthless courses, courses which employers and universities do not recognise or value? Congress, if we really believe as Labour said that every child counts and matters the GMB has to continue to fight against this diverse Academy Bill and we should shame the Labour Party back into the policy of every child matters with the

removal of academies from their policies. We need to keep education in the public sector to ensure proper accountability and, more importantly, ensure that every child has equal access to education. Congress, I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

BRO. A. BROWN (South Western): I am a second time delegate but this is a first time speech for me. (*Applause*) President, Congress, we would like to thank the National School Support Team for producing excellent material that is being used in the fight against Michael Gove's initiative in pushing primary and secondary schools to move to become academies. The GMB in the South Western Region has been invited to speak at a number of meetings with heads and governors on a group basis or on a one-to-one basis.

What appears to be happening is that many schools do not wish to move to academy status but are being coerced by their local education authority to take up Gove's edict. Heads and governors are being promised additional cash to cover the transitional period. What is being admitted is that this is not new money but coming from existing LEA budgets. Many local authorities have already started the decommissioning of services they provide to schools, finance, HR, legal, property, education, welfare, and attainment. Many of these services are the subject of stringent restructuring and reviews and are now being pushed more into the commissioning arena. Schools have always had the opportunity to buy these services from other providers away from the LEA but many have stayed with the council. Heads and governors are being reminded if they opt for academy status they will be taking on the role of the LEA, including the upkeep of buildings. Fine if they have new school build but not so good if their school missed out on Building Schools for the Future.

Schools will be juggling both the educational programme and the LEA responsibility. What happens if the school overspends? If still under the LEA they can agree to a recovery plan over a number of years. Will Gove underwrite any overspends? School support staff are always at the sharp end when budget cuts have to be made and their plight can only be heightened with the threat of reduced employment status. Many catering and cleaning staff have already been outsourced to private contractors. A number of schools are forming cluster groups, secondary schools with their feeder primary schools entering into group academies. There is also an opportunity for other organisations like the Merchant Venturers or happy-clappy Oasis and others, to increase their portfolio of primary and secondary schools. Our children's education is too important to be a political football. They deserve the best to be delivered by the state. We would ask Congress to continue the fight against the creeping academy blight. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague.

MORE INVESTMENT IN SCHOOL SPORTS FACILITIES MOTION 217

217. MORE INVESTMENT IN SCHOOL SPORTS FACILITIES

Congress condemns the Coalition Government, a mixture of two political parties who have implemented savage cuts within our local communities. These cuts are completely unnecessary and the rate that they are being implemented will have a devastating affect on communities where we live.

It is a travesty that cuts so savage to areas like education will have an impact on our children's lives and which will affect their health.

This Congress wishes the CEC to continue to fight the Coalition on the savage cuts to our members families. In addition the CEC campaigns to bring more funding from the government into areas of education through Local Authorities and not the private sector, or Academies, that would invest in sports facilities and education as a whole.

These sports facilities which the Tories have cut the funding to our essential part of the child's upbringing and education. We have seen many examples of obesity, diabetes, and long-term health problems from inept, inadequate sports facilities in schools which have cost the health service hundreds and thousands of pounds. Unless we get the Government to see sense and invest in education, especially around sports facilities and activities, then our children will face a lifetime of ongoing ill-health and detriment.

ISLINGTON 1 & HARINGEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. BREACH (London): Congress, we all have to recognise the massive investment in education from the last Labour Government, an investment that not only improved our children's educational standards to the highest level we have seen in decades but also an investment following the many years of starvation of funding to state educational establishments from this previous Tory government. Labour's investment in schools was not just to drive up educational standards and grades but also to build schools for the future, which transformed some schools from having to teach children in rundown cold damp Portakabins to high-tech state-of-the-art classrooms. It is a fact that in today's modern society owing to poor diets and lack of exercise health problems for children such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease are on the increase, and at such a rapid rate and at such a young age, and to do nothing would only increase the mortality rates for children to the levels seen in the poverty years of the early 1900s, not to mention the added strain and cost to the NHS.

The Labour Government recognised this increase some years ago and decided some extra spending in educational sports facility was needed year on year as a matter of urgency to deal with this serious ongoing problem, and money was allocated to many schools. Even in the desperate times of the Second World War the Government put money into school sports as they knew the importance of fresh air and fitness for children. Sadly, Congress, following the last General Election we now have a Tory-led coalition government who have not only failed to maintain and increase funding in sports facilities, they have cut them altogether. The Tories education agenda took care of those who are within the playing fields of Eton, and the privileged. They think more of money than the children's health, and cater for the few and not the many. They have cut the education maintenance allowance and they have cut all the funding for educational sports facilities, which will only result in the increase in diabetes, obesity, and heart deaths in children of such a young age.

Congress, all the Tories are interested in is bringing in the private sector via private-run academies, to educate our children and at the same time reap the profits from local authority budgets to pay their friends in the private sector. Congress, the Tories always talk about investing in the future yet they fail to invest in children's health and cut education budgets and money for school sports facilities and at the same time put

children's lives at risk. Congress, it will not stop there. The next crazy idea from a Tory council will be to charge children to play in the parks and leisure areas just like the London Borough of Wandsworth has proposed that children should pay to enter parks in the borough. It is a disgrace. The next thing is they will charge us for the very air we breathe. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. N. MANNAN (London): First-time speaker, first-time delegate. *(Applause)* This Congress asks that the GMB and the CEC fight the Coalition Government on the savage cuts to our members working in the public sector; furthermore, for the CEC to campaign to bring more funding from government into areas of education through local authorities and not through the private sector or academies, to invest in sports facilities and education for our children living in deprived areas of the country. I believe that this Government has taken a firm stance to cut school sports funding. The Government announcement made in the comprehensive spending review of last year will have a damaging impact across schools in England. The Department of Education has announced ending £162m investment in school sports from this financial year. The Government is failing to acknowledge the long-term damage these cuts will have on young children throughout the country. We are living in times where we are seeing an increase in child obesity, diabetes, and other long-term health problems caused by the lack of physical and dietary education provided within our schools. I have cousins who attend school in the United States and they are all encouraged to take up sports from a young age. However, I feel that our government wants to do the opposite. I believe by providing more sports education in schools it will allow young people to develop self-esteem and build confidence in their future. Being active in sports can increase achievement and attainment at school level, it will also ensure young people learn to lead a healthy active life. To conclude, unless we get the Government to see sense and invest in school sports education, improved sports facilities, and activities, we are letting our young people down and potentially will face a lifetime of ill health and obesity. I would ask Congress to support this motion in asking the CEC to campaign against the Government in making these cuts. Every child matters. Every second counts. I second the motion. *(Applause)*

FREE SCHOOL MEALS MOTION 218

218. FREE SCHOOL MEALS

This Congress fundamentally disagrees with the Coalition Government's decision to cancel a planned extension to the universal free school meals pilot scheme and totally deplores the fact that the extension of free school meals to more low income families, due to start in September 2010, has been scrapped. Congress demands that the Government assists with the provision of more free school meals recognising the vital contribution they make in encouraging sound eating habits in early childhood, developing social skills, tackling childhood obesity, supporting local businesses through local procurement, creating jobs and helping to end child poverty.

DURHAM COUNTY LOCAL AUTHORITY BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. LINES (Northern): Congress, it took well over 10 years for the Labour government to agree that free school meals applied across the country; nevertheless, better late than never. Many of us who have been in the schools and listened to the

frontline catering staff tell us the reason why they have very few staff; it is due to the fact the take-up of free school meals is so poor. Most of us will also have been in schools in more deprived areas where most pupils are entitled to a free school meal but even then the take-up of free school meals is very low. Congress, free school meals have even been set aside by some parents whose children are entitled to them. It becomes too much of a hassle to apply. The means test system is not working. The evidence from the experts is the take-up is falling. We need universal free school meals. That is why the decision to scrap the pilots by the Tory-led coalition is wrong. Just when we have government passing a good policy yet again the policy is reversed. Universal free school meals removes the shame of applying, it means the catering staff are employed, the stigma of free meals is removed, and the local community benefits. I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

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

SIS. M. MALE (Northern): The idea of free school meals for those on low incomes came about in tackling poor diet and poverty. We now have a situation where the stigma attached to being on school free meals has put parents off claiming a free meal for their children. Congress, in school communities it can be like Coronation Street, everyone gets to know what is going on; it is just the nature of the school community. What they say is the way to deal with this is universal free meals. For a Labour government it was generally through means testing. Free school meals for all was a positive move, it hit all buttons, children got free meals, parents did not hand over money for junk food at fast food outlets, social skills are improved, concentration levels are improved, and more of our members are employed. Congress, universal free school meals is an excellent policy but it is about choosing as a society. The Coalition should reverse its policy and if it does not Labour needs to put it in its manifestos. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

TRADE UNION STUDIES AT SCHOOLS MOTION 219

219. TRADE UNION STUDIES AT SCHOOLS

This Congress calls for our children to be educated in schools. Politics and Trade Union studies must be on the curriculum in their final year. We need to educate our children in these topics so that they are fully aware and have an understanding of these subjects.

A15 ASDA BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. CLARKE (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, less than one in 10 of 16 to 24-year olds are members of a union so there is a lot of work to be done in educating young people about the benefits of joining the union. Where better to start than whilst they are still at school? Where better than school to learn about how unions defend workers' jobs, pay and conditions, and act to improve working conditions? Where better than school to learn that unionised workplaces are often safer places to be and their employees are often better paid, and that workers in unionised workplaces are also more likely to benefit from training and development programmes?

The truth is that young people are most likely to suffer injuries at work or to be taken advantage of by employers as they are least likely to know about their employment rights. Too many young people are not aware of their basic rights at work. While most may have heard about the minimum wage they are often unaware of their rights in relation to time off, holidays, or absence, contracts, and especially health and safety legislation and the protection this offers them, and their own responsibilities regarding health and safety.

Congress, we need to be more involved in spreading the union's messages in school to ensure that young people know the work that unions do, how we can help and protect them at work, and why it is important that they should join from day one when they get a job. Congress, we need to get the study of trade unionism into classrooms as soon as possible. It is imperative that the opportunity to learn about the role of the trade unions is introduced at an early age. We need to enable speakers to go into schools and colleges not as a recruitment tool but to provide a better understanding of unions, their history, and the benefits of joining, and to raise the profile of the union. We believe that if trade union studies are included in the Citizen classes on the national curriculum this would bring an understanding of unions into the mainstream of school studies and enable more young people to be aware of their rights at work. Congress, we have to campaign to help spread the message and promote the benefits of joining the union to the next generation of workers. There is an immense need to reach the young people of our nation to highlight these important issues. So, I urge you, please, to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder? Formally. Thank you.

The motion was formally seconded.

COMMUNITY FUNDING MOTION 220

220. COMMUNITY FUNDING

This Congress calls upon the GMB to campaign in partnership with other Unions and Community Training Organisations to defend the funding for organisations delivering community based education and training.

The Government has without consultation raised the threshold of minimum contract values to £500,000 for those seeking funding from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). It is estimated that of 800 providers only 200 will be able to contract directly. The remaining 600 will have to enter into "partnerships" with larger providers, e.g. colleges, to access their funding. In return the new partnership management can take 15% or more off the allocated agencies funding as their "management fees". We are aware that some colleges are charging above 20%. This will further reduce the actual funding available for education and training as well as leading to job losses in community agencies. These new arrangements, announced at the end of December, have to be in place between March and the Summer of 2011.

We ask the GMB to lobby for a restoration of the former arrangements for 12 months to allow consultation with the smaller agencies. We also ask that the "management fee" element be monitored closely to ensure larger agencies do not exploit their advantage in this relationship.

Severe damage will be done to community based education organisations delivering quality training where most needed. This runs contrary to the Government's "Big Society" initiative of encouraging local community agencies to deliver local services.

Q22 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress, over many years community agencies have helped deliver community based training. This year the Government has decided to destroy the quality, provision, and service provided by these agencies by introducing a minimum contract value of £500,000. Six hundred providers were wiped off the Skills Funding Agency contracting system. Their money has been rolled up into bigger contracts for the larger organisations. There is no obligation on these providers to share the funding; in fact they are charging a 20% management fee to hold the contract with partners. That means there is even less money available for practical hands-on support. This is wrong. It is the hard to reach and the vulnerable who will suffer, that is, our GMB night-shift workers, GMB members with disabilities, and GMB members under threat of redundancy. Many smaller training organisations will go to the wall not because they have done a bad job but because they are the ones who chose to run small person-centred local training.

Congress, I am a proud project worker on the North West & Irish Region Reachout Project. I can give you real examples of a community-based training organisation sending trainers to a factory to provide training on the night-shift for those members facing redundancy, 8.00 p.m. till midnight, they are the ones that are there. Congress, the local colleges would not even come out after 5 o'clock. In July this training will have to stop; so much for meeting the training needs of our workers. Congress, we know now with the European funding the Government department is going to see who should bid. This is not about quality or value for service, it is pure dogma that big and more likely private sector is better. I am telling you it is just not true. For years there has been a place for community training organisations; the funding was separate from further education funding. It was not a fight between the two. It was a creative partnership. It valued the special role and contribution that community agencies make.

Congress, do not let this Government set the colleges against community providers. There has been and is a role for both. I ask Kathleen at the Brussels office to see if the European funding move is legal. We think it breaches the open competitive tendering rules as the Government is making the decisions. This is not a big society, it is a BS society: the first word being BULL, the second rhyming with HIT. It is a BS system. It is a BS agenda. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

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

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Before I call Sharon Holder, colleagues, does anyone wish to come in on the debate?

SIS. H. PURCELL (London): I am speaking in support of all of the motions but in particular Composite Motion 23. Congress, this is a really important motion which I fully support. The Department for Education is currently compulsorily transferring 150 staff internally into its infrastructure and funding directorate, and is pouring massive amounts of resource into the free schools agenda. We need to stop this now and we need to do it in conjunction with other unions. This is not just an issue for GMB. Please support the motion and let's make sure we apply the maximum pressure to halt the break-up of the state education sector. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Colleagues, earlier I made the point about the fringe meeting on Diabetes 2. You have heard several of the delegates mention diabetes in the free school meals debate, very important, and while we are at it the two councils that I can remember now, Islington and Newham, have decided that they would continue the pilot schemes of free school meals, healthy school meals, in their borough. I think credit should be paid to those Labour councils. (*Applause*) Sharon.

SIS. S. HOLDER (National Officer, Public Services): The CEC is supporting Motion 219 with a qualification and asking you to refer Motion 220. Motion 220 deals with a complex situation which has moved on in recent months. It is our understanding that the deadline for effective training providers to notify the schools funding agency of their future arrangements has passed. The CEC feels that we would have to consider the knock-on effects of calling for a delay on further education college income and our further education members. The CEC therefore asks for Motion 220 to be referred so that a detailed examination of the situation and a more rounded statement of policy can be prepared.

On Motion 219, it is existing GMB policy for politics and trade union studies to be on the schools agenda and curriculum, and rightly so, because they are essential to giving children a grounding in citizenship and democracy. The qualification on Motion 219 is that while the motion calls for children to be educated at school, children also have a right to other forms of education; home schooling is the obvious example. Congress, there is a much more practical way in which we can educate the next generation about the role of unions. As a union we have a unique insight into the employment relations of the modern workplace and we ought to be sharing this experience with the next generation of workers, which is why we are teaming up with the education and employers taskforce to offer schools a frontline presentation about today's world of work, a presentation linked to the curriculum which GMB officers and activists will be able to go into schools to give to pupils, to tell students about our experiences of the modern workplace and the positive role the GMB play. We hope to have this in place for the new school year. I believe this would be a really progressive way to engage directly with students and give them an early opportunity to meet us and to think about us in a positive way. Please support Motion 219 with the qualification given and please refer Motion 220. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Does North West & Irish Region accept the reference? (*Agreed*) Accepted. Congress agree that? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now move to Composite 23, Motions 217, 218, and 219. Motion 220 has been referred and agreed. All those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Composite 23 was CARRIED.
Motion 217 was CARRIED.
Motion 218 was CARRIED.
Motion 219 was CARRIED.
Motion 220 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now ask Joe Morgan, Birmingham & West Midlands Region, to move his report, pages 98-106. Joe.

REGIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT: BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS REGION (Pages 98-106)

BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	14,392
MANUFACTURING SECTION	12,240
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	27,590
Grade 1 members	37,676
Grade 2 members	11,723
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	4,823
Male Membership	27,538
Female Membership	26,684
Total number recruited 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	6,669
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	+542
Membership on Check-off	34,184
Membership on Direct Debit	15,326

Response to Organising Agenda

The Organising Agenda remains a priority within the Birmingham & West Midlands Region and I am pleased to report that at the end of December 2010 we were 542 members up on the same time twelve months previous. The Region has continued with our successful Southern Cross campaigns and in 2010 we changed our strategy and had three separate weeks of organising specifically within Southern Cross, this was in March, August and November which generated an extra 253 members specifically over these weeks. That is why although Southern Cross is now being mainstreamed our policy within the region will be to continue to hold dedicated organising weeks within Southern Cross. We also continued with the organising weeks within Wilkinson Stores and our ongoing strategy within schools is still delivering members. As a result of this, we have adopted the strategy of having area schools conferences which have been attracting large amounts of contacts within schools and also representatives. The philosophy of GMB@Work is highlighted to new representatives at their initial support training. There is also a requirement for them to attend the two-day GMB@Work training within a short period of being elected as a new representative. We are finding this very useful as it lays down the foundations of being a good workplace organiser. Although 2010 has again been a very difficult year because of major job losses in the Manufacturing Sector, the region fared very well and at the end of December 2010, our regional membership stood at 54,222 members which was a net gain of 542 on the year. This increase again is a testament to the commitment of the staff, Officers and activists within the Birmingham & West Midlands Region.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

As you would expect throughout 2010, the region has maintained its emphasis on the national targets provided by the National Organising Team and ensured that the Regional Organising Team are driving the Organising Agenda to ensure that Officers and activists follow through to completion. As stated in the previous paragraph, as well as concentrating on Southern Cross, Wilkinson's etc. we are also ensuring that we continue to investigate Greenfield areas within the Private and Manufacturing Sector and I am pleased to report that during 2010 the region managed to secure Recognition Agreements in the following companies; Federal Mogul Sintered Products Ltd, Koito Europe Ltd and Elisabeth the Chef Ltd. We are of the opinion in the region that there is a need to keep a balance between our membership organising activities within both Public Services and Private industry.

Overview of Region's Economic & Employment Situation

As everyone will be patently aware, unemployment has risen sharply towards the end of 2010 with the national level being 7.9%. However in the West Midlands we saw a rise that took us to 9.9% which was a huge increase of an extra 48,000 people registering unemployed, taking the regional jobless total to 264,000.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	4
Membership Development Officers	
Regional Organisers	17
Organising Officers	1
No. of Branches	101
New Branches	1
Branch Equality Officers	18
Branch Youth Officers	13

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	
Total Disablement	
Working Accident	595.75
Occupational Fatal Accident	
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	
Funeral	17,675

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

Throughout 2010 the regional magazine, Centrepoint continues to be a major source of delivering information directly to every member within the region. Also in 2010, the regional website has had an overhaul and is far more user friendly with special sections of the website dedicated to the Organising Agenda within both the national targets with schools, Southern Cross and Asda and also the regional project board again where we keep members informed of the issues surrounding them in their workplace. We also now ensure that successful legal claims are publicised both in the regional media and press and also on the regional website. Dozens and dozens of press releases have been issued to the local media and we also work with the national Communications Department to ensure a wider distribution of press releases regarding manufacturing problems, job losses, factory closures but also advertising major success stories. We have also sponsored many local community events such as local football teams, amateur boxers and community athletic games. The Media department continues to use SMS text messaging along with a database of email addresses for activists to ensure that they are kept in the loop with regards to any campaigns that we have ongoing.

5. LEGAL SERVICES

- (a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
528	528

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
196	132		64 £160,456.06		£2,317,201.61
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010		132			

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	55
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
22	15		5 £86,500		£172,750
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010		33			

(c) Other Employment Law Cases – Compromise Agreements

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages / Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
80			

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
17	4	8

Throughout 2010 we continued with our partnership with Thompsons Solicitors who assist the region in every way possible to promote the Organising Agenda. They are also actively involved with organising campaigns ongoing within the region.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

The Regional Equality Forum (REF) has had a very busy year and during the first three months of the year were without an Officer but the forum continued to work tirelessly. The REF has been involved not only at Regional level in working with branches but also at the Midlands TUC working alongside other Unions to make the voice of the GMB heard. Our members on the TUC equalities strands take their work seriously and some hold key positions as Chair of the various committees.

As well as working within branches the REF has also promoted the GMB at equalities events in the region. Hope Not Hate Campaign, Birmingham Gay Pride, Give Racism the Red Card, young members football event, Women's Chainmaker's event at the Black Country Museum. It was at this last event that the GMB really stood out with a brand new equality banner leading the march. There was also a

stall run by the REF members and volunteers from the membership, this ensured the GMB equalities message was delivered to over 5000 people attending on the day.

We hosted a young members five-a-side football tournament which was a successful day in encouraging young members to get more active within the Union. All participants received a GMB mug and the winners won a trophy donated by the region.

One of the biggest issues the REF has taken forward is the equal pay argument for local government workers especially in Birmingham City Council, this is an ongoing campaign with the support of our solicitors we have won a number of legal arguments against the local authority. In addition we have settled several thousand equal pay claims through COT 3 and compromise agreements, which has benefited our members to the tune of some hundred million pounds.

In previous years the REF took forward the work of the Daphne project (combating violence against partners) and this year we have continued to support this work through the Pink Ribbon Campaign with the main focus being after international football matches, where the statistics state this is where the highest reports of domestic violence take place. We have also produced a leaflet for members on domestic violence and where they can seek help as well as issuing guidance for reps and how to deal with it in the workplace. We have also produced a model domestic violence policy for stewards to take back to their workplaces and negotiate with their employers.

We were also invited by the Birmingham Trades Council to attend a conference against the cuts in the public sector and to deliver training and sessional workshops to the delegates attending around our work in organising underrepresented groups.

The REF held its annual Equalities Conference in October and was very well attended by branches. It was also where we voted to put in place a terms of reference and a constitution for the region as well as additional posts on the REF. We are now the only REF with a fully elected constitution. The REF was also extremely pleased to win this year the Presidents Award and is determined to continue to work harder to achieve more awards in the future.

It is only since September we have started to collect ethnicity data for our meetings, training courses and conferences so the data is limited to the last four months of the year.

Event	M	F	YM	Asian: Indian	Asian: Pakistan	Black: Caribbean	Black: Other	White: British	White: European	Not Stated
Regional Committee	8	4		1				10	1	
REF	12	4	1			1		11	1	3
REF SOC	2	1		1				1		1
H & S conference	31	6						12	1	24
Equalities Conf	22	15		2		1		16	1	17
IST training	30	21	4	1	1	1		36		12
GMB induction	29	13	3	2	1			29		10
Nat Grid	5									5
Accompanying Reps	6	2				1		2		5
DDA	9	2						10		1
Retail H & S	4	5	1					8		1
Negotiation Skills	7	1	1					5		3
Communication	11	2	2				1	8		4
Accident Investigation	17	1						1		17
TUC courses	28	3	1					23		8
Total	221	80	13	7	2	4	1	172	4	111

7. TRAINING

185 Reps received IST training 1/1/10 – 31/12/10

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
GMB@WORK 2 days & 8 days	9	90	38	128	1280
GMB@work 2 days Education	1	6	9	15	30

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Employment Law	1	7	3	10	360
Industrial Relations Intermediate	1	17	4	21	105

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Health & Safety Intermediate	1	26	2	28	140
National Grid Reps H & S	2	21		21	21
Retail H & S	1	4	5	9	9
Disability Discrimination	1	9	2	11	11
H & S conference/workshop	2	29	6	35	35
Accident Investigation	1	18	1	19	19
Hazards	1	2	1	3	9

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student day
Accompanying Reps	1	5	2	7	7
Negotiation Skills	1	7	1	8	24
Communication & Media	1	10	3	13	65

(e) TUC/GFTU/Northern Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
TUC Diploma in Occupational Health	4	8		8	288
TUC Union Reps Stage 1	2	1	1	1	20
TUC Computer Course Nights	2	2		2	20
TUC H & S stage 1	7	12	1	13	130
TUC Tackling Stress	1	1		1	2
TUC Public Speaking	1	1		1	2
TUC Union Reps stage 2 Stepping up	2	2	1	3	30
TUC H & S stage 2 Next steps	4	7	1	8	80
TUC Union Learning Reps	1	1		1	12
TUC Global Economy & Change	2	2	1	3	30
TUC Agency Workers	1	6	3	9	9

TUC Equality Reps 1	1	1		1	3
GFTU ILM Final Presentation	1	1		1	3
GFTU UMF Presentation	1	1		1	1
GFTU Managing Successful Projects	1		1	1	1
Branch Secretaries Course	1	2		2	10

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health & Safety continues to be at the forefront of all our work in the region and this is reflected on the specialist courses we have run since September; Accident Investigation, Disability, Body Mapping, Retail H & S, National Grid H & S and two conferences in November and December highlighting the dangers of Asbestos and the young review.

In April we reviewed how H & S credentials were issued to our stewards and what level of training they received from this all new accreditation letters and cards have been issued, and training pathways implemented for all stewards to identify what further training they need. As part of the accreditation process we also used it as an opportune moment to cleanse membership records and obtain email addresses as well as mobile telephone numbers. This has now resulted in H & S bulletins being issued electronically as well as other information ensuring our reps receive the latest information straight away. This has also helped in other areas of updates and our reps are now more active at turning up to organised events raising the image of GMB further.

We have produced a number of leaflets on a variety of H & S topics and these will form part of a toolkit for safety reps that they can download from the website and use in their workplaces.

Training on H & S has also been given a priority and all new stewards are expected to sign up to the Stage 1 H & S within their first year of being a rep and certainly before they undertake any other training.

A number of issues have also been raised in the region at various workplaces but in particular relating to the cold weather and employers refusing to put heating on. In one case, members were working in temperatures of minus seven. This was soon resolved by the region and a leaflet advising members and reps of their rights in working in cold temperatures was issued. Workplace visits also took place by the Regional H & S Officer.

The region was also asked to present a talk on H & S reps and their training and why H & S need Trade Unions to the HSE and their intake of new inspectors. This has helped to forge a strong relationship with them.

The report was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Page 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106. Seconded? Formally. Thank you.

The report was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can we now move to Motion 139, NHS Public Services.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

NHS PUBLIC SERVICES

MOTION 139

139. NHS PUBLIC SERVICES

This Congress is opposed to the government's attitude towards the NHS, nurses 2 year pay freeze and the stopping of any future increments.

We support the nurses for the value they give to their jobs and they should not be penalised by the inefficiencies of the government.

DAGENHAM MOTOR INDUSTRIES BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. PRESHAW (London): President, Congress, this Government preaches a positive future for the NHS, to build a positive infrastructure that they say will make the NHS stronger. (I am sure I had a bang on the head last night!) If they are going to do this, let's start right at the grassroots and build a solid foundation by boosting the morale of the people that work for the NHS, cleaning staff, nurses, and all the caring staff. Too many times we have seen these people attacked; they are an easy target because of their caring nature. It is wrong. What we now have within the NHS is too many levels of managers. Managers – failed carers, more interested in personal status and paperwork. So let's fight this and any other future government and stop these people having their pay frozen; it is a pay cut for these people. These worthwhile carers do a fantastic job for all of us. My old granddad said once, "There are two things in life, grandson," he said, "arseholes and nurses." We can deal with arseholes. Let's protect our nurses. *(Applause)* Let's do away with the many levels of management and put the emphasis back into the recruitment and retention of the people within our NHS. Please support this motion. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

BRO. J. RICHMOND (London): President, Congress, as the mover said, the pay freeze on nurses is unforgivable, although it is not just nurses who are having their pay squeezed, the civilian staff have been given many surprises; contractors are being forced to reduce charges to the Trusts. This, Congress, is a testament of this Government's political will to abolish the NHS. It would appear that rather than just come out and abolish it, they are trying to make it abolish it by itself: by making it unworkable by failing to adequately award frontline staff, which will mean more expensive agency staff have to be employed, which will mean financial failure. Alternatively, cheaper less able or less qualified staff will be employed and this will mean operational failure. Anyway, colleagues, it will lead to a failure to deliver what the NHS intended to deliver. The consequence of the Government's NHS reforms is being ignored by Cameron and his hapless Health Secretary, Lansley. They ignore it, colleagues, because it is their ideological plan to do away with the NHS, which will be a bad day for this country if it happens. Congress, please support. I second. *(Applause)*

SOCIAL POLICY: NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE REFORMS COMPOSITE 21

(Covering Motions 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251)

- 246. NHS BETRAYAL *(London Region)*
- 247. NHS REFORM *(London Region)*
- 248. SAVE THE NHS *(Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region)*
- 249. OPPOSE NHS REFORMS *(Midland & East Coast Region)*
- 250. NHS *(Birmingham & West Midlands Region)*
- 251. NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE *(Northern Region)*

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE REFORMS

Congress we are proud of the NHS and our members who deliver a world class service and the improvement to the general health of the nation over the last 60 years.

This Congress condemns *and* deplores what Cameron and his Tory Lib-Dem Coalition are doing to the NHS. This unwarranted attack on its very foundation is the biggest broken promise of them all by a Conservative Prime Minister who will destroy universal health care across England by unleashing a free-market tsunami. Congress believes that the increasing market provision threatens the principles upon which the National Health Service was founded.

Congress calls on the Coalition Government to scrap its policy of devolving Health Budgets to GPs. It is clear that their proposals will in time deliver our National Health Service to the Private Sector whose sole objective is greed not need. This will harm patients and create possible closures of many NHS hospitals across the country.

We call on the GMB at all levels, national, regional and branch to actively oppose the insidious attacks on the NHS by the Con-Dem coalition. The NHS is a world renowned institution that we should all stand up and fight for.

This Congress agrees the GMB will campaign and oppose any break-up of universal healthcare in the UK. This Congress believes that the GMB should work closely with the TUC to oppose any reforms that the Con-Dem Government is introducing regarding the NHS. We must now in conjunction with other NHS Unions do everything possible to expose the hypocrisy of the Tory led proposals and defend the NHS in its present form.

Congress further calls on the Labour Party to give a commitment to repeal the Coalition Government's policy when next in power and therefore instructs GMB to lobby Labour MPs to keep the national in the Health Service and stop any privatisation.

(Carried)

BRO. C. KERR (London): Lansley, Cameron, and Clegg, I call them the three amigos, keep on insisting they are listening to public opinion on the NHS reform, but do not be fooled for one little minute. They are still trying to peddle a scheme that could wreck the NHS. They are not prescribing a cure for the National Health Service but a sick dose of private upheaval, a deadly cocktail of dangerous reforms putting profits before patients. This attack on the very foundation of the NHS is the biggest broken promise of them all by a Conservative Prime Minister who will destroy

universal healthcare across England by unleashing a free market tsunami. The audacity of Mr. Cameron is breathtaking. Why wasn't the NHS reform in the Tory election manifesto? It was not in the manifesto because the Tories know they would not even have been half-elected, as they were, if it had been. The slippery PR men con voters, declaring with repeated pledges the NHS was safe in his hands when he intended all along to sell it down the river.

Congress, the Social Care Bill is about much more than handing £80bn worth of budget over to unaccountable local consortia of GPs. It is about opening up the whole of the NHS, both the commissioning and the provision of services, to the private sector. The bill encourages any provider to cherry-pick profitable slices of NHS services. Existing NHS services will be left with reduced budgets, meaning possible hospital closures, ward closures, and longer waiting lists, not shorter waiting lists as Cameron claims because he knows that is not the aim or in fact is not possible on his squandering £1.4bn on the shake-up and £1bn in redundancies.

So, who is set to benefit by this backdoor privatisation? It is certainly not the general public. Could it be the private health bosses with their cosy Tory links, who have made huge sums from the healthcare industry and have denoted £750,000 since Cameron became leader, and who are only in business for one thing, to make money, not make us well. This Tory leader is fulfilling a long held Conservative dream to destroy the NHS. They have disliked it ever since Winston Churchill opposed its creation by the Labour Government in 1948. Thatcher even toyed with dismantling the nation's most cherished institution, but she backed off.

Congress, we are proud of the NHS and it is our members who have delivered a world-class service and improvement to the general health of the nation over the last 60 years. This Congress agrees the GMB must, in conjunction with the Labour Party and other NHS unions, do everything possible to expose the hypocrisy of the Tory proposals and defend the NHS in its present form, keeping the "national" in health service and not profits of shareholders and fat pay packets for doctors. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. N. COLLINSON (Northern): President, Congress, the Tory-led coalition government is playing fast and loose with the NHS. They are seeking to bring in policy more radical than anything Thatcher ever did. It is privatisation. This policy was not voted for; it was not even in the coalition agreement. Now this Tory-led coalition wants to pause, listen, and reflect. What a load of — waffle! Congress, we know the improvements brought about in the NHS were due to investment, not privatisation. Cameron and Lansley have ignored clinicians; that is why health workers and other groups are against these changes.

Congress, the Tories have always opposed the NHS, it is part of their ideology. They voted against the formation of the NHS. Thatcher and Major introduced the internal market to the NHS. The last Labour government brought in creeping privatisation and leading New Labour politicians are now well off as a result of company directorships linked to the NHS. That kind of hypocrisy among Labour ranks is bad enough. However, we now have a Tory/Lib-Dem government and it is privatising the NHS. The Coalition Government is putting price and profit before clinicians.

Congress, overheads are greater in countries with privatised and social market health systems than the NHS. The changes being proposed will not improve efficiency, they will only fragment services. They will attempt to move away from the national pay bargaining and erode terms and conditions of our members. Congress, we need these reforms to be reversed. We need the Labour Party to commit to repeal changes. We need to keep one of the country's greatest assets. I second. (*Applause*)

SIS. A. BURTON-KEEBLE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire) I do not need to tell you that we need to save the NHS so I am just going to say a little bit about where I work. I am a biomedical scientist working in a histopathology laboratory at Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. We are part of the cancer services. We have five qualified staff and two students, and we process 13,000 specimens a year. We have already had our cuts. Five years ago we were told we had to save money. As a result people were given early retirement and people who left were not replaced. Where I work we have less staff now than when I started there 11 years ago, even though our workload has doubled. We end up relying on students who are thrown in at the deep end and quickly become an invaluable part of our team. To be honest, without them we would be stuffed. At this early stage these students are already showing dedication to the NHS. As a comparison we have four newly qualified pathologists who are doctors and who after only 12 months are showing their true colours; very quickly they have become greedy, lazy and show no concern for the patient. These are the type of person that the Government wants to be in charge of our budgets. We regularly stay late doing unpaid overtime so that the cancer patients get their results. We regularly buy things like cleaning equipment out of our own pockets because it is needed.

I just want to highlight a couple of things we have achieved in our laboratory. By liaising with breast cancer screening all patients receive their results within 48 hours. Prostate cancer patients receive their results within 72 hours. As a comparison, if we sent these specimens away to a private company the patient would not receive their result for over two weeks. We have the dedication because we chose to work in the NHS. We want the cancer patients to get their results as soon as possible because we care. Privatising the NHS would be a kick in the teeth. Please support. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. MARGINI (Midland & East Coast) speaking in support of NHS reforms said: President, Congress, we have one of the best health services in the world and are the envy of many countries but if the ConDem government have their way they will totally destroy all we have built. Congress, are these reforms necessary? One quarter of a billion is being spent to make changes; this could be invested in our NHS. Broken promises from the coalition government: they promised no cuts and the NHS will be protected. Evidence shows that there is a huge gulf between promises to protect the frontline and what is actually happening on the ground. Hundreds of thousands of operations are being denied routinely, and many routine procedures. Many of the trusts cut back on surgery, and other treatment, to save money. This cutting has caused the trusts all around the country to refuse to pay for operations, including hip replacement, cataract removal, wisdom teeth, and shockingly the Government have announced that new mothers will have to supply their children with more milk. Clearly, our health comes way behind pounds, shillings, and pence. Fertility treatment most commonly is cut or rationed, whilst in some areas the patients

who have had cancer can receive funding. However, GPs have been asked to delay all non-urgent treatment for over eight weeks.

Congress, what price do you put on a person's life? The damaging unjustified change to the NHS must be shelved. These reforms will introduce a full-blown market into the NHS and put hospitals at risk. The blind shake-up of NHS in the country that will put GPs in charge of buying services could risk patient's care and will destroy the frontline service. If privatisation goes ahead it is feared private companies will cherry-pick the easiest patients leaving NHS to deal with the complex cases. The Government has to be stopped before it is too late and the NHS is completely destroyed. Only the wealthy will have the option to first-class treatment leaving the working class back in the middle. The class war is on. The Government is stoking the fire. Comrades, I ask you to support the motion for your families, for your children, and for your children's children. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Come on, Mario! Mario, sit down. Birmingham? Here is another one that should have been up here half an hour ago. Joe, another fine!

BRO. D. KEMPSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): I do not have a speech made out because I think everything has been said about this composite and we fully endorse everything that has been said. Thanks. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: It will still cost you 20 quid! It will cost your regional sec; 40 quid I have just made out of that! Anyone else want to make any comments? Thanks, David. What do you want? Get up here. Another 20 quid, Paul Hayes! Ah, ah!

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): I was here before that anyway. Good morning. Congress. Thank you very much indeed for allowing me the time to speak on the NHS. These are important, very, very important issues and I love the debate we have been having yesterday, the day before, and today. Congress, this motion is really, really important personally, and the industrial work. I have been working in the NHS for over 20 years, a service which has saved millions of lives. Let me remind you that thousands of breast cancer patients waited over a year or 18 months to have it investigated as to whether they needed treatment or not. The Labour Government put those people on two weeks' treatment. That is an achievement for the Labour Government. We must not forget that. We must not let the ConDem Government put us back on the road for the gold services they are trying to give to the private sector. Let us protect our NHS. We believe in our NHS and we need it for all generations to come. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I call Rehana in response to 139 and Composite 21?

SIS. R. AZAM (National Officer, Public Services): I thought Mo was going to impersonate me there for a second! Congress, I am speaking for the CEC and moving the CEC Statement on the Future of the NHS. The CEC is supporting composite 21 with the CEC Statement. The CEC is also supporting Motion 139 with the statement that I will give a bit later. Congress, when Cameron tricked his way into power he spelled out his priorities in three letters, NHS. It was a barefaced lie and Tory spin for No Health Service. In 2001 and 2005 polls showed that voters would not trust the Tories with the NHS. Do you remember their campaign in 2005: *Are you thinking what we are thinking?* Well, it might have scared you then but they are still thinking

it. Their slogan in 2010 was, *Vote for Change*, it should have been *Spin to Win*. The opening line of their manifesto said, *We will increase health spending*. Spin. This year has seen the lowest settlement for the NHS since the 1940s.

After the LibDems found that voters blamed them for abusing their trust, this Coalition said it would pause to listen to our concerns. Well, Congress, having been to those meetings I can report back that they are not listening and they are not stopping. So what are they so desperate to achieve that they cannot wait for legislation? As ever, the Tories claim that the public sector is rife with bureaucrats, bureaucrats in primary care and secondary care; there is no part of the public sector that Tories do not see civil services wasting money. They claim that PCTs are bureaucratic and they think axing them can save £5bn. Does this mean that their job will no longer exist? Absolutely not. Now it will be controlled by GP consortia. So, will it be managed by GPs? Definitely not. More spin. GPs are too busy managing primary care to spend time balancing budgets and negotiating secondary care. So, who will do this job? Lo and behold, the profiteering private sector. Private sector companies like PricewaterhouseCooper, and KPMG. Welcome to NHS plc: No Health Service.

Conservative MP Nick de Bois called his fellow Tories to arms last week claiming, “We must nail the myth about so-called privatisation of the NHS.” The only thing that is not private about their plans is the money. And where are the profits going to come from if not from the £5bn savings? GPs are being forced to cut costs so that these management consultants can make their profit. Less spent on care and less spent on those delivering it; and they are paving the way to this profit right now. PCTs are being wound up and staff are being made redundant. The Tories have already planned and begun to implement 50,000 job cuts. NHS trusts are accepting foundation trust status allowing them to break away from national negotiations to set local terms and conditions.

If you want to know what is planned for the NHS, Southern Cross is illustrating this. See how the private sector overcharged the public sector inflated rents for care home beds. See the worry that the financial difficulties at Southern Cross have caused elderly and vulnerable residents, their families, and staff. See what happens when you open up the health sector to private equity firms, asset stripping and extortionate rents, where patients do not know where they are going to be tomorrow, who is going to be caring for them, or where that care is coming from. Southern Cross shows vividly what happens when opening up the health sector to the unscrupulous moral standards of investors.

Have the Tories learnt nothing from the economic crisis? Where the markets have failed, they want to gamble more on the markets. They have taken people’s livelihoods and they want to risk our health on them as well. What does this Government really care about, is it the budget deficit, is this why they want a cheaper NHS? In the words of George Osborne, his party is “a tax cutting party”. What this Government really cares about is the rich and how much of their money goes to the poor. We have a Cabinet three-quarters full of millionaires and terrified of how a nation with growing social needs will come to ask more of them and their like in future.

Congress, what we are witnessing is nothing short of an attempt to totally dismantle the NHS and they are planning to complete it before the next general election, before voters get a chance to stop them. So, the GMB sends this message to the tax-dodging Tories and the free-market democrats: the GMB rejects the idea that the NHS could benefit from the profiteering of investors, the GMB rejects the ConDem cuts and the shirking of social responsibility that is being passed off as “the Big Society”, and the GMB rejects the Health & Social Care Bill and calls on everyone here to play their part in saving our NHS and kill the bill.

On Composite 21, can I make it clear (and this is reflected in the CEC Statement) that GMB is not opposed to any change in the NHS. All public sector services are capable of improvement but any change should take place within a publicly owned NHS and have the interests of NHS staff at its centre.

On Motion 139, Congress, the CEC supports the motion with the statement that it applies to all NHS workers.

In summary, Congress, I move the CEC Statement on the Future of the NHS. The CEC is supporting Composite 21 with this CEC Statement and the CEC is also asking you to support Motion 139 with the statement I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to the vote. Dougie, are you waiting for me, or Christmas? You want to make a comment? Hurry up, then.

BRO. D. HENRY (NorthWest & Irish): Forty-two years in the NHS. If we listen to some of the debates that have been going on, we will all see this because everybody will use the NHS in their lifetime, including the people who are not here. If we are going to wait for five years to get another government in, God help us. We have to take the lead with other unions to get this lot out as quickly as possible. We can spend millions of pounds on missiles in illegal wars, as we are doing now, and yet we do not have a hospital for the military soldiers. (*Applause*) I served 40 years in the Territorial Army and the regular Army. My unit is going to Afghanistan again this year. We do not have any military hospitals now so they come to Birmingham. That is what they have. At the AGM of the Royal Liverpool Hospital where I have worked for a long time I wanted to comment so I went because they were bragging about how they are getting patients through within three days for surgical operations, and things like that. As soon as he walked in the Chief Exec went, “Oh, I’ll see you after the meeting.” I said, “No, I’ll ask my question now. It’s all very well getting patients through and the waiting list down, and I accept all that, brilliant, but if there are no services or no PC services to look after them, who is going to look after them because they have nowhere else to go?” “Yes, well, we’ll talk about that after.” The other thing was, just a quick one, Mary, when they opened there were 790 beds. There are now 1,240 beds. In the future the new one that is going to open in 2016 has 600 beds, so what are we supposed to do? We have to fight for this NHS. It is your NHS. It is not theirs to get rid of. We all pay for the bloody thing. Get rid of the missiles and pay for the bloody NHS. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: With that final word of care from Dougie, let’s move to the vote. Does London Region accept the statement? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. On both 21 and 139? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour of 139 and Composite 21 please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 139 was CARRIED.
Composite 21 was CARRIED.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, could I move over for a change in debate to item 13, Composite 5, Public Sector Pensions. Then I will take Motion 83 before lunch.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: PENSIONS & RETIREMENT

PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

COMPOSITE 5

(Covering Motions 79, 80, 81, 82)

79. PENSIONS *(London Region)*
80. PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS *(London Region)*
81. PROTECT PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS PENSIONS *(Midland & East Coast Region)*
82. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION *(Birmingham & West Midlands Region)*

PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

This Congress condemns this Tory led Government for its attack and misinformation on Public Service Pensions which, together with their proposal to increase members' contributions, will be a detriment to members to the benefit of the Treasury.

This Congress agrees that the Government attacks on public sector pensions, covered by the smokescreen of a review conducted by the ex Labour Cabinet Minister, John Hutton, is based on inaccuracies, lies and partial information whipped up by newspapers such as the Telegraph and Mail, and organisations such as the so-called Tax Payers Alliance and the CBI, that public sector pensions are "gold plated" and unaffordable.

Congress further agrees that a race to the bottom is not the solution to funding dignity in old age for our members or the public at large. For the majority of our members the truth is somewhat different with average annual pensions from public sector pension schemes being only £7,000 per year.

We call for a joint trade union national campaign to highlight the attacks planned by this vicious Government and the affects these will have on the future provisions of Local Government workers.

This Congress:

- calls upon the GMB nationally to increase it's campaigning in defence of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- agrees the GMB will campaign and oppose the proposed 3% contribution increase in the Local Government Pension Scheme

Congress mandates the CEC to campaign with other public sector trade unions in defence of public sector pensions, up to and including action if necessary.

(Carried)

BRO. E. STEWART (London): First-time mover. *(Applause)* President, Congress, in all political debate there are lies and there is truth. There is no issue in recent times that has brought these opposites out as much as the debate on public sector pensions. Compo and Clegg use public sector pensions as an election issue. They called them gold-plated pensions and said they were unfair, unaffordable, and unsustainable. That

is a lie. Actually, Congress, public sector pensions are fair, will save the Treasury money in the long term, and most are fully funded and sustainable.

Colleagues, we expect the usual drivel and anti-public service pensions propaganda from the right, like The Sun, The Mail, and Telegraph, but we know when these stories are not the same they must be making it up. The Sun said recently that public service pensions would cost each person in Britain £30 per year. In a subsequent issue this was revised to £5,000 per household. How many households have 15 people, not many, and for this to be true most households would have to have 30 people: pure propaganda, pure lies. The Mail said public sector pensions would cost each person over £900, £600 more than The Sun: bigger propaganda, bigger lies. They cannot all be right, can they? No, colleagues, they are all wrong. If you take out the fully funded scheme like the local government scheme, the cost to the taxpayer is much, much less. There you have the blatant lies and the plain truth.

It was claimed in all the right-wing rags that a teacher who retired on a salary of £50,000 could receive a pension of £25,000 and a nurse who retired on a salary of £40,000 could get a pension of £20,000. The truth is the average public sector pension is under £8,000 and 90% of public service pensioners get less than £17,000. The average local government pension is less than £4,000. There we have the truth and the lies. A gold-plated pension of £4,000 a year, bring it on. How much did retired Labour Minister Hutton get for his report: £4,000 a month for a three-day week. That is gold-plated.

The public service pensions are not unfair, they provide dignity in old age and reduce dependence on the state. If pensions are reduced, any imaginary saving would be lost in providing state benefits. Colleagues, currently one in four members are leaving the Local Government Pension Scheme. This is because real term decrease in pay over the last two years makes it unaffordable. Colleagues, there may be another more sinister reason for reducing public sector pensions. If our pension were to be significantly reduced, that would reduce the liability of potential bidders for public service contractors and lead to a massive privatisation of even more of our public services. That, colleagues, is just not on.

The GMB must increase its campaign to defend public service pensions and let there be no mistake, the campaign must make it clear that strike action is a likely outcome, and London Region believes that this strike we will win. Congress, please support. I move. (*Applause*)

BRO. M. MARGINI (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress —

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you start now, Mario!

BRO. M. MARGINI (Midland & East Coast): With the attack on public sector pensions by the ConDem government and the right-wing media, clearly the public sector pension is gold-plated. Let's look at the myths. Many reports about pensions would lead you to believe that most public sector workers retire at the age of 60 on a third salary. They also think the private sector props up the public sector and of course public sector pensions are spiralling out of control. Let's remember, this is all myth. The truth is the pension age for many public sector workers has always been 65 and this now applies to most when you join it. In fact the public sector workers

can only retire at 60 on two-third salary if they work in the public service for over 40 years or more. The average pension in local government is around £4,000 a year and just £2,000 for women, while in the civil service the average is £6,500. The average pension for NHS workers is £5,000 a year. The pension for a woman is much less; in fact half of all women pensioners who work in the NHS get a pension of less than £3,500 a year. The UK economy depends on a thriving public sector as well as the private sector. The costs are set to increase somewhat on all pension costs but not by unsustainable amounts, and some economists think it will actually be filled by 2030.

Comrades, the public sector pension scheme plays an important economic role. For example, public pension funds will fund billions of pounds of workers' investment in the UK economy. Pensions are also an important element of a remuneration package and essential recruitment tool to attract people to the public service. In addition, they play an important role in ensuring individuals have a reasonable income in retirement and they are an effective way of encouraging saving for retirement. A recent attack on public sector —

THE PRESIDENT: Mario, there is a red light on now.

BRO. M. MARGINI (Midland & East Coast): Okay. In a recent attack on the public sector —

THE PRESIDENT: No, Mario. Mario, we are running late!

BRO. M. MARGINI (Midland & East Coast): Okay. The economy encourages attacks on NHS workers. Please support this motion, comrades. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I am going to ban you from the platform! Birmingham.

SIS. C. BARNETT (Birmingham & West Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am speaking in support of Composite 5. It is an absolute disgrace imposing a 3% tax. Normally, a person would have a choice and volunteer additional voluntary contributions. Birmingham Region fully supports Composite 5. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cheryl.

ACTION ON PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS MOTION 83

83. ACTION ON PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONS

This Congress believes that Government attacks on our Public Sector pensions are totally unacceptable.

Congress supports the call to campaign for a yes vote in a ballot for industrial action of our Public Sector members against Tory plans for our pensions.

BARNESLEY GMB BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. J. GARSIDE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): The proposals in John Hutton's report on public sector pensions reform amounts to a major attack on the lives of public sector workers. The plan for increased employee contributions shifts much of the cost of providing pensions from the Exchequer on to our members. This is about the Government attempting to reduce its deficit, which of course was not caused by workers but by the Government's bailout of the banks and its failure to collect millions of unpaid taxes from corporations and the super rich. This is why the GMB has called it the Osborne pensions tax. Most of the media has bought the myth that our pensions are somehow unsustainable, that the measures taken under Labour are already reducing costs as we are paying more in as a result. However, in the Tory plans we will be paying 50% more and getting less pension. As contributions rise many employees will decide that on top of the two-year pay freeze and with inflation running at record levels they cannot afford to contribute to their pensions and will opt out. This could lead to the collapse of healthy pension schemes. The pension scheme is in surplus, but in Barnsley as in other areas there has been a record number of opt-outs over the last year. A rise in contributions can only make matters worse. The changes are also about reducing the costs associated with privatisation. Hutton plans to exclude private sector employers from the local government scheme despite the fact that one in three employers in this scheme are private sector firms delivering public services. Barring access to the local government pension will worsen pension provision on the rising number of employees working in contracted out services. We know that some workers are preparing to fight the Coalition on these attacks on our pensions. Teachers, civil service workers, lecturers, all plan to strike in defence of pensions on 30th June. The strike will involve workers in four unions, the NUT, PCS, UCU, and ATL, a total of around 800,000 members. It is a shame that we are not balloting our members but Brian Strutton has said we must also be ready to fight. Well, that is good because we are ready. The unions are talking to the Government through the TUC but really we are just being strung along. I understand the GMB position is that we are still at a relatively early stage of negotiation and need to exhaust that process before deciding on other courses of action. In the meantime we continue to prepare should we need to ballot. The pensions issue is one that has a potential to unite all public sector workers against the Government's plans. All we have to do is rise to the challenge, add action to our words, and stop this Government's attacks on our pensions. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, John. Secunder?

BRO. G. WARWICK (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): The motion really says it all but we have to ask, why are we asking for this campaign? For several years now workers in the private sector have experienced reductions in employment pension schemes and final salary schemes are virtually non-existent. Employers and the ConDem Government are beginning to see the differentials between private and public sector schemes so therefore they want to introduce equality but equality by lowering public sector rather than increasing those in the private sector. This leads to the much famous quote, gold-plated pensions. Well, where are they, other than a very, very, very, very, very few. We cannot afford the billion-pound deficit in public sector pensions, and they are charged to taxpayers. I am not an expert on all public sector pension schemes but I can say a little bit about the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Unlike several other public sector pension schemes the LGPS is a sustainable funded scheme, and even the Government's department accepts that it is sustainable, so why the attack? For many years government ministers have been stating that with longer life expectancy people cannot rely on the state pension and they must make separate provision for their retirement either through an occupational scheme or another private arrangement. If this is true, why attack a solid well funded scheme in which members have invested in a basis for a comfortable retirement. The latest 3% tax on pension provision is a disgrace and will ultimately lead to members leaving and therefore threatening the viability of the LGPS. The question is, why is the government doing it? The only conclusion must be that it is an ideological attack on public sector workers. They must not be allowed to get away with it.

Finally, before I wind up and I know the red light is on, I would like to speak from the platform and pay tribute to the GMB's Pensions Department. Without their support we would be seriously handicapped, and they provide a really excellent service. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Garry. Anyone wish to come in on the debate? Oh, we're back, are we? Okay, I call Brian Strutton to respond to Motion 83. Brian.

BRO. STRUTTON (National Secretary, Public Services): Composite 5 and Motion 83 raise the vital issue of public sector pensions and the vicious, sustained, and unjustified attacks on them. We robustly defend all the public sector pension schemes and we drive the argument back. We say, don't tell us the public sector pensions have to dumb down to private sector levels, instead it is time to revise pensions for everyone in every part of the economy, and if critics want to trade arguments about this public sector scheme, that is fine too. We defend the funded schemes like the LGPS with enough money in the bank to pay everyone's pension for the next 20 years and the unfunded schemes like the NHS where the Exchequer has for decades pocketed all the money invested on behalf of the workforce. (*Applause*)

Now, we know that pensions are becoming evermore expensive to provide, we know that workforces are not the same as they were when many of the public sector schemes were designed, so we do not argue against change, we welcome it as a necessary part of keeping schemes sustainable. That is the point. To protect our long-term pensions as a good investment people understand the need to keep those schemes affordable. But we draw a line in the sand when government tries deliberately to destroy the pensions of 12 million working and retired public servants; we will not have it. That is the message I take into the negotiations with government over the reform of public sector pensions. Sensible reform, yes; slash and burn, no. The negotiations are difficult. We are in the middle of those negotiations. I can tell you that we are making some progress, not enough yet but there is still some way to go. When I believe that we have exhausted those negotiations I will put the position openly for us to decide on the next steps. It is likely to mean the consideration of an industrial action ballot and that is why the GMB has been preparing for that eventuality for some time so that we will be ready should the negotiations fail to provide an acceptable outcome.

Therefore, the CEC asks that Motion 83 be qualified so that any call for action is in line with this policy and in accordance with our usual practice. I do not believe we are at that point yet. My best reading of the situation is the crunch will come in the early Autumn. I earnestly hope that I will have a good outcome to present to our members from those negotiations but if it is not acceptable, if it is not acceptable at that time, then we will have no alternative, and let me be absolutely clear about this, we will exercise our right to strike to defend our pensions and bollocks to Vince Cable. (*Applause/Cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Is that spelt with two Bs, Brian! (*Laughter*) Okay, I move to the vote now, colleagues. Composite 5 and Motion 83, does Yorkshire Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) You do. Thank you. Composite 5 and Motion 83, all those in favour please show? Anyone against? They are carried. You see, Brian, you took my breath away then!

Composite 5 was CARRIED.

Motion 83 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Final announcements, colleagues: on Sunday we passed a resolution to update the GMB membership application form and we would like to try and get a new photo for this new form. If you would like to take part in it, could you please gather outside the front of the centre just after Congress ends this morning's session; it will take approximately 20 minutes. Make sure Mario is in the front and you keep him there! (*Laughter*) Could I please remind delegates to pick up a GMB@WORK T-shirt, modelled by Delores. (*Cheers*) Remember to show your credential badge.

There will be a bucket collection in aid of Maureen Malone - and Maureen is up in the balcony with her son - of the Luton Branch as you leave the hall. Colleagues, this and all our bucket collections are for an exceptional good cause so please give generously, and I know you do. Okay.

Lunchtime fringe events have been shown on the screen. Right, I know we are a little late but could we be back at 2 o'clock, please? Thank you. Oh, 10 past. (*Cheers*) Thank you.

Conference adjourned.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress re-assembled at 2.10 p.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Congress come to order, please. Will delegates, please, not have their conversations at the back of the Conference hall. That includes officers. We now move into this afternoon's session. I remind delegates that if you do go over your time, I have arranged with the electronics in the balcony – I will go like *that* – to cut your throats. The mikes will be switched off. I now call Motions 222 and 223. Elaine Daley will respond on behalf of the CEC.

EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIPS MOTION 222

222. EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIPS

This Congress calls on the Coalition Government and the Labour Government to provide tax incentives for businesses to employ apprentices. Congress believes that the UK lags behind our industrial counterparts in recognising the world of work to obtain a practical education and that the UK is still wedded to elitist forms of education. Congress calls for a re-balancing of education incentives to ensure that apprentices are not seen as a poorer alternative to further education.

NORTH TYNE MANUFACTURING BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. R. CLAYTON (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 222 – Education and Apprenticeships. When the last government adopted the recommendations of the Leach Report in 2006, it did so with the aim of improving apprenticeships. We know that the UK economy is reliant on the service sector. To have a dwindling manufacturing base is the wrong choice. Having an unbalanced economy leaves the UK to be in exactly the vulnerable position we were in when the recession hit three years ago. The Leach Report compared our social model to that of Germany and Holland. Both of those countries invest in top quality apprenticeships. Their apprentices are well rewarded. Ours used to be when the governments made it a policy choice to have a thriving practical skill sector.

In recent decades governments have stuck to the rigid elitist form of education. Everything is geared to academic skills, to students going to universities and for them to get into enormous debt for the pleasure of doing so. Congress, it is vital for our future that we have a balanced approach to education. That includes apprentices getting the type of practical education they used to get in trades where they will get work. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

BRO. D. CLEGG (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 222 – Education and Apprenticeships. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Let me put on record before I start that “Clegg” is the only similarity you can make with my name to Nick. *(Laughter)*

Congress, investments in apprenticeships have taken many forms in the last three decades, from youth training schemes to modern apprenticeships through to the current scheme. Governments have grappled with our manufacturing decline. The education system has moved towards a degree-based system. Tory Governments use the Youth Training Scheme and the Youth Opportunity Fund as a way of fiddling the unemployment figures. With current unemployment figures rising from 16 – 24 year olds, it would be typical of this Tory-led Coalition to dream up some similar schemes. At what price do young people have to work for their benefits? Then we have the unscrupulous employers jumping on the bandwagon to try to erode pay in the workplace.

We need proper investments in education that is balanced, that gives incentives to take on more apprentices into the quality education system that balances the practical with the academic. It's what this country was famed for. It's what we need, again. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

APPRENTICESHIPS TRAINING MOTION 223

223. APPRENTICESHIPS TRAINING

Congress must make sure that government sponsored apprenticeships schemes lead to proper training and qualifications.

Z39 NORTH KENT ENGINEERING BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. BURTON (Southern): Congress, I am an old-time speaker, dinosaur and bad speaker. *(Laughter)* May I just take this opportunity to say it is great that we are seeing so many young people and first-time speakers at this Congress. Now I go on to the script.

I have come to this rostrum several times in the past grumbling on about practical education. Successive governments over the decade have ignored apprentices. Now, it seems, that this is the best time since sliced bread, but we must make sure that these apprenticeships are not DIY ones. We must also make sure that they do them now while we still have the tradesmen to teach them.

This is not the case in Europe. Thanks to the GMB, we secured European funding for the *Medway Queen* project. The project is called *Who Sees*, which includes social inclusion. Three ships, three countries. Preserving old skills, creating jobs and repairing lives. I am pleased to say that one of them is the *Medway Queen*. I am also pleased to say that the icing on the cake is that we are going to be taking on eight craft apprentices, three media apprentices and we have four instructors in place now. When I served my time, it was a long time ago. I don't quite go back to the *Mary Rose*, but I do go back to the men and women who gave us the welfare state.

They wanted a better life for me. I want a better life for young people in this country. So let's have proper apprentices and proper jobs. I move. *(Applause)*

BRO. B. HULLEY (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 223. I am not quite as old as my colleague but a dinosaur, nevertheless. Worthy President and Congress, Vince Cable told us yesterday that funding would be provided for a further 250,000 more apprenticeships than previously planned. That sounds good. But what does he actually mean? Does he mean proper craft apprenticeships, providing young people with real skills, such as electricians, carpenters, mechanical fitters and, dare I say it, boilermakers? Or does he mean modern apprentices – three years training to work on a checkout at a supermarket? That is no more than an excuse to exploit young people and keep them on low pay below the minimum wage. This motion is intended to

ensure that all taxpayer sponsored apprenticeships lead to proper training and qualifications for young people.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Before I call Elaine Daley, does anyone wish to contribute to the debate? *(No response)* Thank you. I ask Elaine Daley to respond to Motion 222.

SIS. E. DALEY (CEC, Commercial Services): Congress, the CEC is supporting Motion 222 with a qualification. The motion calls for businesses to be given tax incentives to take on apprentices. This is a reasonable proposal. Indeed, it builds on existing GMB policy of calling for more funding of vocational training. This is especially important today when there are still 2.5 million people on the dole, and when almost a million young people are without work or the prospect of getting work. We firmly believe that employers have a social responsibility to help to tackle the scourge of youth unemployment.

Everyone knows that apprenticeships can help to give young people the start they need in their working lives and, of course, they can also create opportunities for older workers who need to reskill as the economy changes.

The CEC's qualification is that we don't want to see companies getting another tax break for nothing. Other motions to Congress this year have raised the issue of corporate tax avoidance. There is a feeling that big companies are already let off the hook far too often as far as tax is concerned. If employers are to get an incentive to take on more apprentices, we will expect those companies to deliver the goods. Their schemes will have to be proper, good quality ones. To ensure this, they will have to be monitored. Please support Motion 222 with this qualification.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. With that, I put Motions 222 and 223 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? Carried.

Motion 222 was CARRIED

Motion 223 was CARRIED

ADDRESS BY ANDY CLARKE, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ASDA

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to introduce you to the man on my left, Andy Clarke, who is the President and CEO of Asda Stores to our Conference. Andy began his career in retail in Grantham working for Fine Fare. I have heard of Grantham before, somewhere or other. Andy has been working in the retail sector for 18 years and has worked at Morrisons, Matalan and Iceland. He joined Asda in 1992 as store manager in their flagship Edinburgh store. Andy has always had a strong belief in the importance of nurturing young talent. Last April Andy personally committed to create 10,000 work experience placements for 14-16 year olds. He also committed to creating 25,000 retail apprenticeships at Asda.

Andy Clarke, would you please address Congress. *(Applause)*

MR. ANDY CLARKE (President and CEO of Asda): President and Paul, thank you for your warm welcome this afternoon. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker at this Congress. *(Applause)*

It gives me great pleasure to be invited to be with you today and listen to your debate on youth unemployment. It is a topic which is vital to you as a Union, to Asda as a major employer and to millions of people across the country. You are right to put the future of our young people at the forefront of your thinking. Asda shares your concerns. We are totally committed to doing everything we can to help.

Let me tell you why youth unemployment is so important to me personally. How do you think I became the boss of Asda? Hard work at school, years at university and top industry qualifications? Not quite. I left school at 16 with one O-Level. So my prospects weren't great. Although I was brought up with a good attitude to work, I had no real direction. My first job was cleaning tables and sweeping floors. Then I got a job at Fine Fare, stacking shelves. There I met a man who inspired me to succeed. His name was Dennis. Unfortunately, poor old Dennis has been a long time dead. He believed in me and helped me to develop the skills needed to serve customers and become a retailer.

My experience has taught me a vital lesson, that skills change people's lives. Skills give people self-confidence. Skills give people employment. That's why Asda recruits for attitude and trains to skill. The retail sector isn't an old boys' or an old girls' network. We don't recruit from unrepresentative aspects of society or from a few narrow elite universities. We recruit from all sections of society. 57% of our colleagues are female. A number of our colleagues are here today, and it was great to speak to them earlier on. 20% are over the age of 50, and a quarter are aged between 16 – 24. This approach has paid off by making the most of the varied skill bases of our colleagues. We can offer fantastic service to our customers and keep the business innovative and efficient. I believe that wasting talent is as bad as throwing products in the bin. In the end, the customer pays.

Last month I had the opportunity to take part in an event in Newcastle that was arranged to help local people who were looking for work. You may have seen some of the advertising and press for it. I can't tell you how impressed I was with the drive, the passion and the commitment of the 400 people who I met that day. I want, quickly, to tell you about one of them, whose story to me shows how important it is that we invest in our young people. Ashley is 26 and she lives in Gateshead. She has 11 GCSEs, she is very eloquent, a passion to work and a can-do attitude that you wouldn't believe, but Ashley is blind. Despite her great attitude she is struggling to find work. When I met Ashley in Newcastle she impressed me so much that we plan to set her up with a work placement in our Gateshead store. *(Applause)* We work with Jobcentre Plus to offer work placements to long-term unemployed people, to help them get the skills and experience they need to help them get back into employment.

Let me give you another short story. There was a father and his son sat in the second row. Two Normans. I won't declare their surnames. Senior Norman was in tears because he couldn't find employment, and so was his son. They are the sort of stories that generate change. Working with businesses like Jobcentre Plus we can offer a real

difference. We know that work placements are just one step on the road towards employment, but it is a great scheme that helps people get their confidence back on the right track. It has certainly made a difference to Ashley and to the Normans. In fact, Ashley's mum wrote me a letter to tell me what a difference that one show of faith in her daughter has made. She told me that Ashley spends a lot of her time trailing the internet, looking for jobs, and she also has a disability adviser at the Jobcentre, but nothing ever materialises. In her letter, she says: "When she told me about Asda I was thrilled, but she said, 'Let's just wait and see if anything happens.' Sure enough, she got a phone call from your guys as Asda. I have never seen her so happy for a long time. She was completely gobsmacked and lost for words. I burst into tears. Ashley has been through a lot in her life and only wants a chance to be accepted and to prove that, despite her disability, she is a very competent and a lovely person who wants to work." She finishes the letter by saying, "Thank you for giving my daughter hope."

I can tell you now that reading that letter gave me a real sense of pride. It is quite an emotional thing to go through to hear some stories like that from people who simply want to work. Asda has made a very clear and firm commitment to give thousands of young people a hand up rather than a handout. I am proud of the work we are doing. One-third of all of our new starters are between 18 and 24. Remember, we are a company that employs nearly 180,000 people. Two-thirds of our 10,000 seasonal squad are between 18 – 24. Three-quarters are between 16 – 24. We are one of only a few retailers in the UK to offer the same rate of pay to the under 18s. It doesn't matter what part of our business they work in. (*Applause*) I feel very proud of those colleagues who work for us, whether they work on a checkout, run a grocery department or any part of our business.

Our stores are working to adopt a school in their local area and provide structured work experience placements to local pupils. We have committed to offering 10,000 placements to young people to help them get a real understanding of the world of work. Very often I see – certainly when I was running stories – people coming out of schools, they come for their first interview and they don't really know how to dress and what to do. We hope that this will give them an opportunity to understand what the world of work is all about. I am talking about everything from budgets to managing people, certainly not just making tea and sweeping floors.

We are currently rolling out a new apprenticeship programme in our business that will see up to 25,000 Asda colleagues receive a City & Guilds Accredited Apprenticeship by the end of 2012, and 6,000 by the end of this year. I can tell you that only yesterday we opened the programme and 2,500 of our colleagues signed up for the apprenticeship programme to get a City & Guilds qualification.

In the Olympics year we want ambitious youngsters to strike gold, and I am grateful to the GMB for your support of this programme. These are tough times, but whilst we all focus on tackling the challenges of the here and now, we can't lose sight of our responsibility to support the workforce of tomorrow. Young people are the lifeblood of our economy, and that's what big businesses should be concentrating on and we certainly are. That's what the unions can have a major effect on. That's what we are all here for. Thank you for putting this vital issue so high on your agenda. Thank you for listening. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy, for coming to Congress. For years, as you well know, with some employers we are always seen as a threat. You should never be frightened of the GMB. Our jobs is to create jobs and see that business works well. All we want is fairness and justice for members. Andy, I believe you have that commitment and I was delighted to hear your speech that everyone who will work for you will be treated equally. I thank you for that very much indeed. (*Applause*)

On behalf of our GMB members, would you accept these two glasses made by our members.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: There is just one other thing that I want to add that Andy didn't mention in his speech. *This* is a basket made by the York Disabled Workers' Co-operative, which you all know about. Andy, I give you that because you can carry your gear home in it.

THE PRESIDENT: And a bottle to go with it.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Yes. Asda has pledged and given a commitment to give business advice and support to the York Disabled Workers' Co-operative, which is great and fabulous. (*Applause*) But they have done more than that. They have been working to organise space in the Asda stores' car parks in York and elsewhere so that the Disabled Workers' Co-operative can display their goods in the car parks and get a wider business support. It is a great bit of help and a great deal of support. Thank you, Andy. We are really appreciative. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that was extremely pleasant and productive. Can I now move to the next item. I call Helen Johnston to move Standing Orders Report No. 5.

STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 5

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, SOC): Congress, I move SOC Report No. 5. Emergency Motions. The SOC has accepted a further emergency motion as being in order for debate. This is Emergency Motion 5: Proposed Incinerator for Kings Lynn, standing in the name of London Region. The SOC is recommending that this emergency motion be heard on Wednesday afternoon.

DVD. The SOC has given permission for a DVD to be shown in relation to Zoe's Place Baby Hospice on Wednesday afternoon. President and Congress, I move SOC Report No. 5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Are there any comments on the report? (*No response*) Do you agree to accept the report. (*Agreed*) Thank you, Helen, and thank you, Barry.

SOC Report No. 5 was ADOPTED

ANNOUNCEMENT ON COLLECTION

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that the collection raised £647 at lunchtime. We have agreed on the table that we will make it £1,400. Thank you all very much for your generosity. (*Applause*)

MANUFACTURING SECTION REPORT

MANUFACTURING SECTION

MANUFACTURING SECTION NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Martin Shaw	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
John Dolan	GMB Scotland
Ann McLaren	GMB Scotland
Brenda Fraser	London Region
Audrey Harry	Midlands & East Coast Region
Paul Wheatley	Midlands & East Coast Region
Mark Bartlett	Midlands & East Coast Region
Ron Waugh	North West & Irish Region (Section President)
Edward Marnell	North West & Irish Region
John McDonnell	North West & Irish Region
Andy McGivern	North West & Irish Region
Mary Hutchinson	Northern Region
Bernard Taylor	Northern Region
Gerry Ferguson	Northern Region
Sheila Bearcroft	South Western Region
Don McGregor	South Western Region
Brian Farr	South Western Region
Ann Leader	South Western Region
Brian Burton	Southern Region (Section Vice President)
Michael Laws	Southern Region
Tommy Hall	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

MANUFACTURING SECTION NATIONAL OFFICERS

Phil Davies - National Secretary
Keith Hazlewood - National Secretary
Allan Black - National Officer

PHIL DAVIES, NATIONAL SECRETARY

Introduction

Being old enough to remember the difficult days under Edward Heath and then the unrelenting attacks in the 1980's by Thatcher, the first coalition government since 1945 is far worse. For those who voted Tory or did not vote at all there are hard lessons to be learned.

The Con Dem Government that many people in the UK wanted has been a disaster. In the first 12 months it has increased VAT to 20% and food by nearly 8%. We have seen a declaration of war against the public sector worker and a total lack of understanding for the manufacturing industry. The old and young face a bleak future. Inflation is running high with the price of petrol reaching record levels whilst all the time this Tory led government hides behind the economy and is paying back sums of money that the banks were given in 2009.

There are not many economists working on the factory floor but workers know that if you fail in your job like the bankers failed then the only bonus you are given is your P45 and the exit door.

There are signs that the UK is now becoming a society dependent on what you can pay. Reductions in council services, education and health services do not worry the mega rich. If you are receiving a £100,000 bonus every six months in the financial services industry you are not bothered about any services. You can simply flash the cash and join BUPA.

Manufacturing is still taking the brunt of the economic downturn. When will someone high up in government realise that manufacturing could be the backbone of the UK economy. China did not become the world's leading economy by selling financial services. China rolled up its sleeves and invested in manufacturing. The fact that China's economy has been founded on manufacturing has been missed by government since those dark days of Thatcher. Even now the UK's products are the best in the world and the quality and design cannot be overtaken anywhere in the world. We still have the skill to produce any products that are required; the question is for how long?

CONSTRUCTION WORKING RULE AGREEMENT

The pay negotiations have gone from bad to a farce. Our members have not had a pay increase since 2008 and are now in the third year of a pay freeze. The employers have used the downturn in the industry to impose the latest pay freeze.

UCATT seems unable to mount any sort of a campaign against the employers and as the lead union I am afraid UCATT is guilty of not leading the trade unions fight against these pay freezes. GMB and UNITE have been unable to persuade UCATT to come up with any sort of campaign.

Olympics

This is also a farce. Low paid construction workers who have worked flat out to complete a magnificent complex. Very few directly employed local construction workers have been given jobs and we believe this figure is less than the 30% quoted. The Olympics will have been build by skilled workers on the cheap.

ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION

For the last 18 months I have had national responsibility for the industry. During the first year there were several unofficial actions taking place in support of the Lindsey oil dispute. The employers were proposing a pay freeze which eventually was settled at a 2% increase.

The lack of work within the industry has led to tension in the employment of UK workers. Several cases have been uncovered by the South Western Region regarding the underpayment of wages and our solicitors are currently pursuing the employers.

Pay

The joint trade union negotiators were able to conclude a very good agreement which increased pay by 4.7% from 1st January 2011.

Keith Hazlewood, National Secretary is now fully back to health and resumed responsibility for the industry from 1st January 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our shop stewards and Regional Officers within the industry for their help and support during a difficult 18 months.

THERMAL INSULATION (TICA)

For the last 18 months I have had national responsibility for the industry. I was immediately involved in a dispute over pay which because of the employers unilateral imposition of a pay offer led to our members holding protect meetings throughout the industry.

The thermal insulation workers (ladders) will not be dictated to by the employers and they stand by each other in solidarity. A great bunch of trade union members where traditional trade union values still exist. After the few protest meetings from our members the employers came to their senses and after a short but boisterous negotiation improved the offer.

For some considerable time the trade unions have tried to negotiate the calculator for overtime which unfortunately is a part of this difficult job. For many years the actual overtime rate of pay has been £11.01 per hour which is less than the agreed basic rate. In other words the hourly rate goes down when working overtime between £1.21 and £2.42 dependent on time and a half or double time. The employers have now agreed that between 4th April 2011 and 4th January 2012 that the overtime hourly rate will increase in two stages to the basic rate. This, along with a 1.9% increase on basic rate should increase earnings in 2011 by at least 3% and a further 2% in 2012 plus any negotiated increase in 2012.

These negotiations have proved to be very difficult and special thanks go to Billy Coates, David Hulse, Tom Kelly and of course our lagger shop stewards.

BRITISH FURNITURE INDUSTRY

Again it has been another difficult year within the industry. There are signs that the constant move to offshore production is now starting to slow and in some cases return to the UK. Of course there are reasons for this not least the price of oil.

After 400 years of furniture production with skills passed onto generations of furniture workers it suddenly dawned on the UK employers that these skills cannot be replicated in countries where workers are exploited. Quality is lost, the environment is harmed and UK consumers are conned into thinking that goods made outside the European Community are just as good as furniture made inside the European Community.

The high cost of transport, increasing wage rates and low productivity are all reasons why the UK furniture industry will recover. It will take the next 20 years to restore this industry but we do have some great British manufacturers who pay reasonable terms and conditions where the safety of the workers comes first: Duresta, Ercol and many others produce high quality furniture.

Pay

The industry enjoys pay rates between £9 and £15 per hour so why is the national agreement so low?

The answer is that the BFM takes more notice of the employers who pay low wages to groups of unorganised workers than they do to the larger furniture manufacturers who employ organised workers. Certain employers have been allowed by the BFM negotiators to have too much influence at pay negotiations.

As a result of our survey we were able to send out this years pay offer of 2% to more organised furniture factory sites where some of our members took part in the pay ballot for the first time. The employer's offer of 2.1% was rejected. Negotiations are ongoing and another meeting is due to take place at the time of writing this report.

My thanks go to Martin Smith who has supported the Manufacturing Section in efforts to increase membership and democracy within the British furniture manufacturing industry.

INSTITUTE OF ORGAN BUILDERS (IBO)

In 1930 there were over 2000 organ builders. Music from the world's cathedrals was played on British or German organs. Westminster Abbey, St Paul's and Durham Cathedral all have British organs built by very skilled craftspeople. Even today when I visit Mander Organs at Bethnal Green I watch in amazement at the skill of the small group of men and women who are using crafts very rarely seen anywhere in the world.

In 2010 we probably had less than 200 organ builders and nearly everyone was covered by the GMB/IBO agreement. We achieved a 3.5% increase for 2011.

REMPLOY

In the 22 years that I have had national responsibility for our Remploy members I have seen all the directors leave for one reason or another but mainly incompetence and greed. Only two directors in all those years appeared to have any thought or understanding of disabled people. Ray Fletcher and Sandra Knowles knew what was required for Remploy workers and how to negotiate with the trade unions.

During that time we took union membership from 42% to 92%; we negotiated hours from 39 to 35 without loss of pay and consolidated all but £4.46 of the £32 bonus scheme into the basic rate. We reduced the number of hourly paid graded rates from over 40 to just 6 and introduced a much improved sickness scheme. We negotiated up to 27 days annual holiday plus the 8 statutory holidays; we increased holiday pay to average pay including overtime and other paid elements. We took away the two tier pension scheme in the mid 1990's and replaced it with a pension scheme for all apart from 7 senior managers who have enhanced arrangements.

We have protected hundreds of disabled and non disabled people when they found themselves on the wrong side of the disciplinary procedure. We have worked hard to improve our workplace organisation with shop stewards health and safety reps in all factory sites and workplaces.

GMB democracy increased. Instead of the single GMB Consortium member we now have 8 senior stewards, a full time Convenor and deputy Convenor. All this has been achieved during a period where trade union influence and organisation has been reduced elsewhere.

The workforce has increased its skills and production levels and when the work is there this has doubled. There are no restrictive practices in the Remploy workforce.

Therefore why is Remploy still in decline and why is another round of voluntary redundancies taking place?

The answer is very simple. For the last 22 years Remploy has not retained the same quality and integrity of the past Remploy senior management. Over the years we found that the senior management was less experienced in manufacturing, less active in the marketing and had little or no feelings for disabled people.

The latest turn of events in Remploy has come about because of the very poor qualities of the current Remploy management. We have a collection of self-serving people; an HR director who has been running a business long after she was appointed and who was being paid as a consultant for over 18 months of her appointment; a chief executive who publicly lists one of his pastimes as drinking champagne; an HR manager no one has seen for 18 months and numerous senior managers with no interest in Remploy being paid £60,000-£990,000 per year.

There have been over 288 wasteful management appointments in Remploy businesses and over 500 in Remploy; £6.5m spent on consultants since 2008 and over £3m per year in company cars and allowances.

Every year GMB has warned a succession of different governments and ministers of the dangers of overspending and a massive amount of trade union time has been invested in meetings with the DWP.

On behalf of the other unions the GMB produced an alternative plan and strategy which would have saved Remploy up to £30m per year. It is no surprise that this so called Con Dem Government chose not to listen.

It is an absolute disgrace what is happening to disabled people and their supported employment in the UK. The current government blames the last government but everyone is now starting to understand

that no industry, no group of workers disabled and non disabled is safe from their callous approach to the economy.

Remploy workers are in a fight to save the concept that some, not all disabled people need support more than others; that a leg up is better than a knock down. GMB is fighting for the rights of our disabled members to choose for themselves what type of employment is suitable for them.

Pay

For nearly 8 months Remploy has refused to negotiate on pay and when forced to the company offered £250 per year increase for all employees earning less than £21,000 per year. At the time of writing this report the offer is out to ballot.

FUNERAL INDUSTRY

It is hard to imagine but the industry has faced some difficulties in the last two years and it shows how hard the recession has bitten with many people being forced to have cheaper funerals. The bad debt rate has virtually doubled in the last twelve months and for the first time in many years this has all led to some redundancies and a reduction in the number of staff required throughout the funeral industry.

The very fact that people are living longer and the mortality rate has gone down also adds to the difficulties.

Negotiations have taken place with a number of independent cooperatives. The London Association of Funeral Directors (LAFD) has continued to negotiate with the GMB on an annual basis and despite the difficult trading conditions we were able to secure a 2.5% increase on all rates of pay for 2010/11. Negotiations will start later this year for the 2011/12 pay increase.

Cooperative Funeralcare

The GMB still remains derecognised and this is now our fourth year. Despite the pressure from a number of sources including our activist we have not been able to secure recognition. The GMB General Secretary remains adamant that relationships with the Cooperative should be at arms length and only return to normal once the Cooperative recognises GMB for collective bargaining purposes in the Funeralcare section.

Two of our major activists within the industry have retired within the last year and we would like to thank Bill Knollman, former FTAT Executive member who has retired and moved to Devon. Bill was an active member of the funeral industry section and was part of the negotiating team within the LAFD. He took an active part right up to his retirement a few months ago. We wish Bill, his wife and family a peaceful and healthy retirement in Devon.

The pressure from the Cooperative Funeralcare has finally taken its toll on one of our major activists, George Shearman. For many years George was Branch Secretary of the Hanwell Branch before retiring just a few months ago. George led from the front for many years against an overpowering Cooperative management. We will miss his strength at branch meeting and unfortunately our membership will continue to be discriminated against because of their GMB membership. The constant harassment and attention from management has also affected George's health.

We hope that George will return to good health and that he will return to active service. Whatever happens the Trade Union and Labour Movements cannot forget or forgive the actions of the Cooperative.

SAWMILLING

This is a difficult and sometimes dangerous industry to work in. Our members are not always rewarded within this industry for their skills. The industry has fared far worse in the recession of the last two years and has been extremely affected by the downturn in the construction industry.

The requirement for wood products within the UK and Europe has declined with the slowdown of house building. Alongside this there has been a massive increase in the cost of timber which has been mainly because of the massive amounts that China and India are purchasing on the world markets. This has led to a shortage of timber worldwide.

Natural resources are being wasted and European timber companies have seen a decline for their products whilst at the same time the rain forests of the world have been cleared at such a rate that nearly a third of the rain forest has already disappeared. The world's environment has not only changed because of global warming but because of the destruction of these rain forests. The high quality timber in the use of furniture may well become a thing of the past and only carried out in the most expensive furniture manufacturers. The forests are the most natural sustainable resource that the world has and once these have gone the landscape of the world will change forever.

The British sawmilling industry continues to survive and pay negotiations in 2011 increased pay by a modest 1.92%.

My thanks go to Clive Matthews for his continued help in the pay negotiations.

FINNFOREST

This company is one of the major European saw milling companies within timber manufacturing in several countries including the UK. The headquarters are in Finland and the whole company relies heavily on sustainable forests. Finnforest is an important company in the environmental field and all the timber it uses is harvested from sustainable forests, including the UK.

Within the UK there are four major sawmills in the Group. Unfortunately last year the company had to close its Tilbury Docks site with the loss of around one hundred jobs. The company moved some of its products to Boston in Lincs. The Boston site has been extended and modernised and I am pleased to say that at least eighty new jobs have been created.

Again like all European timber merchants Finnforest has found it difficult to trade in the current economic situation. Nevertheless negotiations took place and an increase of 2.25% for 2010/2011 was secured.

We are pleased to say that GMB takes part in the Finnforest European Works Council and I would like to thank our shop steward, Geoff Burch who is Chairman of the Finnforest EWC.

TEXTILES

After years of decline the industry that has been left seems in some cases to have made a niche in the markets. Just in Time of Delivery an invention of the motor industry has been the unlikely opportunity needed for some companies. The High Street is now becoming far more dependent on quality high design fashion products.

One manufacturing company based in Salford near Manchester has baulked the trend in the UK manufacturing industry. It supplies high quality garments on a Just In Time basis delivering right up to the last minute at weekends and during holiday periods. With the high cost of transport we may well see more emphasis on this type of delivery. One of the unfortunate aspects of the remaining textile manufacturers is that nearly all the new companies are non unionised. Nevertheless GMB still holds a skilled membership within the industry.

Changes have taken place within the employers association and the BCIA one of the main associations has now changes its structure to UKFT. A new employers' secretary has taken on the job of raising the profile of the industry both in this country and abroad. The previous employers' secretary, John Wilson has partially retired but still leads the employers' side for pay negotiations. The last two years have seen very difficult and low pay awards in the industry but nevertheless GMB managed to negotiate a pay increase for 2011 of around 2%.

I would like to thank all members of the negotiating committee included Sheila Bearcroft, Brenda Fraser and Anne Leader for their commitment, advice and experience.

INTERNATIONAL

All the Manufacturing Section Officers have been active within their respective responsibilities at international level. We have attended conferences throughout Europe representing the GMB when it has been necessary to do so.

The BWI continues to represent woodworkers of the world and we have been able to attend a number of meetings and influence a policy. Special thanks to go Kathleen Walker Shaw who has given a tremendous amount of support as she always does in our international duties.

KEITH HAZLEWOOD, NATIONAL SECRETARY

This year's report is very much similar to the previous report with very much the same message that we are experiencing with closures, job losses, pay cuts, pay freezes and attacks on final salary pension schemes. Also announcement after announcement of cancellation of some works programmes brought about by the very severe recession that we recently experienced.

We are still working with employers in an attempt to minimise the impact of the recession and looking at ways of saving jobs, avoiding cut backs and advising companies to hold their nerve rather than engage in knee jerk reactions resulting in closures at the worst and worsening of our members' terms and conditions, pensions being a prime example.

SHIPBUILDING

Previously, I reported that the shipbuilding industry is an industry of mixed fortunes. On one hand we have the almost demise of commercial shipbuilding in the UK with only one yard still managing to operate and that is on the verge of closure which will be a sad day for commercial shipbuilding in the UK.

On the other hand in the UK defence shipbuilding industry, we have the biggest order book ever. BAE Systems Surface Ships systems have just completed the last of 6 Type 45 Destroyers which was launched in the last quarter of last year.

Going forward we have the order for two super aircraft carriers for the Royal Navy, the size of which has never been built before in the UK. We did have major concerns regarding the cancellation of these two aircraft carriers when we had a change of Government last year. Our main concern was the outcome of the coalition Government's defence spending review and the impact it may have on the build of the aircraft carriers and on other shipbuilding programmes like the Future Surface Combatant order consisting of Type 26 Destroyers for the Royal Navy.

The review had very little impact on shipbuilding orders especially the aircraft carriers which would have cost the Government more to cancel than it will to build the ship; although we do have serious concerns regarding the follow on programmes for the Royal Navy. There is a commitment from this Government to go ahead with the future Surface Combatant order for Type 26 Destroyers for the Royal Navy.

The industry have told us that between the completion of the last aircraft carrier and the commencement of future Surface Combatant order, there will be lack of work for an 18 month period which we need to address in order to sustain the build capability for future orders, and we will be working with the industry to find ways of addressing this short fall in work.

In my previous report I said that there were two major companies involved in the build of these two aircraft carriers, that being BAE Systems and Vosper Thornycroft from Portsmouth. I can now confirm that these two companies have merged; BAE Systems have bought VT's 45% of shares and now is the sole owner going forward calling themselves BAE Systems Surface Ships.

We are hoping now that we can get some stability within UK Shipbuilding and eliminate cut throat competition that had existed in the past between the yards which has resulted in too many casualties but going forward provided we get the orders, we may see a brighter future.

At this moment in time, we are still building the astute submarines at Barrow-in- Furness which is now called BAE Systems Solutions, although there is still concern with regards to the future of the submarine build programmes.

Our main concerns are that the Government after the next general election will attack other parts of the defence programme and spending which sends out a very serious message to all defence programmes.

STEEL

Tata/Corus

I can confirm that as from November 2010 Corus has changed its name to Tata UK.

Over the last two years within the steel making business which has been horrendous, the company went from very large profits to extremely large losses as a consequence of the recent recession. We were given announcements of job losses of up to as many as 5,000 likely to be lost across the UK business.

On top of that we were threatened with closures in Rotherham and on Teeside resulting in as many as 3,000 of the 5,000 direct jobs and possibly double or treble that number in the supply chain and contractors.

The company stopped paying bonus payments to its employees which was part of their terms and conditions to which the GMB along with other Union colleagues on the steel committee registered tribunals against then Corus for breach of contract/unlawful deductions, and the company backed off and again started paying bonus payments that were owed to our members.

The company then decided that it would close the final salary pension scheme to new starters without even consulting the TUs. The GMB along with other unions from the steel committee responded by threatening industrial action across the company and once again the company backed off and have been consulting with the unions to find a sensible solution to the problem with the company pension scheme.

I can confirm we have still managed to maintain the pension scheme in its totality.

SSI

SSI is a Thai steelmaking company that has recently acquired the Tata Teeside steel making plant previously TCP Teeside Cast Products. For the last 10 months we have had lengthy intense discussions with both SSI and Tata in an attempt to get the deal concluded as soon as possible which will result in SSI re employing some 1700 people whose jobs were at risk and also the possibility of another 800 new jobs created as a consequence of the investment that they intend putting into the Teeside plant.

Redcar Bulk Terminal

A third party involved in the sale of the Teeside cast products plant is a joint venture between Tata and SSI called Redcar Bulk Terminal. This is a company that will be working on the wharf on which both Tata and SSI will be requiring for its transportation of iron ore etc. from the ship to shore.

With the Redcar Bulk Terminal we have an issue with which pension scheme the employers RBT will be in. Bearing in mind that all these employees are ex employees of Corus which was in the then British Steel Pension Scheme which is the finally salary scheme and they are being offered a DC scheme by SSI. The preferred option is the British Steel pension scheme with it being a final salary pension scheme and there is the issue of service that these people have in the pension scheme with them all

being long service employees. We are still in discussions with both Tata and SSI in an attempt to maintain the British Steel pension scheme, but Tata is opposing our efforts.

AEROSPACE

Since my last report, there have been devastating announcements regarding the aerospace industry, with this Government's defence spending review it resulted in the cancellations, closures and job losses throughout the industry in vast numbers. Although lots of companies across the aerospace industry have felt the impact, BAE Systems have been hit with immediate effect with the first casualties seeing the scrapping of the Nimrod order, an order that BAE Systems had almost completed which was overrun in build time and over budget. The Government made a decision with immediate effect that the Nimrod should be scrapped; they're in the process of scrapping these planes, and the cancellation of the harrier jump jets.

We will still continue lobbying the Government in an attempt to save as many jobs and orders within the industry and supply chain as we can, and keep working with companies like Airbus, Bombardier and BAE systems to name a few.

In my last report, Bombardier in Belfast had secured a long awaited C series aircraft order which in the short term did bring with it difficulties although in the long term the site looks pretty good. The Aerospace industries are a global industry and all we have ever asked for is a level playing field when competing for orders which has proved very difficult when some countries are receiving subsidies which has worked against the UK in the industry, resulting in losing orders.

OFFSHORE INDUSTRIES

As reported on previous occasions, we had a long standing issue regarding the Working Time Directive in the offshore industry, and the interpretation of holiday entitlements. In 2007 negotiations, we came to some agreement with the Offshore Contractors Association which resulted in the change of working patterns from two weeks offshore and two weeks onshore, to a two week offshore and a three week onshore working cycle. But to date not all of the companies under the OCA agreement have adhered to these negotiated agreement, and over the last 6 months we have had four national reference 'failure to agrees' on the full implementation of the holiday entitlements that were negotiated and agreed with OCA.

In 2009 pay negotiations resulted in a pay freeze across the industry and last year resulted in a 1.9% increase on basic pay. We are now in the process of negotiations for 2011 and hoping we get an improvement on the last two years for increases for our members working offshore.

ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES

The recent recession has had a substantial impact across all UK manufacturing. We are faced with the same sad stories of pay cuts, pay freezes, job losses in order to keep work in the UK. We need to work continuously with employers and the government in order to establish a Manufacturing Strategy going forward and to not only keep, but build a UK Manufacturing base in the UK. We have to compete against countries like India, Japan and China who are manufacturing goods at prices that the UK cannot compete with. All we have ever asked for in engineering as well as other industries is a level playing field and we always seem to be disadvantaged by not being able to compete against other countries because of low wages and subsidies. We need to encourage companies to recruit apprentices to address the skilled shortages we are currently experiencing. Without apprentices, we won't have the skills capability in which we need to compete or manufacture within the core industries which we have always done. We also have the programme of the aging workforce with employees leaving the industry or retiring and not being replaced which will be a devastating blow for UK manufacturing if not addressed.

We still have the ever increasing news of companies employing non UK labour and in some cases not paying the negotiated rate for the job making them a cheaper alternative at the expense of local labour which will impact on the local economy and gives us bigger dole queues.

Engineering Construction

In the Engineering Construction Industry we are feeling the impact of the recent recession once again with the slow down in the build of new power stations, oil refineries and repair and maintenance. We are still experiencing companies employing non UK labour and paying them less than the negotiated rate for the job under the national agreement, a battle that we are constantly having to face but I would like to think that with more resources we are now becoming more aware of these companies and addressing the issue.

The NECC has now formulated the 2012 pay claim which will be submitted within the next few weeks. The ECIA employers federation has indicated that there will be a pay freeze for 2012 so we will have to see what the outcome of the negotiations are this year.

NUCLEAR

Being new to the Nuclear Industry I attended a recent Nuclear Energy All Party Group meeting at the House of Commons which was mainly attended by politicians, industry, trade unions, Nuclear Decommissioning Agency and the media. It was a very informative meeting and I was encouraged at the Decommissioning and New built programmes in the pipeline.

We should at all stages encourage the clients and the Industry to have these programmes, with the fabrication of the new build to be done in the UK and the installation and decommissioning to be done under the NAECI agreement, which is a long established, tried and tested agreement for the industry bringing stability and job security across the programmes.

UK CAR MANUFACTURING

The car Industry is mainly serviced by the Birmingham Region which I would like to thank Khalik Mohammed and the region for their support.

The UK Automotive industry is a vital industry to UK Manufacturing but has recently become a very fragile industry.

Jaguar/Landover

A two year deal was reached in October 2010. The headline of the Agreement was the company was able to secure investments and sourcing agreement for all UK plants until 2020 plus a 5% increase in pay for 2010..

Jaguar- VMC Browns Lane

After looking for a buyer for quite a while the company chose a buyer who was unwilling to guarantee any job security and terms and conditions. The members voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action in July 2010. This led to further negotiations with agreement on a final enhanced package. Most of the staff have either taken VR or started to transfer to other sites.

Landover- Solihull/Gaydon

Currently they are doing very well as far as sales are concerned, and will be the main contributor to the projected profits for the current financial year.

ALLAN BLACK, NATIONAL OFFICER

Introduction

At Congress last year I presented a Report reflecting the dire state of many of the industries and Companies on my sheet. This year I would like to be able to report significant improvements. I would like to but alas I cannot for it remains the case that for much of my industrial sheet there is no real sign of recovery and indeed, in one or two areas – particularly in the building materials sector – we may not yet have reached the bottom. Indeed only a couple of days before the Report was being written Pilkington glass, a famous UN brand now owned by a Japanese multi national announced a further plant closure in the South East of England with the loss of 30 jobs. There has however been one

positive change for our members in the materials sector. This is the fact that on the whole Employers have realised that in circumstances of relatively high inflation levels - whether measured by the Conservative Government's fiddled CPI (which assumes that we all live in tents) or the more realistic RPI – their knee jerk imposition of pay freezes is not acceptable. Thus on the whole even in the depressed building materials sector modest pay rises have been secured. In other areas covered by my sheet - food processing and chemicals – the detail of pay bargaining reflects the more varied economic climate of these sectors. Across the piece however, pay and conditions bargaining remains tough and overshadowed by an understandable reluctance to rock the boat even under severe provocation from emboldened and aggressive employees. A brief summary of specific agreements I have been involved in negotiating since last Congress constitutes the bulk of the rest of this Report.

BUILDING MATERIALS SECTOR

Lafarge Cement

One of the more enlightened and progressive Employers on my sheet is the old Blue Circle Cement now owned by French multi nationals Lafarge. Since last Congress there have been no further plant closures or significant job losses in Lafarge. Indeed the Company has gone out of its way to safeguard the retention of all the plants in its current configuration. In pay bargaining there has been a two year settlement at 3% for 2011 and a further 2.5% with effect from January 2011. This offer was overwhelmingly accepted by GMB members in a consultative ballot and the settlement was subsequently reflected in an identical offer to the directly employed cement drivers.

Hanson Group

Hanson has continued to downsize since last Congress. In later autumn they announced the loss of a further 160 or so jobs in their contracting division. In their Building Products Division (HBP) numbers have fallen by a further 200 or so since last Congress.

More positively however, on pay bargaining the Group has apparently abandoned the pay freeze position and at the time of writing an offer of 2.8% on basic rates in the Building Products Division is set out for consultation. In Castle Cement the offer is 2% on basic and the introduction of a three plant bonus scheme which, to date, has not found favour with GMB members. In the Aggregates division the (delayed) negotiations are about to commence.

British Gypsum

After last year's pay freeze (2009/10) a three deal was negotiated with effect from 1st July 2010. This long term deal was accepted by a clear majority of GMB members after a consultative ballot. The first year provided an increase of just over 2.25%. The second and third year provide CPI related increases of a minimum of 1.5% each year and a maximum of 3%.

Solaglas

This Company is the main part of Solaglas in the UK and is a subsidiary of St Gobain the French multi national. After a period of pay freezes and some internal reorganisation our members are at the time of writing this Report being consulted on a 1.5% pay offer. The probability is that this will be rejected but I will be able to offer an update at Congress.

Solaglas Installation (formerly Windowcare)

This smaller division of Solaglas had a pay freeze imposed on it in 2010/11. We have recently started the negotiations for 2011 with some expectation of a modest offer.

Flat Glass Industry (Green Book)

The Glass Industry NJC (the Green Book) had a pay freeze in 2010 as reported to last year's Congress. This year an increase in basic rates of 15p/hour was accepted after consultation by our members. This equates to around 2%. The Employers have also indicated that they are keen to discuss a root and branch review of the agreement to see if it can be made more relevant to the industry.

Lafarge/Tarmac Joint Venture

On the eve of writing this Report, two of the largest companies in the building materials sector announced their intention to bring together (most) of their UK interests in a Joint Venture. The detail of this and its impact on the hundreds of GMB members employed by both companies still have to be worked through. It is, however, very clear that this major change presents GMB with a challenge and an opportunity to significantly improve our membership numbers on the new Joint Venture when it is up and running.

FOOD MANUFACTURING

United Biscuits

UB remains a source of employment for around 2,500 GMB members spread from Glasgow to London. Collective bargaining in the Group is largely at plant level by the four former McVities sites do negotiating nationally on a joint basis. At the time of writing we are entering into the detailed negotiation of our National Claim in McVities and I will be able to update Congress as to the outcome. On a more sombre note also as this Report was being prepared the Company announced 93 job losses at the GMB organised Tollcross site. This situation is, of course, being dealt with by GMB Scotland.

Nestle

The UK sites within the Nestle giant negotiates pay and conditions at plant level. After huge delays and months of frustration (and a threat of industrial action) most of the plants settled for an increase of around 1% plus enhanced bonus probably with a further 1.5%. This outcome which, whilst not brilliant certainly represented a significant shift away from the Company's initial stance of a UK wide pay freeze. Our local Officers and shop stewards are to be congratulated for their perseverance and patience.

Burton Foods

This Company has a large plant at Edinburgh. For most of last autumn an internal review of the Company structure was taking place and there was understandable concern about the future. However, it was announced last month (January) that not only would the Company continue to manufacture on the Edinburgh site but they were actually investi

Bakkovar Food Company

At Congress last year a decision based on a motion from London Region was taken to pursue the establishment of a proper European Works Council allowing for GMB representation within the Bakkovar Food Company. As a result I have as requested by the Congress decision contacted the European Federation of Food Unions (EFFAT) as the body responsible for the oversight of EWCs in the Sector. They have referred me to Unite as the Secretaryship of the Trade Union Side of the existing so called EWC apparently resides with Unite. Due to some internal Unite issues I have not heard from them at the time of writing this Report but will provide an update at Congress.

Unilever

Our membership in the two Unilever plants organised by GMB continues to face difficulties created by the Company as it fights to retain market share and secure efficiencies. At the time of writing, the Norwich site is facing some job losses which is obviously being handled at local level.

PROCESS

BOC

Last year I reported to congress that I was not happy with the way that BOC engaged with GMB on behalf of our members. I am pleased to say that thanks in part to the need to respond to the Company's proposals to change (cut) the pension scheme, things have improved. We now have active and competent shop stewards and play a much bigger role in the Company than previously. We were able to secure a basic rate increase of 4.7% in the most recent pay round. Potential GMB recruitment areas within BOC are being identified.

Air Products

Talks continue with the Company to try to bring about a sensible pay structure. This follows a 2010/11 pay settlement of 4.2%. However at the time of writing there are continuing issues regarding the seriousness with which the Company is actually approaching these talks.

Astrazeneca

Astrazeneca based in Macclesfield in the GMB North West region is one of the most prosperous and successful pharmaceutical firms in the UK and indeed in the world. In no small measure their success is due to the skill, loyalty and attitude of their GMB organised workforce. Our AZ membership tended to look to the Company for local, relatively well paid and secure jobs for life. In recent years much of this trust and loyalty has been squandered by a series of high handed measures coming from the Company. The claim finally broke when AZ unleashed a savage attack on our members' Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. Our members voted overwhelmingly to take strike action to try to force this hugely wealthy company to think again. After a series of 12 strikes we settled with AZ on terms which were honourable even if they did not give our members what they wanted. We were not helped by the actions/inactions of others, but AZ would do well to remember that GMB memories are long and we are about to embark on the 2011 pay round. I do not anticipate that this will be an easy pay negotiation.

Corrugated Paper Industry

After a protracted negotiating process a 2.5% increase in basic rates was secured. GMB members felt that this was inadequate and again ill feeling will persist.

CONCLUSION

I continue to be responsible at national level for the GMB participation in some of the European and worldwide Trade Union federations to which GMB affiliates. I also still hold a brief on behalf of the Union in relation to that group sheltering some of the least savoury employers in the UK – the temporary employment agencies.

In all of these efforts I have been greatly assisted by the extremely professional support staff at National Office. Clearly there is also a small army of committed and competent shop stewards and local Officers dealing on a daily basis with all of the Companies on my sheet. Their knowledge and expertise is of huge importance to our members and I am grateful to them on their behalf.

MOTIONS

MF4 Building Industry

We have raised the issue of bogus self employment at several European meetings and we have commented on the lack of UK workers on the Olympics. We have also complained on several occasions about the blacklisting of trade union activists.

MF6 Apprenticeships in the Construction Industry

Over the last twelve months we have been able to promote the employment of apprentices both through the Working Rule Agreement and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board.

MF7 Manufacturing

We have continued to lobby Government on public procurement and raised with local councils the consequence of sending public procurement orders overseas. We will continue to do so as part of our normal duties.

MF8 Manufacturing Decline

We have continued to campaign over the new Government for a manufacturing strategy.

MF11 Outsourcing of Manufacturing Jobs

As with the previous two motions we have campaigned for more financial help for manufacturing. We have also written to ministers on several occasions regarding public procurement etc.

MF12 Defend Corus Workers' Terms and Conditions

We have had ongoing discussions with Corus on the bonus payments and maintaining the pensions scheme. After lengthy discussions the company agreed to continue paying the bonus and maintain the pension scheme. We will continue to defend our members jobs.

MF13 MOD Contracts for UK Shipbuilding Industry

We have met with the MOD at various levels making the case for the current contracts to be honoured. The announcement on the Government's Defence Spending review recognises the need for these programmes to go ahead as it would have cost more to cancel the two aircraft carriers than it will to build them, and the Future Surface Combatant Order is going ahead post carrier.

MF14 Warship Building

Continuous meetings and lobbying the Government has been on going for the last ten years and will continue, although we have secured the current orders we need to secure future orders beyond the Carriers and Future Surface Combatant orders, and fill any gaps between orders.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I now move on to ask Phil Davies if he will move his report, pages 73-85. Phil?

BRO. P. DAVIES (National Secretary): Formally moves.

THE PRESIDENT: I will go through the report. Pages 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84 and 85. Do you agree those pages, colleagues? *(Agreed)* Can we now formally second?

(The Manufacturing Section Report was formally seconded)

The Manufacturing Section Report was ADOPTED

THE PRESIDENT: I want to let you know that after item 4 on Manufacturing, we will be taking Emergency Motion 2 on Tata Steel.

We will now deal with Motions 119, 120, 121 and 123.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY – MANUFACTURING

**OFFSHORE WIND FARM INDUSTRY
MOTION 119**

119. OFFSHORE WIND FARM INDUSTRY

This Congress recognises the importance that the Offshore Wind Farm Industry brings to regional economies and fully supports moves to develop, manufacture and maintain Wind Turbines in the former shipbuilding facilities. Congress recognises that this important sector will generate substantial economic benefits, as well as producing a green energy source as part of a diverse UK energy supply.

NORTH TYNE MANUFACTURING BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. T. WINTER (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 119 on the offshore wind farm industry. Our shipbuilding facilities can provide the perfect arena to win contracts for offshore turbines. In recent awards of contracts within the UK hundreds of jobs have been created. Many of the facilities being developed involve the manufacture of a massive tonnage of turbine blades, platforms and installation processes. This means that there will be jobs for many skills vital to the communities across the country – engineers, welders, electricians, steelworkers, plumbers and painters, to name but a few. This country could become a key player in the marine renewables sector, and we have the yards and facilities to beat off the best of competition.

Congress, if this country is to develop the mixed economy of skills and abilities across the sectors, then we must utilise our key skills to adapt so that we play our part in diversification of the UK's energy supply. The GMB refuses to believe that globalisation should mean that this country should become a low wage economy. We need the UK to regenerate. We need young people to see this country as a rightful place for their future and that of their families.

We believe that a thriving offshore wind farm industry in the UK will help to provide the basis for skills, development and community regeneration. These are essential if our regions are to play their full part in the building up of employment and providing a stable future as we move forward. I urge you to support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Secunder?

BRO. C. TAYLOR (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 119 on the offshore wind far industry. The offshore wind farm industry is an integral part of the UK's manufacturing future. We have tremendous plant capacity to develop wind turbines, to manufacture them and to provide maintenance of them. Our shipbuilding facilities in this country are second to none. Our skill base is world class. Any economy worth its salt must invest in the skills of its workforce. Congress, UK workers have continually shown their adaptability over time so it is with the vast potential of the offshore sector.

We applaud the work done by some of our Labour MPs. We recognise that the offshore wind far industry can be developed in the UK. We will work with those politicians and employers who want to make this a thriving industry and this country a world leader in manufacturing.

This is not just about the present. This is about the future. This is about the UK's energy future. It is about maintaining and developing skills and facilities. It is about building up the UK's manufacturing sector and it is about our workers, our members, their families and their futures. Thank you.

STRATEGIC DEFENCE REVIEW MOTION 120

120. STRATEGIC DEFENCE REVIEW

This Congress believes that it is nothing short of a disgrace that the Coalition Government's Strategic Defence Review of Autumn 2010 has placed many British manufacturing jobs under threat as a result of an unpatriotic decision to open up maintenance contracts to other countries. This Congress believes that a fundamental principle of supporting British companies and workers has been broken by the Coalition Government's quest for cuts in public expenditure. Congress calls on the government to think again to reverse its policy and support British companies, British jobs and British skills.

NORTH TYNE MANUFACTURING BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. T. WINTER (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 120 – Strategic Defence Review. The Strategic Defence Review conducted by the Tory-led Coalition Government has been the worst one in decades. Let's be quite clear. In the UK, the livelihoods of thousands of workers and those of their families and communities, depend on the maintenance and manufacture of defence contracts. I know some people want to retrain workers or move them from the defence industries to others. To those who believe that, I would invite them to come to Barrow-in-Furness or on to the Tyne to look at those workers in the eyes and tell them that their livelihoods should be cut off. Congress, this is exactly what the Coalition Government has done with the Defence Review.

We have the ridiculous sight of aircraft carriers being built with no bloody aircraft to go on them. It gets worse. The Tories and the Lib-Dems are prepared to cut off work to domestic companies and give contracts for maintenance and manufacture to other countries. The Government has sacrificed again all its principles regarding supporting British manufacturing. Workers, families and communities face contracts being taken away in horrendous economic times and work being given to our European and American counterparts. This is the economics of the madhouse. We need defence procurement maintenance and manufacture to be focused on the UK companies and the hard pressed regions need its defence companies to get their fair share of Government contracts. I urge Congress to support.

SIS. V. DAVIDSON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 120. This Tory-led Coalition has sacrificed all common sense in its Defence Review. Aircraft carriers will be built years before the aircraft are available to go on them, yet the UK Government continues to commit our Armed Forces personnel to more wars.

Congress, when defence contracts are being awarded, you would think that the UK Government would look to the expertise it has available in UK companies. That makes sense, doesn't it? Well, not with this Tory-led Coalition Government, Congress. They believe in price alone as the only way to award contracts. That means new work on manufacturing and maintenance is going abroad.

Talking of going abroad, who are the Government using to promote British defence companies overseas? Prince Andrew! Congress, you couldn't make it up if you tried. The Government must realise that it is top civil servants and their top executive mates who cause contracts to drive on, not workers. We need our defence companies to get work so that people's drives and skills thrive and their communities live on. I ask for your support. *(Applause)*

HITACHI – COALITION GOVERNMENT MOTION 121

121. HITACHI – COALITION GOVERNMENT

This Congress believes that it is imperative that the Coalition Government makes a decision to give the go-ahead to Hitachi building the next generation of trains within the UK. Congress notes that such a decision would create 800 jobs directly, thousands more in the supply chain and provide a vital lifeline to the skill-base in regional economies across the UK.

Congress supports the work done so far in lobbying the Government and urges the Coalition Government to make a decision on the Inter City Express Programme that will enable key skills to be retained within the UK.

REMPLOY NORTH BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. K. STUBBS (Northern): I move Motion 121 on Hitachi. Brothers and sisters, even though events have taken over somewhat, I feel it is only appropriate to talk about one of our most recent success stories, by which I mean the announcement that has been made that Hitachi will build the new intercity express trains and Newton Aycliffe. This could very well bring about much needed investment and thousands of jobs directly and indirectly across the north-east. I, myself, live in Newton Aycliffe in County Durham and I know only too well just exactly what this huge decision and its impact means to the people living there.

Newton Aycliffe is only several miles from Darlington, which used to be synonymous with railways, so you can't even begin to imagine the effect it is starting to have with industry. Work on building the plant is due to start next year with full production starting in 2015. Added to this, we are starting to see signs already of the huge ripple effect right across the north-east. Hitachi has recently met with over 600 different companies from the north-east, all of whom are keenly interested in become part of their supply chain. Even better, Hitachi have signed a lease for the next 25 years and announced that they are committed to County Durham for the long term. Yes, despite turbulent times and cutbacks and other grim news we daily from this Con-Dem Coalition Government, a success story has been achieved by the GMB, so why am I talking about it, you may well be wondering. Quite simply because we don't flag up our own successes as often as we should.

We know what lies ahead of us, and any success at the moment feels like a major achievement, but this story also has a point. As a point of fact, the MP for Newton Aycliffe used to be none other than the Prime Minister, Tony Blair. Through all his time as Prime Minister, jobs in our area went out, not in. The current MP is a guy called Phil Wilson, who has been very active in putting out stories in Newton Aycliffe

that this lobbying was a one man effort led by himself. We know the real situation. I want it to be known that the GMB Northern Region would like to place on record our thanks to all the parties involved for the way in which this fight for jobs has been conducted. An incredible amount of hard work was put into this lobbying and it was purely down to dogged determination and to the fact that that the GMB Northern Region wouldn't take no for an answer. I, myself, on behalf of the people of Newton Aycliffe, cannot thank the GMB Northern Region enough for their magnificent efforts. These efforts were ably aided by the TUC, along with the local Labour MP, Phil Wilson. In addition, these joint efforts were wholeheartily supported by the people of Newton Aycliffe.

Is it just politicians that make a difference? I believe it is not. Tony Benn summed this situation up for me so well when he said in Durham one year: "Government and politicians don't make changes. They respond to you and your efforts, or the lack of them." The message is very clear, Congress. To take the fight forward we all need to be united and re-double our efforts. Don't accept that we can't win. That is defeatist talk. GMB Northern Region in this case has proved that hard work and skills can still reap a dividend.

This motion doesn't call for support as such, but what it should do is show that there is light at the end of the tunnel if we are prepared to fight for it. Up north we have a saying, Congress, and it is this: Can we do it? Why, aye, we can! Thank you.
(Applause)

(The Motion was formally seconded)

SIEMENS PLC MOTION 123

123. SIEMENS PLC

This Congress notes, with deep concern, the actions of Siemens PLC in planning to close the highly profitable longstanding British manufacturer Trench UK Limited (formerly the Bushing Company) in Hebburn, Tyne and Wear, in September 2012 and taking its full order book to their plants in Germany, France and China. Congress notes that Trench (UK) produces state of the art high voltage electrical products called Bushings, is the only remaining manufacturer of Bushings in the UK which are fundamental to the supply of electricity in the UK through the National Grid network; acknowledges that Trench (UK) are a world leader in this field and this expertise will be lost from the UK by its closure and calls on Siemens PLC to reconsider this decision.

HEBBURN NO 1 ENGINEERING BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

BRO. G. MAYFIELD (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 123 on Siemens. Siemens own the Trench UK plant in Hebburn. Trench have built a worldwide reputation for the manufacturing of made to order components called Bushings. These are essential for the things that we take for granted in our everyday lives. They produce components for the National Grid. If they were not available, the National Grid would not be able to keep power going across the UK. Trench is the only

remaining manufacturer of made to order Bushings left in the UK, yet Siemens are closing the plant next year and taking the work to a new plant in Germany.

Siemens built their new German plant a few years ago and it is only running at 30% capacity. It was a terrible management decision. It could be a breach of European law and it is an act of naked self-interest by the company. They can't do this in France because French domestic law doesn't allow it. They can't do it in Germany because German domestic law doesn't allow it, yet they can do it in the UK as British governments allow the free market to cripple our manufacturing base. They would rather do this in the name of globalisation than provide our people with the kind of protection that exists elsewhere in Europe.

The situation is desperate for the many workers and families affected. Congress, Siemens also want to look at other work and take that back to Germany from plants across the UK. Siemens should reverse this disgraceful decision. Globalisation is being used to batter our community. We need a return to companies that have a stake in the localities where they make their money and who care about the workforce, families and communities. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gareth. Secunder?

BRO. P. OWENS (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 123 on Siemens. Congress, the workforce at Trench UK has worked tirelessly to retain it as a viable concern. The local Labour MP, Steven Hepburn, and the region's Labour MEP, Stephen Hughes, have both been magnificent in how they have argued for the company to stay open.

Siemens' executives used figures that were over four years out of date in making their decision to close Trench UK. The trouble is that the board of Siemens did not even make the decision. It's a group of corporate pen pushers who know that they have made a major blunder by building a massive plant that operates about a third of its capacity. These executives have tried to prevent the board from finding out the truth. Congress, Trench is profitable. Trench is successful. It has customers all around the world. They are no threat to Siemens, so what does it mean? Jobs and the order book go abroad, which means that in this country the National Grid now faces getting poor quality parts from abroad. Management must recall this decision and enable all parties to get round the table to move things forward and safeguard the plant's future. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I now move to Emergency Motion 2, to be moved by Midland & East Coast, Tata and Associated Job Losses.

TATA AND ASSOCIATED JOB LOSSES EMERGENCY MOTION 2

GMB CONGRESS 2011

EMERGENCY MOTION NO. 2

TATA AND ASSOCIATED JOB LOSSES

CONGRESS CALLS UPON GMB NEGOTIATORS TO MITIGATE AS FAR AS IS HUMANLY POSSIBLE THE APPALLING ANNOUNCEMENT ON 24 MAY 2011 BY TATA STEEL EUROPE ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF ITS LONG PRODUCTS DIVISION AT SCUNTHORPE AND OTHER SITES IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE LOSS OF 1200 JOBS AT TATA SCUNTHORPE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF HUGE GLOBAL PROFIT, CURRENTLY QUOTED ON ITS OWN WEBSITE AS \$2,015 MILLION US DOLLARS, AS AGAINST A LOSS OF \$451 MILLION US DOLLARS IN 2010, IS DESCRIBED AS ROBUST IMPROVEMENT, WHILST ACKNOWLEDGING DIFFICULTY WITH UK OPERATIONS REQUIRING RESTRUCTURE.

AS THE FUTURE OF THE LIVES OF OUR GMB MEMBERS SIT ON THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND THE FINAL FIGURE IS EXPECTED TO BE AS MUCH AS DOUBLE THAT ANNOUNCED, WHEN CONTRACTORS AND AGENCY WORKERS ARE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION, THIS CONGRESS SENDS OUT THE SOS TO SAVE OUR SOULS BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

SCUNTHORPE DISTRICT APEX *Midland & East Coast Region*

(Carried)

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I move Emergency Motion 2 on Tata Steel and associated job losses at Scunthorpe and Teesside.

President, the recent announcement of a total of 1,500 job losses in the steel industry is yet another bitter blow for the manufacturing backbone of the nation's economy and its communities. At a meeting of our members last week it was highlighted that the loss of a quarter or 1 in 4 of the production workforce insinuates that in heavy industry it is safe to work with fewer workers and, if so, why are Tata not doing so already? A heavy industry that preaches zero harm is not likely to send us home safe to our loved ones if, in future, what was one man's job becomes another worker's overtime. The recent explosion at the Chevron Refinery comes to mind in this regard. I am talking about the global turnaround of a business, so vast that it is scarcely possible to comprehend, from a loss in 2010 of US\$451 million to a profit of US\$2,015 million by March of this year, that not merely wants to shed 1,500 employees of its own, as announced, but will trigger the inevitable loss of full-time and permanently cited contractors and agency workers as well as the complete closure of adjacent supporting industry that relies upon Tata as its main source of income becomes clear.

At Scunthorpe alone we estimate, therefore, that this loss, from what the former nationalised British Steel Corporation titled its production services, could equal and even surpass – double – the 1,200 jobs being quoted in Scunthorpe throughout the supply chain. Negotiations with the GMB and other leading steel unions are only, as

yet, at the early stages, as Tata seeks also to completely renegotiate flexibility into every element of its manufacturing output. Any compulsory redundancies will be opposed at all levels by the GMB. Worst hit, apart from Tata Steel employees will likely be our members in Harsco Metals, which happens to be the world's largest mill services provider, based at Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania and throughout the world, and Tube City, formerly Hansen Services, who provide much of the day labour force.

In consulting our members, convenors and negotiators prior to rising to speak to this Congress today, I felt as though the unique need to send out an SOS to our Union existed. In hindsight, the even older call of CQD, or "Come Quick Danger" might be more appropriate as the income and future pensions of entire neighbourhoods simply vanishes. For how many years, every time this Congress has convened, whether at Plymouth in the south west, at Newcastle in the north east, at Southport, Blackpool or wherever, has the GMB nationally told government to support manufacturing industry? Without that support, the nation is unsafe in its defence capability, banks do not need to lend – indeed, our members can't get a mortgage for a new affordable home because, by and large, there are none – and a Con-Dem Government condemns us all to the austerity series of measures that parallels the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Congress, support this emergency motion so that the GMB can go forward and tell the next Government, almost certainly a Labour one, when elected, that we need to invest in manufacturing industry by kick starting our economy back into life. Please support.

BRO. P. SAWDON (Northern): Congress, I second the emergency motion on Tata Steel. The workers and, indeed, their families affected by the closure of the steel plants by Corus looked forward to a bit of good news when the announcement came through that Tata Steel had taken things over. Tata Steel is rich. They have posted profits of over £1 billion. It is a disgrace that they are reducing the workforce and it is sheer ignorance for the Tata Steel owners then to say that the British workers, including the managers, don't work hard. Let us be clear what this is – a cover! What Tata Steel wants is for their owners, who are billionaires, to build on their profits and on the backs of low wages and a low economy. No chance, no way!

I have seen how they export workers in India. You just have to look at how their shifts are handled. Workers have little or no health and safety. What Tata Steel wants it to return the industry back to the Victorian era. We stand for excellent terms and conditions. What is needed are skills for the manufacturing sector. We are not selling out on that. Please support.

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Congress, I am supporting Motion 121. Congratulations to the Northern Region for the work they have done in bringing those manufacturing jobs to your area. If we are going to solve this economic crisis, then growth in manufacturing is absolutely vital so that taxes are paid on the profits and on people's wages to close the deficit through growth and not through cuts.

I also have a little bit of sadness coming from Swindon, where between 1831 and 1985 it was the centre of building trains. I saw a television programme recently where Michael Portillo was doing railway journeys. He came to Swindon and he was looking at the empty rail works, and he asked a passer by and said, "What happened

to it?”, and the bloke, “You and your bloody government closed it down.” In 1986 thousands of jobs were lost. The point is not just about the pride that we have in our town that we’ve made trains and that we have got a train on our town coat of arms, but those were public sector jobs. We seem to have got the idea of thinking that “public sector” means public service. Public service is incredibly important but there is no reason why manufacturing can’t be in the public sector. If we look at those countries which are doing best coming out of the recession, it is where they still have a substantial manufacturing stake owned by the State. So the State has been able to boost investment and say to the State-owned companies, “Re-tool. Bring forward your investment programmes. Put people into work.” They then turn to their State-owned banks and tell them to lend them the money.

I thought the Economic Report yesterday from the CEC was brilliant, but if we were going to go one step further in developing that, we need to re-open the debate about State-ownership. The market has failed. That means that the State needs to take a bigger role in the economy, because that is democratic. We elect the State. We don’t elect those private corporations. We need public ownership in manufacturing.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone else wish to speak?

BRO. I. KEMP (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am supporting Emergency Motion 2. President and Congress, at last year’s Manufacturing Conference I moved a motion calling for this Union’s support for workers at Tata. I never thought, what with the turnaround that we have had in the steel industry, that I would be asking for that motion to be acted upon 12 months later. During the problems we had a couple of years ago, I can tell you the position now. I work at Stocksbridge and we were, literally, minutes away from the plug being pulled, so I know what the guys at Scunthorpe and Teesside are going through. However, the responsibility for these redundancies lies fairly and squarely with this Government. We have heard about the aircraft carriers and the fact that we will not have aircraft for them. That could put me in a position of me losing my job because we supply a lot of the steel to the aircraft manufacturers.

This Government’s failure to invest in the construction industry has cut into the market for the steel produced at Scunthorpe and Teesside. Vince Cable said that we shouldn’t rock the boat. I have a message for him and his colleagues in the Cabinet from my colleagues at Tata. We took the pain, we took the pay cuts, we took the redundancies so we’ve done our bit. It’s your lot that has let us down! It is your lot who wouldn’t even get a job picking up paper, never mind working in a steel mill. You are not just rocking the boat. You’re sinking the ship. In the name of God, go. Let us salvage the flagship that’s the British steel industry.

THE PRESIDENT: Sheila, please take the platform. I am sorry to keep you waiting.

SIS. S. BEARCROFT MBE (CEC, Manufacturing): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 121. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. Colleagues, it is a long-standing GMB policy to lobby and support the creation of UK manufacturing jobs. Many of the current financial problems that our nation faces could have been mitigated if our economy had had a stronger manufacturing base and was less reliant on financial services. The Intercity Express

programme is an opportunity for government to support manufacturing and create jobs.

In 2009 Hitachi of Japan was selected as the preferred bidder for the Intercity Express programme. At that time, the GMB was disappointed that the Labour Government did not award the £4.5 billion contract to our members in Bombardier. Despite the change of government, the policy has not altered. On 1st March 2011 the Transport Secretary, Philip Hammond, gave the go ahead for the Intercity Express programme, together with the £704 million plan to electrify the Great Western Main Line between Didcott, Bristol and Cardiff. Those of us in Wales wanted it to go as far as Swansea.

Congress, we welcome Hitachi's announcement that European rolling stock manufacture will commence in Newton Aycliffe in County Durham in 2013. However, manufacturing rolling stock is only one part of the industrial process to deliver the new train systems. There will be opportunities through the supply chain to create and protect UK manufacturing jobs. These opportunities must be taken.

The qualification, therefore, is that Congress supports lobbying and campaigns to ensure that all elements of the supply chain for these projects are contracted to high quality, unionised, British manufacturers and producers. Please support Motion 121 with the qualifications that I have just outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Will Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Then I put Motions 119, 120, 121, 123 and Emergency Motion 2 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Those against. That is carried.

Motion 119 was CARRIED

Motion 120 was CARRIED

Motion 121 was CARRIED

Motion 123 was CARRIED

Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 211

SOCIAL POLICY: JUSTICE

RIGHT TO LEGAL AID FOR WELFARE BENEFITS AND DEBT MOTION 211

211. RIGHT TO LEGAL AID FOR WELFARE BENEFITS AND DEBT

This Congress is asked to support the "Justice for All" Campaign to prevent cuts to Legal Aid.

The Tory led Coalition Government is proposing to stop access to Legal Aid for people who wish to challenge welfare benefit decisions which can lead to a Tribunal hearing needing legal representation. They are also seeking to stop access to Legal Aid for people with debt problems and who also need free, independent and impartial debt advice and representation.

NORFOLK PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. V. THOMAS (London): Congress, I move Motion 211 – Right to Legal Aid for Welfare Benefits and Debt. The Congress is asked to support the “Justice for All” Campaign to prevent cuts to Legal Aid. There are two versions to this, actually, one official and the other unofficial. My employer would want me to behave myself and give you the official version. No, you are not getting that. (*The speaker tore up his notes*) You are not having that. Both versions have the same aim, anyway. We want GMB support. You can get the official version, anyway, off the internet. I am not going to be bolshie, although my branch secretary is rolling her eyes.

I should declare an interest here. I am a welfare rights case worker at a Citizens’ Advice Bureau. I am slated for eventual redundancy along with thousands of other welfare rights and debt case workers across the UK. Excuse me if I say that I am a bit annoyed about this. This issue goes beyond polite conversation. It’s about the rights of the sick, disabled, elderly and unemployed. It entails cutting Legal Aid to the tune of £350 million relating to welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment, family and immigration. I don’t think I have left anyone out. That covers most of our members.

One version of the official campaign is to quietly discuss these cuts behind closed doors, with no letters to the press, no demonstrations, but quietly talk to the Minister concerned, Ken Clarke. This was an attempt to get him to change his mind. Congress, this is not nearly enough. I am not going quietly into the night, not for anyone. We need to be shouting this from the rooftops, shouting about the cuts. You won’t be surprised that there is another unofficial campaign that does involve demonstrating and shouting. Yes, I was on the march in London back in March, along with my family. I wasn’t one of the people dressed in black running down the street. These cuts are a direct attack on the working class.

The Tories discussed cutting Legal Aid when they were last in government, so it is unfinished business for them. It has nothing to do with the deficit. Yesterday, Edmund, from Dunstable, asked Vince Cable whether there would be fair treatment for people with disabilities. Edmund, I can tell you, no, there won’t be, not with our overlords in the Coalition Government.

Welfare benefits, as an area of social welfare law, is complex and it is changing rapidly and radically. We refer now to EU law as well as UK law and regulations. It is not just the complexity that has increased, but the volume of welfare benefit appeals has increased as well. Employment support appeals have increased by 128% the last time I looked, but the Tory Government wants to cut the welfare budgets by a large percentage. Cutting Legal Aid to welfare benefit tribunals is part and parcel of this plot. I say “plot” because they have been thinking about it for long enough.

The success rate for welfare benefit tribunals without representation is about 17%-19%. The success rate for appeals with representation, paid for by Legal Aid, is about 60%-65%. It is obvious what you do. Little wonder that the Tories want to cut Legal Aid and sack the welfare rights workers. This policy, this cut, is tantamount to taking the welfare rights workers out and shooting them. You’re next. Trade union reps are next. As we engage in the battle against the cuts, the Government will be coming for the rest of us.

Congress, we don't just want the GMB to support this motion. We need the GMB to support this motion. We need to fight these cuts. Cuddling up to Tory Ministers isn't nearly enough. Writing ten page letters in red and underlined in green won't cut it.

The CAB is a local charity and it is limited to what it can do under charity laws. As a CAB case worker, I can argue until the cows come home around the laws and regulations, but when the laws and regulations are wrong, we have to fight. That is why I am in the GMB. I move.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

SIS. J. SMITH (London): Congress, I second Resolution 211. The sentiments you have just heard come from a very qualified welfare rights worker. Therefore, Congress, he knows and has experienced the importance of what Legal Aid means to many of our colleagues within our walks of life. Without the much needed Legal Aid, they will not get the help and the support at their hour of need, especially representation within the courts, and I know, from working within the courts, just how much Legal Aid means to our under privileged clients who we see. Tribunal cases are even debt issues. Please support. We need to keep our Legal Aid system for all the reasons given. Thank you. *(Applause)*

LEGAL AID REFORMS MOTION 212

212. LEGAL AID REFORMS

This Congress is deeply concerned about the Legal Aid reforms announced by the Conservative led Government in November 2010.

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

Under the new system proposed, anyone with assets worth more than £1,000 will have to pay at least £100 towards their legal costs and fees paid in civil and family cases.

Congress calls upon the CEC to campaign to restore the Legal Aid system to the level it was, which gives the most vulnerable in our society access to this vital service, particularly women who may suffer from domestic abuse. Although Legal Aid funding would still be retained for family law cases involving domestic abuse, forced marriages or child abduction, many women could be too frightened to take such traumatic action to free them from abuse, when they look at the mountain they may have to climb and possible financial costs which may be beyond their means.

MID GLAMORGAN C&T BRANCH
South Western Region

(Carried)

SIS. J. SMITH (South Western): Congress, I move Motion 212.

Vice President and Conference, once again this unholy alliance of Con-Dems are targeting the most vulnerable in our society with their attempt to reform the Legal Aid system with their plan to slice £350 million from the £2.2 billion Legal Aid budget. The Ministry of Justice last autumn suggested that 500,000 fewer cases would be

entitled to funding, but the Legal Action Group has estimated that the figure could be far higher with as many as 650,000 removed from access to Legal Aid. Even the Law Society has accused the Government of ignoring consultation and pressing ahead with the plan. It expressed the view that the proposals amount to a fundamental re-shaping of the Legal Aid scheme, with many areas of law, where services are provided to the most vulnerable, being completely removed from the scope. This reform is tantamount to moving pieces around on a chessboard and borrowing from Peter to pay Paul as the cuts in Legal Aid will merely shift responsibility between departments and impose far higher costs on other arms of government.

One of the basic pillars of the legal system in our country is supposed to be that the law is accessible to all, not just to those who can afford it. The contraction of the Legal Aid system will have damaging effects on many vulnerable groups, including women, asylum seekers, children and young people, with many people within these groups being at risk of losing access to justice. These are the very people who need it most. Not only that, these reforms will also severely affect housing, education and consumer rights. If some sections of our society are excluded from having access to Legal Aid, this may lead to a surge in individuals pursuing their own cases in court because they will not have access to the Legal Aid system. This could lead to clogging up of the legal process and, possibly, imposing greater strains of costs on the system. Also the ability of the most vulnerable people to present their cases will be weakened because they will not have the help and advice necessary in preparing a case.

There is also the danger that if the claimant is found to have acted unreasonably, which might just amount to refusing to accept an offer of settlement they may have disagreed with, then they will leave themselves exposed to losing their house through liability of costs.

This motion calls upon the GMB to campaign for the restoration of the Legal Aid system, but as yet the reforms have not been enacted. The Bill is going through the Lords. Then the Ministry of Justice is expected to publish the early in June. We must campaign and voice our opposition to this severe iniquitous attack on our legal system, which at the moment protects those who need to fight for justice and do not have the means to pursue legal protection. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jenny. Secunder.

(The motion was formally seconded)

JURY SERVICE – SOCIAL MOTION 213

213. JURY SERVICE - SOCIAL

This Congress recognises the fact that our members who are called up for jury service do not always receive expenses to reflect their wage loss.

We instruct the CEC to lobby the relevant bodies to revise the expense payment to reflect their actual loss of earnings.

(Referred)

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 213. Jury Service. If you are summoned for this extremely important social duty, it is more or less impossible to get out of. Much more importantly, it is a role of such standing that it would lead to someone's imprisonment or it could lead to a decision on someone's future livelihood and their family's future. All that apart, the motion isn't about the role. It's about the payment for the role. You don't get paid by your employer in the vast majority of cases. You don't get your wages. You get expenses. The vast majority of jury service lasts between one and two weeks, and the vast majority of these days lasts for around four hours. The expenses for the first ten days up to four hours is a pitiful £32.47p. Over four hours for the first ten days, it is £64.95p, which, again, is sadly lacking for lots of our members' pay, but if you are unlucky enough to be there for between 10 to 200 days, the jury service for four hours a day is only £64.95p. Even worse, some cases can go on for over 200 days, and then the expenses rocket. If you attend for over four hours a day, it rises to £228. That seems a reasonable amount, but just imagine the stress of a 200 day court case. Let's be honest, how many of these cases do actually happen?

What I am calling for on behalf of Congress is a scheme which genuinely reflects our normal pay, a system where we are recompensed for expenses to reflect average pay, including average overtime. I urge us all to support this motion and recompense our members with an honest average payment they deserve to carry out a role which, quite frankly, most of them don't want to do in the first place. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

(The Motion was formally seconded)

LEGAL SERVICES – JACKSON REPORT MOTION 214

214. LEGAL SERVICES – JACKSON REPORT

This Congress notes with great concern, the Government's intention to implement, at least in part, Lord Justice Jackson's Review of Civil Litigation.

This report is a thinly disguised attack on injury victims and trade unions alike.

Just some of the proposals are:

1. The end of After the Event (ATE) insurance against losing a case
2. The millions currently paid out by insurers for disbursements in lost cases will no longer be available with injury victims and unions now being expected to pick up the tab
3. No success fee from insurers. This alone will cut at least 20% off costs insurers currently pay and will massively weaken the GMB's ability to fund and fight groundbreaking landmark cases

4. A return to the bad old days of contingency fees where lawyers take a percentage cut of injury victims' compensation.

Conference therefore calls on the GMB to continue its vigorous campaign in opposing these unfair and draconian proposals, aimed at benefiting insurance companies at the expense of injured victims and their funding trade unions.

Conference also calls on the GMB to ensure we never return to the bad old days where, to fund legal provision, an admin charge and/or deduction from compensation was made from injured members' entitlement.

KIRKLEES BRANCH
Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

(Carried)

SIS. N. SHARPE (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I am speaking to move Motion 214 – Legal Services – Jackson Report. Vice President, I wonder if I could ask for a little flexibility as I may go slightly over time.

Congress, years of insurance industry pressure about the legal costs of victims of personal injury pursuing claims for compensation has led to a top judge in this country requesting Sir Rupert Jackson, another judge, to produce a review and report into the matter, the report being some 584 pages long. Let's remember that this Government is funded not only by the greedy bankers but also the very same insurance companies who are now seeking to amend the costs in pursuing personal injury claims for innocent victims of injuries.

This is a fundamental and personal attack on the rights of vulnerable people and the trade union Movement. So what are the proposals and what is the impact? Firstly, it is the end of "after the event insurance and success fees" to be met by the guilty party. Currently, the success fees and insurance enables claims which have a lower than average prospect of success to be investigated and disbursements met. In relation to claims for industrial diseases, complex cases, such as claims for asbestosis or deafness, these proposals will limit the investigations which solicitors will be able to carry out. It will mean that only the strongest cases will be able to be pursued. As a result, solicitors will be forced to cherry-pick cases and costs will increase.

Secondly, there will also be a success fee deducted from the compensation awarded to victims of injury of some 25%. Although the Government has said that there will be a 10% rise in compensation to make up the difference for this, it by no means fills the financial gap. The injured person loses again.

Let me tell you about a constituent within Nick Clegg's area. This person is an engineering craftsman doing heavy manual work who pursued a claim. He said, "I have worked in a trade and for the same company for 32 years. During that time I saw injury and death. We all knew it was a dangerous workplace but it was a job. When I was injured a few years ago, I was ignored like so many others. I was bullied into a corner and I had to keep working to try and make ends meet but my health problems became debilitating. Eventually, I was thrown on the scrapheap, 13 years before retirement and left in unrelenting pain. I am in the process of challenging my employer but, financially, I am in trouble as Disability Benefit and the reduced

pension barely pays the mortgage. What I experienced and the reason why I was injured was down to my employers. What they did to me is fundamentally wrong. “The current rules mean that I have a solicitor who is prepared to challenge the employer, and when I win I will get 100% of my compensation. Under the Government’s proposals I would not have the hope of justice that I have now. Under the Government’s proposals, my case would have been silenced. I wouldn’t have been viewed by any solicitor as falling below the bar between the cost of pursuing a case and the chance of success. The worst of the Government’s proposals is that the company would have been immune. They would have got away with treating its employees as second-rate citizens.”

This Government refuses to listen. We must make them listen and continue to campaign to protect and stand up for the rights of victims of personal injury caused because of unscrupulous employers. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder.

BRO. S. WELLINGS (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): Congress, I second Motion 214. Congress, this Tory-led Government, once again, is implementing changes to the justice system for those pursuing personal injury claims for accidents at work, so that ordinary working class people will find it more difficult to obtain compensation for injuries caused through no fault of their own. We must not return to the bad old days when the insurer and the employer sacrificed the injured person’s welfare and access to compensation. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I now call on Jean Foster on behalf of the CEC to speak on Motions 211, 213 and 214.

SIS. J. FOSTER (CEC, Commercial Services): Vice President and Congress, the CEC is supporting Motions 211 and 214 with a qualification, and are asking Congress to refer Motion 213.

On Motion 211, the motion highlights the effects of the cuts to Legal Aid and the impact on the poorest and the most vulnerable in society and calls for the GMB to support the “Justice for All” campaign. This is a coalition of charities, legal advice agencies, politicians, community groups, members of the public and some trade unions. The campaign describes itself as “non political”. Whilst GMB supports the general aims of the campaign, the qualification is that we would always wish to reserve our right to use political methods to challenge the cuts. After all, there are political cuts being made by the Con-Dem Coalition Government.

On Motion 213, the CEC is asking you to refer the motion and to allow for some further research on the issue. The motion raises a point of interest for GMB members. Although an employee attending jury service can claim for loss of earnings, there are limits set by the courts. One option might be to press the employers to pay employees in full. They do not always have to pay anything at present. The CEC is recommending referral to examine the position further.

On Motion 214, the motion highlights the attacks led by the insurers on the victims of accidents and diseases in the Jackson Review of Legal Services. Legal assistance to

members in accidents and disease cases is a vital means of ensuring access to justice for injured workers. The qualification relates to the request to commit the Union not to reintroduce the admin charge from injured members' compensation. From 2003 onwards the Union was able to phase out the admin charge as a result of the introduction of conditional fee arrangements with success fees and self-insurance premiums. If the Jackson proposals are implemented, then together with proposals for fees in employment tribunals and the general economic environment, there may be a great deal of financial pressure on the funding of legal provision for GMB members. The CEC is recommending that we should wait to see how Jackson and other changes to legal services pan out before making any decisions about the admin charge. Therefore, the CEC is recommending support for the motion, subject to this qualification.

Therefore, the CEC ask you to support Motion 211 with the qualification, to refer Motion 213 and support Motion 214 with the qualification that I have outlined. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does London Region accept the qualification to Motion 211? (*Agreed*) Does Birmingham & West Midlands accept reference to Motion 213? (*Agreed*) Does Yorkshire & North Derbyshire accept the qualification to Motion 214? (*Agreed*)

I will now put the vote on Motions 211, 212, 213 and 214. The CEC are recommending on all of these motions. All those in favour, please show? Any against? They are carried.

Motion 211 was CARRIED

Motion 212 was CARRIED

Motion 213 was REFERRED

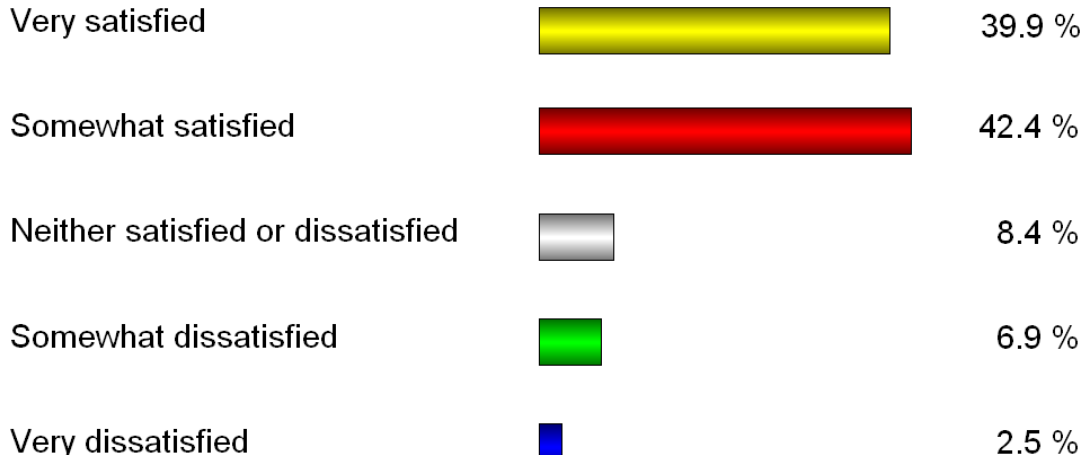
Motion 214 was CARRIED.

GMB@WORK HANDSET QUESTIONS

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call on Paul Kenny.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: It's fun time again, or maybe it's not. I don't know. Have you got your handsets? (*Calls of "Yes"*) We are going to do a small session of only about nine or ten questions. It is all about the GMB@Work agenda and your own experiences. What I would like you to do, when you answer, is to answer as honestly as you can. Don't think, "What answer does he want us to give?" Give the honest answer that comes into your head when you see the question. If we could try and see if the system works, we will start off with the first question, which should be: "Are you happy with the service you receive from the Union?" 1 is "very satisfied". 2 is "somewhat satisfied". 3 is "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" and 4 is "very dissatisfied". We have cut down the times, so we haven't got that long wait. You've got five second left. Fingers crossed everybody. (*Pause*).

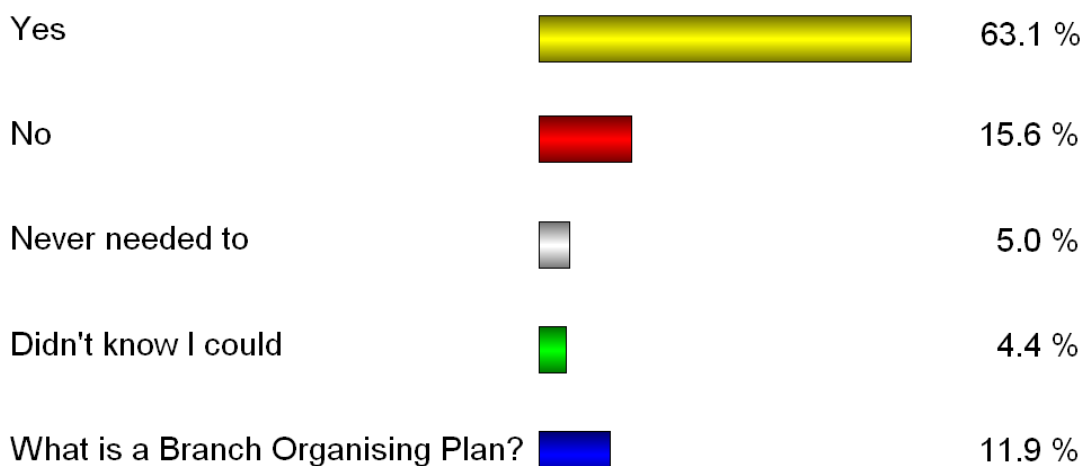
How happy are you with the service you receive from the union?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Well, that's not bad. We can do better, but it's not bad.

Okay. Question 2: "Do you have any input into your branch organising plan?" Yes is 1; no is 2; "Never needed to" is 3, and 4, "What is an organising plan?" Please vote. Last five seconds. *(Pause)* .

Did you have any input into your Branch Organising Plan?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Wow! Okay

Question 3: "Do you have a workplace organising plan where you actually work?" 1 is yes; 2 is no, and 3 is "Don't know". *(Pause)* Five seconds left.

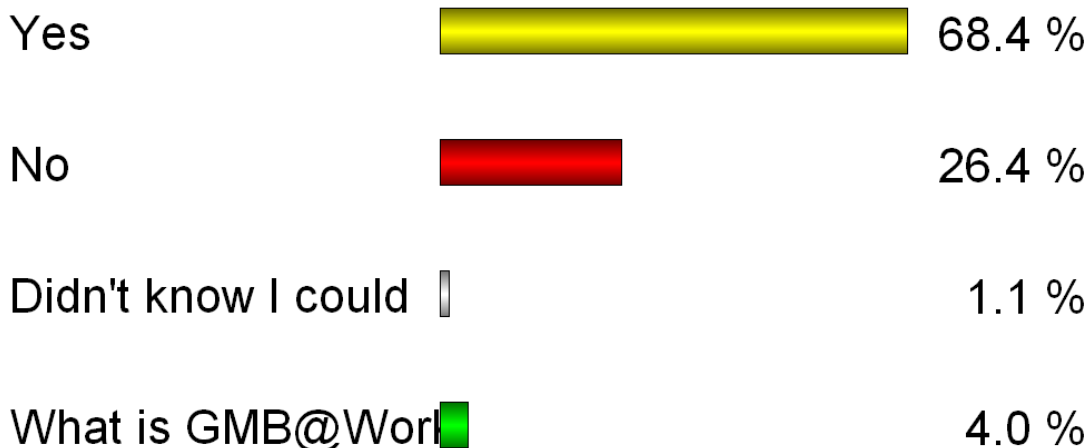
Do you have a workplace organising plan where you work?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Those are good answers.

Next question: "Have you had GMB@Work training?" 1 is yes; 2 is no; 3 is "Didn't know I could" and 4: "What is GMB@Work training?" (Pause)

Have you had GMB@Work Training?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Bang! Well, very good. Thank you very much. We have a few more questions.

Next question: "Have you ever received a GMB Workplace Organiser's Toolkit?" 1 is yes; 2 is no, and 3 is "Don't know". (Pause)

Have you received your GMB Workplace Organisers Toolkit?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Very impressive! Cor!

Next question, please: “How do you update your GMB Workplace Organiser Toolkit?” 1: “Do you download new material from the national website?” 2: “Do you receive updates by email?” 3: “Do you receive updates by post?”, or 4: “You don’t get updates”? (Pause)

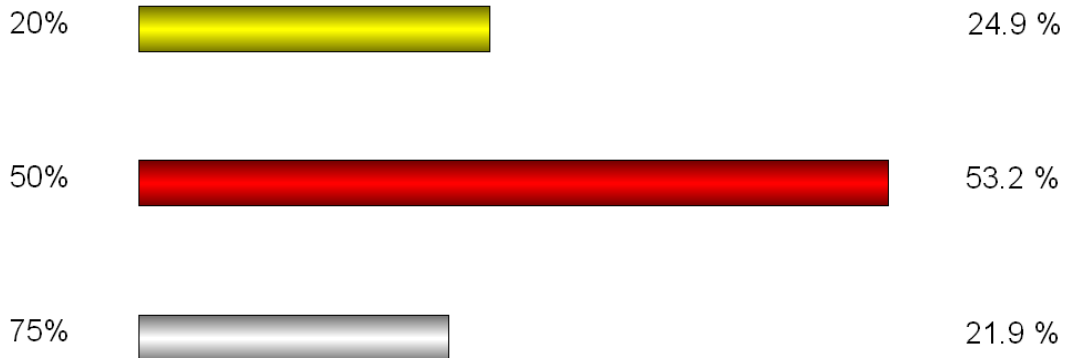
How do you update your GMB Workplace Organiser Tool kit?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you for being honest. You don’t know how important that is.

Next question, please. Here is an interesting one. “What percentage of GMB members do you believe are women?” Is it 20%, 50% or 75%? (Pause)

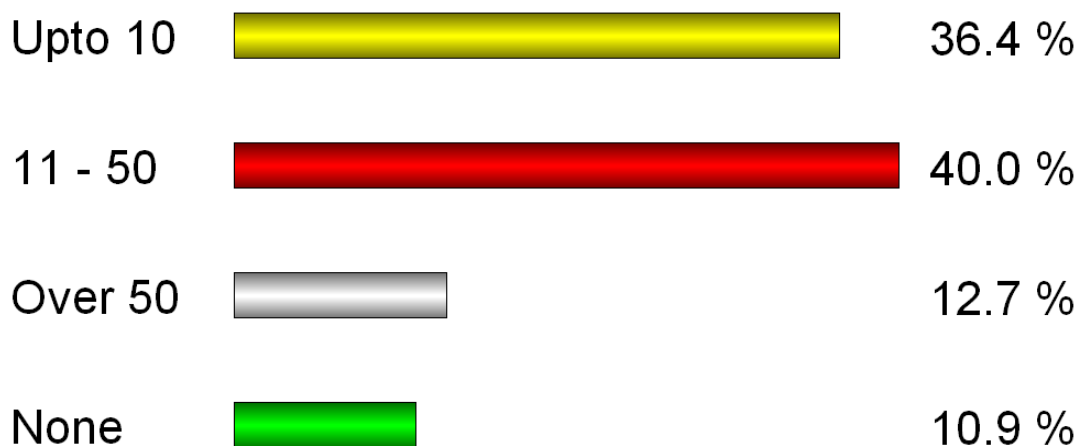
What percentage of GMB members are women?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: You are right. Well, at least half of you are, anyway. Well done.

Next question, please. “How many members have you recruited since the last GMB Congress?” If everybody votes for no. 3, I am going to go back and check the membership records, okay. 1 is: “Up to 10”. 2 is: “11 to 50”. 3 is: “Over 50”. 4 is: “None.” Please vote. Just be honest. *(Pause)*

How many members have you recruited since the last GMB Congress?



THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you. That is good.

We are nearly done. Just a couple more questions. “Who is responsible for recruiting new members to the GMB?” Is it workplace organisers, GMB officers, regional secretaries or every GMB member? 1, 2, 3 or 4. *(Pause)* . I knew it. I knew it was

going too well. That wasn't bad. We got almost all of it. If it is going to be a problem we won't go on with it now. Thanks very much. We have got quite a lot of good information in that particular bit. Thanks a bundle. Cheers. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can we now move on to item 7: Employment Policy – Pensions & Retirement. This section covers Motion 69, Composite 3, Motion 73 and Motion 74.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY – PENSIONS & RETIREMENT

PENSIONS MOTION 69

69. PENSIONS

This Congress calls for a reversal of pensions' policy, whereby workers increasingly are not able to access company pension schemes. Congress finds it scandalous that pension schemes have become a rarity within workplaces over the last thirty years. Congress calls on the Coalition Government to implement a new Pensions Act that makes it mandatory for companies to have a company pension scheme and provide workers with the opportunity to save for their retirement. Congress, also, calls for a Pensions Act to enshrine in law that it is a criminal offence punishable accordingly for owners and directors to utilise pension fund assets as part of their bottom line in mergers and take-overs.

NORTH CUMBRIA GENERAL BRANCH
Northern Region

Carried)

BRO. R. CLAYTON (Northern): Congress, I move Motion 69 on Pensions.

Congress, 30 years ago we had part-time women workers being prevented from paying into the Local Government Pension Scheme. Nothing could have shown the macho culture of the time, even with a woman Prime Minister. The Government attacked the notion of collective saving. Individuals were told to look after themselves. The idea of the more people pay in, the more people get out was rubbished.

Congress, the rules also allowed companies to change their pension schemes. Short-term profit and shareholder value replaced having a stake in the community. Then we had the scandal of Maxwell, a series of fraud trials and tax incentives for individual pension provision. The erosion of collective saving in company pension schemes was complete.

Congress, the adoption of individual saving was a complete contrast to the gold-plated pensions of directors. This type of corporate greed with no stake in the community was part of the corporate culture that led us to the crisis that capitalism brought on itself three years ago. In Britain and America this is called "globalisation". Many other countries encouraged collective saving for retirement. Congress, we need to change the culture to embrace the corporate social responsibility of being committed to local communities. Government needs to bring in a landmark pension legislation that brings back mass collective saving in sold company pension schemes. Such a

law should outlaw spivs and speculators raiding pension schemes for personal gain. It should increase the punishment of those who break the law. Thank you.

BRO. N. COLLINSON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 69 on Pensions. Since the dark days of Thatcher and the Big Bang company pension schemes have increasingly become marginalised. In the private sector, the pension benefits have been reduced or frozen. In the public sector, employers are trying to cut the benefits of final salary schemes. Congress, I bet Lord Hutton did not suffer when he lectured in law, became an MP and then a Cabinet Minister. It is amazing how many policymakers continue to lecture us on our conditions when theirs are already gold-plated.

We have seen a succession of high profile fraud cases where company pension schemes were raided by spivs and speculators. We have seen private equity companies asset-strip and sell on companies at vast profits for themselves. We need to end pensioner poverty. We need a decent pension to be back on the agenda of central Government. That means a law to encourage saving in a decent employer pension scheme. It means outlawing the use of pension schemes to increase shareholder values, to entice takeovers and make executives rich. Employers should have a stake in communities. Lawmakers should tackle corporate and City greed. Please support.

THE PRESIDENT: We will now move to Composite 3.

PENSION INDEXATION

COMPOSITE 3

(Covering Motions 71 and 72)

PENSION INDEXATION

This Congress is appalled by the disgraceful efforts by the Coalition Government to downgrade pensions to be based on CPI (Consumer Price Index) as opposed to RPI (Retail Price Index). Movement of pension monetary provision from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index will mean less money weekly for British Pensioners. Also the winter fuel payments could be looked at for reduction, even though massive price increases in fuel for heating and petrol/diesel have happened U.K wide.

British Pensioners need support of the Trade Union Movement like never before *and* Congress needs to

- get this high on the agenda and keep it there;
- urgently promote action to ensure the British State Pension, which is the lowest in Europe is strengthened to reflect a fairer political stance.

We instruct our Pensions Department to lobby appropriate bodies in Government to secure the most favourable conditions for our pensioners' future.

(Carried)

SIS. M. DOCKERY (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Composite 3.

We have all been bombarded for over 12 years with our “poor Britain” and how bad the current economic climate is. 60 years of age is the new 40. It’s been going on and on until we are all punch drunk with it all. Day after day, newspapers, television and radio are all full of so-called facts meant to persuade us, the pensioners. As they currently are, pensions are a luxury and we cannot afford them. Here are some facts that you probably won’t have seen. 1: Britain now has the worst level of debt since the Second World War. Yet at that time it engaged in a massive social housing programme and built the NHS. 2: The population is living much longer. Really? Well, get this. The growth of life expectancy for both men and women is predicted to remain constant from 2021 for another 30 years. 3: Everyone is living longer. No. They are not. Longer does not mean healthy, active lives. What is clear is that life expectancy and health are always linked to income. The poor die younger. It was as simple as that. 4: The type of work you do relates directly to life expectancy. Professionals can expect to live longer than manual workers by over four years. Nothing is being done to protect pensioners. Who would want to live longer if all you faced was poverty, pain and loneliness? People deserve to have a retirement free from worry, fear and poverty. This is not what the Government has planned for them.

Working people who reach retirement have a right to expect a decent standard of living and a decent quality of life. The current British state pension is currently the lowest in Europe. This is already a national disgrace. We then have to add in the cut to the Winter Fuel Payments, despite ever-increasing energy costs.

We also have to face the Consumer Price Index. Barbara Castle would be turning in her grave. The last Budget provision provided for the introduction of a flat rate State pension. For further pensioners, this will create a two-tier pension system that will leave further pensioners with less state income.

We have a few voices who speak out. Jack Jones was the leader of the National Pensioners’ Convention. The trade union Movement harnessed the skills and protection of not only the current activity but our retired members to fight these shameful costs on all the more valuable members of society. Please support this motion.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Seconder?

BRO. G. RICHARDSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Government plans to change the measure of inflation used to calculate pension payments means, in simple terms, millions of public sector pension holders are likely to see their retirement income slashed. Invariably, the Consumer Price Index is lower than the RPI. Webb said they should also apply to private sector pensions. Webb, the Pensions Minister, said the links with final salary schemes to the CPI would save the Government millions. Neil Carberry, the CBI’s head, welcomed the news. Osborne extended the link to exclude mortgage payments, VAT, and all housing costs. But never mind what they say, what do we say, the workers who are affected by this cut. It is blatant anti-employment discrimination; to propose the existing legal terms and conditions of employees’ pension schemes can just be ridden over roughshod is unacceptable. It is time we did something about it. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

PENSIONS MOTION 73

73. PENSIONS

This Congress calls for a campaign to put pressure on the Government to stop pensions, occupational and state, from being taxed.

Congress is concerned that the Conservative Party's own research showed that in February 2009 "Pensions inflation" was as high as 8.6% for single pensioners and 6.7% for couples while the RPI was 0.1%.

The Government are proposing to amend the measure of occupational schemes from the higher rate of RPI to the lower CPI rate.

Congress acknowledges that this change will further reduce the value of occupational pensions.

Congress believes that the economic downturn combined with the Con-Dem Government's vicious cuts will disproportionately affect pensioners, and condemns this Government in failing to protect some of the most vulnerable in society.

REMPLOY LANARKSHIRE 306(CFTA) BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

BRO. J. HILLS (GMB Scotland): Before I go to the motion I would like to personally thank Phil Davies and a consortium of trade unions for all the fighting they have done to get Remploy the occupational pension that we have. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Congress, President, delegates, although the late Jack Jones of the previous Transport & General Workers had a campaign for several years, sadly the pensions, state and occupational, are now being taxed. As you probably heard, the Government announced a few months ago that the pensions are now going to be based not on RPI but CPI. That means, quite simply, and I watched the programme on BBC1, that over the next few years, five years or so, the pensions are going to be eroded by nearly a quarter, so be prepared for that; not only are they taxing them but they are going to be eroded. People have worked all their life for pensions; why should they be taxed? I call on this great union, the GMB, to start a campaign to put pressure on the Government to stop taxing pensions. It is not deserved and we should not be taxed, and it should go back to RPI. Please support this motion and thank you very much for listening. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. Secunder? Formally? Harry, I thought I had caught you then!

The motion was formally seconded.

STATE PENSION PAYMENTS MOTION 74

74. STATE PENSION PAYMENTS

This Congress agrees that the GMB will campaign to make state pension payments at present taxable income to a non taxable income in future.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. P. DAVIES (Birmingham & West Midlands): President, Congress, first-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. Congress, this motion is asking that state pension payments, which at present are taxable income, are moved to a non-taxable income in future. The issue is straightforward. We have a two-tier system. A person has paid up to 6% of their income for 20, 30, or 40 years, has gone short of their income for all those years to provide a pension for a better future in later life; for that they are penalised. Their state pension is deducted from allowances. This cannot be right. Congress, there are members out there who are not in a Local Government Pension Scheme but who will still pay small amounts into private plans, which they can ill afford as many are on minimum wage, again trying to provide for an enhanced pension in later life and keep their heads above water, but to whom the same tax rules apply. Congress, this cannot be right. A lifetime of hard work, going without all those years to help provide for their retirement, low wage, low state pension, and for all that they take the state pension payment out of your allowances. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

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

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Does anyone else, beside my colleague down there, wish to come in on the debate? No? Thank you.

SIS. A. MURPHY (North West & Irish) speaking in support of Motion 74 said: Not only has this ConDem government moved the goalposts with basing the pension calculations on CPI instead of the higher RPI, they tax the meagre amount to British pensioners. When a survey took place recently many quizzed believed the state pension was at least £150. Are these people in for a shock when they eventually come to retirement age. To tax our meagre pension is a national disgrace. Please support this motion. We need to get a commitment from the next Labour government to reverse this situation. Leave us with what we have earned, along with our dignity. I support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angela. I now call John McDonnell, CEC, to speak on Motions 69, 73, and 74. John.

BRO. J. McDONNELL (CEC, Manufacturing) speaking on Motions 69, 73 and 74 said: President, Congress, the CEC is supporting these motions subject to the following qualifications. The first part of Motion 69 calls for mandatory occupational

pensions. The qualification is that this policy was enacted by the Labour Government; an automatic enrolment into a minimum standard of pension scheme is to be phased in from the year 2012. Our union, the GMB, continues to support this policy but have repeatedly voiced concerns about the employer-friendly amendments being imposed by the Tory-led Coalition.

The second element states that using pension funds assets in any merger should be outlawed. Congress, pension funds cannot legally be used in this way. The funds are ring-fenced and are outside the control of either party to a company transaction. The control of funds rests with the trustees who must act in accordance with the law and in the best interests of the scheme membership.

Regarding Motions 73 and 74, the CEC would wish to qualify both of these as follows. Both motions call for an end to taxation of pension benefits. This would undermine the arguments we have previously used for GMB policy supporting universal pension provision, namely, that it can be recouped from the rich through taxation. At present a higher tax-free allowance is in place for people over 65. This means tax-free pensions for low to medium income households as a taper that ensures the better-off pensioners are taxed on their pension income.

Congress, the spectre of pension poverty has grown in the last year with an increase in the VAT to 20%, lower pension increases, higher pension retirement ages, attacks on occupational pensions, and a cut in the winter fuel allowance. I can assure Congress that the GMB led by our General Secretary and our CEC delegates on the Labour Executive, and also our CEC delegates on the TUC General Council, and not forgetting our representative in Brussels, will continue to expose the Tory-led Coalition's punitive and aggressive policies and campaign for a dignified retirement for all. Please support the motions with the qualifications outlined. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Does Northern Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does GMB Scotland accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Birmingham Region accept the qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. While I have just mentioned Birmingham, Joe Morgan paid his £20 fine. Thank you, Joe. (*Applause*) Can I now move to the vote, Motion 69, Composite 3, and Motions 73 and 74? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 69 was CARRIED.

Composite 3 was CARRIED.

Motion 73 was CARRIED.

Motion 74 was CARRIED.

**REGIONAL SECRETARY’S REPORT: MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION
(pages 107-113)**

MIDLAND & EAST COAST REGION

1. MEMBERSHIP & RECRUITMENT

FINANCIAL MEMBERSHIP	55,703
Section Financial Membership (by each Section):	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	14,563
MANUFACTURING SECTION	15,371
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	25,769
Grade 1 members	36,614
Grade 2 members	11,940
Retired, Reduced Rate & Others	7,149
Male Membership	3,1371
Female Membership	24,332
Total number recruited 1.1.2010 – 31.12.2010	7,259
Increase/Decrease 1.1.2010 - 31.12.2010	+750
Membership on Check-off	30,061
Membership on Direct Debit	18,493

Response to Organising Agenda

The Midland and East Coast Region has the Organising Agenda embedded into every activity that the Region undertakes. We continue to target key workplaces that have been set and prioritised from the National and Regional targets with the input of Organisers and support of activists and lay reps. GMB@Work training for reps and activists has continued to be rolled out to all workplaces and delivery is complete in the Region’s current target workplaces.

The Region’s Organising Team is working well in partnership with the geographical industrial teams and the Region is benefiting from closer co-operation and information sharing.

In 2010, more than in any previous year, the Region’s reps have grown in confidence and this is demonstrated by the number of issues and claims which are being put on the employers’ table. The approach of key target companies is paying dividends and more companies than ever are now fully organised.

Both National and Regional targets have continued to deliver growth and extra efforts have again been put into achieving sustainable organisation within schools.

Recruitment Targets and Campaigns

Asda is a National target and the Region has worked hard at consolidating our membership within the distribution centres. During 2010 the Region gained recognition at the IDC Distribution Centre which is the largest within the Asda network. The percentage of workers voting for GMB recognition was the highest anywhere in the country.

Staythorpe Power Station has also delivered excellent membership growth within the engineering construction sector and has again demonstrated the growth which can be achieved when campaigning and organising on issues.

Regular pre-planned recruitment weeks that are diarised annually at the beginning of the year continue to produce results. These are backed up with two weekly “organising days” where each Organiser

focuses totally on recruitment and organising within the workplaces for which they have responsibility. They also have the ability to request support from the Regional Organising team when this is required. These are all in addition to the day to day recruitment and do not preclude any extra initiatives which are planned as required.

This planned approach to recruitment and organising has helped Midland and East Coast Region achieve a year of growth in a very challenging economic environment.

Overview of Region's Economic and Employment Status

The economy within the geographical area covered by Midland and East Coast Region is diverse and differs from area to area. We cover areas traditionally known as the East Midlands, Humberside and East Riding of Yorkshire. The Region stretches from Scarborough in the north to Wellingborough in the south and from Skegness in the east to Buxton in the west.

Economic output in the East Midlands relies on the Manufacturing Sector more than any other Region within the UK. However, much of Lincolnshire and the Derbyshire Peak District are reliant on agriculture. GMB continues to recruit migrant workers, many of whom work in and around the food industry.

The current recession has hit the East Midlands and unemployment rose in 2010 by 11.2% rise between August and October. Workers in the East Midlands earn on average £28 per week less than the national average.

Most Local Authorities within the Region are announcing redundancies and the impact of these on the Regional economy will be huge as many jobs in the East Midlands are low paid.

2. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Regional Senior Organisers	3
Membership Development Officers	
Regional Organisers	13
Organising Officers	3
No. of Branches	91
New Branches	
Branch Equality Officers	44
Branch Youth Officers	26

The Regional Secretary continues to lead the Region's management team, supported by three Senior Organisers who each have individual geographical areas, which are aligned to improve the services we deliver to the members.

The Region has 13 servicing Organisers, supported by three Organising Officers, which form part of the Regional Organising Team who have responsibility for working in the whole of the Region with the Servicing Organisers and Activists. The three Senior Organisers each have responsibility for an area within the Region and one of the Sections in the GMB, along with other responsibilities, as delegated by the Regional Secretary.

3. BENEFITS

Dispute	
Total Disablement	8,000
Working Accident	1,150
Occupational Fatal Accident	8,000
Non-occupational Fatal Accident	2,155
Funeral	35,524

4. JOURNALS & PUBLICITY

The Region continues to produce the Regional Magazine called "Contact" which is distributed to the Region's membership. Contributions to the magazine are made by Activists Reps and Staff on topical issues from around the Region.

Many Press Releases have been written and distributed (in support of the Region's work in organising and recruitment) to the Region's media, resulting in excellent media exposure. Examples of these are the Staythorpe Power Station dispute, Northants County Council, Notts City Job Evaluation, and Connaught.

Regional Officials have been on BBC and ITV Regional Television Programming, Regional Radio, and Regional and National newspapers.

Sponsorship of the GMB Nottingham Panthers ice hockey team has continued, and has generated much interest and press coverage. Our logo and bill board appear several times a week on Regional TV and we receive excellent exposure from both radio and print media.

As part of our continued recruitment in Asda the Region sponsored the Asda family fun day in Lutterworth. This is a National event for Asda employees and their families. The sponsorship was very successful and gave GMB excellent profile with Asda employees both within the Region and Nationally.

The Region has also started to embrace new media with trials of twitter within the Region. The Regional website continues to be a source of news and information for members and a recruitment tool for non-members.

5 LEGAL SERVICES

(a) Occupational Accidents and Diseases (including Criminal Injuries)

Applications for Legal Assistance	Legal Assistance Granted
656	652

Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Court	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
678	299	6	373 £3,491,217.45		£3,491,217.45
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010			1,132		

(b) Employment Tribunals (notified to Legal Department)

Claims supported by Union	298
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Cases in which Outcome became known

Total	Withdrawn	Lost in Tribunal	Settled	Won in Court	Total Compensation
175	69	3	90 £166,656.30	13 £12,000.00	£178,656.30
Cases outstanding at 31.12. 2010			536		

(c) Other Employment Law Cases

Supported by Union	Unsuccessful	Damages / Compensation	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
7	1	£6,891.84	11

(d) Social Security Cases

Supported by Union	Successful	Cases outstanding at 31.12.2010
34	11	20

During the period 1.1.2010 to 31.12.2010, the Region's Legal Services have been the focus of an ongoing review, with new systems being put into place, as we continually strive towards improving the service to our members.

In conjunction with the Region's Solicitors, Thompsons, we have introduced a new Employment Law Scheme, whereby our Officers can ring a dedicated telephone number on either a general employment law query or a potential tribunal claim for our members and the Officer will receive a call back from a Solicitor, within one hour, offering initial advice which is backed up by an e-mail. This is helping to reduce the number of ET claims being registered without reasonable prospects.

The introduction of this new Scheme has also resulted in the reduction of unnecessary paperwork and duplication, as through the Legal Department all advices and correspondence received by e-mail from the Solicitors are attached to the membership system, resulting in a log of correspondence against individual members which is available to view at the click of a mouse.

In addition to the above, in May 2010 all Officers attended a one day Employment Law Training Course, delivered by Thompsons Solicitors, to refresh and equip them with the knowledge and ability to confidently advise and, in less complex cases, provide representation to our members pursuing claims to Tribunal.

There has been an increase again this year in the number of Medical Appeal Tribunals supported by the Region and this is expected to increase further following the coalition government's crackdown on welfare benefits which will force many people on benefits to undergo medical tests.

With this in mind a Medical Appeals Tribunal representatives' training course was held towards the latter end of the year, which was very well attended and the training continues into 2011. This will result in a wider network of trained representatives to call on to assist and accompany our members to Medical and Social Security Appeal Tribunals.

Equal pay claims are still ongoing within local authorities and NHS. There have been many claims settled resulting in substantial payments for our members. At present we have 731 claims, these have been reducing over time but because of the tenacity of reps, full time Officers and Solicitors further potential claims have been highlighted and pursued. There is no litigation against the Union. The above has been achieved by full time officials following the toolkits provided by the GMB.

The free will service continues to be extremely popular, particularly following its mention in the Region's Contact magazine as does the Thompsons 'non work related' advice helpline.

All of the above has undoubtedly helped to improve the quality of service to our members and continues to assist in the Region's efforts to recruit new members as our legal services remain a key reason why people join the GMB.

6. EQUALITY & INCLUSION

Further to the ratifying of the constitution for the Regional Equalities Forum there have been two forum meetings which have taken place with the newly elected forum members. Two people were elected to each of the Equality Strands with an additional strand for the retired members, as detailed:

Colin Gunter	Race
Nima Patel	Race
Shelly Gathigia	Young Members
Tracey Ashton	Young Members
Helen Holt	Disability
David Jobson	Disability
Charlie Pankania	Migrant Workers
Richard Morgan	Migrant Workers
Andrea Chatfield	Gender
Shona Ortega	Gender
David Lascelles	LGBT
Trisha Buscada	LGBT
Elizabeth Blackman	LGBT

At the first meeting of the forum which was held on 2 June 2010, Helen Holt was elected as the regional representative to the National Equalities Forum, and David Lascelles was elected as vice chair of the Regional Equalities Forum. It was also agreed that in the event that Helen Holt could not attend any of the forum meetings that David Lascelles would attend as a substitute.

In order to progress, the forum agreed to have meetings of each strand to look at how the work could be developed within that particular area and to identify potential campaigns. This involved meetings which were arranged at the nearest and most appropriate GMB office and therefore the race strand and the disability strand met at the Leicester Office on 9 July 2010. The young members strand met on 20 July at the Nottingham Office and the Gender and LGBT also met at the Hull Office on 20 July. Progress was made on establishing the key areas that the committee felt were important for the GMB to be focusing on.

The information was fed back to the next Regional Equalities Forum and the key elements that were common to most strand meetings were the possibility of mentoring new activists in each strand area, developing a wider understanding of the GMB's structure and opportunities for people to become involved and become empowered through equality campaigns and activity.

The other key area was that of publicity and was focused on how simple information regarding the GMB's support for and commitment to specific strands of equality could be produced by activists and branches to generate interest and confidence on the GMB Equality Agenda.

Each strand was also tasked with identifying a campaign subject for the next REF meeting which was broad based but achievable. It was hoped that the campaign ideas identified could be discussed at the next REF meeting and proposed before submitting those that the committee felt were best achievable to the Regional Committee for their consideration.

The National Equalities Conference is due to take place on the 16 and 17 March 2011. Due to the late notification of the event the Region has struggled to field delegates, however, the following people will be attending on behalf of the Region.

Richard Morgan, Derbyshire Community Branch
Colin Gunter, Grantham Community Branch
Shelly Gathigia, Nottinghamshire General Branch
David Jobson, Leicester Services Branch
Chukuemeka Wakama, Nottingham City Branch
Cathy Mason, Ashfield No1 Branch

Helen Ashton will be attending as the Region's Representative on the National Forum.

Ethnic Breakdown of the Regional Equalities Forum:

	White	Black	Asian	Other
Male	3	1	1	
Female	6	1	1	

7. TRAINING

(a) GMB Courses Basic Training					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to GMB (GMB@WORK (2 days))	10	120	36	156	312
GMB Induction (Workplace Organisers) (5 days)	10	120	36	156	780
GMB@WORK (1 day)	1	4	6	10	10

(b) On Site Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
H&S Awareness	1	8		8	8

(c) Health & Safety Courses (please specify subjects)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Introduction to Health & Safety (3 days)	10	120	36	156	468
Tacking Stress at Work (2 days)	1	9	3	9	18
Assessment, Investigation and Inspection (2 days)	2	17	2	19	38

(d) Other Courses (please specify subjects / weekdays/ weekends)					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
Negotiating Skills (2 weekdays)	1	8	1	9	18
Organising Apprentices Conference (1 weekday)	1	18	4	22	22
Representing Members (1 weekday)	2	10	10	20	40
Grievance and Disciplinarys (2 weekdays)	1	14	3	17	34
Medical Appeals Tribunal (1 weekday)	1	5	2	7	7

(e) TUC (STUC & ICTU) Courses					
	No. of Courses	Male	Female	Total	Total Student Days
TUC Courses	79	59	20	79	

GFTU Courses	11	9	2	11	
Northern College Courses	16	15	1	16	

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

Workplace Organisation and Visits

In the period since last Congress, the RHSO has been involved in a number of visits to workplaces:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Redhill Comprehensive School | H&S Inspection/Workplace Visit |
| 2. | Tarmac, Buxton | Workplace Visit/Joint Training |
| 3. | Nottingham City Council | Asbestos |
| 4. | Care Home | Bullying |
| 5. | Joy Mining | Joint Working Initiative |

The service continues to be explained and offered to all new representatives attending the regional training courses. The RHSO also attended several RHSO meetings in 2010.

Enquiries

Regional office continues to handle health and safety enquiries. In the period since the last report to Congress the following subject areas were raised:

- Asbestos - GMB Region database scheme
- Working temperatures - What is the minimum?
- Adverse Weather - Individual Rights, Paid time off
- Risk Assessments - Employers legal responsibilities
- Work-related Stress - Individual Rights/Absence
- Working Time - Waivers – opting out
- COSHH - Provision of PPE
- Manual Handling - Weight limits
- PPE - Who pays/maintains?

Training

In addition to the Regional Induction Course the Department has rolled out a very successful Health & Safety short course programme including:

- Tackling Work-related Stress
- Accident Investigation and Inspections
- Mental Health Awareness
- Representing H&S Issues
- Risk Assessment

Information Distribution

During 2010 the following Health and Safety Matters have been distributed to Safety Reps and Branches:

- March 2010 Fit Note
- April 2010 Health & Safety Management: Waste & Recycling Services
- May 2010 Accessing Compensation
- June 2010 Mesothelioma
- July 2010 Health hazards of asbestos prior to 1930
- August 2010 Paul Kenny appointed to HSE Board

The Regional Office continues to offer an e-mailing service to distribute electronic versions of documents dealing with health and safety, on request, from representatives. The Region's revamped website holds a great deal of Health and Safety information and additional resources are to be added, including the new Safety Representatives' Toolkit.

A revision and update of the health and safety pages on the regional website has now been completed. The Department will always be proactive in responding to any changes in the needs of our safety representatives.

(Adopted)

THE PRESIDENT: I ask Andy Worth now to move his Regional Secretary's Report, Midland & East Coast Region, pages 107-113. Andy? Formally. Thank you very much.

The Report was formally moved.

THE PRESIDENT: Page 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113. Agreed to second?

The Report was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress agree to accept? *(Agreed)*

The Regional Secretary's Report: Midland & East Coast Region (pages 107-113) was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: Before we begin the Finance debate could I please welcome Phil Clark from our external auditors. Welcome, Phil. *(Applause)* I will take the three motions and one rule amendment, and then Paul Kenny to respond.

UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCE & CONTRIBUTIONS

BRANCH ACCOUNTING SYSTEM – RULE 35

MOTION 31

31. BRANCH ACCOUNTING SYSTEM – RULE 35

This Congress welcomes the transparency and accountability of the new Accounting System; however we do not believe that the proposed scale of payments for Branch President and Branch Auditors reflects the time and effort that these Officers put into the Branch to ensure that the controls and checks are in place. The GMB has always prided itself (and rightly so) on working to obtain a fair wage for workers. These proposals are not fair given that these Branch Officers spend a lot of their time outside the workplace working for the good of the members of the Branch. The proposed payment for Auditors starts at below the Maximum Minimum Wage. We call on the CEC to revise and improve these scales now to reflect the value of their service to the GMB and continue to review them in line with other benefits and membership fees.

X07 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

SIS. M. GREGG (North West & Irish): President, delegates, as you are all aware, in the past branch finance records have not always been kept as up to date and as

transparent as we would like. Computerisation and improved communications have allowed us at this time the opportunity to organise our records and keep them up to date. Like all changes these require scrutiny and more regulations as we are told the changes are to bring us into line with the HMRC. Therefore, the branch officers and accountants have more work to do which entails more time spent on branch business, voluntary time which the members may not be aware of but surely the CEC should be.

The GMB is proud to be a lay members union. The members and the branch officers are the backbone of the union and many have given years of support to the union, and through their work keep branches active and have also kept the GMB going. So, how do we reward them? I am sure the presidents of the branches and the officers are not carrying out their role formally but the branch meetings have to be arranged. We know some may not be well attended but they all have to be prepared for and members' questions answered, and meetings kept in order. So, if there is a scale of payment set out let them reflect the esteem of the GMB for these branch officers, for their loyalty to the branches and members. Branch auditors and qualified auditors, who are also our members, can get at least around £34 an hour, but don't worry, Paul, do not get excited, we are not asking for it, but to offer pay scales starting at below the Maximum Minimum Wage does not seem to me or the members of my branch to be fair. Remember, these payments are for the quarter, not for an hour's work, and the new system does place a higher standard of requirement, as I have already said, on the accounts and on the auditors, and there is increased scrutiny now of all the payments, and the receipts checked. They also have to keep an eye on the HMRC regulations. They also require our branch secretaries, and I know mine does, to record all the details of the branch and the business in a timely manner. Certainly this will ensure better accounting records but it needs time and effort spent, as I have said, and my branch would like to ensure there is proper recognition for the work they do and that it is rewarded.

The new branch accounting system was debated and voted on at last year's Congress but the details of the payments were not finalised in that report. Later on at branch secretaries' training when we had the paperwork it was all set out, but like all new systems, and we have had experience of this today and yesterday with the handsets, they need adjusting. Now, at this Congress I call on the CEC to revise and continue to review these payments in line with other benefits and membership fees. Please support the motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. I will introduce the man on my left one step from Paul Kenny, Allan Wylie, our Finance Director, so if you have a complaint see him, not me. Seconder?

BRO. P. MACKLIN (North West & Irish): First-time delegate. *(Applause)* Margaret's observations are spot-on. We are a lay members organisation and it is important that we are accountable not only to the HMRC but to those very lay members. She is absolutely right, there is a greater level of transparency and accountability required now, and this is important, but please let that importance be reflected in the recognition given to the tasks carried out by the branch officers who play such an integral part in making the GMB the great organisation we are all proud to belong to. There are a good number of branch officers in this room. Please support this motion: you have bloody well earned it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Midland Region.

**BRANCH ACCOUNTING
MOTION 32**

32. BRANCH ACCOUNTING

Whilst welcoming the attempts to improve the branch accounting system, making it more transparent and robust, Congress calls on the CEC to consult with the Regions and Branches to ensure the new format is achieving what it is designed to do.

Also, to review the system, in order to reduce duplication and unnecessary paperwork, leaving the Union with a simple, robust, branch accounting system.

MIDLAND HEALTHCARE BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. HELEY (Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, this region welcomes the attempts that have been made to improve the branch accounting system, to make it more transparent and robust. However, we also believe we have a long, long, long way to go. At Congress 2007 we agreed to major changes to branch funding so that from Q1 2011 all branches would receive the same 10% commission in line with Rule 35; no problem. This region had no problem with that and I was one of those who voted in favour. Congress, that gave us three-and-a-half years to get it right. The General Secretary in his report to Congress 2008 pointed out that the GMB branch accounting returns were out of date and needed revising; again, I did not object to that because it still gave us two-and-a-half years to get it right.

In recent years we have consulted with regions and branches on every important change that has been proposed to the way we operate within our union, and we got it right, but on the issue of fundamental changes to our branch accounting system this did not happen. The NAU appeared to be making things up as they went along and waited for complaints to come in. What they should have done is put out a robust system for discussion and come out of their ivory towers and listened to regions on the road shows. It was definitely not designed by lay members. It has all the hallmarks of an accountant's input. There were meetings in regions and various road shows to try and explain it, dry runs leading up to Q1, yet every time I got my branch return from NAU there were amendments, deletions, and requests for extra information. At a joint meeting which our region attended in Birmingham, Mr. Wiley assured us that duplication would stop. Guess what, last month I received the paper from the NAU and was told the branch income and expenditure sheet was no longer required as it was a duplication. Great. I was then asked to include copies of all bank statements for the quarter in question, that meant putting another three extra sheets back in, which is already shown on the tabletop in the branch returns: more duplication.

Congress, we still do not have it right. It is wrong, wrong, wrong, yet we are told we are the only region complaining. I wonder what the rest of Congress thinks. In the lead-up to the launch most branches in my region lost a quarter due to information we needed; we slipped out, and we only put three quarterly returns in. My branch, for

example, receives its commission in arrears so the money it receives at the beginning of Q1 is for that period. You get a return for the next quarter as you have quoted the quarter after, so you work in a six-month shift. This may be the way big businesses operate but we at the branches are not big businesses. Let's keep it plain and simple so that it is transparent and robust.

For that reason Congress calls on the CEC to set up a small task group to consult with the regions and branches to ensure the new format is achieving what it is designed to do, and also to review the system in order to reduce duplication and unnecessary paperwork leaving this union with a simple, robust, transparent branch accounting system. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

SIS. C. MASON (Midland & East Coast): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* President, Congress, I am not a branch secretary so I do not have to comprise the figures for branch accounts but I was a branch auditor before I was promoted to branch president. I am under rule the branch custodian of our GMB rule book. If I am having problems, how can I ensure we are operating to rule? My branch secretary has tried to explain the new system a number of times. Congress, you do not know me so I will ask you to believe me when I say my hair might be blond but I am not as dumb as I look, but I am struggling to grasp the new system and I am sure I am not alone. We all agree that changes to branch accounting was needed but the changes that have been introduced neither my branch nor I have been consulted over. Congress, if our employers tried to introduce a fundamental change with retraining into our workplaces without consultation there would be uproar yet it would appear that this has happened with branch returns.

Congress, it is my opinion that branch secretaries are the cornerstone of the strong foundation on which this union stands but please remember that they are only ordinary men and women and usually not qualified chartered accountants. With branch accounting there is still scope for improvement and I respectfully ask that branches, regions, and particularly branch secretaries, should be consulted. Congress, please support this. I second the motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Cathy.

**BRANCH SECRETARIES TRAINING AND BRANCH ACCOUNTS (AS SHOWN IN THE RULE BOOK)
MOTION 34**

34. BRANCH SECRETARIES TRAINING AND BRANCH ACCOUNTS (AS SHOWN IN RULE BOOK)

Congress we request training for all Branch Secretaries – training in all aspects of branch organising but more importantly on how to keep proper financial records and recording systems so the improved and more useful data can be shared between Regions and Branches. As agreed at Congress 2007 in motion 34, we are still waiting for the training.

We also ask that in future Branch secretaries will be consulted before any changes are made in the branch accounting systems as the latest system is confusing and with lack of training makes little sense to some branch secretaries; even those who are trained in accounting are having problems.

As per rule 38.3 we also ask that computerised accounting is allowed as soon as possible and that scanning and emailing of all the accounting paperwork with signature of auditors and branch officers is permitted, providing the branch keeps a copy of either the signed paperwork or computerised accounts so that we can bring the GMB into the 21st century, which also satisfies the 6 year rule of keeping accounts.

As there is no clarification as to whether this rule has meant in the past to **send** is by post or to **send** is by email then both formats will be acceptable.

38.3 states

...The branch secretary will send to the National Administration Unit the branch's balance sheet, which will ~~should~~ be signed by the auditors and the president, within 14 days of the end of the quarter.

What we do ask Congress though is to substitute the word should to will to ensure signatories of required branch officers on the quarterly account sheets.

B40 BOURNEMOUTH BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. B. BRITTAN (Southern): B40 Branch asks that it be made possible to allow the sending of branch quarterly accounts by email or via the website, which should include scan confirmation of signatories on an internally used set of accounts as this is deemed acceptable practice in many other workplaces. B40 Branch also asks that there is a change to the confusing dates when paperwork is sent to NAU, and work in line with branches. Account quarters so as not to confuse are requested to change to January-March, April-June, July-September, and October-December. In closing we also ask that Congress make available suitable and full training for all new and current branch secretaries in both paper and computerised format of accounting as many branch secretaries have no training in any form of accounting or balancing the books. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Secunder? Formally. Thank you, Richard.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask if anyone wishes to come into the debate?

SIS. J. SMITH (London) speaking in support of Motions 31 and 32 said: Congress, I am a branch secretary and, like the delegate said in Motion 32, it is complicated. I have been doing it for many years, since 1980, and I have to say I am bloody well confused and I know a lot of our branch secretaries in East Anglia have equally complained of the system we have. The system that we have at the moment, like the delegate said in Motion 31 about a fair wage, I am sure when this was first passed the sentiments that we are now having to deal with and taking honorary payments for was not discussed in that full manner as it is being put to us today. Had it been, I am sure we would not have accepted it. Please support these motions. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan.

BRO. D. LASCELLES (Midland & East Coast) speaking to Motion 34 but in support of all the motions in the group, said: Frankly, the National Administration Unit have asked for the completion and sending of information protected actually by the Data Protection Act through the Royal Mail or by electronic means. Sort codes and account numbers of named bank accounts are not the stuff that branch secretaries wish to be seen to bring our union into conflict with its members over, if, as so often happens, sadly these days, the internet security is not secure – but do speak to Sony about that and its Playstation - or for that matter mail simply getting lost or intercepted. I would hope that those responsible for such requests will consider these points and that Congress will nonetheless support the motions. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David.

BRO. D. BREARLEY (Midland & East Coast): I support what the worthy brothers and sisters have said but I would also like to add that I think the auditors ought to be involved in preparing the paperwork, or any new paperwork. I am a social club secretary and I do the club's books, tax and insurance, every week. I submit them to an auditor every 12 months who has to submit them back to the branch and then send them off to the FSA for acceptance. I found it very difficult with my two auditors to understand what was actually going on. I support the motion. Thank you, Madam. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David, nice to see you.

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midland): Just to say on a serious point on this, our branch secretary has just resigned after nearly 20 years because he does not think he can cope with this. I am sure there is going to be a lot more of that. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Glyn. Can I remind delegates that I shall be taking the vote on these at the end of the Finance debate? Can I now ask the mover of Rule 55, Funeral Benefit, Birmingham Region, to move and I will also be taking the vote on that after the Finance debate.

RULE AMENDMENT 307

Rule 55 Funeral benefit

1 If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for 8 years dies, the regional secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of £275. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses.)

2 We will not consider paying funeral benefit unless the member's widow, widower, relative or nominated person makes a claim within 12 months of the member dying.

3 If the member dies at sea or in instances where no death certificate has been issued, we will not pay funeral benefit unless the member's widow, widower,

relative or nominate person gives the Central Executive Council satisfactory evidence of the member's death.

5 The branch secretary will keep a book in which each member will nominate, in writing, the person who we will pay the funeral benefit to if the member dies. Members can cancel their nomination by sending notice, signed by them, to the branch secretary. The branch secretary will be responsible for making sure the nomination is cancelled.

RA307

Clause No : 1, 2, 3 & 5 (clause 1) lines 1, 3, 4
(clause 2) lines 2
(clause 3) lines 3
(clause 5) lines 2

Amendment & Insertion:

Clause 1. If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for **one** year dies, the Regional Secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, **partner**, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of **£500**. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses).

Clause 2. We will not consider paying funeral benefit unless the members widow, widower, **partner**, relative or nominated person makes a claim within 12 months of the member dying.

Clause 3. If the member dies at sea or in instances where no death certificate has been issued, we will not pay funeral benefit unless the member's widow, widower, **partner**, relative or nominated person gives the Central Executive Council satisfactory evidence of the members' death.

Clause 5. The Branch Secretary will keep a book in which each member **may** nominate, in writing, the person who we will pay the funeral benefit to if the member dies. Members can cancel their nomination by sending notice, signed by them, to the Branch Secretary. The Branch Secretary will be responsible for making sure the nomination is cancelled.

B10 BANBURY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Lost)

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): The first change we would like to see in this is the 8-year rule for members to qualify. Quite frankly, it should be as Mary said yesterday, employment rights from day one. When you are a member, you are a member. It is also discriminatory. I feel it is discriminatory against our young members. A young member starting work at 19 would have to wait until they are an old member at 27 to qualify for this, if they happened to be unfortunate enough to cop it. I do not think you need me to tell you about the legal explanation on discrimination. There is a provision criteria practice that puts a particular group of people or someone at disadvantage and this puts our young members at a disadvantage. We would settle for changing it to a one-year qualifying period. The other changes we would like to see brought in is the insertion of the word "partner", it says widow or widower, or family, but some folk do not get married; it is a wonderful

institution but some folk prefer not to live in an institution, they do not want to live in an institution, and it also covers same sex partners.

The most contentious bit is probably the level of the funeral grant. I understand that the CEC is putting it up to £300 but I think it should be at a higher level. I do not think it would break the bank. I see in the financial report that £300,000 was spent in the last year and if the same number of people, members, copped it next year it would only be £550,000. I am branch secretary and I am not very good at sums, but I think that is what it would be. *(Laughter)* Let's face it, 500 quid will maybe pay for a half-decent cardboard box to stick you in these days. In clause 2 and 3 we also think the word "partner" should be included. In clause 5 it says branch secretaries will keep a book in which each member will nominate. Some of the branches have thousands of folk and getting nominations of who the payments are to be made to — I think it should be changed to "may". If somebody does not want their wife to pay for it — I just think it is not practical, "you will keep a book". I am sure all you branch secretaries have a book that lists everybody's name and who they want to nominate to get the funeral benefits. I know the CEC will oppose this on the strength of that £25 increase but I ask this Congress to support this. We believe in fairness and equality and because we care about our members and their families, and we should care for them from day one, we want to show support for families of our members in a difficult time. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Jimmy, you are about to cop it now! Thank you, Stevie. Secunder? Do we have a secunder?

BRO. G. HARVEY (Birmingham & West Midlands) I am probably going to repeat most of what he said so that you will be able to understand me! *(Laughter/Applause)* President, Congress, you heard what she said about me, I am still here, I am still trying to take on the CEC, and in the past I have been known to win; I think it was in the 1970s when Derek Gladwin was in the chair, but I have won before now against them.

As we have heard, to implement this it would not cost an arm and a leg to do it. I know we are all cognisant of finances and money, and all we ever hear is that, but it is not a big thing. I know from personal experience last year when we buried my mother-in-law who was 101 it was a frightening amount of money to bury somebody. I did not realise. I had not had this problem for a long time and it was a frightening amount of money for people to find. I am sure that even if we did improve it, we are not going to have people rushing to take advantage of this benefit, are we? *(Laughter)* You know what I mean? There is the fact that none of us want it but I am sure that at some time we are all going to need it as well. *(Laughter)* I am sure that if we have an employer telling us that we have to wait eight years for a benefit to come into operation we would be playing hell about it, wouldn't we? *(Applause)* I think it needs repeating that Mary had said we should get employment rights from day one and if I can just say at Congress last year Paul Kenny said we are going to have a bigger, more inclusive, longer Congress, but I did not think he meant by half an hour a day on the conference thing. If he keeps us working this bloody long we are all going to need this benefit, I can tell you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Glyn, you kept pointing at me. I promise you I am not putting in my application yet! *(Laughter)* Can I say we will be taking the vote on this after Paul Kenny has moved the annual accounts and auditor's report, the General Secretary's Report, and the CEC Finance Report, *Building on Growth: Financial Proposals for the Year Ahead*. We are now taking items 11, 12, and 13 together and I call on your General Secretary, and Treasurer, Paul Kenny, to move the Annual Auditor's Accounts, move the General Secretary's Report, and move the CEC Finance Report, *Building on Growth: Financial Proposals for the year ahead*. Paul Kenny. *(Applause)*

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS & AUDITORS REPORT.
(Adopted)

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

A Framework for the Future of the GMB: Update

This report audits the progress that has been made towards implementation of the 23 recommendations set out in the CEC Special Report *A Framework for the Future of the GMB*, and carried by Congress 2005. Where it has been previously reported to Congress that the recommendation has been implemented, the recommendation itself is no longer shown.

1.	<i>Implemented</i>
2.	<i>Implemented</i>
3.	The CEC will establish a special working group on young people, whose terms of reference will be to examine how to raise trade union awareness amongst young people, how to attract more young people into membership of the GMB and how to increase the participation of young people in the Union. <i>One of the aims of the CEC Special Report "A Bigger, Better, More Inclusive Congress" adopted by Congress 2010 is to encourage more young members to attend Congress. The ability of Region's to seek additional nominations from Branches to appoint 10% of their delegates will hopefully encourage Branches to nominate young members and allow the Regions to ensure a balanced representation in their delegation, including young members.</i>
4.	<i>Implemented</i>
5.	<i>Implemented</i>
6.	<i>Implemented</i>
7.	<i>Implemented</i>
8.	<i>Implemented</i>
9.	<i>Implemented</i>
10.	<i>Implemented</i>

11.	<i>Implemented</i>
12.	The CEC will examine the issue of “tidying up” some regional boundaries where any alterations to these could enhance and improve the service to GMB members. <i>Work is ongoing.</i>
13.	<i>Implemented</i>
14.	<i>Implemented</i>
15.	<i>Implemented</i>
16.	<i>Implemented</i>
17.	<i>Implemented</i>
18.	The CEC recommends that the Finance Committee and Senior Managers review all the financial restructuring issues identified by the Task Group with the aim of identifying appropriate reforms that can be implemented immediately and, in the case of reforms requiring changes to Union Rules, recommending detailed Rule Amendments for the CEC to propose to the next GMB Congress. Senior Managers have already taken preliminary steps so that the financial restructuring review can proceed quickly should Congress 2005 accept this recommendation. <i>With effect from the March Quarter 2011 rule 35.1 will come into operation to tighten up scrutiny and Branch payment systems</i>
19.	The CEC will look at all areas of expenditure to identify those that are unproductive and to make recommendations that these practices are stopped, to free up resources for direct servicing of members and ensuring the growth of the Union. <i>We now have a national mobile contract which includes both voice and Blackberry services covering all nine Regions, National Office and the National Administration Unit, with O2. We are only nine months into the contract but we estimate that for these services we are saving around £75,000 per annum when compared to the prices of our previous providers.</i> <i>We are about to embark on an exercise to review GMB contracts for landlines as again there will be opportunities to make considerable savings</i> <i>Also, a re-negotiating of the contract for ExpertHR, used as an online reference guide by officers and staff, has resulted in a saving of over £50k per annum.</i>
20.	<i>Implemented</i>
21.	<i>Implemented</i>
22.	<i>Implemented</i>
23.	<i>Implemented</i>

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The GMB Communications Department is responsible for getting news about GMB and GMB members into the media at all levels. The aim of this media activity is to ensure that members and would-be

members are aware of GMB's work and developments involving GMB members in their workplaces. Media publicity has an important and not to be underestimated role to play in achieving GMB members aims in disputes and campaigns. The department is responsible for producing the GMB magazines, GMB publications and the operation of the GMB National website. New technology is revolutionising communication methods and this is impacting on how we work.

PRESS OVERALL

The department aims to issue and distributes an average of 3 GMB press releases, nationally and regionally, every day which are fundamentally driven by the GMB's bargaining and organising agenda. Since last year's Congress the department has brought fully online an independent email system that distributes GMB press releases to the selected appropriate media outlets from amongst the 1,300 geographically based media and 5,000 specialists outlets across the UK and Ireland. Up to 2nd February 2011 the department has issued more than 351 GMB press releases.

The total press coverage in the eight months since Congress 2010 has been around 161 million GMB mentions in the print media of which 90.3 million were in the national print media. When radio, TV and online mentions are added this totals more than 320 million GMB mentions in the UK media. Clearly, what GMB does and what GMB members do is very news worthy. The department would like to thank all the GMB members, activists and Officers who have made this work possible by tell the GMB National Press Office of events and news and fronting their stories.

Public Services and Cuts

Since Congress 2010 the cuts arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review on 21st October 2010 by the Tory/Liberal coalition government have been the dominant issue for GMB in the media. We set up a news gathering operation to successfully track the number of public service posts under threat in councils across the UK that will be lost over the next four years. As we write this report the number of public services jobs under threat stands at 184,073 in 297 councils, local NHS bodies and other public bodies. Tory ministers have attacked the GMB figures as 'scare mongering' and have sought to confuse job losses arising from unfilled vacancies, voluntary redundancies and early retirements with compulsory redundancies. Most media outlets have chosen to report the figures from the GMB's news gathering.

We set out GMB opposition to Tory policies on schools, forcing those on benefits back to work, raising retirement age, cuts in public spending and attacks on public services pensions. We continue to warn of the dangers of a double dip recession.

We published the annual GMB survey of the amount of uncollected council and business taxes by council. We commented on the threat to the building of the aircraft carriers and pointed out that the private sector will be badly hit by cuts and replace lost jobs. We published the details of the high pay of local authority Chief Executives and Head Teachers and drew attention to the waste of £690million on public sector consultants. We rebutted claims by consultants Knox Darcy that public sector workers are so unproductive that half a million could be sacked.

We have sought to convey the impact of the cuts in services. We have covered the closure of a Luton disabled workshop, the threat to Bedford nursery schools, the impact on Cumbria's NHS, libraries closing or using volunteers in the shire counties, a Southampton GP referral scheme, the scrapping of wardens for the elderly with volunteers from AgeUK in the East Riding, the loss of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and tuition fees; the impact on the ambulance service of the watering down and loss of the 19 mins target to get nonlife threatening incidents, waiting times in the NHS and how the new NHS Bill threatens the NHS. We reported the scrapping of the 18 week target for patients to be treated and the scrapping of the 48 hours target for patients to see doctors; the scrapping of the 4 hour target for accident & emergency patients.

We issued a joint New Year's message with Unison & Unite. The Times used this as a front page lead saying unions plan a general strike over the cuts.

We published regional lists of the schools moving to academy status with advice for how school support staff should react to Lord Hill's advice that schools bypass TUPE. GMB exposed the fixing of a Battersea 'free' school catchment area to exclude children from council estates near the school but to include wealth kids from areas further away. This was front page of the Mirror. We covered school support staff being responsible for giving pupils medicines at school.

Pay and other disputes and organising campaigns

We covered pay disputes at London Fire Brigade, Sandwell Council refuse staff, West Lothian council refuse service, the pay offer at Corus, disputes at Cumbria Housing, Stansted Airport, Gatwick Airport, Aberdeen City Council, Milton Keynes refuse, Gentings casinos in Mayfair, South Coast Ambulance Service and Veolia. We covered Birmingham City Council's leveling down of the pay of refuse staff which was resolved after industrial action. The dispute at British Airways ground staff was concluded with an agreement. We covered winning the right to continuing recognition at JJB Sports warehouse and the £400,000 award for Cleveland Bridge workers on the Sea Dragon project. We covered the 16 Polish workers in South Wales were unpaid by more than £10,000 each over 7 months in engineering construction. We reported the AstraZenca pension dispute until it was settled.

We covered the successful outcome on a GMB school worker in Northern Ireland who was wrongly accused of 'grooming' a child after giving the child a biscuit. We commented on a case of the sexual harassment of a school support staff member in Kent by the Head Master which was resolved satisfactorily.

GMB commented on Lord Hutton's review on public services pensions. We continue to cover the impact of increasing employee contribution levels for public services pensions and to defend the viability of the Local Government Pension Scheme. We did a number of releases opposing the pay freeze in local government.

We welcomed new jobs at Hotel Chocolat as GMB works towards recognition. GMB continues to issue press releases on standards in the care sector.

Other Issues

Paul Kenny is regularly quoted on the monthly unemployment figures. We covered the number of people chasing each job vacancy, the numbers of young workers unemployed by region/area and the take-over of United Biscuits.

GMB warned of the risks of abolishing the Security Industry Authority (SIA) body. We slammed the appointment of Bob Diamond as the Barclay Bank Chair. GMB protested about the consequences of Connaught going into liquidation and 300 workers sacked by conference call.

We covered recycling levels by council/region and the likely increase in land fill tax if the tonnages not recycled are not reduced and the number of women in the workforce and other equality and diversity issues.

We covered the eviction of GMB members from tied accommodation in Hammersmith just before Christmas and Mary Turner's appointment as Honorary President British Dietetic Association.

We covered the Criminal Records check for refuse staff in Solihull and that 30 GMB members won £3million compensation for unfair dismissal by Excelcare from Essex care homes.

We covered the lack of salt & gritting in the cold weather, helped British Gas get praise for GMB gas engineers who kept the nation's boilers going, identified bosses refusing to pay staff who were unable to get to work due to the weather and commented on the crisis in Northern Ireland Water due to the cold weather.

During the early part of the year we highlighted the companies and councils that refused to give the day off with pay for the Royal Wedding or to pay premium payments for working on the day and the proposal to move the May Day bank holiday.

We covered GMB support for Ed Miliband and his conference speech. GMB complained over media misreporting of the issue and some of the complaints went to the Press Complaints Commission. We set out GMB's policy of supporting 'First Past the Post' in the referendum on the issue in 2011.

We reported Paul Kenny's appointment to the HSE and covered the fatal accident at Lindsey Oil Refinery and the fine for the explosion at Buncefield. We condemned the Court of Appeal ruling on asbestos compensation.

We responded to the Redfern Report on the historical body parts issue at Sellafield. We commented on the new regime for nuclear power and welcomed the possible Mox replacement at Sellafield in light of the Chinese decision on nuclear reprocessing. We reported 1,500 job losses at Sellafield.

Paul Kenny issued a tribute to Mrs Jayaben Desai who lead the Grunwick strike in 1977 and who died just before Christmas.

We continue to issue press releases on the enforcement of rights at work and on the union's legal work to secure workers rights. We regularly reissue press releases on enforcement action by the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA).

GMB CAMPAIGNS

The Pubcos campaign was in full swing after Congress and we issued press releases on the deplorable treatment of GMB members by the pubcos, some of whom are in a desperate position but are legally trussed up. There were meetings of members in Leeds, Oxford, Derby and Kent. The abuse of the Brulines measuring equipment is a live issue as National Measurement Office got involved and there is litigation underway. We continued to publish the GMB monthly index 'on trade' sales which is now widely reported. We exposed the level of loans outstanding at Punch and we called for a conference of all the parties to write down these loans which will never be repaid.

GMB has shown that 'on trade' sales are down by 35% since 2002 as customers desert pubs in droves due to the high prices springing from the high rents and put the level of exploitation in this sector from the offshore bond holders in to the public domain. For this there were editorial attacks on GMB in the trade press.

The OFT report on 14th October disgracefully washed its hands of the overcharging as a consumer issue and the exploitation of customers and tied tenants. The politicians are likely to do nothing either. So unless enough pub tenants join GMB and use their rights as directed workers to take action more pubs will close.

Southern Cross Campaign

We continued with press releases relating to the ownership by the Qatari Investment Authority (QIA) of the freehold of care homes used by Southern Cross and the fact that they are overcharging on the rents to the tune of roughly £80 million per year. This is £60 per bed per week. We used the takeover of Harrods to finally get the issue into the national media. Advisors to the QIA have been in touch with the General Secretary and the issue is very much alive. The Emir of Qatar paid a State visit to the UK in October and was in Windsor on that day. GMB was there with a protest in Windsor pointing out that all 10,000 GMB members in Southern Cross had been advised that their pay was frozen. We held a further demo outside Harrods in March.

Remploy

A dispute is brewing over the further of Remploy with the issue being the company seeking voluntary redundancies.

The York Disabled Workers Co-operative held its official launch on 28th October which was featured in the GMB magazines together with the catalogue and order forms.

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

We work constantly to get members to keep their personal details up to date so that we can send them their GMB regional magazine, action and election ballot papers and other information or consult them on many subjects important to their GMB membership and working lives.

The GMB central membership system is central to this and more than 8,000 members have updated and/or added personal contact information to their membership records via the members' area at the GMB national website. We constantly remind members in the regional magazines, emails and industry and workplace specific newsletters to go to the website and update their personal profile. This is part of the GMB@WORK drive to keep the Union in a state of readiness and able to ballot members should the need arise. We rely mostly on GMB Workplace Organisers, Branch Secretaries and Officers gathering the information or reminding members to keep their record up to date. It is vital that they put any member's personal information that they hold on their PCs or in their offices on to the member's record so that it can be accessed when needed and not lost when post holders and officers change.

GMB Regional Magazines

The GMB Regional magazines are delivered to members homes at an average cost of 37 pence per copy. We had a total print run of 591,465 copies of the last editions and 580,000 were mailed directly to members. This figure increases for each edition which clearly shows that our membership records are becoming more complete all the time. The copies that the Post Office are unable to deliver are becoming less and less.

The centre 16 pages carry national news and the outer 16 pages carry regional news.

They are timed to carry important information and ballots; the July 2010 editions included the Labour Party Leadership ballot packs and saved around £150k in postage. This policy makes the best value of the cost of postage and ensures that all members are well informed. The advertising in the magazines also off-sets costs.

GMB National Website www.gmb.org.uk

The new website has been in use of over a year now and is working very well. It is constantly updated as new technologies are developed.

As at 1st March 2011, over 70,000 new members have joined the Union online at www.gmb.org.uk since it was launched on 28th March 2006. In 2011 the number of members who joined online represented more than a quarter of all 2010 joiners.

Following a request from a member, members can now change their password for gaining entry to the members' area. A new service has been added that lets members move their subscriptions from 'check-off' to payment by Direct Debit.

A 'Have Your Say' forum where members can discuss the public services cuts and exchange their experiences has been set up at the request of the Public Services Section.

Publications

The Communications Department produces publications and newsletters for circulation via direct mailing and distribution by Regions to GMB members, some of which are circulated to a wider audience. These primarily consist of recruitment, organisational and campaign material, helping to keep GMB members up to date with issues in their workplace.

Although the majority of these are still produced as hard copy there has been an increase in the amount of e-newsletters which can be emailed directly to those GMB members we have email addresses for, cutting the cost of mailing and printing, and providing a more environmentally friendly and efficient form of communication.

E-newsletters offer an effective way to communicate to GMB members and have so far been primarily used to communicate with our many engineering construction members who work away from home and communicate almost entirely with their mobile phones and laptops.

Text Messaging

There has been an increase in interest for the text service. Several national text campaigns have been sent since Congress 2010 and there is a continued demand from Regions. This service is available to all Regions and Branches to use at no cost.

We pay 0.515 pence per text message sent to members. In the last year the department has sent out 28 separate messages on behalf of Regions. The vast majority are from Branches to their members notifying them of meetings and events.

GMB MERCHANDISE

The GMB lanyard and pens have been redesigned in line with GMB@WORK.

GMB CONGRESS 2010

We continue to keep a close hold on the cost of staging Congress. We provided GMB Congress TV again but viewer numbers were down. It lets members, would-be members and journalists follow the full Congress proceedings via the internet as they happen and then refer to Congress sessions afterwards.

EXECUTIVE POLICY

1. Supports the General Secretary in matters related to the Governance of the Union. The Executive Policy Section services a number of internal bodies and provides support for the General Secretary, CEC and National Officials at Congress and CEC meetings, TUC and Labour Party Conferences.
2. The Executive Policy Officers support the Central Executive Council and provide the secretariat to the SMT and the CEC Organisation Sub-Committee. They are responsible for ensuring that Actions and Decisions of Congress are carried forward for action by the relevant Departments and Sections at National Office.
3. Develop union policy, raise the GMB profile and strengthen GMB influence by providing specialist advice, preparing proposals, drafting consultations and liaising with contacts in Government and other relevant industrial political bodies in the UK and the European Union.

GOVERNANCE OF THE UNION

Dolores O'Donoghue and Ida Clemo, the Executive Policy Officers work closely with colleagues at National Office, the European office and regional level. They are members of the Congress Working Party and are heavily involved in the planning stages for Congress which commence in July each year.

The Section co-ordinates policy work for GMB Congress and prepares the preliminary and final agendas; advises the CEC on policy stances; co-ordinates compositing of motions; finalises the programme and President's running order; co-ordinates and drafts the President's address and provides support and advice to the President's platform at Congress. They also manage the Congress timetable.

Review of Congress 2010

In February 2010, 288 motions were received at National Office of which 68 motions were allocated to Section Conferences. In summary, there were 2 CEC Reports: A Bigger, Better, More Inclusive Congress: New Arrangements to Strengthen GMB Democracy, CEC Finance Report: Stability & Accountability and a Review of GMB National Equality Forum (NEF) Structure 2009 /10 plus 2 CEC Statements on Political and Pleural Plaques

Dolores and Ida are involved in ensuring that the other events at Congress are planned, organised and included in the daily President's Running Order. In 2010 this included:

- Regional winners of Regional Outstanding Achievement Award
- Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Rep of the Year: Winner & Runner up
- 4 Guest Speakers: George Dove, Joe Anderson, Richard Moore and Frances O'Grady
- Labour Leadership Hustings: Candidates were Diane Abbott, Andy Burnham, David Milliband, Ed Milliband and John McDonnell
- CEC Speakers
- 10 Fringe Events
- Liaising with technicians and preparing Congress Powerpoint Slides

In 2010, General Election duties and commitments meant that Regions and National Office had shorter timescales to prepare documentation. We produced pro-forma tables to assist Regions to record decisions made at their Regional Delegation Meetings in April. These were well received by the Regions and assisted us in the preparation of the Final Agenda to the Congress schedule.

The scheduling of Congress debates proved more of a challenge in 2010 due to having to change the programme at short notice to accommodate the first Labour Leadership Hustings and the impact on the scheduling of Section Conferences.

The section dealt with the programming of the Congress Final Agenda and supported 30 CEC speakers with speech drafts and policy advice, and programmed the attendance of Guest speakers.

SUMMARY OF GMB CONGRESS 2010	TOTAL in Final Agenda	Out of Order	Withdrawn	Existing Policy	Not Debated	Motions for debate	Carried	Referred	Lost	Debated
Motions (including 20 Composite motions)	146	2	16	23	41	105	87	11	7	105
Emergency Motions	5					5	5			5
CEC Rule Amendments	9					9	6		3	9
	160	2	16	23	41	119	98	11	10	119

The section has developed a number of documents which assisted the smooth running of Congress.

- A summary programme for delegates
- "Congress Explained" which was developed together with Steve Short. This document sets out information and advice on the processes and procedures of Congress in a user-friendly format. It is particularly helpful for new delegates and gives hints and tips on writing motions and making speeches. It was circulated to Regions in advance of the Regional delegation meetings in April 2010 and an updated version will be provided for Congress 2011 to include Rule Changes passed at Congress 2010.
- Delegate Questionnaire

- Combined Preliminary Agenda document produced for the CEC for their March Meeting where stances on 146 motions and 9 Rule Amendments were discussed.

During Congress, the Executive Policy Officers support the President, Vice President, and General Secretary to manage the Congress timetable. They also supervise the recording of decisions. Dolores and Ida wish to express their thanks to their colleague Phil McEvoy who has ably taken over this role from Charlie King

Congress 2010 Delegates

Over the two and a half days of Congress business the following numbers of delegates spoke (not including CEC, Guest speakers or SOC). This year, it was noticeable that there were a high proportion of first time speakers.

No of Delegates who spoke	Male	Female
Sunday	70	24
Monday	28	14
Wednesday	79	28
TOTAL	177	66

The Section received positive responses and suggestions from all regions to the delegate questionnaire and points raised were taken to the Congress Working Party in July 2010 for consideration in the planning of Congress 2011.

Policy Work

Ida has responsibility for progressing policy on the National Minimum Wage (NMW). This has involved giving oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission in November 2010 in support of our submission and attending meetings with TUC, BIS & HMRC, Civil Servants and Policy Officers on NMW issues in particular on Tips, E24 & Toncs and Enforcement. She would like to thank Adrian Baker, Southern Region for his useful input into the Policy update meetings covering Tips and Tronc systems in casinos.

In February 2010, Ida and Adrian represented GMB at a number of Round Table Meetings with employers, BIS, HMRC and Trade Unions on the Voluntary Code of Practice on Tips and the production of multilingual leaflets aimed at workers, both documents were launched in March. Following this, Ida produced a GMB Tips Charter which was made available on the new GMB website and in Regional Magazines sent to members in April. All policy updates on the National Minimum Wage have been added to the new GMB Website which went live in March www.gmb.org.uk/nmw.

Dolores has been involved in developing a close working relationship with the Child Poverty Action Group, the leading charity campaigning for the abolition of child poverty in the UK and for a better deal for low-income families and children. Part of this work involved looking at the provision of GMB badged CPAG Welfare Benefits Handbooks to GMB regions. The handbooks are a valuable resource which GMB officers and staff have used to provide benefit advice to members for a number of years. We also provide copies to the 43 TUC Unemployed Centres. Given the government's radical overhaul of the welfare state, which will impact on people in and out of work, disabled people and families, it will be even more important to have a source of advice and assistance. We are currently looking into moving to an on-line version of the Handbook, which is similar in cost, but has added advantages for users.

Consultations

Ida has produced two government responses: GMB submission to the Low Pay Commission and a response to DCMS Consultation on the Regulatory Future of Remote Gambling in Great Britain (together with Adrian Baker, Southern Region)

Central Arbitration Committee Applications and Voluntary Recognition Agreements

The Section produces a regular report for the CEC on Voluntary Agreements. Over the year, GMB Sections and Regions have reported 32 new Recognition agreements. All agreements received are added to a shared database which is available to all GMB Regions.

Labour Research Department

Ida represents GMB representative on the LRD Executive Committee which had its AGM and first Meeting in April 2010. This Executive Committee holds regular monthly meetings to discuss booklets, research and future work of the Labour Research Department. GMB Staff and Members continue to have free access to all LRD Publications and LRD PayLine systems.

Special Projects

The Department assists the General Secretary by undertaking special projects and duties as directed, producing presentations, briefings, statistics, profiles and research intelligence for the General Secretary to use in internal or external meetings. In February 2010 Ida assisted the General Secretary in preparations for the 4th annual Full Time Officers meeting in Edgbaston and also undertook a project related to National Officers workload distribution and priorities.

In November 2010, the Executive Policy Officers attended the North West Women's Conference where Dolores gave a "Congress Explained" presentation explaining how motions are drafted and the processes in regions and national office that go into the annual Congress. She encouraged participation by women members in activities to get motions to Congress, and attend and Ida updated the delegates on LRD PayLine and Publications systems.

Information Systems and Other Resources for Bargaining & Representation

Ida Clemo has been part of the National Office Project Team approving the design and taking part in the implementation of the new GMB National website which was launched in March 2010.

Ida continues to monitor and train Regional and National staff in the use of research information systems ensuring that these products are used effectively for bargaining support, recruitment initiatives and company research. In November 2010, Ida updated and distributed a Guide to Information Systems Leaflet for Regions to inform them of the resources they have access to for organising and bargaining support. Ida has also negotiated getting member access to LRD Publications database.

The Section has conducted a review of publication and online information systems subscriptions used by GMB Regions and substantial cost savings have been made whilst ensuring that all Regions and Sections continue to have access to resources for research, bargaining and representation.

TUC Congress 2010

Dolores and Ida ensure that Congress decisions and GMB policy are taken through to TUC Congress. They are also responsible for supporting the GMB delegation and raising the GMB profile at TUC. They planned and organised (with assistance from colleagues in the General Secretary's office) the GMB stand and office at TUC Congress. TUC Congress was once again successful for the GMB delegation and GMB was again at the forefront of debate.

The team co-ordinated and provided speech drafts for the delegation and liaised with the TUC to ensure that GMB speakers were called. From the GMB delegation of 64 (made up of 31 Male, 33 Female) we had 22 speakers (12 Male, 10 Female) and moved 2 motions, seconded 12 and spoke in support of 7 motions. GMB and the General Secretary received extensive media coverage. GMB motions on Public Services and Pensions were incorporated into composites which were carried, as was GMB's Emergency Motion on Redundancies at Birmingham City Council. GMB's amendment to the motion on Malnutrition and Dehydration was carried and GMB's amendment to the motion on Palestine formed part of the agreed composite which was carried. Other notable highlights were Marilyn Lyons receiving the Health & Safety Rep of the Year award on behalf of her late husband, Dave Lyons and Alan Dudson putting a "killer" question to Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England.

Paul Kenny seconded the Vote of Thanks to the President, Doug Rooney. The first morning of Congress adjourned early for a demonstration and the official launch of the "All Together for Public Services Campaign". We would like to thank North West & Irish Region for providing flags and Ethical Threads for providing the T-shirts our delegation wore. On the last day of Congress, Paul Kenny spoke in the debate supporting the proposal to change the schedule of TUC Congress to a smaller Congress in London in alternate years. The proposal was carried after a card vote.

TUC CONGRESS 2010: SUMMARY OF SPEAKERS

GMB MOVING SPEAKERS

Comp 5 Pensions (on GMB Motion in the composite)	Naomi Cooke
EM 6- 26,000 Redundancy Notices at Birmingham City Council (GMB)	Joe Morgan

GMB SECONDING SPEAKERS

8	Public Interest Disclosure Act (Equity)	Rehana Azam
12	LGBT Rights in the New Political Situation (TUC LGBT Conf)	Nick Day
29	Internships (SCP)	Elaine Daley
49	NHS Hospital Car Parking Charges (SoR)	Sharon Holder
50	Malnutrition and Dehydration (BDA/ GMB Amd)	Mary Turner
68	Haiti (TUC Black Workers Conference)	Dotun Odumosu
70	Supporting International Development (Accord)	Kathleen Walker Shaw
71	Vietnam (BFAWU)	Phil Davies
79	Cosmetic use of Sunbeds (SoR)	Jude Brimble
Comp 18	Palestine (TSSA/ GMB Amd)	Paul Kenny
EM4	Bangladeshi Garment Workers (Unite)	Sheila Bearcroft
EM5	Connaught (UCATT)	Malcolm Sage

GMB SPEAKERS IN SUPPORT

13	A workplace Agenda for Disabled Workers (TUC Disability Conf)	James Stribley
77	Asbestos on ships (Nautilus)	George Fraser
Comp 3	Child Poverty (USDAW/ ATL)	Emma Ritch
Comp 7	Climate Change (Prospect/CWU)	Brian Farr
Comp 10	Defending Public Services	Brian Strutton
Comp 12	Academies, free schools and state education(NUT/ATL/UCU)	Viv Smart
Comp 17	International asbestos ban (UCATT)	Dotun Odumosu

QUESTIONS & speakers on the General Council Report

Question to Mervyn King	Alan Dudson
GC Report Para 9.4 Congress	Paul Kenny

Action on Referred and Carried Motions of Congress 2010

The Executive Policy Officers have implemented changes to the way Actions on Decisions of Congress are followed through. Following the September CEC meeting, motions are now referred in the first instance to the October meeting of the appropriate CEC Sub Committee, SMT member or Section National Secretary. The movers or Branches of Referred motions may now also be invited to participate

in the evaluation process prior to final recommendations. The report on referred motions is set out in A) below.

A. ACTION ON MOTIONS REFERRED BY THE 2010 CONGRESS

<p>1. Review of Congress</p>	<p>The General Secretary's Department conducted a detailed examination, as requested in the motion, and reported their findings to the February 2011 CEC meeting. The report concluded that both financially and effectively the present Congress arrangements best suit our purpose and there was no clear financial, practical, or operational advantages in changing the date of Congress. There would be serious disadvantages in moving the date, with implications for staffing resources both nationally and regionally, Rule Book changes, the possible suspension of Congress in one year to accommodate any rulebook changes, and a policy vacuum in promoting GMB Congress decisions at TUC and Labour Party Conferences.</p> <p>However, given that the availability of facilities and venues to hold Congress may change in future, the GS department and the Congress Working Party will continue to keep options for Congress arrangements under review and take new options into consideration when making recommendations for future venues and dates, but will always keep in mind the overriding principles for booking congress venues of cost, location, availability and suitability.</p>
<p>22. Retired Members</p>	<p>This motion was referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The motion argued that the retired life member system, which ended the old practice of seeking 5p per week from retired members, meant that branches lost touch with retired members, and often did not know when they had died. The CEC had taken reference to see if the existence of dead members remaining on the register was indeed a problem. The Committee did not see any evidence that this was a problem. However, it was suggested that, where possible, branches be advised of deceased members, when the Union learned of their deaths through returned mailings or other sources.</p>
<p>25. Adult Education for GMB Members</p>	<p>The National Organising Department continues to receive reports from current regional ULF projects on the number of GMB members attending training courses, the numbers of none members and those joining GMB as a result of the projects and produced a summary report for the CEC in December 2009. A further summary report can be produced for the period since this time to assess the impact of the ULF projects on achieving the objectives of GMB@Work.</p>
<p>30. Young Members</p>	<p>The Motion highlighted the impact of the recession on young people; that union density is low and declining; and called on the CEC to carry out a comprehensive review of GMB services, work and campaigns ensuring that we appeal to young workers and to consider changes in structures for an enhanced role and look at a reduced rate for young members. This motion was referred to the new National Equality Forum who have agreed to produce a report for the CEC to address these issues and make recommendations.</p>
<p>65. Right to Strike</p>	<p>The Motion was referred in order to investigate further the cases referred to on the right to strike. The background is as follows. In a series of recent cases the European Court of Human Rights has declared that the right to strike is a fundamental right guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. However, the Court has also said the right to strike is not an absolute right and it can be subject</p>

	<p>to certain conditions and restrictions. The Court has not as yet indicated the nature or extent of those possible conditions or restrictions.</p> <p>Accordingly, the UK courts have indicated that unless and until the European Human Rights Court spells out more precisely what is meant but this it should not be taken into account in UK cases. In a series of high profile cases recently in the UK injunctions have been granted to employers against unions in cases where human rights arguments are relevant. As a result we are seeking to identify possible cases that might be appropriate to pursue as cases in Europe, and at the time of writing another union has started such a case, though it may take some years before it is heard. We are also working closely with the Institute of Employment Rights</p>
74. Written Statement of Contract of Employment Particulars	<p>The Motion called for a fixed penalty to be introduced for employers who fail to provide the written statement of employment particulars to employees. The Motion was referred to investigate the proposed level of penalty suggested by the Motion i.e. £100 after 2 months and an increase on a sliding scale for a 12 month period. At present the remedy for breach of the statutory rules regarding written statements is by means of a reference to an employment tribunal but with no direct award of compensation. However, Tribunals have the power to award compensation where a successful claim is made for breach of another employment right e.g. for unfair dismissal if the employer is found to be in breach of the duty to provide full and accurate written particulars. The amount of compensation is set at between two and four weeks pay (subject to the statutory limit on the amount of a week's pay currently £380). The anticipated review of employment tribunals will provide an opportunity to raise the matter with Government).</p>
75. Paid Bereavement Leave	<p>The principle of statutory rights to paid bereavement leave for two weeks for a close relative and one week for in laws and across three generations is very aspirational. It is unlikely that the Government would be open to any improvements in terms and conditions to give all workers minimal statutory rights to paid bereavement leave and there is no European level that we could pursue this motion. Therefore, this is a matter best pursued by negotiators, and the Executive Policy Officers have produced a detailed and practical "best practice" guide for negotiators which includes a model agreement. This has been circulated to all Regions.</p>
128. Abolition of the Monarchy	<p>There are strong views amongst our members regarding the Monarchy on both sides of the argument. There is a great deal of respect for the current Monarch, but this is unlikely to be the case when she is succeeded by her heir. In the current economic climate, campaigning for the abolition of the Monarchy is not the best use of GMB resources or time.</p>
165. Special Recognition for Wootton-Bassett	<p>RAF Lyneham is due to close in December 2011; the Hercules fleet which transports the coffins of the repatriated soldiers is due to transfer to RAF Brize Norton in August 2011, after which date the journeys through Wootton Bassett will end. GMB supports the principle of recognition for Wootton Bassett, but it must be one that the people themselves would welcome. A number of suggestions have been put forward to government, and the possibility of an Appreciation Parade is under consideration.</p>

170. Accountability	<p>The motion calls for transparency in the medical spending of the NHS and accountability in deciding the value of such spending. The motion as originally considered seemed to suggest that some long term medications were wasteful and that free prescriptions were unaffordable and damaging to other interests.</p> <p>It is GMB policy to campaign for full public funding for free prescriptions for all and there is no reason to change this even though government doesn't agree. We would argue that our stance is right; it is government policy that is wrong.</p> <p>In terms of the suggestion that there needs to be greater transparency and accountability for ongoing medication costs, in July 2010 government published a White Paper on the future of health provision which included similar issues. It proposed radically changing spending decision-making in the NHS. The proposals in that White Paper have now (January 2011) been made a Bill intended to become legislation later this year.</p> <p>GMB has therefore considered issues of spending transparency and accountability in the context of the changing NHS landscape proposed by government as the issues cannot be considered in isolation. The virtual privatisation of the NHS, as proposed by the Bill, takes many areas of decision-making away from patient care and towards profiteering. This is an agenda that GMB does not want to support.</p> <p>The conclusion is that where conducive to our arguments to do so GMB will reflect concerns about public and professional accountability and transparency in NHS spending through our continued campaigning over the NHS Bill - the democratic accountability deficit being one such issue that we have raised.</p>
207. London Weighting for Pensioners	Research is being commissioned into the relative costs for pensioners living in London and elsewhere in the UK

In January each year Executive Policy ask colleagues at National Office to include progress on all motions carried at the previous Congress in their section of the General Secretary's Report which are set out in B) below.

B. REPORT OF DECISIONS MADE BY CONGRESS ON RULE AMENDMENTS, MOTIONS, REPORTS AND STATEMENTS

1. REPORTS AND STATEMENTS CARRIED/APPROVED

The CEC Action on Decisions document below sets out the responsibility for the actions on all motions carried and referred by Congress 2010. It is also available on the GMB National Website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

CONGRESS REPORTS	
	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
General Secretary's Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS
Annual Accounts and Auditors Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS • Finance Director
Review of GMB National Equality Forum (NEF) Structure 2009 / 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)

CEC REPORTS	
	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
CEC Special Report: A Bigger, Better, More Inclusive Congress: New Arrangements to strengthen GMB democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS • SMT • Executive Officer
CEC Finance Report: Stability & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMT • CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee

CEC STATEMENTS	
	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
CEC Statement on Pleural Plaques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee(Health & Env)
CEC Political Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMT • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee

2. MOTIONS REFERRED BY CONGRESS

MOTION	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
1. Review of Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMT • Executive Officer
22. Retired Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Finance & General Purposes Committee
25. Adult Education for GMB Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMT • CEC Organisation Committee
30. Young Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Equality) & National Equality Forum
65. Right to Strike	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
74. Written Statement of Contract of Employment Particulars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
75. Paid Bereavement Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
128. Abolition of the Monarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GS • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
165. Special Recognition for Wootton-Basset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
170. Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNS (Public Services)
207. London Weighting for Pensioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Comms/Pensions)

3. CEC RULE AMENDMENTS CARRIED BY CONGRESS

CECRA1	Rule 15.2	Electing a General Secretary and Treasurer	RULE CHANGE
CECRA5	Rule 45.3	Disputes	RULE CHANGE
CECRA6	Rule 54.1	Disablement Grants	RULE CHANGE

CECRA7	Rule 58.1	Fatal Accident Benefit	RULE CHANGE
CECRA8	Rule 65.5	Political Fund	RULE CHANGE
CECRA9	Rule 65A	Political Fund (NI)	RULE CHANGE

4 a. EMERGENCY MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
EM 1	Unity Across the Public Sector Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNS (Public Services)
EM 2	Freedom Flotilla Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
EM 3	Shooting in West Cumbria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
EM 4	Remploy Non Disabled Trainees Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNS (Manufacturing)
EM 5	Government Funding of Regional Development Agencies - Save our Steel Carried with Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SNS (Manufacturing) CEC Political, European & Int. Committee

4 b. MOTIONS CARRIED BY CONGRESS

MOTION		LEAD RESPONSIBILITY
UNION ORGANISATION: Congress		
3.	Black Hole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GS All Section National Secretaries
UNION ORGANISATION: General		
5.	Communication Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEC Organisation Committee (Comms) Executive Officer Regional Secretaries
UNION ORGANISATION: Recruitment & Organisation		
10.	Recruitment and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEC Organisation Committee (Nat Org Dept) Regional Secretaries
12.	GMB Retired Members Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMT RMA CEC Organisation Committee (Nat Org Dept)
13.	Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GS SMT
UNION ORGANISATION: Equality & Inclusion		
31.	Women's Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEC Organisation Committee (Equality)
EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Health, Safety and Environment		
C1	(Motions 34,47) Health & Safety Reps and Temperature Extremes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEC Organisation Committee (Health & Environment)
C2.	(Motions 36,37,38,39) Asbestos Related Diseases and Pleural Plaques Carried with Statement	

40.	Asbestos Register	
41.	Risk Assessment for New and Expectant Mothers in the Workplace	
C3.	(Motions 42,43) Tackling Work Related Stress	
44.	Work Related Industrial Injuries	
45.	Exposure to Lead at Work	
46.	Health & Safety	
48.	Aspartame Artificial Sweetener	
51.	Climate and Environment	
EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Pensions & Retirement		
54.	Defend State Pensions Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Pensions)
EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Rights at Work		
C4.	(Motions 55,56,58) Temporary and Agency Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
61.	Bogus Employment/Casualisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal) • Section National Secretary (Manufacturing)
C5.	(Motions 62,63) Client-Contractors and the Outsourcing of Labour Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
71.	Redundancy Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
76.	Youth Unemployment – A Fair Day's Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
77.	Freelance Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
80.	Bank Holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Migrant Workers		
83.	Migrant Labour Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: Economy		
84.	Economy Tax and Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
C6.	(Motions 85,86) UK Taxation and Corporation Tax	
87.	Pro Rata Pay Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section National Secretary (Public Services)
C7.	(Motions 88,89,91) Greedy Bankers Bonuses Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
92.	Civil List Carried with Qualification	
94.	Public Services Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section National Secretary (Public Services)
96.	Supporting British Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Section National Secretary (Manufacturing)
98.	Return to Mutuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
C8.	(Motions 99,100) Loan Sharks and Interest Rates	
POLITICAL: Labour Party		
101.	Labour Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee

102. Welfare Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
108. Freedom to Express Our Union's Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
109. Maximising Support For GMB Policies	
111. Inequality	
112. Equal Pay	
C9. (Motions 113,114) Remploy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Section National Secretary (Manufacturing)
116. Engineering Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
C10. (Motions 117,119) Working Class Labour Candidates and Parliamentary Democracy	
121. Mentoring For Prospective Candidates	
122. The Story of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • CEC Organisation Committee (Comms)
POLITICAL: Democracy & Constitutional Reform	
124. Section 141 of the Mental Health Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
130. Illegal War	
C12. (Motions 131,132) Inner London Status and Financial Equality For Newham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Regional Secretary (London)
POLITICAL: Racism & Fascism	
133. Fighting Fascism Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
SOCIAL POLICY: Justice	
141. Errosion of Civil Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Legal)
142. Justice for Working People Carried with Qualification	
SOCIAL POLICY: Education	
C13. (Motions 147,148) Student Finance and National Insurance Credits Carried with Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
SOCIAL POLICY: General	
149. Extending Allotment Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Health & Env)
C14. (Motions 150,151) Preserve Analogue Radio and our Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Health & Env) • CEC Organisation Committee (Comms)
152. Chaplaincy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Section National Secretary (Public Services)
153. Withdrawal of Cheques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RMA • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
C15. (Motions 156,157) Energy and Utility Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section National Secretary (Commercial Services)
158. Fuel Costs Carried with Statement	
161. the Morning Star Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC Organisation Committee (Comms)
162. Protection of Suppliers to the Big Four Supermarkets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section National Secretary (Commercial Services)

163. Save the Local Pub Carried with Statement	• CEC Organisation Committee (Nat Org Dept)
SOCIAL POLICY: Housing	
166. Council Housing Programme	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
C16. (Motions 167,168) Council Housing	
169. Social Housing 2010	
SOCIAL POLICY: National Health Service	
C17. (Motions 171,172,173) Cancer Screening	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
176. Banned Heart Drug Costing Just £2 Per Day	• CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
177. Department of Health Funding to Support National Defibrillation Programme In Children's Hospices	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Section National Secretary (Public Services)
C18. (Motions 179,180) Funding for Care for Alzheimers and Dementia	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
181. Promoting Public Health to Reduce NHS Costs Carried with Qualification	• CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
183. Deaf People in Hospital Carried with Qualification	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Section National Secretary (Public Services)
184. Privacy and Dignity Carried with Qualification	• Section National Secretary (Public Services)
SOCIAL POLICY: Transport	
185. Freedom Passes	• CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
188. The Cost of Travelling on Public Transport	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
C19. (Motions 190,191) East Coast Mainline	
193. Using Mobile Phones Whilst Driving	• CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
194. Car Speed Boxes	• CEC Organisation Committee (Health & Env)
195. Large Change Supermarkets, Monopoly on Fuel Carried with Qualification	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • Sectional National Secretary (Commercial Services)
196. Disabled Parking Spaces Being Mis-Used	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
197. Ban Car Clamping	
SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights & Services	
200. Government Target to take 1,000,000 off Incapacity Benefit and other Benefits generating unmanageable number of Appeals and Long Delays for Claimants, Due to Administrative Backlog	• CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
C20. (Motions 205,206) Winter Fuel Allowance	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee • CEC Organisation Committee (EP)
INTERNATIONAL	
210. Medical Aid for Palestinians	• CEC Political, European & Int. Committee
213. The Danger of Nuclear Confrontation in the Middle East	
214. Global Mining	

215.	Corporate Tax Dodging & Development	
219.	EU Colombia Fair Trade Agreement	
220.	Sri Lanka	

INTERNATIONAL REPORT

Introduction

The election of a Conservative-led coalition in May 2010 ensured that there would be no let up in the vigorous pursuit of neo-liberal economic policies both at home and abroad. At a seminar, held as part of the consultation for the White Paper on trade in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, on October 28th, Government representatives made it abundantly clear that their priority on the international stage would be the promotion of UK business. GMB and others from NGOs and the TUC expressed their concerns about Government policy, especially its emphasis on free trade agreements negotiated in secret by the European Commission. GMB subsequently made a detailed, written response to the Government, expressing concern about the effects this would have on poorer countries in the global South and, disappointingly, was the only trade union to do so.

Costa Rica

Our partners in the Costa Rican union, SITRAP, know only too well the effects of neo-liberal policies designed to maximise corporate profits by driving down costs and embracing free trade, in their case by membership of the Central America Free Trade Agreement, which will expose public services to competition from multinational companies and leave agriculture unable to compete with subsidised imports from the USA.

The year was book ended by the arrival in the UK for 3 months of young SITRAP activist, Johana Rodriguez, in January and the death of the union's Health, Safety and Environment Officer, Carlos Arguedas on New Year's Eve. Johana, who had never been out of Costa Rica before, came first to Norwich at the invitation of Banana Link to do some language training and then to GMB Head Office for nearly two months to work with the Communications Department. On February 23rd, she took part in a demonstration outside Westminster Cathedral to protest at the San José Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church's engagement in union-busting and their promotion of *Solidarismo* as an alternative to free collective bargaining by independent trade unions. The demonstration attracted a considerable amount of media attention, not least in Central America.

Johana returned home on March 7th with a GMB delegation comprised of three lay activists and two officers. The delegation was in Costa Rica for two weeks where it undertook a range of activities including field visits and participating in an unprecedented conference on the banana sector that included representatives from every part of the industry as well as the ambassadors from the UK and Norway. A press conference at the end of the delegation's visit, hosted by public sector union General Secretary, Albino Vargas, drew coverage from newspapers, television and radio and allowed GMB to focus public attention on Costa Rica's failure to comply with ILO norms.

Delegation members were inspired by Carlos Arguedas' knowledge of and dedication to environmental issues relating to plantation agriculture. Carlos had become particularly involved in campaigning against the worst effects of the booming pineapple industry characterised by the wholesale exploitation of Nicaraguan migrant workers, indiscriminate use of chemicals and the contamination of rivers and aquifers that had left entire communities without safe supplies of water. On October 2nd, the Guardian newspaper published a damning report of the pineapple business to accompany a filmed documentary in which Carlos featured prominently. By then, he was already feeling the effects of the illness, which would later be diagnosed as the cancer that led to his demise.

The delegation heard about conditions on the pineapple plantations at first hand from Nicaraguan SITRAP activist, Pablo Lopez who had survived a number of anti-union purges by his employers, Piña-Frut, in spite of his prominent role in recruitment activities. His luck ran out in August when he and 200 others were dismissed, ostensibly for reasons of redundancy. Without work, he and his family faced eviction from their rented accommodation. A subsequent GMB appeal raised over a thousand pounds to keep him at home.

Beyond Costa Rica

GMB's work in Costa Rica invariably brings the Union into contact with the wider world of tropical fruit production, particularly in Latin America. SITRAP General Secretary, Gilbert Bermudez, is also the Coordinator for COLSIBA, a confederation of trade unions representing workers in the production of bananas, pineapples and, more recently, sugar and melons. GMB continues to have a seat at EUROBAN, the European Banana Action Network, and as part of that body lobbied supermarkets, consumer organisations and governments in response to requests for support from COLSIBA and individual trade unions. GMB was active in the World Banana Forum, under the auspices of the UN organisation, FAO, and contributed towards the workshop looking at value along the banana supply chain. In addition, GMB lent advice and pro-bono consultancy services to Fairtrade Labelling International (FLO) in conjunction with the IUF in an attempt to improve standards on their certified plantations in Latin America for the benefit of trade union members.

Guyana and Sugar

In January, the President of the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) and the General Secretary of the National Association of Agricultural Commercial and Industrial Employees (NAACIE) visited the UK as part of the ongoing schedule of joint work. During 2010, representatives of both unions attended training courses, at GAWU's new education facility in Georgetown that were financed and organised by GMB using TUC grant money from Dfid. An application for more money to expand the training was made and we await the outcome from the Ministry's contractor.

In conjunction with the Canadian Auto Workers Union, who have committed significant amounts of money, GMB gave logistical and financial help to the IUF's sugar programme. The focus of the programme was on mobilising trade unions in the ACP countries that are in receipt of EU compensation for losing their favoured trade status as a result of WTO regulations. Trade unions should be on the list of stakeholders who, potentially, are eligible to receive financial assistance but at a workshop in Zambia, we were able to learn that this is not always the case. More work needs to be done in conjunction with GMB's Brussels office to ensure that they benefit from EU funds to which we believe they are entitled.

Other activities

GMB was active within several campaigning organisations which included Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Venezuela Solidarity Campaign, Cuba Solidarity Campaign and Justice for Colombia. On October 5th, GMB jointly promoted a conference with War on Want in Brussels entitled, "Beyond Free Trade" at which the pending EU-Colombia Free Trade Agreement was one of the subjects for debate. On December 10th, JFC organised a conference on the same topic and GMB is committed to help them with the fight to stop the Agreement being ratified.

GMB supported a composite motion on Palestine at the TUC Congress after a debate in which Israel was condemned for its aggression against the Palestine people and the denial of their rights. Veolia, with whom GMB has a number of recognition agreements, was singled out for criticism because of its participation in a consortium building light rail links through the occupied territories.

On Cuba, Southern Region Secretary, Richard Ascough, spoke at a vigil outside the US embassy in London on October 20th, to protest at the unjust incarceration of the "Miami 5". Cuba Solidarity organised another successful Latin American Conference at the TUC in December where GMB was in attendance. Amongst the topics for discussion was the perceived press bias in the coverage of events around the Region. Given that most of the media belongs to corporations who have a vested interest in

maintaining the neo-liberal status quo, it is hardly surprising that efforts by various governments in South America to challenge it were not greeted with universal acclaim.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Introduction

More than any other year in recent memory, 2010 has been dominated by big picture political decisions on health and safety. While the Department has continued to deliver representation and campaigning on health, safety and environment issues, there is no doubt that the outcome of the May 2010 General Election, has resulted in a damaging change of policy direction with potentially disastrous implications in the workplace.

The announcement in June 2010 of the Prime Ministerial Review into Health and Safety Regulation, headed by former Thatcher Cabinet Minister Lord Young of Graffham, signposted that health and safety was in the sights of the new Coalition Government. The final report, published in October, contained little explicitly attacking the existing health and safety framework, but suggested a number of damaging initiatives, all of which will be enacted in 2011 and beyond.

In addition, HSE had its' campaigning activities suspended, removing a key role from the regulator, whilst the Comprehensive Spending Review outlined cuts of 35% to the overall HSE budget, with 28% cuts in local authorities budgets. The knock-on effect, for both HSE and Environmental Health Inspectors is a likely decrease in workplace inspections and an increase in worker accidents.

On a more positive note, 2010 saw the General Secretary, Paul Kenny, appointed to the HSE Executive Board, which has a strategic overview on the operations of the HSE, for a three-year term commencing on 1st October 2010.

On his appointment Paul said *"I am proud to be appointed to the HSE board. These days we hear too little about the very real improvements health and safety has brought over the years. As a board member I will do my best to shift the focus to the true value of protecting workers from unsafe working practices, and to the wider benefits for business and society"*. The appointment is a strong endorsement of the importance that GMB places on workplace health and safety, and in effect makes Paul Kenny the most influential trade unionist in Great Britain on health and safety issues.

Motions from Congress 2010 which required action are dealt with in the body of the text.

LORD YOUNG REVIEW OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

On 14th June 2010, Prime Minister David Cameron announced the appointment of Lord Young of Graffham as his adviser on health and safety matters, and that an immediate review of *"the operation of health and safety laws and the growth of the compensation culture"*. Young was Trade Secretary under Thatcher, and had already reviewed health and safety law once before in the 1980's. His specific remit was *"to investigate and report back to the Prime Minister on the rise of the compensation culture over the last decade coupled with the current low standing that health and safety legislation now enjoys and to suggest solutions. Following the agreement of the report, to work with appropriate departments across government to bring the proposals into effect."*

This announcement followed an earlier speech by Cameron in December 2009, in which he repeated many false myths on health and safety, and called for a bonfire of red tape and unnecessary regulations.

The Review itself was undertaken hurriedly and with minimal consultation. Young appeared to give disproportionate access and influence to the business lobby, whilst given unions and safety

campaigners only the most cursory of hearings. As the review was not a formal government consultation, there was no need to provide balance, or reach evidence-based conclusions.

Young himself did little to calm our fears in an interview with The Times in June, in which he expressed views such as *“offices are not dangerous places”*, indicated that he wished to see the emergency services removed from the scope of the Health and Safety at Work Act, and pledged to tackle the “compensation culture” and no-win no-fee lawyers. On 20th September, Cameron was quoted in the Daily Mail as promising a *“bonfire of unnecessary health and safety regulations which have become a music hall joke”*.

However, we did not anticipate any major recommendations for changes to existing law, as most current health and safety legislation exists to implement European directives, and so to scrap these laws the Government would ultimately need to withdraw from the European Union.

Young’s report, “Common Sense, Common Safety” was finally published on 15th October 2010. The report was concerned as much with compensation issues as core health and safety matter. It made 36 specific recommendations, which were a mixture of initiatives already announced; welcome clarifications and pie-in-the-sky thinking. Half of the recommendations are to be enacted by HSE. Key recommendations included:

- Endorsement of the Jackson Report, in particular the idea that lawyers who charge “success fees” in “no win, no fee” agreements should no longer be able to recover these fees from defendants.
- Small shops, offices and other “low-risk” workplaces should no longer face complex paperwork to meet risk-assessment and other health and safety criteria.
- Homeworkers should be exempted from risk assessment requirements.
- All health and safety consultants required to register with HSE and meet professional qualification standard, from January 2011.
- All current health and safety Regulations on statue to be consolidated into one set of accessible regulations.
- Changing the RIDDOR reporting requirements from over-3-day injuries to over-7-days
- People who perform “good Samaritan” acts which, through no fault of their own, cause others a personal injury should no longer be subject to lawsuits.
- Members of emergency services, including part-time police officers, should not be able to be sued when they have risked life and limb to save others.
- Teachers should no longer have to fill in huge numbers of “risk assessment” forms before taking pupils on trips. A simple consent form, signed by parents, should be all that is needed.
- Schools should not be liable for injuries suffered by children on trips or when playing sports – except where there has been “reckless disregard”.
- Firework displays, street parties and concerts should not be able to be banned by local councils or officials on health and safety grounds.

Young’s report said nothing at all on occupational health issues.

It is difficult to judge which was the most sickening - the outcomes themselves or the glee by which they were greeted by the deregulation lobby. The combined effect of the review has been to weaken the perception of risk assessment, reduce the value of incident reporting, and create an artificial two-tier “safe” and “hazardous” standard for workplace safety. This has unfortunately resulted in a mind set that some areas of work are less relevant in terms of hazard and risk than others and can effectively be discounted. Allied to the potential cuts to the Inspectorate this is a very worrying situation and has the potential for an enormous impact for workplace representatives, health and safety reps and officers across all workplaces in the country.

The Young Review was therefore a largely negative affair, which will undermine the value of health and safety in the public mind. The concern is that in making this such a priority, the Government will use the Young Review to undermine the case for health and safety at work, and will use the conclusions of Young's report to justify savage cuts to HSE budgets.

To complicate matters, Lord Young resigned from his position on 19th November 2010, following the fallout from his *"most people have never had it so good"* comments, as reported in The Daily Telegraph. Young's resignation takes away the opportunity to engage on the detail of implementation, and to try to influence the direction of some of the more unworkable recommendations. Instead, the report will be enacted in full by the Civil Service under Prime Ministerial mandate, making it much harder to formally object to the changes being made.

This is clearly the most sustained attack on health and safety since the heyday of the Thatcher Government. A key focus for the Department in 2011 will be working with the TUC and sister unions to develop a range of campaigning and political responses.

CUTS TO HSE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY BUDGETS

The week after the publication of the Young Report, the HSE and Local Authorities will discover the extent of the budget savings that they are expected to find in the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The HSE will face budget cuts of 35%, amongst the most severe cuts made within the executive agencies of the parent department, the DWP. It is clear that such a severe cut will fatally compromise HSE's ability to perform its core functions properly. HSE has already suffered from budget freezes and staff reductions under the previous Labour governments, with the result that enforcement and prosecution levels have reached historic lows. Consequently, the average workplace can expect to be visited by an HSE Inspector once every 38 years.

In addition, all HSE campaign expenditure was frozen, including high-profile initiatives such as the 'Hidden Killer' asbestos campaign; the Back Pain Musculoskeletal Disorders campaign; and the 'Shattered Lives' slips and trips campaign.

Prospect, the union that represents HSE Inspectors, has estimated that cuts of 15% or more will render the organisation unable to perform their legal remit. HSE has four primary functions:

- Inspection
- Investigation
- Prosecution
- Policymaking

The Prospect campaigning to date as concentrated on asking the question "which of these functions does society want HSE to stop? We cannot continue to do all four". The implication seems to be that policy making functions will be sacrificed at the expense of warrant-holding frontline Inspectors.

The Department sees genuine danger in this approach, Firstly; policy work underpins the inspection and enforcement action, so it is not possible to remove one plank of HSE activity without undermining the other three.

Secondly, such proclamations may lead to accusations that the HSE is a failing organisation, which needs to be reformed or even merged with another agency. The press reports about a possible merger between fire and ambulance services suggests that the coalition government is much more bold in considering merging agencies than the previous Labour administrations.

It is therefore timely that the General Secretary has joined the HSE Board, and is in a position to hopefully influence the direction of decision making on the future of HSE activity.

The cutbacks will also affect the health and safety activities of local authorities, who have responsibility for inspection and enforcement of shops and offices. Most councils already prioritise food safety, noise abatement and licensing activity over health and safety inspection, and it is rare for employers such as Asda or Wilkinsons to face prosecution. These cuts will reduce activity from councils on health and safety to practically zero, meaning employers will not face any form of proactive scrutiny unless there is a fatality at their site.

The combination of the Young Review and the cuts has the potential to devastate health and safety performance in Great Britain, leading to a rise in workplace deaths, and an epidemic of ill-health and industrial disease.

Our campaigning activity in response will focus on engaging politicians, working with like-minded employers, and most importantly, ensuring that all GMB members are aware of the potential damage that this will cause, both now and in the future.

ASBESTOS

Pleural Plaques: February 2010 finally saw the Labour Government make a final decision on the cases of pleural plaques victims, who had been denied compensation following the decision of the Law Lords in October 2007 that pleural plaques did not constitute harm.

The Government announced a package of measures that provided some recompense, but fell some way short of an overturn of the House of Lords Decision. The primary announcement was of a one-off payment of £5000 for all pleural plaques sufferers whose court cases were 'stayed' (i.e. judgement was reserved) by the Law Lords' decision, with a compensation scheme operating until 1st August 2011. The Department has worked with colleagues across the Regions and with Trade Union Solicitors to publicise the eligibility criteria for the scheme. We have also raised the issue again with the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) (Congress Motions C2).

Several other measures were announced, including:

- Consultation to establish an Employer's Liability Insurance Bureau (ELIB) to ensure that asbestos victims who cannot trace an employers' liability insurer may claim against a fund of last resort
- Investigating how the government can increase research investment into asbestos-related diseases
- Lifting the 2008 Mesothelioma Scheme lump sum payments equal to the Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers Compensation) Act 1979 lump sum payments
- Reducing the difference between dependency lump sum payments and in-life lump sum payments (as above).
- Taking measures to speed up mesothelioma claims.

With the change of Government following the General Election, we had anticipated some potential issues with the delivery of the promised package on pleural plaques. Already, many of the promised elements have been thrown into doubt.

The £5000 compensation payments for those whose cases were "stayed" at the time of the Law Lords decision have been shrouded in controversy. Shortly after the election, Senior Civil Servants publicly announced that they did not believe that the compensation was legitimate, and that the Secretary of State had been required to personally authorise the scheme in writing.

In addition, the affordability of the proposed Employers Liability Insurance Bureau (ELIB) has been thrown into doubt due to the cutbacks in government expenditure. Compounding this was the

announcement that the funding for medical research into asbestos-related diseases is to be administered by the British Lung Foundation on behalf of the ABI, effectively removing union involvement from the oversight process.

Some positive news was that the Northern Ireland Assembly is to follow the Scottish governments lead and pay victims of pleural plaques. This now leaves England and Wales, under the policy of the Coalition Government, isolated in their approach to compensation.

The next likely stage for a legal challenge is the European Courts, though we continue to pursue all political lobbying avenues to overturn the decision as restore compensation to all those diagnosed with Pleural Plaques since 2007. The department, in accordance with the statement on pleural plaques at last years Congress, used the opportunity of a meeting of the European Building workers, to ask the Commission if there was a possibility of pleural plaques becoming a prescribed industrial disease across Europe to a fairly negative response, and political progress remains slow.

A further legal setback came in the 'trigger issue' case, where the Court of Appeal, accepted the principle that injury is caused to a victim of asbestos-related diseases at the onset of physical symptoms, rather than at the time of exposure. This means that compensation will only be payable from the time a sufferer develops the symptoms of an asbestos disease, rather than from when they were exposed.

As a result, very often no compensation will be payable, as in most cases, asbestos-related diseases manifest physical symptoms more than 20 years after exposure. This long latency means that in many cases, the victim has retired from work, often prematurely due to ill-health; and the employer has ceased operations, meaning there is no insurance policy against which to claim.

The Court of Appeal decision stems from a case originally taken by the insurance industry in June 2008, at which the courts found in favour of asbestos victims. It is now anticipated that a further appeal will be heard by the Supreme Court. GMB will continue to be at the forefront of campaigning to overturn this ludicrous and illogical decision.

These decisions have highlighted the importance of registering asbestos exposure as early as possible. The Department has liaised with Regions, and every Region now either has an asbestos register or is in the process of creating one (Congress Motion 40).

GMB continued its' work in other areas, particularly in the Asbestos in Schools campaign where while progress in understandably slow, it is at least progress. We have begun to take a leading role in the development of campaign strategy. The campaign links into the larger EU-wide campaign on health and safety in maintenance activities, and also into the wider campaign against cuts to the schools building and refurbishment programme.

There has been a reluctant acknowledgement from both the Department of Education and the HSE that there is a serious problem with the management of asbestos in schools.

GMB, in conjunction with the other education trade unions, undertook an online survey of safety reps on their awareness of a management plan for asbestos in their school, and the department is proud to state the GMB responses made up 50% of the total responses. This served to show that even after 7 years since the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations came into effect many schools were still failing to survey and register the presence of asbestos in the fabric of the buildings where GMB members work.

This was further compounded at the start of this year by the HSE, as a result of Lord Young's review, issuing an online classroom assessment, including a section on managing asbestos, which was clearly not an assessment. GMB have responded accordingly that they withdraw this and start again involving the trade unions.

The Department was also involved in two international demonstrations against the proposal by the Quebec regional government to reopen the notorious Jeffries asbestos mine, with a subsidy of \$58 million, for export to Asia. GMB feels that this is an illegal subsidy under World Trade Organisation rules and Stephen Hughes MEP, raised this question in the European parliament.

The Department also played a key role in organising a very well-attended demonstration on 1st July to protest against the continued export of asbestos by Canada, followed by a second demonstration in December when the decision was believed to be imminent. At the time of writing no decision on re-opening the mine has taken place, but the international pressure has postponed the decision twice.

The Department also attended a seminar in Brussels on an asbestos-free Europe on October 8th where apparently the situation in the eastern countries is serious. In addition the International Ban Asbestos Network gave a presentation at the TUC recently on the appalling situation globally, particularly in Asia.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The political upheaval caused by the election result extended into the policy development sphere. The new Coalition Government is markedly more reluctant to consult with trade unions than it's Labour predecessor, and the announcement of mergers and closure of many quangos has meant that influencing policymakers is becoming increasingly difficult. This said, the Department continues to follow political strategies in order to implement GMB policy, both through direct engagement with the Government and Civil Service, and through wider initiatives with the Labour movement.

The Department has faced particular problems in trying to influence HSE policy, due to staff cutbacks and the consolidation of portfolios for HSE staff. We have raised a number of issues, including:

- The issue of new legislation on workplace temperature (Congress Motion C1), including attendance at a summit organized by HSE to examine the issue in close detail. Due to the current deregulatory nature of government policy, it is unlikely that any new health and safety laws will be placed on statute, so our policy focus for 2011 will be developing a campaign on workplace temperature, and lobbying for new directives at EU level.
- Risk Assessment for New and Expectant Mothers in the Workplace (Congress Motion 41). From our discussions with HSE, there are no proposals to review government policy or update current official guidance at present. The Department published guidance on this subject in Autumn 2010, in the Health and Safety Matters newsletter.
- The Department has recently published updated guidance for Safety Representatives and members on tackling work-related stress (Congress Motion C3). We have engaged with policymakers in DWP and HSE to press for the formal adoption of the Stress Management Standards as legally binding, rather than voluntary best practice, but under the current Government this is unlikely to happen.
- The Department has continued to lobby HSE to further review occupational exposure levels for lead (Congress Motion 45), following the Hazards Magazine campaign highlighting that the current level is too high and does not prevent serious illness. Meetings of HSE's WATCH (Working Group on Action to Control Chemicals) Committee have not been held since February 2010, so the current policy position is unclear. Work is ongoing with the TUC and other unions to bring the issue back to the forefront of the HSE policy agenda.

Engagement has also proved frustrating beyond HSE. We have lobbied the Trade Union members of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Committee for a formal investigation into industrial arthritis (Congress Motion 44). At time of writing, IIAC is currently awaiting the results of the Government's review of

benefits, as Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit could be abolished or altered, and as such the Council is not undertaking new studies at this time.

In addition, political uncertainty over the future of the Food Standards Agency has caused difficulties in engaging with civil servants on aspartame food sweetener (Congress Motion 48). The FSA policy line remains that aspartame is safe to consume, though a study has been commissioned to research the health effects of prolonged consumption. This study is due to report in 2011, and we will intensify activity on the issue once the full conclusions are in the public domain.

Outside of engagement with the Government, the department organised two well-attended fringes at GMB Congress. The first gave an insight into GMB's developing environmental policy, and the Department is grateful to Peter Kane of the Northern Region for his first-rate contribution on the nuclear industry.

The second fringe meeting covered Pleural Plaques, to bring delegates up to date with recent developments and the current state of play. The Department wishes to place on record its thanks to Ian McFall of Thompsons Solicitors, for providing an excellent summary of progress to date.

The Department was also active during conference season, contributing to fringe meetings at both the TUC and Labour Party conferences. At the TUC fringe, we spoke in support of the Hazards Campaign's "We Didn't Vote to Die at Work" campaign, which is raising awareness of the damaging approach to health and safety taken by the coalition government.

At the Labour Party Conference, GMB organised a well-attended fringe aimed at tackling the myths on health and safety and giving people the real picture. Chaired by Sheila Bearcroft from the CEC, the meeting featured contributions from the General Secretary; London Mayoral candidate Ken Livingstone; Carolyn Jones, Director of the Institute of Employment Rights; and Professor Steve Tombs of Liverpool John Moores University. The Fringe meeting was a great success, and we are indebted to the Political Department, and in particular Heidi Benzing, for all of their help in organising the event.

There was further recognition for GMB at TUC Congress when the late David Lyons was awarded the TUC's Safety Representative of the Year award. David was the first GMB winner for many years, and won for his many years of outstanding campaigning and recruitment in the security industry. Brian Terry of Southern Region performed an outstanding tribute to Dave in a video presentation, and Dave's widow Marilynn collected the award from TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber.

ENVIRONMENT

The Government had claimed to be "the greenest in history" when the coalition was formed, but for all the promises and rhetoric pre-election, the reality has been disappointing.

The Green Investment Bank, which could have invested in green skills and industry and issued green bonds and even ISA's, is now to be a fund, and will not start until 2013. The New Green Deal looks akin to a mortgage scheme which would load greater debt on households to receive investment in energy efficient schemes. The comprehensive, though too late, proposals for skills development for the UK workforce by the previous government seem to have been largely abandoned and it is unclear where the investment in training will come from in the future. Three of the proposed Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) pilots have been abandoned, with the last in jeopardy at the time of writing. With the future of the UK's energy insecure, investment in coal based forms of energy would seem a logical way forward.

The promise of 200,000 jobs based on green skills by Secretary of State Chris Huhne looks very optimistic without coherent investment in both people and projects across the country. The Department responded to a key consultation of Low Carbon Skills. Our response focused on the need to ensure that adult retraining was at the forefront of thinking on skills policy; the need to ensure that adult education

facilities were available to provide this training; and the nonsense of attempting to develop a coherent skills strategy whilst making large cuts to public service providers. The consultation closed on 25th June, and we await the implementation of the Government's response with interest.

The abolition of the Regional Development Agencies was denounced by many and the proposed replacement by five Technological Innovation Centres does not have any more status than a general proposal.

The government have agreed to renew the meetings between the minister and the TUC under the TUSDAC policy umbrella so there should at least be some dialogue on green industrial issues, though no meetings have taken place as yet. The Just Transition Forum, on which the General Secretary sat has not met since the election, but again we are promised a replacement body, which at present has failed to materialise.

We continue to lobby government on the adoption of sustainable climate change policies (Congress Motion 51), both as members of the TUC's TUSDAC committee, and as GMB in our own right. Activities have included fringe events at GMB Congress, Ministerial-level meetings and briefings to key civil servants in DECC and DEFRA. The Government has invested in wind turbine projects at the Port of Hull, and Harland & Wolff in Belfast have commenced manufacture of turbines for use off the English. DECC officials have acknowledged the importance of wind energy as part of the best energy mix for the UK, and we continue to press for easier planning consent for domestic renewable energy installations.

There is continuing concern among the Energy Intensive industries that increases in charges and taxes on emissions could lead to the decimation of these valuable industries in the UK. As such, we have contributed to the joint TUC/EEF Energy Intensive Users Group, which seeks to shape government policy on the consequences of environmental measures against sectors with large energy requirements. Existing policy threatens manufacture of ceramics, steel and glass, where companies could relocate from Britain to outside the EU to escape paying carbon taxes.

The EIUG commissioned a research report into the potential likelihood and consequences of such a move, which completed in Summer 2010 and was presented to Ministers in DECC and DEFRA for consideration. At time of writing, we are still awaiting a formal response.

Since June 2010, Government policy has lacked coherence, substance and impetus. In short, the Tory-led coalition has so far achieved the very opposite in trying to be the *greenest government ever!*

SUPPORT TO SECTIONS

This has been a year of primarily consolidation activity, as employers seek to cope with the long-term health and safety impacts of the recession. The department continues to be involved with a number of initiatives on behalf of the Commercial Services, Manufacturing and Public Services Sections.

Commercial Services:

The Department has maintained involvement with the national Health and Safety committee for the distribution arm of Asda over the course of the year. In particular, we have been heavily involved with the development of a project looking at the ergonomic design of distribution centres, which will commence with a study undertaken by the Health and Safety Laboratory in Spring 2011.

In the utilities sector, the department continues to liaise with British Gas senior Reps in British Gas on the safety implications of changes to the business, and deliver training programmes for GMB reps based in office functions.

Within National Grid, we have continued to provide advice and support to the company Safety, Health, Environment and Security (SHES) Forum. In particular, we have held further negotiations on the

implementation of the company Drug and Alcohol policy, with the discovery that most testing has occurred following minor road traffic accidents. This is neither within the spirit nor the intention of the policy, which is concerned with all activities; and has a disproportionate affect on our members, who constitute the majority of the field workforce and therefore are most likely to be tested.

We have again reiterated our stance that we cannot agree to an internal policy that specifies lower limits than the law, and have requested a meeting with senior management to discuss changes to the current imposed policy.

The Department also spoke at the National Grid Safety Representatives Conference at Gaydon, Warwickshire in October, on worker involvement and consultation.

In the Security Sector, we have continued to provide secretarial support to the G4S Manned Guarding National Health and Safety Committee. The department has provided advice and support on a range of issues, including incident investigation and sharing of best practice. The Department has also been heavily involved with the SafeGuard campaign. We contributed to the development of campaign ideas and briefing, and provided a speech and presentation to the Uni-Europa meeting in Switzerland in April 2010. The Department will be contributing to HSE's Partnership on Work-Related Violence, to input ideas and experience from the SafeGuard campaign. We also presented on the campaign at the TUC's Union Health and Safety Specialists meeting.

We are also working with G4S on the Cash and Valuables in Transit (CVIT) side of the business, and have provided guidance on the manual handling aspects of cash and jewellery collection and delivery, and helped with a joint inspection of delivery vehicles at the Nine Elms depot. The Department was also heavily involved with the negotiation of a new Drugs and Alcohol policy for all CVIT branches.

Within Loomis, the department has continued to be involved in negotiations to curb a pilot scheme using lone workers instead of teams to deliver cash. We have contributed to a working group looking at new working methods, introducing new technology, and addressing ergonomic issues from one-person delivery.

Manufacturing Section:

We have worked with Hanson management and Unite to further review the company's Drug and Alcohol policy. Following a shaky start, the company has now implemented a progressive policy, which has placed support and rehabilitation of workers at the heart of its activities. The feedback from safety reps to date has been positive, and the contrast between the approach taken by Hanson and that of National Grid has been marked.

We have continued to provide support and advice to assist with recruitment of members in Bouygues, and have provided technical advice for members in British Gypsum, Corus Steel and Remploy.

Public Services:

The Department has co-ordinated a major survey on the effects of Tetra Wave equipment on ambulance workers, following concerns that Tetra usage was causing health problems. The results of the survey are being collated at present, but the initial findings suggest there may be a link between some health conditions, particularly fatigue, and long-term Tetra use. We are in the process of analysing all the survey returns, and a full report will be provided to the CEC once this has been completed. Initial analysis suggests that there are no concrete health outcomes, but many areas for future action.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In health and safety terms the situation has been relatively quiet across public services, with an attempt to issue updated guidance on health and safety in the Local Authority green book agreement which is

with the employers, though as there appears to be a move to break up national bargaining this may result in stagnation on the document.

The Waste and Recycling industry continue to grow, as unfortunately do the serious accidents and fatalities. The HSE and Local Government Employers have issued an H&S guide to procurement in this industry, a model of which could be used across all public sector contracts.

PUBLICATIONS

As well as responding to a number of government consultations the department issued two new leaflets directed at GMB, and prospective GMB, members in the Retail and Waste & Recycling industries. The Department is currently updating our guidance on the control of Legionella risks (Congress Motion 46), with the intention to publish a revised document before Congress 2011.

In addition the department published 8 newsletters during the year on areas of concern, many of which had been raised by officers and reps as workplace concerns. Under Volume 7 these were –

- The new Fit Note
- Waste Client Procurement
- Accessing Compensation
- Occupational, Domestic and Environmental Mesothelioma Risks
- Knowledge of Asbestos Health Hazards prior to 1930
- Paul Kenny Appointed to the HSE Board
- A Guide for New and Expectant Mothers
- What future for a Green Investment Bank?

CONCLUSION

The previous year may come to be seen as the calm before the storm across all sectors and workplaces. 2011 will likely see the full impact of the Coalition Government's cuts agenda take effect, with greater work pressures on GMB members as colleagues are not replaced when jobs are lost, and ever greater expectations of productivity. The implications of the cuts to HSE and local authorities are a further weakening of health and safety inspection and enforcement.

The National Health, Safety and Environment Department will be at the forefront of the fight to protect health and safety services, and will continue to provide support and advice to GMB members across parts of the union. GMB more than ever will need to rely on our army of, already overworked and under pressure reps, to ensure decent health, safety and welfare provision wherever GMB is organised.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

PERSONNEL

The National Office Legal Department comprises Maria Ludkin, National Officer for Legal and Corporate Affairs, and Barry Smith, Legal Officer. Sarah King, Legal Research and Policy Officer is currently on secondment to the European TUC.

GMB @ WORK: THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL OFFICE LEGAL DEPARTMENT

GMB is a campaigning Union for justice and rights for workers. The Legal Department aims to support the Union's campaigns and in particular the strategy in GMB @ Work. The Department remains closely involved in developing strategy to support the Union's industrial and organisational objectives.

We work closely with National Officers in order to develop a strategic response to the attacks being launched upon workers and trade unions by the Tory – Lib Dem Coalition. We have had to respond to a series of judicial decisions which seek to undermine the role of trade unions. This has included challenges to collectivism, to the ability of unions to call upon members to take industrial action, and to attacks on trade union legal services.

We continue to be heavily involved in organising and developing the multiple actions regarding equal pay litigation. GMB remains the union for equal pay, and this year will see a GMB case reach the Supreme Court as the union continues the longstanding campaign for equality.

The Department continues to be involved in political campaigns, including challenges to the public spending cuts, private equity, rights for pub licensees, and continuing to support actions which make bankers accountable for their actions and their impact on the economy.

The Department works with the National Equality Department and it is expected that soon Sarah King will be returning to Wimbledon, She will be making an important contribution on Equalities and will work with the National Equalities Officer. Her work will include strengthening and giving direction on the impact of the Equality Act 2010, and her experience of European law in this area, as well as other areas such as Health and Safety, will be very valuable.

ACTION ON CONGRESS 2010 MOTIONS

Composite 4 – Temporary and Agency Workers (covering Motions 55, 56, and 58)

We have worked with the GMB European Office on making submissions on the draft regulations and draft guidance. The new rules will come into force in October 2011. We will work with the TUC and other unions in disseminating guidance to Officers and will monitor the position closely. We will seek to secure improvements in the protections for agency workers.

61 Bogus Employment/Casualisation

We are working closely with Industrial Officers in tackling bogus self-employment in the construction industry (particularly on CIS 4 status) that is undermining the rights of workers and collective bargaining. We have also established informal links with our European counterparts as there is growing evidence that this is a Europe wide issue.

Composite 4 – Client Contractors and the Outsourcing of Labour (covering Motions 62 and 63)

We are working with Industrial Officers to address the issues of interference by the client in the disciplinary procedures of contractors highlighted by the Motion and by the speakers to Congress.

71 Redundancy Rights

We continue to work with Industrial Officers and our European counterparts to advocate the raising of UK worker's redundancy rights to those of many workers in Europe. Employment rights from day one, including a right to statutory redundancy pay, are a long standing policy of GMB.

77 Freelance Workers

We are working with Industrial Officers to press for the practice of non-payment of holiday to all to end, and for all workers to receive their appropriate statutory and contractual holiday entitlements.

141 – Erosion of Civil Liberties

Whilst the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 contains provisions that will allow the Lord Chief Justice to veto requests for private inquests, we remain concerned that this does not provide adequate protection. Private inquests will undermine public confidence in inquests involving state agents (e.g. the shooting of Jean Charles De Menezes) and highly contentious deaths in custody taking place without juries in private with Government appointed coroners. We will continue to advocate for inquests to be public and also for individuals released without charge by the police to have their DNA to be removed from the National Database.

142 – Justice for Working People

Following the Comprehensive Spending Review the Government announced plans to cut between £350 million and £500 million from the Legal Aid Bill, and proposals that will deny the poorest in society access to justice. We are working with Industrial and Political Officers to fight this denial of access. This is taking place against a background of attacks on trade union legal services such as those that we provide members in employment disputes and accidents at work.

Motion 163 Save the Local Pub

The Legal Department has worked with the Organising Team, the Political and Research Departments and the Press Office to evaluate the problems arising in the tied tenant membership. We focussed our campaign on providing legal support to members facing unchallenged evictions, running test cases in relation to the accuracy of Brulines measurement equipment, and the use of that data as a basis for fines and evictions, and support in relation to the renegotiation of leases. We also heavily lobbied Trading Standards, the National Weights and Measures Office and the Home Affairs Select Committee to make them aware of the issues and levels of exploitation, our members were facing within the industry.

SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

We continue to give priority to supporting recruitment. We are working closely with National Officers in developing a response to the thousands of dismissal/re-engagement notices being issued under the guise of redundancy consultation in local authorities as part of the Tory – Lib Dem cuts in public spending. This is a challenging area because conventional legal thinking on dismissal/re-engagement limits the options available to defend members in these circumstances. The aim is to develop new ways to challenge employers who seek to tear up collective bargaining alongside members' jobs and terms and conditions.

Equalities remain, as ever, a crucial organising issue and features strongly in the work of the Department. A significant part of our work continues to relate to equal pay issues in the public sector, working closely with National and Regional Officers, and with GMB solicitors.

The Department continues to work to achieve the union's aims and action plan as set out in the CEC Special Report to Congress 2009 on Equal Pay. GMB continues to achieve equality and recover substantial compensation for members who have suffered from historic equal pay discrimination.

GMB continues to provide crucial litigation support for members where necessary. In June 2011 a case from the GMB Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region *Gibson v Sheffield City Council* will reach the Supreme Court. This case involves claims from carers and others seeking to achieve equal pay against employer resistance.

At the time of writing we are also dealing with a significant challenge to the union from a local authority employer in the North-East. The employer concerned has issued proceedings against GMB (and another union) in the employment tribunal claiming that the unions are required to make a contribution to the employer's equal pay liability. This goes against general social policy in the UK and Europe which

determines that equal pay is the responsibility of the employer. We are resisting this challenge and the outcome of this litigation is awaited.

Tribute has to be paid to the GMB Officers, activists, and members who continue to follow GMB policy to achieve equality in the most difficult of circumstances.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Department has continued to be heavily involved in developing a legal and political strategy to support the GMB campaign to draw attention to the negative aspects of the unregulated private equity industry.

We have continued to support the campaign for Trade Union freedom. We supported the Lawful Industrial Action (Minor Errors) Bill introduced by John McDonnell MP. We are, alongside other unions, seeking to identify potential legal cases on collective issues that might be pursued as European human rights cases.

We are continuing to work with the Political Department and outside legal specialists in order to take forward the campaign for justice for Cammel Laird members.

We remain committed as per longstanding GMB policy to the repeal without pre-condition of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

We assisted the GMB European Office with the response to the public consultation on the new guidance notes that will supplement the introduction of the Agency Worker Regulations into UK law in October 2011.

At the time of writing we are drafting the union's response to the Jackson Review on civil costs. We will be responding to the anticipated review of employment tribunals later this year.

Pubs: We continue to support a number of important legal actions which we hope will bring about changes in the industry which will affect our wider pub licensee membership. In particular we are focussed on challenging the use of Brulines equipment as a basis for levying fines and evicting tenants. We have legal cases challenging the scientific evidence backing up the equipment as well as concerted pressure on Trading Standards and the National Measurement Office regarding the protocols used to test and monitor the equipment. We are also supporting a number of cases to prevent evictions and to force the pubco's to be accountable for the representations they make to new pub licensees regarding the profitability of the pubs. We are working closely with other organisations to co-ordinate information and actions focussed on this campaign.

Pleural plaques: We continue to closely monitor all legal cases and regulation regarding pleural plaques on an international basis. We also work closely with US lawyers who are testing the law in relation to asbestos related illness in America and in Europe.

Barry Smith attends the TUC Union Legal Officers Network meetings on behalf of GMB. He is also on the Executive Committee of the Institute of Employment Rights.

PUBLICATIONS AND INFORMATION PROVISION

Each year continues to see the introduction of a raft of new employment-related legislation. We aim to keep up to date with the changes and to disseminate the information in an accessible and user friendly format to officers.

At the time of writing we are updating the GMB "Most Asked Questions" to produce the 14th edition. This consists of a series of one page answers to questions covering a wide range of employment issues. The

aim is to provide a document which Regions can easily send or hand to members with common enquiries, and for this to form part of the GMB @ Work Workplace Organiser's Toolkit.

SUPPORT FOR RECOGNITION

GMB continues to meet with considerable success across a wide range of companies, both in terms of new sites and sites where GMB members have remained loyal through years of employer hostility

GMB continues to make good use of the legislation both as a framework for voluntary agreements, and as a procedure for achieving recognition in the face of employer hostility. The union continues to press for improvements to the scheme, including the removal of the 21 workers threshold. It remains to be seen whether the Tory – Lib Dem Coalition seeks to make changes to the scheme but none have been announced at this stage.

We continue to provide advice and assistance and support to Officers in considering and preparing application to the Central Arbitration Committee. We provide standing guidance and template letters for Officers to use. We provide a regular report on the progress of applications to the Central Executive Council.

In 2010 we noted one of the first attempts to de-recognise a union that had been recognised by a CAC ballot at JJB Sports, where the employers sought to persuade the CAC to order a de-recognition ballot. The application by the employers was rejected by the CAC.

Barry Smith is available to act as “devil’s advocate” on applications and to run briefing sessions on the procedures.

SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

We continue to provide day-to-day support to Regional and National Officers on industrial action issues and industrial action ballots.

The whole area of industrial action has been the focus of judicial scrutiny in a series of high profile cases in the last year or so. This has demonstrated that the approach of the judiciary is to concentrate on the process and not the outcome of ballots. Thus where unions are judged to have not followed a “perfect” procedure under the legislation the injunction has been granted regardless of the democratic wishes of the members. The areas of challenge have focussed on the members eligible to vote, the contents of the pre-ballot and pre-action notices, and on the process of giving the results of the ballot. Together with other unions we are seeking to identify possible cases that might be appropriate to pursue as human rights cases in Europe following recent encouraging decisions from other European countries.

We supported the Lawful Industrial Action (Minor Errors) Bill introduced by John McDonnell MP. The Bill was debated but ran out of time on 22 October 2010. It is on the Order Paper to resume its second reading on 17 June 2011 but will not be debated. The Bill would have made modest changes to the complex rules affecting industrial action ballots. Organisations such as the CBI have been calling for greater restrictions to apply.

We remain committed to trade union freedom including the repeal without conditions of Section 127 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

Against this difficult background we provide standing and specific guidance to Officers on the statutory balloting procedures, and we continue to update our guidance to reflect changes in case law and legislation. We were involved in a number of ballots including British Gas and Astra Zeneca.

Barry Smith is available to run briefings for Officers, and ran a series of briefings for National Office staff in 2010 on the impact of recent cases. It is hoped to extend this to Regions in 2011.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT LAW

We continue to provide day-to-day support to Officers on individual employment matters, though as previously collective issues and policy issues remain our priority. Redundancy consultation has been an area of particular interest.

TRADE UNION LEGAL SERVICES

We remain committed to playing our part in defending trade union legal services. Proposals affecting civil costs and employment tribunals are likely to have a negative impact on trade unions. First, the Jackson Review proposes to abolish the recovery of conditional fee agreement success fees and the after the event insurance premium amongst a raft of other proposals designed to attack trade union personal injury claims. Second, the anticipated review of employment tribunals is likely to result in proposals to introduce fees for tribunal cases amongst other proposals designed to weaken the ability of unions to represent members in tribunals. We will keep Officers updated on developments and will respond to the relevant public consultations.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Barry Smith was Secretary to the Congress 2010 Standing orders Committee (SOC). He is Secretary to the Congress 2011 SOC.

PENSIONS DEPARTMENT

ACTIONS TAKEN ON CONGRESS 2010 MOTIONS

Motion 54

The Pension Dept has met Ministers and others to voice GMB's opposition to the faster increase in the state pension age announced by the government. We continue to work with other unions and organisations such as the National Pensioners' Convention in campaigning for a decent state pension ensuring all pensioners can live with dignity in retirement.

Motion 207

This motion was referred and research is being commissioned into the relative costs for pensioners living in London and elsewhere in the UK. We continue to work with other unions and organisations such as the National Pensioners' Convention in campaigning for a decent state pension ensuring all pensioners can live with dignity in retirement.

INDUSTRIAL ISSUES

GMB's Pension Department continues to support national and regional officials with negotiations throughout the union on pension issues that arise in the workplace. As in previous years, the trend has generally been one of worsening occupational pension provision. However, in many cases we have been able to reduce the cuts proposed by employers, ensuring greater security and fairness for members' retirements than would otherwise have been the case.

Commercial Services

The Pension Department has participated in or assisted negotiations in the following companies in 2010: ASDA, BA, BMI, Centrica, DHL and National Grid.

Notably in British Airways, a significant amount of resource was given to assist in negotiating changes that would assist the company to fund its £3.7bn pension deficit. In working to retain a defined benefit arrangement for members, significant progress was made in introducing tiered contributions meaning that lower paid employees would contribute a lower proportion of pay for their pensions than their higher paid colleagues.

The fight to protect defined benefit pensions in the electricity and gas distribution sectors has continued this year with GMB leading the other unions in challenging OFGEM's ideological and counter-productive plan to micro-manage the sector's pension schemes. The approach of the energy regulator is now being copied by OFWAT and OFCOM as GMB unhappily predicted. GMB has lodged Parliamentary Questions about OFGEM's approach and has had discussions with the Pensions Regulator and others in furtherance of our campaign.

Manufacturing

Companies in the Manufacturing sector have continued to struggle to provide decent pension provision in light of the economic downturn. In the face of this, the Department and National Officials have put forward alternative proposals to these companies and through negotiation achieved better results for members. The Pensions Department has participated in discussions in the following companies in 2010 as well as providing generic guidance to the section's officials: Astra Zeneca, Hanson, Ibstock Brick, Corus, Lafarge, Nestle and Shipbuilding Industries.

In Astra Zeneca members took a most commendable stand to maintain prolonged industrial action in defence of their pensions. Their action brought much attention to the plight of AZ employees and brought into sharp focus of the hypocrisy of the AZ board who benefit from million pound pension pots.

Public Services

The Pension Department continues to devote significant resource to the Local Government Pension Scheme, the occupational pension scheme covering nearly a half of all GMB members. In 2010 we produced 75 documents relating to the scheme including a number of formal consultation responses, correspondence and material for members (this is a 75% increase on 2009).

The year was dominated by Lord Hutton's Independent Public Service Pension Schemes Commission to which GMB submitted three formal responses and a range of supplementary material, the Department also met the Commission on five occasions to reinforce the key messages in the GMB submissions.

The second significant development in 2010 was the announcement in the Comprehensive Spending Review of a 3% increase in employee contributions to all public sector pension schemes (excluding the Armed Forces). GMB has been at the forefront of campaign against this move. In December we launched an online survey of member responses to this announcement. More than 2,000 members completed the survey, data from which has been instrumental in persuading other organisations that this government policy is set to have a devastating impact on the continued viability of the major public sector pension schemes.

To assess the current participation rates in the LGPS and to measure the effectiveness of the scheme's auto-enrolment requirements we issued a Freedom of Information request on all employing authorities in the English LGPS. The results showed very clearly a lack of consistency in scheme participation rates and a shortfall in data that local authorities hold. On average 75% of those who could be members of the LGPS are in the scheme, this is the lowest proportion in the public sector and disguises a huge range in participation rates between authorities. The responses also indicated that part time workers are much more likely to opt out of the scheme, as are those on lower earnings. This data has informed GMB's discussions with the Hutton Commission, DCLG and the DWP in debates on UK pension saving and public sector scheme reform.

In January 2010 GMB published a detailed report into Public Sector Pensions which described the union's vision for sustainable, affordable schemes across the sector building on the reforms agreed over the last few years. The report has proved a useful basis for developing dialogue with others involved in public sector pensions which is vital to the continuing campaign.

In the NHS, 2010 began with the launch of the Pensions Choice Exercise which will see members of the 1995 Section of the NHS Pension Scheme given a chance to join the 2008 Section, which was open to new employees from April 2008. To tie in with this the Department produced a glossy 18 page guide to the NHS Pension Scheme which was distributed amongst regions. In addition briefing sessions on the NHS Pension Scheme and the Choice Exercise were held throughout the country.

The Department continued to advise members on the changing landscape of the NHS Pension Scheme brought about by the coalition government, both through bulletins and in a session at the NHS National Conference in Birmingham. The Department continues to support the National Officer through attendance at the NHS Pension Scheme Governance Group and Technical Advisory Group. GMB's profile has continued to grow in these groups which are run on a partnership basis with NHS Employers.

In the civil service, 2010 has again been dominated by negotiations over changes to the redundancy scheme following the general election and the outcome of a Judicial Review which blocked the scheme agreed between most civil service unions and the Labour government in February. In the negotiations GMB pressed for the focus of protection in the new scheme on those with reduced re-employment prospects and those on low earnings and was broadly successful although overall the new arrangements are not as beneficial as those negotiated earlier in 2010.

In the Higher Education Sector, much focus was given to the review of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). GMB worked with other unions to offer a reasoned counter proposal to the employers' cuts to the pension scheme, which were originally proposed following lengthy negotiations with the lead HE union. Several meetings have been held and whilst there has been some movement from the employer, a devaluing of the USS look set to proceed.

Regional

The Pension Department has also participated in or assisted negotiations at regional level in the following companies in 2010: the AA, Anchor Trust, AEI Cables, Aga Rangemaster, Aggregate Industries, Amcor, Anglian Water, Aquascutum, Ardagh Glass, the Advertising Standards Agency, Asda, ATL, Aviva, Amadeus, BALPA, Biffa, Bradfords, Bridon International, Britvic, Capper & Co, Carron, Chivas Brothers, CIM, CITB, CME Sanitary Systems, Connaught, Cookson, DCWW, Devonport Shipyard, Diageo, DS Smith, DUCO, EDF, English Landscapes, Enterprise, Equity, EVH, Fulcrum, GCHQ, Grundon, HJ Berry, Imperial Tobacco, Indorama, Ineos, ITT, JCB, Jersey Public Service, JLR, Johnson Mathey, Kingston Communications, Laser UK, LFEPA, Lloyds TSB, Marstons, May Gurney, McCains, Mount Charles, National Express, NI Water, North British Distillery, P&O, Pentagon Chemicals, Pilkington, Police Federation, Premier Foods, Prudential, Quadron Services, Radius Systems, Rockwool, RPC, SMS, St Gobain, Sterilin, Synergy Healthcare, Tensar, Thames Water, United Utilities, Welsh RFU and Whyte and Mackay.

Many of these changes reflected closures of defined benefit schemes, but some employers have bucked the trend and retained such schemes, albeit in a less generous form. Notable examples include P&O and Ardagh Glass where GMB negotiated acceptable reforms to retain quality pension provision.

In keeping with previous years we continue to see detrimental changes being made including increasing member contributions, reducing accrual rates and changing definitions of pensionable salary. We are beginning to see some employers looking to increase pension ages especially in light of government moves to increase the state pension age to 66 and beyond.

POLICY

In addition to the work outlined above progressing specific GMB Congress motions, the department has been heavily involved with the DWP and The Pension Regulator on a number of issues:

- We have produced 26 consultation submissions, Ministerial correspondence and press releases on general pensions policy
- We have held meetings with the new DWP team, including the Minister, on a number of issues including deregulation, the Pension Protection Fund, state pensions, 2012 NEST reforms and the decline in quality occupational pension provision
- GMB has maintained good links with the Pension Protection Fund (now incorporating the Financial Assistance Scheme) and the Pension Regulator, meeting regularly on specific and general pensions issues
- GMB policy in regard to the Default Retirement Age has finally been met with the removal for this discriminatory provision due in 2011
- GMB once again led the debate on pensions at TUC Congress in 2010 and have followed that up with meetings with TUC and others to address the issues raised in GMB's motion.

CASEWORK

We continue to receive a large number of requests for advice from national and regional officers, with 275 new requests (not including ongoing cases) being received in 2010. Roughly 45% of requests are related to industrial matters and some of these are highlighted in the Industrial Issues section of the Department's report. More than 150 new requests however related to advice on individual issues such as queries and disputes. The Department aims to advise on such requests within two weeks of receipt, and the average turnaround time for replying in 2010 was around two days. However, more complex cases can take considerably longer to advise on.

In all cases, the Department acts in support of full time officers and will advise or take on casework as appropriate. As such, individual and industrial cases should be submitted from a Regional Officer in the first instance. The Department will keep Regional Officers advised on case progress at all times. Some members do contact the Department directly and in such instances we deal with these members fairly, but refer them back to their Regional Officer.

We deal with pension cases on all pension schemes operating in the UK: occupational, state, personal and stakeholder schemes. Some of the more complex cases, particularly those concerning individual pension rights can take a significant length of time to resolve, particularly when ill health pensions are being disputed and medical evidence is required. The Department recognises the anxiety that uncertainty and grievances relating to pensions can cause and aims to deal with all individual queries in an efficient and sensitive manner. In particular we have noticed a marked increase in the length of time it is taking the Pensions Ombudsman's office to investigate and make determinations on pension disputes. However the Ombudsman's office remains the main arbitration point for pension disputes and we have had to exercise and encourage patience when faced with lengthy delays.

In the more complex cases, the Department will recommend that regions or industrial sections will benefit from legal advice and we have good working relationships with solicitors who specialise in pension matters.

COMMUNICATIONS

In 2010, ten editions of GMB Pension News were issued to those who had signed up to receive this update of developments. Recipients include pension scheme trustees, activists and other interested parties. Members can sign up to receive this by e-mailing pensionsdeptwi@gmb.org.uk

Also in 2010, four editions of the Pensions Q&A were issued giving a more accessible update on key pension developments.

In the run up to the election a detailed analysis of each main UK party's pension policies was drawn up and circulated. Similarly following on from the formation of the coalition, our Pensions News bulletins feature regular Coalition Watch items, which update and analyse coalition pension policy.

The Department addressed three local branch meetings in the course of 2010 as well as several National Committee meetings. A lively and very well attended pensions fringe event was also held at GMB Congress 2010 in Southport.

The Department continued to update and circulate our library of key pension briefings giving an in depth perspective to many relevant issues, including: Career Average Pensions, Default Retirement Age, Hybrid Pension Arrangements, Indexation of Pensions, Part Time Working and Pensions, Redundancy and Pensions, Redundancy and Age Discrimination, State Pension Age and Tax Relief for Pension Savings.

The majority of our communications are posted on the GMB Pensions Webpage (www.gmb.org.uk/pensions). The website also contains the campaign materials the department produces to defend public sector pensions (www.gmb.org.uk/pspc).

CO-OPERATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

GMB Pension Department continues to work with other organisations where appropriate to promote GMB's pension agenda. This year we represented GMB at a number of public and industry events held by: Club Vita, Department for Work and Pensions, Fair Pensions, HM Treasury, Mercers, National Association of Pension Funds, OFGEM, National Pensioners Convention, NEST, The Pensions Regulator, Pensions Management Institute, Pension Protection Fund, Public Sector Pensioners Council, TUC, Unison and Unite.

We also hold seats on a number of committees on behalf of GMB (or TUC), these include: The Pensions Regulator Advisory Panel, LGPS Policy Review Group, LGPS III Health Monitoring Group, TUC Capital Stewardship Steering Committee, NHS Technical Advisory Group, NHS Governance Group, CCSU Pension Reform Group, Deregulation Review Body and FAS Stakeholders' Committee.

GMB PENSIONS TRAINING

The SMT agreed in mid 2009 that all GMB Officers would be required to attend a training session on pensions aimed at ensuring all officers have a consistent basic pensions understanding and are aware of the role pension issues can place in organising activities. This took place throughout 2010 and is to be followed by occasional sessions to ensure all new officers are provided with the necessary training.

In addition to training on general pension issues, the Department ran briefing sessions on the NHS Pension Scheme and the NHS Pensions Choice Exercise at five different locations across the country, for officers and reps.

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

2010 saw the first General Election the Labour Party has lost since 1992. GMB played a key part in stopping an outright Tory majority. In addition, the Department also supported numerous campaigns

throughout the year. We have ensured that GMB's profile has been enhanced at all levels of the political process and promoted GMB values throughout Westminster.

1. ACTIONS TAKEN ON MOTIONS CARRIED IN CONGRESS 2010

Emergency Motion 3: GMB's Political Department has raised this issue throughout Westminster through discussions with MPs in the GMB's Parliamentary group.

Emergency Motion 5: Letters have been written to two Secretaries of State in the Government Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills and Communities and Local Government.

Composite 4: The Coalition Government announced that it will not be implementing the Agency Workers Regulations. The current Government is still in dialogue with stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Directive and the Political Department is monitoring the situation closely. In addition, the Political Department will also feed this into the Labour Party policy making processes.

Motion 76: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for BIS to highlight this matter and request current policy.

Motion 83: This issue will be feed into the Labour Party's National Policy Forum processes to ensure it becomes Labour Party policy.

Motion 84: The issue of tax avoidance was the basis of the GMB contemporary resolution to Labour Party conference 2010 and the resolution was passed.

Composite 6: The issue of tax avoidance was the basis of the GMB contemporary resolution to Labour Party conference 2010. A letter has also been written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Composite 7: The issue of tax avoidance was the basis of the GMB contemporary resolution to Labour Party conference 2010. A letter has also been written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Motion 92: As part of the comprehensive spending review by the Coalition Government the civil list was reduced.

Motion 96: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Motion 98: A letter has been written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Composite 8: A letter has been written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Motion 101: GMB continues to work closely with the Labour Party, especially with Ed Miliband.

Motion 108: From Labour Party conference 2010, all contemporary resolutions now taken to Conference are voted on and if passed the resolution becomes policy. The current National Policy Forum processes are under review and GMB will be submitting a response that includes a call for the contemporary nature of conference resolutions to be abolished.

Motion 109: The current National Policy Forum processes are under substantial review and GMB will be submitting a response to the consultation that includes a call for amendments to be submitted to Labour Party conference at the final stage of the NPF's processes.

Motion 111: GMB's Political Department raises policies that reduce inequality at every opportunity throughout Westminster.

Motion 112: The Political Department raises this issue whether possible within the Labour group of MPs and in particular the GMB Parliamentary group. A letter has also been written to the Coalition Government.

Composite 9: A new document regarding cost saving has been developed by the Manufacturing Section. A summary document will be sent to all GMB MPs in early 2011.

Motion 116: A letter has been written to the relevant Secretary of State to pursue this matter within the Coalition Government.

Composite 10: In the run up to the General Election in 2010 a policy of helping candidates from a trade union background was pursued.

Motion 121: The Political Department is currently developing a programme for the next interviews for the parliamentary panel in the run up to the next General Election which will include training and mentoring sessions for GMB members.

Motion 122: An advert has been included in the GMB magazine to encourage members to send their stories to the Political Department.

Motion 124: The GMB Political Department has discussed this issue within the GMB parliamentary group.

Motion 130: GMB's Political Department continues to monitor and await the recommendations of the Iraq Inquiry which is looking into the way decisions were made in the run up to the conflict in Iraq.

Composite 12: Letters have been written to the Secretary of State in the Department for Communities & Local Government and to the Mayor of London.

Motion 133: GMB continues to work very closely with various anti-fascism organisations to prevent the electoral success of the BNP.

Composite 13: The Coalition Government announced a commitment to improve the Student Loans Company. GMB's Political Department has also written to Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Motion 152: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Health.

Motion 166: GMB continues to promote the policy of building more council homes. A composite on housing went to Labour Party Conference 2010 and GMB supported the composite.

Composite 16: A letter has been written to the current Housing Minister.

Motion 169: A letter has been written to the current Housing Minister.

Composite 17: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Health.

Motion 177: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Health.

Composite 18: This matter will be fed into the National Policy Forum to ensure it becomes strong policy for the next Labour Government.

Motion 183: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Health.

Motion 188: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Composite 19: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Transport

Motion 195: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Business.

Motion 196: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Motion 197: The Coalition Government has now introduced legislation to limit and control car clamping companies.

Composite 20: A letter has been written to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

2. GENERAL ELECTION

In 2010 the work of the Political Department was largely dominated by the May General Election. The Political Department worked closely with the Labour Party and other trade unions, focusing in particular on retaining key seats. GMB put much resource in the form of finance and general campaign work in the fight to retain these key seats. The Labour Party was ultimately unsuccessful although the Party managed to win 258 Parliamentary seats which deprived the Tories of an overall Parliamentary majority in the House of Commons. There is no doubt that the work done by GMB enabled many key seats to stay in Labour hands and without the efforts of GMB and other trade unions, the result would have been far worse.

GMB supported a number of candidates throughout the UK. Many candidates supported were from our existing list of MPs, however, a large number were new GMB Parliamentary Panel candidates. A great many of these MPs were returned to represent their local constituency to office. MPs returned to the House of Commons included Kelvin Hopkins from Luton North, John Mann from Bassetlaw, Madeline Moon from Bridgend, Karen Buck, Westminster and Kate Green, Stretford and Urmston.

Below is a list of newly elected MPs who are also members of GMB:

Rushanara Ali	Bethnal Green & Bow	London Region
Jenny Chapman	Darlington	Northern Region
Mary Creagh	Wakefield	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
John Cryer	Leyton & Wanstead	London Region
Nic Dakin	Scrunthorpe	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
Simon Danzucuk	Rochdale	North West & Irish Region
Geraint Davies	Swansea West	South West Region
Gloria De Piero	Ashfield	Midlands & East Coast Region
Julie Elliott	Sunderland Central	Northern Region
Pat Glass	North West Durham	Northern Region
Mary Glendon	North Tyneside	Northern Region
Tom Greatrex	Rutherglen & Hamilton West	Scotland
Kate Green	Stretford & Urmston	North West & Irish Region
Ian Lavery	Wansbeck	Northern
Chris Leslie	Nottingham East	Midlands & East Coast Region
Shabana Mahmood	Birmingham Ladywood	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Grahame Morris	Easington	Northern Region
Fiona O'Donnell	East Lothian	Scotland
Teresa Pearce	Erith & Thamesmead	Southern Region
Bridget Phillipson	Houghton & Sunderland South	Northern Region
Yasmin Qureshi	Bolton South East	North West & Irish Region
Emma Reynolds	Wolverhampton NE	Birmingham & West Midlands Region
Karl Turner	Kingston upon Hull East	Midland & East Coast Region

Chuka Umunna	Streatham	Southern Region
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In total GMB has 85 MPs in the Parliamentary group.

If it wasn't for the concentrated work and support of the unions, the Labour Party would have lost another 40 to 50 seats. The Political Department combined a mix of direct mails, automated calling, text messaging and magazine pieces to support our candidates. The Department also supported the production of over a million newspapers for the key seats.

3. WESTMINSTER ACTIVITY

The Political Department has supported various Parliamentary events throughout the year. We fully supported the TUC's Stand up for Public Services lobby and rally. We have held GMB Parliamentary Group meetings and have organised briefing meetings for the group on key issues such as the Local Government Pension Scheme. Finally, the Department has also assisted with speakers at conferences such as; Justice for Columbia and the Hungarian water industry trade unionists in Autumn 2010.

4. LABOUR PARTY

Andy Worth, Regional Secretary for GMB Midlands & East Coast Region, and Mary Turner continue to be GMB representatives on the NEC. They play a significant role in holding the Labour Party to account.

GMB played an important role in the selection of a new Labour Party leader following Labour's General Election defeat in 2010. Following a hustings at Congress and a special CEC, we endorsed Ed Miliband for Labour Party leader and he was ultimately successful. His election undoubtedly marks a shift in Labour Party policy and GMB played a role in supporting his campaign.

Reviews of the National Policy Forum processes are already underway and GMB will fully take part in those discussions later in 2011.

5. LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

GMB made a significant contribution to the Labour Party Conference in September 2010. The GMB contemporary resolution on tax avoidance was passed and is now Labour Party policy. There were also a number of GMB speakers to Conference, as well as 3 well attended fringe meetings.

6. LOCAL ELECTIONS

Much resources have been directed to working on the council elections, the next round of council elections will be in May 2011. Detailed work has been done to try and ensure that Labour wins as many council seats as possible and to gain back councils which have been lost. On a national level, the Political Department has organised and attended meetings with regional directors from all over Britain, whilst on a regional level, meetings are ongoing with regional political officers to focus specifically on key target councils which also encompass details relating to key wards in all regions of Britain.

7. REGIONAL POLITICAL OFFICERS

There have been a number of meetings throughout the year with the Regional Political Officers to exchange information and coordinate political work. The Regional Political Officers are:

Paul Maloney	Southern
Vince Maple	London
Pamela Drake	South Western
Martin Hird	Birmingham & West Midlands

Les Dobbs	Midlands & East Coast
Steve Jennings	Yorkshire & Derbyshire
Colin Priest	North West & Irish
Chris Jukes	Northern
Richard Leonard	Scotland

8. POLITICAL EDUCATION

The Political Department has continued to develop a national political education programme.

The Department discussed each Region's strategy and requirements for their political education programme individually with each regional political officer. A report was drafted to highlight the ways that the Political Department could assist each region with their programme.

The report started to be implemented during the latter part of 2010. A course will be run to support Birmingham & West Midland's programme in January 2011, with further courses rolling out in 2011.

9. LONDON MAYORAL SELECTION

GMB arranged a selection hustings for both GMB London and Southern regions at the TUC where both Oona King and Ken Livingstone were given an opportunity to make presentations and field questions. Ken Livingstone was endorsed following a vote of GMB members at the hustings. Ken went on to win the Labour nomination for Mayor of London. We have started to coordinate work to help Ken win the mayoral election in 2012.

10. CAMPAIGNING & LOBBYING

Opposing Public Service Cuts

GMB's Political Department has supported the TUC massive rally and lobby in November alongside the Public Services Section. The Political Department has also distributed material around the regions and branch structures to highlight the campaign and towards the end of the year we began to prepare for the march on 26 March.

Remploy

In 2010 the Manufacturing Section developed a document to highlight ways that the company is able to save money through reducing the number of luxuries that the senior managers enjoy. The Political Department is working closely with the Section to ensure that the document will be well distributed and supported throughout Westminster.

CEC Political Project

The CEC political project continued to be developed in the target seats throughout the country in the run up to the General Election. All members in the target seats chosen were sent a letter from the General Secretary and a survey to complete and return. In some cases events were run to support the local MP and Labour party by encouraging GMB members to become involved and join the Labour Party.

Towards the end of 2010, the Department began to conclude the project in the target seats by either sending Labour Party application forms to members, or by beginning to arrange events to encourage GMB members to become politically active. This project continues.

Councillors Network

For the first time we are setting up a national GMB councillors network. Details of all GMB councillors are being collated nationally. Relevant information will be distributed and meetings to explain GMB policy are being arranged.

Pleural Plaques

The campaign on Pleural Plaques continued in 2010 resulting with the government publishing guidelines about who will be eligible for payments under the new pleural plaques scheme in England and Wales, and how they should apply. Although the criteria from the present government falls short of what GMB were asking for, it could have been far worse. The campaign and fight continues.

Gangmasters Licensing Authority

Steve Kemp was formally appointed onto the public body as a board member of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and also sits on the Workers Representative Liaison group. Steve is able to feedback information relevant to the union and is also able to input any information and ideas from the union going forward.

Defend Housing Campaign

The Political Department has worked with the Defend Housing Campaign which is becoming an ever important group given the present policies by government towards housing and also more recently the effect that the Localism Bill will have towards communities and indeed affordable housing in the future.

Robin Hood Tax

GMB also sits on the Robin Hood Tax UK lobby group keeping GMB up to speed with the campaign. The main argument put forward by the group is that the bankers should pay for the mess caused and not our members: a view that GMB is strongly in agreement with.

Hope Not Hate

The Hope Not Hate campaign continues to fight against the far right and the BNP. Coordinated campaigning continues with an ever watchful eye on the BNP, but also of even more importance the English Defence League. This campaign will carry on because at the forthcoming council elections it is expected that BNP will stand many candidates. The union must be ever vigilant and should not rest on recent successes in defeating the BNP.

APPOINTMENT AND ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

1 JANUARY 2010 – 31 DECEMBER 2010

APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISERS

Midland & East Coast Region	Richard Taylor
Northern Region	Joan Anderson
Southern Region	Kevin Brandstatter

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

North West & Irish Region	Neil Holden
Southern Region	Rachel Verdin

ELECTION OF ORGANISERS

London Region	Gary Carter Mark Holland Vince Maple Daren Parmenter Sandra Vincent	Bob Crosby Warren Kenny Paul Meddes Hiten Vaidya Paul Ward
Midland & East Coast Region	Les Dobbs Andy Fletcher	Martin McGinley
North West & Irish Region	Alanna Armstrong Neil Holden	Alan Collinge Eddie Parker
Southern Region	Paul Grafton	
South Western Region	Paul Gage	

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISING OFFICERS

London Region	Michelle Bacon	Stella George-Duesbury	Richard Owen
Midland & East Coast Region	Paul Bissett	David Oglesbury	
Northern Region	Tom Allison	Dawn Davies	
Southern Region	Nadine Houghton Asia Morasz	Frank Macklin	
South Western Region	Greg Hughes	Russell Mardon	

TUC CONGRESS AWARDS 2010

As agreed by the CEC its Finance & General Purposes Committee selected recipients of Congress 2010 Regional Outstanding Achievement Awards to go forward for TUC Congress Awards.

The late David Lyons, the recipient of the Southern Region Outstanding Achievement Award 2010, was nominated for the TUC Health & Safety Rep Award 2010. The nomination was successful, and his widow Marilyn Lyons attended TUC Congress 2010 to collect the award.

Yvonne Morris, the recipient of the Northern Region Outstanding Achievement Award 2010, was nominated for the TUC Women's Gold Badge 2010. Unfortunately Yvonne's nomination was unsuccessful.

(Adopted)

CEC FINANCE REPORT: BUILDING ON GROWTH: FINANCIAL PROPOSALS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

FINANCE REPORT

Building on Growth: Financial Proposals for the year ahead

**ANNUAL CONGRESS 2011
THE BRIGHTON CENTRE**

SUNDAY 5 JUNE 2011 to THURSDAY 9 JUNE 2011

Building on Growth
Financial proposals for the year ahead.

These are difficult times for our members. The Tory-led government is wasting no time turning the fiscal deficit to its own advantage with an all-out assault on public services and in particular the jobs and wage levels of GMB local authority, NHS and civil service members. For all our members, household expenses, the VAT rise and soaring fuel prices mean that the living standards of ordinary people are being squeezed harder than at any time since the 1920s.

So the decision to make a recommendation on contributions this year was a challenging one for the CEC.

Once again, the accounts for 2010 report solid financial progress for our union. The value to GMB and our members of the return to financial stability after so many years of deficits cannot be overstated. But it would be a dangerous mistake to interpret this as a signal to relax financial control and forget about budgets and maintaining a steady growth in membership income.

Congress has a firm policy of raising contributions in line with inflation. The alternative is for essential expenditure to push ahead of income, resulting in a future need for dangerously steep contribution increases, or a return to the misery of operating deficits. In the past, we had both. Congress, we have learned our lesson.

The CEC is recommending the minimum increase necessary in contributions, 5p per week across the board. For the majority of members, this is less than half the current rate of inflation. The CEC is confident that this will allow GMB to protect ourselves against unavoidable cost increases, while continuing to build the union's financial strength and providing the best value service to members.

The CEC proposes that all of the increase should be used for GMB industrial and organising activities, rather than increasing the amount transferred to the Political Fund. The recommendation is therefore that the political levy is frozen at last year's level.

The CEC believes that, where possible, the quality of the union's cash benefits should reflect GMB's financial progress in recent years. Therefore, in keeping with the strategy of incrementally improving the funeral benefit as finances allow, the CEC is recommending a £25.00 increase in funeral benefit to £300.00. This is an increase of 9%.

The CEC has been keen for some years to find a way to increase the Fatal Accident and Disablement benefits. For work-related deaths and disablement, the GMB will stop at nothing to recover maximum compensation for members through the courts, but it is right that the union itself is there with cash for members and their families should the worst happen.

The CEC is pleased to recommend that the occupational fatal accident and total disablement be raised from £4,000 to up to £10,000, and that the non-occupational fatal accident benefit be raised from £1,100 to up to £5,000. This represents a maximum increase of 250% and 450% respectively.

The union relies on the unstinting efforts of lay activists who look after members' interests at all hours and in all weathers, often with little reward. And the CEC is very conscious of the extra pressures they are under in the present state of the economy. Fuel prices are at eye-watering levels, and fewer and fewer employers are willing to give paid time off for union duties.

The CEC is therefore proposing the following:

Mileage rates for members using their cars on GMB business to increase from 30p per mile to 35p per mile, an uplift of 17%.

Compensation for loss of earnings to increase by 9%, from £55.00 per day to £60.00 per day.

Congress is asked to accept this report and to pass the following rule changes to bring the recommendations into effect. It is proposed that the expenses will increase from the Monday after Congress, the benefits will increase on July 1, and that contributions will increase on October 1.

Rule Amendments

CECRA4.

Rule 46 Clause 1,

Line 3: Delete “£2.60”, insert “£2.65”

Line 8: Delete “£1.45”, insert “£1.50”

Clause will now read:

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

Members will pay £2.65 a week and be classed as grade-1 members, **unless** they are:

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

in which case, they will pay £1.50 a week and be classed as grade-2 members. However, grade-2 members can choose to pay the contribution rate for, and be classed as, a grade-1 member.

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

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CECRA5.

Rule 46, Clause 2,

Line 4: Delete “£2.60”, insert “£2.65”

Line 5: Delete “£1.45”, insert “£1.50”

Clause will now read:

2 Branch committees will have the power to fix the amount lapsed members (members who joined but later stopped paying contributions) need to pay to rejoin. This amount will be between £2.65 and £10 for grade-1 members and between £1.50 and £5.50 for grade-2 members, except in particular circumstances when we may increase the amount with the approval of the regional committee.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CECRA6

Rule 54, Clause 1

Line 1: Delete “£4000”, insert “up to £10000”

Clause will now read:

1 The Union will pay a grant of up to £10000 to any member who is permanently unable to work as a result of an accidental injury sustained whilst at work, as long as that person, at the time of the accident, had been a continuous member for 12 months and did not owe more than six weeks' contributions.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CECRA7

Rule 55, Clause 1

Line 5: Delete “£275, insert “£300”

Clause will now read:

1 If a full financial member, who has been a continuous member for 8 years dies, the regional secretary will, having been given a copy of the death certificate, pay the widow, widower, member of the family or nominated person a funeral grant of £300. (This person will need to show that they are responsible for paying funeral expenses.)

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CECRA8

Rule 58, Clause 1

Line 14: Delete “£4000”, insert “up to £10000”

Line 17: Delete “£1100”, insert “up to £5000”

Clause will now read:

1 In line with clause 3 below, we will normally pay fatal accident benefit to the husband, wife, child, parent or partner (including same-sex partners) of a member who has died and who was a full financial member. The relative claiming benefit must have completely or partly depended on the member for the ordinary necessities of life according to their circumstances.

We will pay fatal accident benefit as follows.

- For a full financial member who:
 - dies in an accident (within 12 months of the accident);
 - was working at their usual place of employment; and
 - has been a continuous full member for 12 months;

we will pay up to £10000.

- For a full financial member who has an accident (other than while working at their usual place of employment) from which they die within 12 months, we will pay up to £5000.

We will only pay one type of fatal accident benefit for any one financial member. The Central Executive Council will have the power to decide which of the above people we will make the payments to. If more than one person is entitled to the payment, the Central Executive Council has the final decision about how the payment should be divided.

We will only pay the benefit if, at the time of the accident and when making a claim, the member had been paying full grade-1 or grade-2 contributions (unless they were paying contributions at a different rate under rule 48.7) and did not owe more than six weeks' payments.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

(Adopted)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Mary. Thank you, President. Thank you, Congress. I thank you for the warm-up act, Steve and Glynn. I will see what I can do about that in a fraction, if you hang on a sec. Paul Kenny, General Secretary and Treasurer moving General Secretary's Report covering all the Head Office departments, the Accounts for the year up to 31st December 2010 and the Special Report on Finance: *Building for Growth*, and replying for the CEC on Rule Amendment 307, and Motions 31, 32, 34. When I have finished that I will have a sweep-up and pick the paper up.

Can I move first to the Financial Accounts, which is that book there, if I may? Hopefully, shortly, you will see some slides, if the technology — ah, we have one. That is fantastic. The first slide is membership growth. It shows the steady increase in GMB members and then the operation of GMB@Work, as you can see since effectively regime change took the union in 2004.

The next thing is what is called the operating surplus and you can see the performance and particularly for new delegates — 38% of this hall is new delegates, that is why it has expanded, Glynn, 38% new delegates — it is important they understand the history of this organisation and where we have come and how we have come. You can see those red lines. That is not Man United versus Man City; that in reality is the performance of this organisation, again up to the period of regime change. Frankly, the union was bust. Do not talk about increase in benefits because for years this organisation and the people who ran it came to this Congress and said, "We can't afford it." That has never been the position of our CEC since we got GMB@Work in place. You can see that each year we have put strong goals in place to grow the membership, get value for money, and crack down on frankly a whole range of waste issues in the union. That performance is very, very good.

I want to talk next about the financial results, if they can come up. That is the operating surplus based on the budgets that the CEC and the SMT set themselves each year. Do not spend more than you say you are going to get in. The financial surplus,

this is those operating surplus budgets plus the sale of things like properties and the shares, and interest, and other money, commercial things that we get in. In the years preceding that regime change you can see that the union was in a fairly dire financial position; even after selling properties and shares each year we were making substantial losses which forced us to sell off our assets.

When you talk about commercial organisations or put the union in that plane, then the truth and the reality is it would not matter if you were the biggest corporation in the world, you could not sustain losses like that year after year. So the union had to be put on a proper footing, not just in terms of organising workers and battling for workers, but on making sure we had the resources to deliver what Congress asked us to do.

They are the very good results. But, you know, if you tottle up most of those results, over seven years of pretty hard work and dedication from you in this hall, total credit to the people in the union, it just about balances the losses in those other two red years. That is how hard it is to start reclaiming and rebuilding the organisation; a lot of effort has gone into doing it. It is a fantastic performance. I wish the figures for the last year were quite as good as they look.

We did budget last year for a number of things which did not happen. We had to budget for potential for a General Secretary election, for a local government budget, for balloting, and for other things, and for equal pay battles. It did not happen but that money still needs to be transferred to this year because, frankly, it is pretty likely they will happen this year. So the figures do look a bit better than they are but nonetheless it is a very, very good performance and I do not want to hide that from you. Congratulations go to the senior management team and to everybody in the union for delivering that sort of performance.

What do we do with it apart from trying to organise the union and support the members? That is what we have been doing with it. You might say we have been screwing it away. We have been rebuilding the bedrock of this organisation. If I was to take that chart back that way you would see that in reverse. Once upon a time we had £80m in those reserves and over a long period of time, not that long maybe, a decade, each year you saw those red lines, the money to keep paying the union and keep it going came out of those.

No matter what organisation, you come to as many conferences, you can make as many resolutions as you like, colleagues, but unless you have the organisation and resources to back the members when they need it, then, frankly, it is hot air. We have been rebuilding the organisation. You have been rebuilding this organisation. Now we are a union, frankly, fit for purpose. So, we have had lots of battles. We have had to rebuild the union's pension scheme. We have had to invest lots of money in lots of other infrastructure things that were ignored for years, whether a new office in Scotland, support and work for a new office in Wales, and other parts of the union's operations; frankly, including the IT system, for years we did not do it because we could not.

The truth of the matter is that we have had some very, very good fiscal performances. Those charts show them and the accounts show them. Frankly, I move those

accounts. There have been no questions on the accounts. I move those accounts with a little note of pride that everything that you set us to do in tasks of getting this union, turning it round, and I am proud to say that the SMT and the Executive have delivered for you. I move those accounts, Mary, on that point.

Then I want to commend to you and move the General Secretary's Report, moving pages 7-23 and 35-57. I commend the work, as a number of people have said, of some of the departments at Head Office, the staff have been absolutely brilliant. We are very, very lucky: pensions, health and safety, legal, campaigns, press, the equality and inclusion, political, the General Secretary's Executive Department (it sounds really posh, there is actually four of us), European and international and all the sectional officers and staff, their performance during this period, in my opinion, has been five-star and I would set our people against anyone else in the trade union Movement. I think they have performed a fantastic job and they are value for money throughout the organisation. I think you should give them a round of applause. *(Applause)*

Now I come to the easy bit, which is the Finance Report. The union has been subject, as I said, to lots of external pressures the same as everybody else, and will continue to be so. The issue about energy costs, pension costs, wages costs, VAT, all impacts on the organisation and our ability effectively to maintain a GMB. We need whatever else we do, as I explained, to maintain and build the finances to support the members in struggle.

Congress policy actually, colleagues, is to implement increases in contribution rates in line with inflation but we have not been doing that. We have been coming back to you year after year saying we do not think we should do that. We think we should ask the members for less and we should effectively recruit more members and wherever we can make economies in-house, get better value in the deals we do across the whole of the union with the people who supply us with things. We have done that. In the last year I think we saved about £140,000 by organising our telephone contracts more effectively. So money that in the past people have just more or less taken for granted, the new regime budgets from the SMT make sure that every element of the money that we spend on behalf of the members is properly scrutinised.

This year again I come to you, Congress, to ask you to waive that policy again this year. If we were to go with the policy that is laid down in Congress it would mean going back to the members and asking them for a 12 or 13p a week increase and frankly that is just too much and cannot be sustained. It is a difficult choice. We know that. We know there are many members in difficulties. But the CEC is recommending that we ask for 5p a week. We know there are difficult times but the union has big battles to come and if we are to be equipped to do it then we have to make sure that we have the finances to do it because that battle is coming.

The GMB is not frightened by Cable, or Cameron, or anybody else, frankly, but we do have to have the financial strength to back our members. So it is with that clear goal in our minds that we say we seek the extra 5p increase in contributions across all the grades. For the last five years while we have been trying to turn the organisation round we have actually sought to improve the benefits and the allowances to assist members in need and activists working for our members' interests.

For quite a while now I and the Executive have been trying to find a way to dramatically increase the cash benefits payable to occupational fatal accident and total disablement, to upgrade those claims from their current levels. We are proposing a 250% increase of up to £10,000 for occupational fatal accident and total disablement, and a 450% increase in non-occupational fatal accident of up to £5,000 from £1,100.

We also recognise that the increases in fuel costs have impacted on lay officials the same as everybody else so we propose to raise the basic mileage payments from 30 to 35p a mile, a 17% increase. There is a 40p special rate before someone from Birmingham jumps and asks me what has happened to it; it is still there and remains intact and is payable in specific circumstances.

Funeral benefit, over the last few years — you think it is bad now, Steve, it was not much good, you would not even get a cardboard box for what it was a few years ago — we have steadily increased the benefit and lowered the qualification period that is required. But Steve and Glynn, I have to say here that Rule Amendment 307 goes way much further. In essence, what you are saying is that a member from day one, or one year in this case, would receive £500. That is an awful big increase. It does not really correlate to just a doubling of the current levels because the number of people who would qualify would obviously increase significantly.

Steve, I think you are right when you moved the Rule Amendment to point out that the old parts of the rule are a bit cumbersome, a bit difficult, and frankly I wonder how often they are applied. We cannot have rules and commitments to those people who are seeking the support and assistance when they lose their loved ones held up by bureaucratic red tape. The truth is that branches and regions do not delay claims on the basis that they have to comply with every section of the rule, but I agree with you entirely, Steve and Glynn, effectively those qualifying pieces within the rule book are effectively out of date and truthfully are hardly ever applied, and they should be tidied up. We do not want to disbar anybody at any branch for late claims for funeral benefit, which regions sometimes get and branches get from distressed or elderly partners of deceased members who simply were too much in grief to ever think about sorting out their problems at the time. The conditions attached to the current funeral benefit, I think it is, you are right, it is an added level of bureaucracy and I think we can sweep it away.

Now, in terms of cost, Rule Amendment 307 will require very substantial amounts, hundreds of thousands of pounds. If you make choices and it is all about choices, if you make that choice then it means something else has to go or contributions have to be increased. That is the stark choice when you are in the reality of managing the situation. The CEC recommend we continue to push up funeral benefit, we are not ignoring it, we are going to move it up, regular amounts each year depending on our performance and what we can afford. I just remind Congress that funeral benefits will rise from £130 to £300 now in a few short years if the recommendations of the £25 increase is adopted this year, a 9% increase this year, by the way.

On that basis, not on the basis that you are right, I think the conditions attached to it are irrelevant, and old-fashioned, but on the basis of the cost in this particular year, then the CEC ask you to oppose Rule Amendment 307.

The CEC also know that loss of earning compensation needs updating again so a 9% increase to £60 per day is recommended.

I move to the motions, if I may. Motion 31 actually is very, very helpful in drawing people's attention to the accountability of the new branch system because, frankly, the old one was not fit for purpose. The motion also points out that the important role of lay auditors and other branch officers, and I and the CEC and the senior management team heartily endorse that view. Margaret, the new branch accounting rules make it possible, actually, for the levels of payments to branch officers to be varied by branch recommendations through regional committees. In other words, in plain English, the reality of life is that if you believe that one of those branch officer roles in the branch is worth more or worth less, then you recommend it through the regional committee and it goes for payment via the Admin Unit. The figures I think that you were referring to that were given out were the tax-free thresholds that people can apply for but there is nothing stopping exactly as you say the important role being recognised by additional funds, providing the branch recommends it and the regional committee authorises it. That is the transparency that we were seeking. The other part of it is, of course, where it goes over the thresholds for Inland Revenue, then of course tax and National Insurance will be paid. But people will take account of that. It will be transparent and it will be upfront.

I hope the new system will prove to be far more flexible, actually, than the old fixed rates for branch office holders and I hope that that helps to deal with the problem. If it does not, then we will change it. That is the key issue on all this. The motion also draws attention to the vital role branch auditors play and the senior management team are recommending that compulsory training for all lay auditors is put into place so those important functions have more support.

Bill, Cathy, Motion 32 is fully supported by the CEC and already significant improvements to the original format, the coffee table without the legs, I think I described it when I first saw it, already significant improvements to the original format have been made. They have been made because of the positive and very helpful guidance and advice from branches and that, frankly, Bill and Cathy, will go on.

Barry, Motion 34 is also very helpful in pointing us to delivering more training and support for our branch secretaries. The new system was a big change, a massive change, and although there were briefing sessions and they were carried out across the union, and support systems and help were put in place, it was never going to be enough. Extra training support for our branch secretaries and our branches is a request that we must meet.

The use of online reporting for branch accounts begins in early 2012 and that will help many branches. The introduction of spreadsheets for reporting has also found favour with many branches but the CEC and the senior management team agree that we must do much more to help our key lay officers in the important roles they perform.

Congress, last year I made it clear that the tiny number of people who misused or abused the trust our members put in us to safeguard their money would not be allowed to undermine or besmirch the good name of our diligent, honest, dedicated branches and their officers. I made it clear then and I will do it again, there is no room in the GMB for anyone who thinks they can steal or misappropriate members' funds for their own ends. Since the last Congress we have continued that drive to ensure our members, and you in this hall, can have confidence in our systems and a number of officials covering branch secretary duties have been dismissed, have resigned, or brought forward their retirement. As a result of the investigations the Finance and General Purposes Committee is studying a lengthy paper which identifies instances uncovered and which will result in recommendations to the CEC about our procedures and where they were circumvented or breached.

Congress, don't anybody shed tears for those who were dismissed. It is the mark and measure of this great union that we do not fear rooting out wrongdoing. Take confidence that if people steal from us we will catch them and we will act. The reputation of our branch secretaries, who are key players in the GMB, and our branches which are the cornerstones actually of what we do, is stronger now than ever. I and the CEC thank you.

This great union of ours is growing. We fear no employer or politician. We exist to support and fight for the rights of working people and our communities and the vulnerable in our society. The GMB has emerged in recent years as a bit of a rough opponent to go in the ring with, as politicians, multinationals, and private equities found out. What we do is fight for justice, a decent and fair society. We are against exploitation. We demand respect for pensioners and a decent pension for all. We will not tolerate discrimination whether it is in the colour of your skin, your gender, your age, disability, your sexuality, or any other reason. We believe in the right to decent housing, social housing, council housing, and if politicians put a fraction of the money into that instead of lining the pockets of private landlords with housing benefit cheques and bed and breakfast payments, then not only would the country be richer, but tens of thousands of families would have a decent home to live in.

We believe in the right to good free high-quality healthcare. We believe in the right for all to have access to work. We believe that unemployment is a scourge. We believe young people have a right to education, to work, to respect, and we believe that one million young people denied those basic rights is a scandal and a waste. A million young people unemployed may be a statistic to David Cameron but the damage caused by denying young people those rights today will be seen in different statistics in the future. We believe that instead of demonising those receiving welfare or social benefits, a decent society, a fair society, should target the tax dodgers, the multinationals, the City and private equity pigs, pigs who boast that they pay less tax than their cleaners and pocket millions from exploiting care.

Whilst on the subject of banks and bankers – I am getting angry now — in the late 1920s there was a Wall Street crash. Do you remember that? You would, worthy brother. The Wall Street crash, the banks and the stock markets collapsed, terrible scenes, terrible scenes, of bankers and speculators throwing themselves out of windows in high-rise blocks. You know, sometimes I think the old traditions are the best! (*Laughter*) There was something introduced after the great crash in America in

the early 1930s called the Glass Steagall Act. It was introduced in America to protect the Americans and the global banking system from ever collapsing again. That Act which controlled how banks operated was in situ for 70 years. After much lobbying by banks and financial institutions, millions, tens of millions lobbying on Capital Hill they got it repealed in 2001: Well, do not need it, do you, with the light touch regulation. That is all we need.

Seven years, seven years in place to protect us, seven years, and they brought down the system again. We believe that when Bob Diamond, Barclays Bank, tells us to get over it, to get over what those people did to our lives, he demonstrates why radical reform to our banking laws and control over those greedy bastards is required. We will not forget or shut up about what those people did and we are going to continue to remind politicians in every particular party of their responsibility to protect the people of this country from rogues and thieves, and greedy gits like that. The idea that the banking and finance industries would have a conscience or would be self-regulating now looks like the sick joke that we as the GMB were telling people it was over years and years and years.

We believe that good public services are a hallmark of a decent modern society and we believe that those who deliver those services should be respected and valued and not treated like some nasty stain on a carpet.

Talking of nasty stains, Eric Pickles, or Jabba the Cut, as I like to call him, what a particularly horrible piece of work telling low paid workers to tighten their belts. Eric, tighten your belt; have a laugh. (*Laughter*) Liberal Democrats, like Danny Alexander, the man driving the attack on local government pensions. Do you remember him, ginger hair, glasses, a sort of combination of Harry Potter and Ron Weasley. You could sum up his entire life work experience on the back of a stamp. You see in the GMB we believe that you should respect and value those who need residential care, not parcel them off, make as much money as you can off them and then treat them and their carers with contempt.

A word now for all those who hanker after a return to New Labour, you forget it. That brand is as politically toxic as Nick Clegg. (*Applause*) Those in the Shadow Cabinet who dream of days gone by had better wake up and realise the stark truth, five million people stopped voting New Labour. They rejected you and so do we. The GMB vision of social housing, transaction tax, controls on banks and private equity, an end to our public services being sold off, carved up and privatised, and a future, a real future, for manufacturing jobs, that is the programme that this union is going to fight for inside the TUC, the Labour Party, and the country; growth, a future.

A word for Vince Cable — I said a word for him, not a word about him — a man with more neck than a giraffe. You come here and you lecture us about strikes doing economic damage. No strike has ever done a fraction of the damage that the banks and finance whiz kids have inflicted on our country and our people — (*Applause*) — and you go off and lecture them before you have the temerity to come here before an audience of working people and tell them when they want to stand up and defend their pensions or their jobs, or their communities, that you are going to come down and crack a whip on them. You bugger off and tell them before you have the cheek to come here and tell us. (*Applause/Cheers*)

I do not regret inviting him. I am so pleased we did because when you confront them then you get the real of them. To talk about fundamental rights on one hand and curbing those rights if you do not like what they say is hypocrisy and I am pleased we exposed it to full public air. The truth is actually exposing politicians to direct questioning from our members gives them nowhere to hide.

Finally, be clear, what we do is morally right. We can be proud of what we do. We can be proud of the things we state. What we believe is about justice. What we do is morally right. What we stand up for is help for the needy: not more for the greedy. We will not be bullied. Have a go! We will not be bullied and we will not stay silent. You know, we do not fear anything for ourselves. We do not fear anything for ourselves. We fear for the damage this Government is and will do to our citizens and our communities, and to Cameron and Clegg, and the other fellow, I give you this promise from the GMB, you try to stifle the basic fundamental rights of working people to go on strike and we will give you the biggest civil disobedience campaign your tiny little mind can ever be involved in. (*Applause/Cheers*)

Colleagues, I think as much as we want to reach a negotiated decent settlement for our colleagues in local government over the pension scheme, and we do, I think it is a dialogue with the deaf, and as much, frankly, as we want people to understand that they cannot keep trading on the elderly and the vulnerable in our society and parcelling up our public services, it is a dialogue with the deaf. That is why I say that I believe that these years of rebuilding this organisation has now made us fit for the purpose for which Will Thorne and those that went before us set its place, that is, not just to create social change but to challenge those who would destroy our society. Mary, I move. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Paul.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. I now invite regions who wish to speak on the Finance Report, please, and then I will be calling Paul to respond.

SIS. S. FARMER (Midland & East Coast) President, Congress, it is asking for a 5p increase in subscriptions. Yes, we are in difficult times but we are only talking about 5p a week. What can you get for 5p? It costs 20p to use public toilets. Look at the plus side, mileages for members using their cars on GMB business is to increase from 30p a mile to 35p a mile, loss of a day's pay, increased by £5 a day, occupational fatal accident benefit up to £10,000, non-occupational benefit up to £5,000. We are now showing a surplus in real terms. Just remember, Congress, where we were before our current General Secretary took over, in the red and selling properties to make up shortfalls. The risk is that if we do not have this minimum increase funds would dwindle, we would not be able to bring in the increased benefits, and the next year or the year after we would have to make a massive increase. We do not want boom and bust. We have all seen where that leads. Congress, get behind our great union. It would be a good idea for the national to put out the increase in benefits when they announce the increase in subscriptions. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. James.

BRO. J. STRIBLEY (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire): A proud Remploy worker talking on the Finance Report on behalf of the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region and talking in support of the Finance Report. We support the increase but with reservations. You might say it is only 5p but we have to be cautious that we do not increase too much at a time when our members are under attack and some have received no pay rises in the last three years. We need to look at the increase on part-time hours from 20 to 25 and hold on to what we have where possible. We need to carry on recruiting and in the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region we do better than most with 60,000 members. We know we have tough times ahead but we welcome the increases in car mileage and the loss of earnings, and funeral benefit. I move. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. Charlie.

BRO. C. ROBERTSON (GMB Scotland): GMB Scotland fully understands the reasons involved in making the recommendation to increase the level of contribution. The document sets out to report solid financial progress in 2010, a very difficult year, and the value to our members of financial stability within the GMB. For those that may not remember, our financial results and operating surplus has not always been positive. There are those of us here today who can remember the dire straits prior to 2003 and since 2003 we have seen year on year an operating surplus combined with growth, a major transformation ensuring our ability to be a major campaigning union on behalf of the members and to maintain our identity and independence. There is no doubt that this is a difficult decision having an impact on our members due to the austerity measures of this Government. These proposals we believe will ensure our ability to campaign tirelessly for our members while at the same time balancing this by increased benefits, which have required improvement. GMB Scotland therefore supports the Finance Report: *Building on Growth*. (Applause)

BRO. N. SMITH (North West & Irish): This is a difficult response to give when clearly many delegates feel strongly, and rightly so, about any rise at all being implemented, given the financial hardships many of our members are already facing with many more being affected in the future. Also, the fact is the flat rate increase is applied across both grades and continues to impact adversely on part-time workers who see the differential between 20 hours part-time and 38 hours full-time eroded year on year, something particularly hard to justify to members working 22 to 25 hours. However, taking into account all those points there are many positives. For several successive years GMB has been financially sound, that follows Congress decision not to merge but to strengthen and grow, a decision which has proved to be the right one given the performance or the non-performance of Unite. The whole amount of the increase will be used to grow the union and strengthen our stability, not to shore up MPs who give us no help. They will have some way to go before they see any more of our members' hard paid dues. There will also be substantial increases to five benefits. The lowest increase is 9%, the largest increase by a huge 450%. Funeral benefit, occupational fatal accident, total disablement, and non-occupational fatal accident, all benefit members' families at times of great need. Mileage rates and loss of earnings increases recognise the contribution our activists make whilst working on behalf of our members often at cost to themselves. Whilst the increase

does not kick in till October, members will receive the benefits from the week following Congress, therefore giving continued stability to the union, and the increases recognise some of the difficulties facing our members. North West & Irish Region agree to accept the report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Neil. Paul, do you wish to respond to anything?

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Colleagues, I will be really quick. Neil made the point, and I am sorry I missed it, Neil is absolutely right, the 5p will go entirely into the general funds of the union, no proportion of that at all will go into the political fund or will go in supporting any particular MP. It will go into the general funds of the union to organise and support the members directly. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, can I now call the vote to accept the Annual Accounts & Auditor's Report. Motion 31, does the region accept the qualification? Yes? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Does Southern Region accept the statement? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you, Richard. With that, Congress, the Annual Accounts & Auditors Report, Motion 31, Motion 32, and Motion 34, the General Secretary's Report pages 7-23 and 35-57, and the CEC Finance Report, all those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Annual Accounts & Auditor's Report was ADOPTED.

Motion 31 was CARRIED.

Motion 32 was CARRIED.

Motion 34 was CARRIED.

The General Secretary's Report (pages 7-23 and 35-57) was ADOPTED.

The CEC Finance Report: Building on Growth: Financial proposals for the year ahead was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: I now come to Rule 55, Funeral Benefit. Does the Birmingham Region wish to respond or would they wish to withdraw in favour of the statement?

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Thank you, President. I will have a go. I totally agree nobody here would want to go back to the bad old days and I do not think there is anybody in this room, nobody denies that Paul, the CEC, and the management team have done a brilliant job over the last few years but I still think that the £300 for our dead members is an insult to their memory. Some of the older members who can just pay the £25 life membership are still paying full dues so that they can play a role within the union. Paul, you said it is hundreds of thousands, it is not millions, and if you look at the Finance Report and see how much they invested last year in some companies and some banks, and compare it to the pittance that is invested in supporting our members in their hour of grief, I think we should show that we are a caring, compassionate, and generous union. I still ask that the floor supports this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Are you prepared to accept the General Secretary's statement on Rule 55? No?

BRO. S. ROBERTSON: No.

THE PRESIDENT: Fine. I will put it to the vote. Can I now put RA307 to the vote? The CEC are opposing this. All those in favour please show? All those against please show? That is lost. (*Calls from the floor*) Too late, that is lost.

RA307 was LOST.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am going to go back to some of the work that we did not get through this morning; that will be Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Services, Motion 142, to be moved by London Region, and Motion 144 to be moved by the Southern Region.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

VALUE CARE STAFF

MOTION 142

142. VALUE CARE STAFF

This Congress demands justice in pay for Care Workers. We ask the CEC to use all its influence to ensure Care Workers are valued by Society and receive a fair wage and not the current practice of minimum or near minimum wage.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): Here we go again. I have been coming to Congress for six years now and this motion is always on the table for discussion. God knows why the managers of these homes disrespect our members because I am sure I do not. They pay the Government minimum wage whilst the manager's pay is huge, and the bonus to go with it. Looking after these people who are vulnerable is an important job and the pay should reflect this. We have had Vince Cable talking of plans for the country. What about the subject of Southern Cross who have taken the profits before giving the care: now they cannot afford the care. That is outrageous. I alerted my local council weeks ago after being given the heads up by GMB. They appeared not to have a clue but now tell me they will put Southern Care on the at risk list. Never mind that, how about taking them back into the local authority care, but they are not likely to do that because Essex County Council are getting rid of everything. These people have worked all their lives, fought in wars, and they do not want much, just to be cared for by competent staff. Homes like these even keep beds empty, although they are being paid for by the local authorities. Guess why. Yes, so they can run on the minimum staff; furthermore, robbing people of jobs so as to line their pockets. Pay these people a decent wage. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Secunder?

SIS. K. WEBB (London): Congress, we need to recognise the people who are caring for our community and family members. These people are working day and night to provide a much needed service to our communities. Is it fair that they should receive minimum or close to minimum wage? The answer is no, they should not. They should receive a salary which matches their devotion and hard work in caring for others. I hope that if any of my relatives required care I would be there to do it for

them myself. However, if I could not care full-time for my relatives, I should be safe in the knowledge that there are people to help and support me. Let's not forget the recent Panorama programme about how some people are being poorly treated and physically abused in care homes. Let's support our staff and stop this from happening again. We need to care for these vulnerable people by supporting the care staff. I hope we have fewer burdens in finding the funds to do so in future. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I just make a comment on that? We are discussing the care homes but I believe we should be incorporating all care staff, including those who work in people's homes and are being totally exploited with no contract; they only get paid when they reach the job, and they have to pay their own petrol and supply their own cars. This should be our next big investigation of the contract con tricks. (*Applause*)

EXPLOITATION OF FOREIGN CARE WORKERS AND THE GANGMASTERS LICENSING AUTHORITY (GLA) MOTION 144

144. EXPLOITATION OF FOREIGN CARE WORKERS AND THE GANGMASTERS LICENSING AUTHORITY (GLA)

In an endeavour to lower their costs and reduce the pay of their care staff, the care sector continues to recruit staff from overseas particularly from Eastern Europe and South East Asia. A recent BBC Face the Facts programme estimated that over 10,000 foreign migrant workers are employed in the UK care sector.

Most of these are recruited through agencies who exploit these workers, by making them pay for the recruitment service. The BBC found in one case a worker had been charged £8000 for her fare to the UK and her employment place. Although the care homes pay the agency at least the minimum wage for the workers, these agencies frequently deduct accommodation and travelling charges from the pay before the pay is passed on to the worker. In one case accommodation amounted to a camp bed in communal room with a kettle and microwave oven.

This Congress supported the last Labour Government's effort to reduce exploitation of foreign workers in the food, agriculture and the farming sector of UK industry by introducing the Gangmaster Licensing Authority which has now been able to regulate these sectors. We also note that Oxfam and others are campaigning to have the Gangmaster Licensing Authority take over responsibility for employment of foreign workers in the care sector.

We also note that the Gangmaster Licensing Authority has expressed a willingness to do this. During the last parliament the Liberal Democrat MP Ed Davey supported this action. Yet now as the Coalition Government's Employment Minister responsible, he now says "this would be additional and unnecessary regulation". Even though a recent report by his department BIS and the National Audit Office on better regulation found that "The GLA's impact in improving working conditions for some vulnerable workers has been impressive, particularly in view of its relatively small size".

This exploitation of foreign workers is both morally wrong and illegal, it also has the effect of suppressing the pay of other workers in the sector. Therefore this Congress believes that the GMB should support Oxfam in their campaign to transfer responsibility of employment in the Care Sector to the Gangmaster Licensing Authority.

(Carried)

SIS. N. JACKSON-AMPAW (Southern): I am sure most of you in this hall will remember the tragic death of the Chinese cockle pickers who died at Morecambe Bay when they became trapped and overwhelmed by the rising tide. Out of this tragic incident it is right to say that these hardworking and exploited workers did not die entirely in vain. Out of their deaths came the gangmaster legislation to control the people who employ and exploit migrant workers. The last Labour government reduced exploitation of foreign workers in the food, agriculture, and farming sector of UK industry by introducing the Gangmasters Licensing Authority which has been able to regulate the sector. However, the licensing authority only has responsibility for workers in the food, agriculture, and farming sector of UK industry. What about the many foreign workers in other sectors who are still being exploited? They have their passports taken from them, they are not paid directly by the employer but by an agency who deducts expenses for living accommodation, protective clothing, and travel to work, and worst still for finding them the job in the first place, leaving many of them destitute and unable to break free of these agencies. This happens in the care sector too. Care workers are recruited from Eastern Europe and Asia. A BBC investigation last year found workers paying back agencies up to £8,000 for the introduction to a job and their fare to the UK. Cuts in public spending and the crisis in the care sector with companies like Southern Cross in financial trouble will mean more pressure will be applied to keep pay down, and the best way to do this is to recruit outside the UK.

Congress, we should note that Oxfam and others are campaigning to have the Gangmasters Licensing Authority take over responsibility for employment of foreign workers in the care sector. Congress, we should support Oxfam, especially as the Gangmasters Licensing Authority has expressed willingness to do this. During the last parliament the Liberal Democrat MP Ed Davey supported this action yet now as a Coalition Government Employment Minister responsible he now says this will be an additional and unnecessary regulation, yet a recent report on better regulation by his own department, BIS, and the National Audit Office, found that the GLS impact in improving working conditions for some vulnerable workers has been impressive, particularly in view of its relatively small size. Congress, the exploitation of foreign workers is both morally wrong and illegal. It is suppressing the pay of other workers in the sector. Please support. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Formally. Thank you, Richard.

The motion was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to come in on the debate? No. Home time! Thank you. Can I now put Motion 142 and 144 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 142 was CARRIED.

Motion 144 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I now call on Helen to move the Standing Orders Report.

STANDING ORDERS REPORT NO. 6.

(Adopted)

SIS. H. JOHNSON (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, Emergency Motions: The SOC has accepted a further Emergency Motion as being in order for debate. This is Emergency Motion 6 entitled Syrian Regime Emergency Motion, standing in the name of GMB Scotland. The SOC is recommending that this be heard tomorrow morning.

Times for speakers: President, Congress, you will be aware that in accordance with paragraph 9 of the Guidelines for Congress Business the SOC recommends the time for speakers taking into account the business on the agenda. You will also be aware that in accordance with paragraph 9 it may be necessary in order that the business be properly completed speaking time is to be curtailed. Would delegates please note that at this moment the SOC is considering whether the speaking times will need to be amended tomorrow? Please be mindful of this when you are checking your final documents for tomorrow. We will let you know first thing in the morning what the decision is that has been taken. President, Congress, I move SOC Report No. 6. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Barry. Do you accept Standing Orders Report No. 6? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much, Helen and Barry.

SOC Standing Orders Report No. 6 was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, could I ask for the movers of Emergency Motion 4, Fukushima Disaster, Northern Region, to move and second. While Northern Region are coming to the platform, who said people do not watch us and listen? As a result of the coverage of Congress a head teacher of a Southall High School where GMB has members has contacted GMB officers to arrange a meeting to discuss the implementation of a pay rise for all manual and support staff at the school. *(Applause)* If she is watching, well done. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the rest followed! *(Agreed)* George, you would not be on time-and-a-half now at Brent because you forgot to take your dinner hour off! Okay.

FUKUSHIMA DISASTER EMERGENCY MOTION 4

GMB CONGRESS 2011

EMERGENCY MOTION NO. 4

FUKUSHIMA DISASTER

THIS CONGRESS, WHICH REPRESENTS THOUSANDS OF WORKERS IN THE UK NUCLEAR ENERGY INDUSTRY, EXPRESSES ITS CONDOLENCES TO THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN, PARTICULARLY THE WORKERS AND FAMILIES OF FUKUSHIMA PREFECTURE.

THIS CONGRESS RECOGNISES THAT GMB HAS LONGSTANDING LINKS AND A STATEMENT OF CO-OPERATION WITH DENRYKO SOREN, THE TRADE UNION FOR WORKERS IN THE JAPANESE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY, AND IS CONSCIOUS THAT THE TSUNAMI DISASTER, ALSO, THREATENED THE STABILITY OF THEIR NUCLEAR REACTORS, RAISING A QUESTION OVER THE CONTINUED SAFETY OF THESE INSTALLATIONS.

CONFERENCE, THEREFORE, AGREES THAT FURTHER LESSONS NEED TO BE LEARNED IN THE SAME WAY AS LESSON WERE LEARNED WHEN A GMB DELEGATION VISITED CHERNOBYL IN THE 1980S AND AGREES TO SEND A DELEGATION ON A FACT-FINDING MISSION FOR THIS PURPOSE TO FUKUSHIMA AND TO REINFORCE OUR LINKS.

CONFERENCE NOTES THAT THE WEST CUMBRIA ECONOMY DEPENDS ENTIRELY ON THE SELLAFIELD SITE AND THAT A LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY COULD LEAD TO A LOSS OF JOBS ON A SITE WHEREIN WE HAVE THREE AND A HALF THOUSAND MEMBERS, WHILST RECOGNISING THAT SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT.

SELLAFIELD INDUSTRIAL *Northern Region*

(Carried)

BRO. J. KANE (Northern): President, Congress, I could say first-time delegate, first-time speaker, but I am not Vince Cable. I like to speak the truth. Congress, anyone witnessing the force of nature and the devastating effects of both the earthquake and the tsunami could not have failed to have been deeply moved at what was happening to the Japanese people. Men, women, and children died, communities were torn apart. It will take years to rebuild but rebuild they will; the Japanese are a very resilient nation. Congress, we do not want the UK rushing into making a rash decision. We want consideration of our safety record, facts and figures, not speculation and scaremongering. In West Cumbria we have thousands of GMB members who are proud to work in the nuclear industry and many more who would love the opportunity to do likewise. One in three families in Copeland and one in four in Allendale have someone directly employed on the Sellafield site. Congress, devastation, deprivation, and decimation will be the impact across the community of West Cumbria if those with the closure agenda win the argument. It is our GMB members that undertake environmental monitoring. We tell the company the results. I stress that anyone in this room who thinks we put the company before our families should hang their heads in shame.

Congress, we the GMB have been at the forefront of all issues regarding nuclear safety. We set the standards, we raise the bar. We negotiated a company compensation scheme 20 years ahead of its time. We all need to gain a clear understanding of what occurred in Japan and the lessons learnt from the impact of nature, recognising one key point, that despite one of the most powerful earthquakes in Japan's history it had no impact on the Fukushima reactors. It was the impact of the tsunami which caused the cooling water failure and release of radioactivity, but

once again the reactors failed to go critical, they held out. To me that is a testament to the design engineers and our Japanese counterparts. Congress, I have actually been to Japan on three occasions. The first time was at the request of a union called, Denryko Soren, which is a confederation of electric power related industries. We drafted a statement of cooperation between the GMB and Denryko Soren and now is the time to implement that statement and implement that agreement. We the GMB have always been at the helm and stayed in the nuclear industry through very choppy waters. Denryko Soren, like us, is a very proud union. Remember our motto, *Unity is Strength*. We need to open up a dialogue as soon as possible with our Japanese counterparts, share our experiences, share our knowledge, and learn from that. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

Emergency Motion 4 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to come in on the debate? Yes. No. Yes. Come along. Charge him for the overtime!

BRO. F. ALEXANDER (GMB Scotland): Congress, this will be quick. The TV images of the earthquake and the resulting tsunami hitting the coastal areas of Japan will stay imprinted in the memories of millions of people, and especially those of us like me who work at operational nuclear power stations. In 1986, I was part of the GMB delegation that went to Russia and Ukraine to investigate, in cooperation with the various labour organisations, the reasons for the Chernobyl accident and to report back to Congress on our findings. As the major trade union within the energy industry and with large numbers of GMB members employed within the nuclear industry, we need to understand what happened at Fukushima and apply those lessons to ensure that the United Kingdom nuclear sites are both operated and designed to ensure that safety is the number one priority. Safe, secure, and with world-class environmental standards is our aim both to ensure the safety of our staff and families surrounding the plants but also to ensure that everyone in the United Kingdom can rely on our plants to provide secure, clean, and affordable energy supplies both now and in the future. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Frank. I remember you going there. Can I now put Emergency Motion 4 to the vote? All those in favour please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Emergency Motion 4 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Congress, for being so patient and good, all except Mario. (*Laughter*) And Glyn. Congress is adjourned till 9.30 in the morning. Thank you.

Congress adjourned.