



Together, we
**MAKE
WORK
BETTER**

GMB Congress

Brighton 2023

Award Winners' Report

Eleanor Marx Award 2023

Award Winner: Maddy Wilkinson,
North West & Irish Region

Maddy is an inspirational leader and Branch Secretary, tirelessly supporting convenors and workplace reps since the 1990s.

Maddy brought Equal Pay claims against Cumbria County Council on behalf of GMB members in the early 2000s and is once again leading the way in bringing claims for women members in Cumbria.

Maddy has successfully secured facilities agreements for seven convenors on full time release, ensuring GMB can continue to campaign and represent their members.

Maddy is helping secure the future of GMB. She has supported convenors in identifying new workplace representatives – four of them under 30 in the last 12 months.

Maddy has supported each convenor to lead on campaigns – including the Women's Campaign and Men's Health Campaign. The women's campaign has included funding of Period Poverty Boxes in council workplaces and delivery/upkeep of these and providing menopause books in workplaces for members to borrow. The Men's Health campaign includes educating members on a variety of different issues that may impact them such as mental health, prostate cancer and testicular cancer – breaking the stigma around these topics.

Additionally, Maddy organised filled food baskets across Cumbria for members, recognising that many were feeding their children before themselves.

Maddy always encourages representatives to be active in the union – securing positions on Regional Council, Committee and Equality Forum.

Maddy has greatly improved GMB's image and standing so that we have grown – and are now the largest union in Cumbria local government.

In 2022, General Secretary Gary Smith recognised the hard work of Maddy's branch for its growth in membership (25%) and campaigning.

Maddy has never been to GMB Congress, always encouraging others go instead. Her branch was asked to put on a fringe event this year to showcase the organising work they are doing, and it is only right and proper that this amazing rep will attend and receive this award in person.

Mary MacArthur Health & Safety Rep Of The Year Award 2023

Award Winner: Simon Wilde, London Region, for outstanding campaigning work in Best Food Logistics across the Region and beyond.

Simon has spent the past couple of years advocating for the safety of drivers in Best Food Logistics, who deliver to third-party customer premises.

After many years of inadequate risk controls, with the expectation of safe systems of work being provided by the hosting customer, Simon successfully convinced the company to create a standardized process for assessing the risks involved in delivering to different locations. This including using stairs and third-party equipment, hazards that Best Food had previously ruled to be out of scope for assessment.

As a result, Health and Safety Representatives at Best Food can now provide input and challenge any assessments that do not adequately address all the risks drivers face while making deliveries. This has been a seismic change in the health and safety culture of the business, and has ended a long period of poor practice from management.

In addition to creating this process, Simon also developed a training module to ensure that only competent individuals are conducting these assessments. Thanks to his efforts, the process is now working effectively at Best Food Logistics, with a high volume of assessments and hazard reporting, and a sharp reduction in work-related injuries.

Simon is currently collaborating with health and safety representatives from Bidfood to replicate this standardized process in their own sites, clear recognition that his approach now represents best practice in the Just-in-time delivery sector.

John McClean Health & Safety Branch or Workplace of the Year Award 2023

Award Winner: Asda Bulwell Nottingham HSC Safety Rep Team, Midlands Region A17 Branch

The Safety Reps have completely changed the approach to health and safety in Home Shopping Centre, overcoming substantial management challenge and reluctance in the process.

Members were complaining of low temperatures in the Asda Hub, and the Rep Team identified an average temperature of -20c. By taking a collective grievance, they forced management to concede the issue and implement measures to both raise the temperature, and protect workers from the cold.

This was followed by the identification of a major issue with sack barrows across Asda, and a second collective grievance resulted in the trialling and implementation of a new, safer barrow design. Defective barrows have now been removed from the site.

When GMB implemented Fire Safety Week in Asda, the Team found 7 fire extinguishers which were out-of-date and unsafe to be used. When reported to management, the response was hostility and a refusal to accept the report. However, after informing management that they were facing fines of £5000 per extinguisher, and personal criminal charges against the General Store Manager that could result in unlimited fines and 2 years imprisonment, the management side conceded that the report was correct and replaced the extinguishers.

There are now weekly health and safety meetings on site, with monthly inspection walking tours. Whilst there is still hostility from managers, the membership is growing, and members are seeing that work is now better and safer for them.

Join GMB now online at
www.gmb.org.uk/join

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