

GMB

CONGRESS 2023

.....
BARBARA PLANT
(National President)
(In the Chair)
.....

Held in:

**The Brighton Centre,
Brighton**

on:

Sunday, 4th June 2023
Monday, 5th June 2023
Tuesday, 6th June 2023
Wednesday, 7th June 2023
-and-
Thursday, 8th June 2023

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY ONE
(Sunday, 4th June 2023)

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FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY, 4TH JUNE 2023

MORNING SESSION

(Conference assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to Order. Welcome all to Brighton.

Congress, this week I will be joined once again by our Vice President, Malcolm Sage. He will be assisting with chairing Congress throughout the week, ensuring we have a smooth running of the agenda.

BANNER CEREMONY

THE PRESIDENT: We will now move on to the traditional opening of Congress, which is the Banner Ceremony. This year GMB Scotland will be forming the Banner Party, and this year, for the first time, they will be joined by the Retired Members' Association. I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. Congress, please stand to greet the National Banner.

(The National Banner parade entered the Congress Hall to the music of Jerusalem)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. That is always a really emotional start to Congress.

WELCOME TO BRIGHTON

THE PRESIDENT: In a slight change to precedent, we have invited a member based in Sussex to welcome us to Brighton. This Congress will always be the voice of the membership, and it feels only right that you hear from our great activists. She also happens to be the Standing Orders Committee representative for the Southern Region this year. I'm proud to introduce Niki Palermo of Southern Region to the stage. Thank you, Niki. *(Applause)*

NICOLETTA PALERMO (B50 Sussex): President and Congress, it is our pleasure to welcome you all to Brighton and the Southern Region. My name is Niki Palermo. I am a GMB activist from B50 branch here in Sussex. We are so glad to have Congress in Brighton again, and I am sure a lot of you are, too. It's a lot cheaper. I am here to remind everyone that Brighton is a GMB town, as is

the rest of Sussex. There are GMB members everywhere, from the Town Hall to the hospitals, the Ambulance Service, care homes, schools, refuge depots, the parks, EDF and the staff who work right here in the Brighton Centre, who might, at a certain time today, be issuing something – I am not saying anything – as I will let Gary do that later.

All these members keep our public services running and keep Brighton the town that we keep coming back to for Congress. There is nothing quite like seeing GMB flags flying down Queen's Road, North Street or Lewes Road, as we march on demo days, landing at the Old Steine for the rallies or, of course, when Congress comes to town.

Last year our refuse members in Wealden went out on strike for 43 days for better pay. It was a long and difficult dispute. I did get a nice sun tan. I was on the picket line with all of our guys trying to stop the disgraceful management from breaking the strike. Our members held out, they didn't give in and they took home just under 27%. I think we might have got a mention from our General Secretary. Just to let you know, the Wealden guys were back out on strike on Thursday and Friday of last week because of the bullying and intimidation that goes on from Biffa. They did stand together, they did stand strong and they came back out again. *(Applause)* We don't do this for the dream of being congratulated on the stage – not a chance, I'm shaking – but we do this because we deserve more. We all deserve decent lives and GMB members all over the country are striking for themselves. That's what GMB members do together, and together we are stronger. So welcome to Brighton and let's get this party started! *(Cheers and applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Cheers, Niki. Thank you.

OBITUARIES

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Congress to stand in silence as a mark of respect for departed GMB colleagues. *(Congress members stood in silent tribute)* Names will be shown on the screen and a copy of the Obituary list is on page 6 of the Congress Guide. Thank you. Too many names are gone but never forgotten. *(Applause)*

SAFETY PROCEDURES

THE PRESIDENT: You will find details of the fire and evacuation procedures in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide document. There is a prayer room

located in Office 7 on the 3rd floor backstage. Can I remind people, please, to have your phones on silent. Thank you.

WELCOME TO DELEGATES AND VISITORS

THE PRESIDENT: I would now like to introduce the members on the platform party. As I have said, we have Malcolm Sage, our Vice President, and Gary Smith, our General Secretary and Treasurer. Throughout the week we will be joined by members of the Research & Policy team who will be assisting with the agenda, as well as other members of GMB staff assisting with Congress, who have done so much behind the scenes to get this Congress ready for you.

Could I, please, welcome the following guests and visitors. We have three new General Member Auditors who will be supervising counting of votes. They are Jayne Davies (North West & Irish Region), Kevin Fox (North East Yorkshire & Humber Region) and Stephen Horton (Midlands Region)

And, of course, our Verbatim Shorthand Writer, Michael Thear.

This year we will also be joined by Sign Language interpreters from Interpreting Matters. Please welcome Karen Green, Helen Foulkes and Omoyele Davey. I would also like to welcome and thank the live subtitle writers from Interpreting Matters who will be providing this service remotely.

Other suppliers I'd like to thank as well are Exhibit World, U2 Events, Full Spectrum Printers, and, of course, Pellacraft. Without these organisations, we would not have Congress running quite as smoothly.

And, of course, a big thanks to Gary Maziere and T5 Event Media, who provide all our staging and PA equipment in the main hall and fringes to make sure Congress really looks and feels like it always does.

Most importantly, could I extend a warm welcome to all our first-time delegates (*Applause*) and welcome back all our delegates who we haven't seen in a number of years in person.

As you know, a motion was unanimously passed at our Congress in 2017 in support of the Total Eclipse of the S*n Campaign on banning *The Sun* newspaper from all GMB buildings, GMB conferences and all GMB meetings. (*Applause*)

We want to remind you all of GMB policy that this rag is still banned and should not be brought into the centre. *The S*n* caused a lot of pain and suffering with its lies and misreporting and we've not forgotten it and never will. *(Applause)*

Before we start the business, I want to set out my thanks to all the Brighton Centre staff who will be looking after us this week. They are GMB members and, as Niki said – it is in my notes – the branch announced yesterday that they have voted to take industrial action. Congress, please show them your support. *(Applause)*

Could I also remind delegates that all Congress sessions are transmitted live on the GMB website, and YouTube. Please ensure that you refrain from using inappropriate language and from making personal attacks on staff or any other individuals while you make your speeches.

Make sure you remember to say your name and Region clearly for the verbatim record, and so we will all get to know each other. Please also mention if you are a first-time speaker, because you will get a big welcome.

Delegates will be able to find all the important documents for this week in your delegate packs, which should include the following: One page Delegate Outline Programme and Order of Business; Income & Expenditure Report and the Final Agenda & Congress Guide. This document gives you information on Congress Motions, CEC Rule Amendments, SOC guidelines for Congress business, including time limits for speakers, Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, Representation Statements for Congress, Composite Motions, Fringe Meetings, Exhibitions and Seating Plan. If there are any changes to the programme, I will give you advance warning.

ROLL CALL

Would all Regional Secretaries please notify the Congress Office of any changes to your delegation. Please use the email address for the Congress Office as the first port of call for any issues.

TELLERS AND SOC

THE PRESIDENT: The names of all Regional Tellers are on the screen. All Tellers must remain in the Hall whilst Congress is in session and delegates must be in their allotted seats when a vote is taken. There should be a slide with the Tellers' names.

To see if you are eligible to vote, please look down at your Congress Credential. If it says the word “Delegate” on it, then you can vote. All others in the Hall are NOT eligible to vote.

Can I congratulate Karen Dudley on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for the first time. Well done, Karen, and best of luck! *(Applause)* However, it would be remiss of me not to mention Helen Johnson, who has been the SOC Chair for the last fourteen Congresses. This year, though, she is on a well-deserved holiday. *(Applause)* The names of the members of the Standing Orders Committee is on page 24 of your Final Agenda.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1

THE PRESIDENT: I now call Karen Dudley, Chair of the SOC, to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, which is on page 20 of your Final Agenda.

GMB CONGRESS 2023 STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO 1

The business of Congress will be conducted in accordance with the Agenda, the Programme and the Guidelines for Congress Business, subject to changes at the President’s discretion.

Times for Congress

The Standing Orders Committee wishes to draw the attention of Delegates to the starting times of the morning and afternoon sessions set out in the Congress programme as follows:

Sunday 4 June – Wednesday 7 June
9.30 am – 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Thursday 8 June
9.30 am – Lunchtime

The Standing Orders Committee recommends that the President be authorised to close each session when appropriate, without further reference to the Standing Orders Committee or to Congress.

Times for Speakers

The Standing Orders Committee recommends the following Time Limits for Speakers.

General Motions and Rule Amendments:

Movers up to	4 Minutes
Seconders up to	2 Minutes
Other Speakers up to	2 Minutes

Officers’ Reports:

General Secretary up to	10 Minutes
Movers of Section Reports up to	5 Minutes
Questions up to	1 Minute

Officers' and Section Reports, and questions to them, should relate only to matters of general policy, and not to details of negotiations.

Special Reports and CEC Statements:

Mover up to	6 Minutes
Seconder up to	3 Minutes
Other Speakers up to	3 Minutes

It would help the business of Congress enormously if, wherever possible, motions could be formally seconded, and if replies to questions and debates were kept to a minimum

The Standing Orders Committee draws Delegates' attention to the rostrum and asks speakers to be ready by the rostrum when it is their turn to speak. Chairs will be provided at the front of the hall for speakers awaiting their turn.

Questions on Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report

Questions on the Balance Sheet and Auditors' Report must be submitted in writing to graham.dow@gmb.org.uk no later than 5.30 pm on Monday 5 June.

Motions Out of Order

The Standing Orders Committee has ruled that the following Motions and Rule Amendment are Out of Order for the reasons specified:

Motion 5 Monaghan Report Recommendations X

This Motion calls for recommendations in the Monaghan Report to be written into and adopted by GMB in the Rulebook. This would require rule amendments, but none have been submitted, and the Motion does not state where in the GMB Rulebook the Monaghan recommendations should be added.

Motion 6 Dignity and Fair Pay for Trade Union Workers X

This Motion is not appropriate for Congress to debate as it involves matters relating to GMB staff terms and conditions which are not within the scope of Congress and is contrary to the Special Motion adopted at Congress 1985 (reproduced in the Guidelines for Congress Business) which reserves such matters to the CEC.

Motion 29 Equality Officers – A Full Time Role

This Motion is not appropriate for Congress to debate as it involves matters relating to GMB staff terms and conditions which are not within the scope of Congress and is contrary to the Special Motion adopted at Congress 1985 (reproduced in the Guidelines for Congress Business) which reserves such matters to the CEC.

Motion 32 Mileage Rates X C2

This Motion is not appropriate for Congress to debate as it involves matters that are in the competence of the CEC to determine. Under Rule 33, Paying Expenses, the CEC will set scales of payments for expenses, fares, subsistence and loss of working time for members, representatives, and officials who carry out GMB business. The Motion is also contrary to the Special Motion adopted at Congress 1985 (reproduced in the Guidelines for Congress Business) which reserves such matters to the CEC.

Motion 33 Mileage Rates X C2

This Motion is not appropriate for Congress to debate as it involves matters that are in the competence of the CEC to determine. Under Rule 33, Paying Expenses, the CEC will set scales of payments for expenses, fares, subsistence and loss of working time for members, representatives, and officials who carry out GMB business. The Motion is also contrary to the Special Motion adopted at Congress 1985 (reproduced in the Guidelines for Congress Business) which reserves such matters to the CEC.

Motion 71 GMB as a Disability Confident Employer X

This Motion calls for GMB to sign up to be a Disability Confident Employer. This is a staffing issue because each level of Disability Confident accreditation covers matters that would normally be a matter for the union's internal staffing structures including the NNC such as recruitment processes, employment policies, and reasonable adjustments. These are not within the scope of Congress and is contrary to the Special Motion adopted at Congress 1985 (reproduced in the Guidelines for Congress Business) which reserves such matters to the CEC.

Motion 124 Delayed Parcel Deliveries X

This Motion calls for future recognition agreements with logistics and delivery companies to include clauses relating to delayed parcel deliveries. This motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is through the process of collective bargaining by GMB members in those areas and the relevant GMB committees.

Motion 142 The Police Force X

This Motion calls for all police staff to undertake an enhanced DBS check. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is through the process of collective bargaining by GMB members in those areas and the relevant GMB committees.

Motion 144 Mandatory Risk Assessments for Staffing Ratios for Each and Every Classroom X

This Motion calls for mandatory staff ratios to be set up for Special Schools. This Motion ought to be dealt with but a more appropriate body, that is the two national schools committees.

Motion 146 Clear Cover Policy for School Support Staff X

This Motion calls for a cover policy in schools. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is the two national schools committees.

Motion 157 National Campaign to Rescind Section 2 T & Cs within Ambulance Services X

This Motion calls for a national campaign to eradicate the use of section 2 terms and conditions in ambulance services. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is the GMB National Ambulance Committee.

Motion 158 NHS Ambulance Workers Pension and Retirement Age should be aligned with other Emergency "blue-light" service workers X

This Motion calls for a campaign for ambulance workers to pursue a comparative pension retirement age with the workers above or for a "special class" arrangement to be applied. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is the GMB National Ambulance Committee.

Motion 159 Standardised Meal and Rest-break Procedure and Penalty Payments across all NHS Ambulance Services X

This Motion calls for a national campaign to have a unified meal and rest break procedure with an updated penalty payments review across all NHS Ambulance Services. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is the GMB National Ambulance Committee.

Motion 163 Ending Low Pay Culture X

This Motion calls for GMB to write to every local authority asking them to adopt the commitment to pay the Living Wage for employees, with protections for contracted staff. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, as this is an industrial/JIC matter, and most council pay rates are governed through the NJC collective agreement.

Motion 221 Feeding Staff and Children to Support Concentration, Wellbeing, and Mental Health at all Schools.

This Motion calls for support for free breakfast clubs and free meals for various groups including staff. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body as it could be part of a pay claim item, that is the relevant JIC or schools committees.

RA 286 Rule No 15 Clause 6

This Rule Amendment proposes the use of Single Transferable Vote for electing a General Secretary and Treasurer. This method of voting can be used for statutory elections but is only relevant if there are more than two candidates standing for election, and there is no way of knowing how many candidates will stand. To make the proposed Rule Amendment workable, the amendment would need to be qualified to apply only where there are more than two candidates but does not do this. The proposed amendment would leave Rule 15 deficient, and GMB would have to instruct the Scrutineer to conduct a ballot using Single Transferable Vote even if there are only two candidates for election.

Motions in line with Existing Policy

In accordance with recommendation 14 of the “Framework for the Future of GMB: Moving Forward” CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress 2007, the CEC has advised the Standing Orders Committee about those Motions which are in line with existing GMB policy. The CEC Report on “Existing Policy Motions” printed in the Final Agenda explains when and how existing policy was established in each case. The Standing Orders Committee has accepted the advice and is therefore recommending to Congress that the following Motions be put to Congress for endorsement without the need for debate:

Motion 78 Pay Parity for Black Asian Minority Ethnic Workers – Time to Enshrine the Ethnicity Pay Gap in Law

Motion 83 Community Hubs for Mens’ Well Being

Motion 84 Dignity at the Toilet

Motion 86 Neurodiversity in the Workplace

Motion 91 Help The Long Covid Sufferers

Motion 101 Pensions Triple Lock

Motion 104 Paternity Leave

Motion 118 Zero-Hours Contracts

Motion 123 North South Poverty Divide

Motion 130 Retail Workers Abuse is at a Record High

Motion 153 Equal Terms and Conditions within the NHS

Motion 190 No Back-Sliding on Windrush Compensation

Motion 194 Regulation of Sex Workers

Motion 197 Protect Trans Rights

Motion 201 Long Term Covid Sufferers should be viewed as having a disability Motion 202 Period Poverty

Motion 205 Prevention of NHS Privatisation

Motion 207 Health Staffing and Training Commission needed to ensure enough medical staff are available to NHS

Motion 210 Misuse of Funding in the NHS

Motion 217 Academisation/’Hiving Off’ All Schools

Motion 229 Energy Prices in the UK

Motion 235 The Pollution by the Water Industries of rivers and coastlines

Motion 236 Cut the Crap

Motion 251 Accessible Transport

Motion 253 Removal of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Composite Motions

Agreement has been reached on the Composite Motions printed in the Final Agenda.

Mobile Phones

If mobile phones are brought into the Congress Hall, they must be switched off at all times when Congress is in session.

Film Cameras

The Standing Orders Committee has given permission for film cameras to be used in the Conference Hall. The Committee has been assured that filming will be carried out with no interference to Delegates.

DVDs, Videos etc

Requests to play DVDs, videos, etc should be submitted to the Standing Orders Committee for approval prior to being shown at Congress.

Bucket Collections

Requests for permission to hold Bucket Collections should be submitted in writing to the Committee by 11 am on the first morning session of Congress. (It is a term of Exhibitors' agreements with GMB that they will not request permission to hold a collection.) Requests must be submitted in writing by the Regional Secretary, and must have the support of the Regional Delegation. Priority will be given to requests for bucket collections which concern trade union or related issues. Where permission is granted, those requesting the collection must organise, count and bank the collection, if necessary liaising with the Congress office for support from Congress Stewards. They must then notify the Congress office of the amount collected, so that the President can inform Congress.

In the normal course of events the total number of bucket collections to be authorised by the SOC will be limited to a maximum of 3, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances at the discretion of the President. The SOC will limit consideration of requests for bucket collections to a maximum of 1 per Region, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances.

By agreement reached at Congress 96, Regional Committees will each contribute a further sum to the national Congress gift. So permission will not be granted for a collection to augment the Congress gift.

GMB CONGRESS 2023 SUPPLEMENT TO STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO 1

Motions Out of Order

The Standing Orders Committee has ruled that the following further Motions are Out of Order for the reasons specified:

Motion 155 Job Evaluation Manipulation Must End

The Motion calls for a campaign to end manipulation of the job evaluation scheme in the NHS. The motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is through the relevant GMB Committees in the NHS.

Motion 162 Cost of Living Pay

The Motion calls for a decent pay rise for public sector workers. This Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is through the lay democratic structures for members in those sectors and through the relevant National and Regional Public Services Committees.

Motion 222 Bring Local Authority Care Provision Back In-House

The Motion calls for a £15 an hour to be included in the next NJC claim. The Motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, that is the local government NJC.

GMB CONGRESS 2023 STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

KAREN DUDLEY (London Region, Chair, Standing Orders Committee): I, formally, move SOC Report No. 1. President and Congress, before I move the report, with your permission, I would like to mention the passing away of two

SOC members since we last met in 2022. They are Colin Kerr from London Region, who has been a CEC Observer, and Georgie Murray had been the SOC member from the old Northern Region for a number of years. They are both sadly missed and we offer our sympathies to their families, friends and colleague trade unionists.

President and Congress, I will now move on to the Report. You will find a copy of SOC Report No. 1 in your Final Agenda starting at page 16. I formally move adoption of that report and, in doing so, would colleagues please note the long-standing Guidelines for Congress Business on page 12 of your Final Agenda. This will help all of you, especially new delegates, in understanding the procedures and guidelines that the President and the SOC work to. A copy of my verbal report moving SOC Report No. 1 on behalf of the SOC will be issued to delegates later today. Any further SOC reports will be issued to delegates during the course of the week. I hope this will assist everyone in being able to keep track of decisions, such as withdrawn motions.

Withdrawn Motions and Rule Amendments: The SOC has been informed that a number of motions have been withdrawn since the printing of the Final Agenda. We will report these in full later today. For now, please just note that the following motions have been withdrawn as they were due to be heard this morning: Motion 6, Dignity and Fair Pay for Trade Union Workers, from London Region; Motion 7, Senior Leadership Team of the Union, from Midlands Region; Motion 10, Sustainability & Ethical Future, from North West & Irish Region. Would Congress delegates please note that if any further Congress motions or rule amendments are to be withdrawn during the week, then, please, advise your Regional Secretary who then, in turn, can inform the SOC.

Agreed Composite Motions: The SOC would like to thank delegates and their Regional Secretaries for agreeing 17 Composite Motions that also appear in your Final Agenda, starting at page 107.

Congress, there are three agreed Composite Motions where more than two regions are involved. They are Composite 4: GMB Legal Services Through UnionLine and in Northern Ireland, involving Southern, London and North West & Irish Region. Composite 5: Employment Tribunal Cases linked to Race Discrimination and Ensuring Equal Access for GMB Union's Support of Black Members in Race Discrimination Cases, involving Southern, North East Yorkshire & Humberside, London and North West & Irish Regions. Composite 16: Energy – Pre-Payment Meters Justice, involving North West & Irish, London

and Midlands Regions. The SOC is, therefore, recommending that each of the regions in the composites mentioned should still have the opportunity to speak on the composite motion, if they so wish. This is by way of an exception to Motion 8 – Speakers on Motions – carried at Congress in 2018, which limits the speakers to the mover and seconder where the motion is unopposed.

Existing Policy Motions: Congress, in accordance with Congress decisions adopted since 2008, the SOC is recommending that motions which are existing policy are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate, following advice from the CEC on particular motions in question. The existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 at page 18 of your Final Agenda. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC, which is at page 121 of your Final Agenda. The letters “EP” also appear by the side of each such motion in the Final Agenda.

Motions out of Order: Congress, the SOC has ruled that there are 15 motions remaining on the agenda that are out of order for debate. First, there is one motion that calls for changes to the GMB Rule Book but no rule amendments have been submitted. Secondly, there are two motions that are contrary to rule. Thirdly, there are two motions that are not appropriate for Congress to debate as they involve GMB staff matters. Fourthly, there are 10 motions which are about industrial strategy and are matters for the GMB members in those areas and the relevant GMB committees and are not policy matters for Congress.

The details of the out-of-order motions are contained in your Final Agenda at pages 16 and 17 of your Final Agenda and in the supplement SOC Report No. 1 that has been issued to you.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. (*Applause*) Is there any delegate who wishes to speak on any of the SOC’s recommendations? Can you say which specific motion it is, please?

CINDY GAVIN (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Congress, I am speaking against SOC Report No. 1, in particular concerning Motion 144: Mandatory Risk Assessments For Staffing Ratios for Each and Every Classroom and School. The SOC has ruled this motion out of order. The SOC states that the motion should be dealt with by two schools committees. Point to note: schools only have one committee. Yes, there are a number of schools with

different forums but these are not committees, and it varies from region to region. Lack of funding, staff and training across our schools in education is a national disgrace, and this is putting the health and wellbeing of our staff at risk, and add that to the increasing verbal and violence that they receive every day, which is what this motion is about.

THE PRESIDENT: Cindy, you need to speak as to why it is out of order and not speak to the motion.

CINDY GAVIN: I'm sorry. I didn't write this speech. What we are actually asking of you is just to tell the SOC to do one, to go against it and let's move the motion, have that debate. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I am -sorry, I should have made it clear. You are coming up to give your reason as to why the motion should be backed, not to give the speech that you will make when the motion may get back in.

LINDITA SALIASI (Southern): I am speaking on Motion 146: Clear Cover Policy for School Support Staff. We ask the motion to stand. I have agreed to support the motion. This motion is not out of order and it deserves to be debated. Support staff work hard for the children, who are our future, but need to be looked after, too. Schools rely more and more on the goodwill of support staff to step up and work in roles that are above their pay scales. They are the backbones. Without them, schools would be in trouble. School support staff must be paid for the roles they do. Congress, therefore, oppose this decision. The motion should not be ruled out of order.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Just stick to why it should be back in. Thank you. Can we keep to why it should be back in?

SIMON DAY (Midlands): I am a first-time delegate and a first-time challenger, apparently. (*Applause*) I am the branch secretary with A02 Ambulance Service Branch in the Midlands Region. Our motion 157 has been ruled out of order as it should be dealt with by the National Ambulance Committee. I recognise that ambulance pay is part of the wider NHS pay and part of the even wider public services pay structure that we have a special report on.

However, section 2, terms and conditions, have been a divisive and destructive efficiency policy making Ambulance Service staff pay for the cuts by this Tory Government during the past 13 years. We never voted for it as GMB. We want to challenge it as Ambulance Service workers. We want

the support of our union behind us in that challenge. We have the support of NAC. We have the support of our members, and we want our union to join and understand that challenge. That is why I would like to oppose the out-of-order motion that is put forward by the SOC. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Simon. Are there any other delegates who want to speak? Again, the same rules apply. Just keep it to why it is out of order.

TRACEY BEESON (London): I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* We wish to challenge Motion 124 on Delayed Parcel Deliveries. We are a new branch and this is our first motion. While we understand that the industry issues need company negotiations, our branch wanted Congress to hear about this and help to create future policy. We believe that this motion is not just limited to couriers but also to our members in the districts and food-service companies, all who work extended hours and who are affected by the impact of transport delays. Please allow this motion to be debated. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tracey.

PAUL BLOCK (London): I am speaking regarding Motion 229 being existing policy. Whilst I agree that this motion may be existing policy, the situation regarding many members' energy bills cannot be understated or ignored. This problem has grown out of control and it is having massive effects on members' energy bills and, hence, their cost of living. Are the GMB piling on the pressure to Government and lobbying the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy? What I am asking for is feedback on this existing policy as members are struggling, struggling to pay bills, and they have asked me what, if anything, can be done about the soaring and immoral prices being charged in the UK for energy. Surely, as we head towards a general election, now is the time to start arguing the case to restore energy companies, both electricity and gas, to public ownership so that costs can be controlled as they are in other countries. I ask for Congress support for this matter, please. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. If there are no more delegates wishing to speak against the SOC, let me ask Karen to respond.

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President and Congress, as Standing Orders Committee Chair, I am responding to the challenges to SOC Report No. 1.

Out of order motions. Congress, in considering whether a motion is out of order, the SOC does not look at the merits of the motion. The SOC only considers whether the motion is out of order by reference to the criteria in the guidelines for Congress business, which are adopted by Congress each year and are contained in your Final Agenda on page 12. In particular, motions which deal with industrial strategy are matters for the GMB members in those areas, and the relevant GMB committees, and are not policy matters for Congress. I will deal with each challenge in turn.

Motion 144: Mandatory Risk Assessments for Staff Ratios for Each and Every Classroom. This motion calls for mandatory staff ratios to be set up for special schools. This motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body; that is the two National Schools Committees.

Motion 146: Clear Cover Policy for School Support Staff. This motion calls for a cover policy in schools. This motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body; that is the two national schools committees.

Motion 157: National Campaign to Rescind Section 2 of the Terms and Conditions within the Ambulance Service. This motion calls for a national campaign to eradicate the use of Section 2 terms and conditions in the Ambulance Services. This motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body, which is the GMB National Ambulance Committee. This is a pure terms and conditions motion.

Motion 124: Delayed Parcel Deliveries. This motion calls for the future recognition agreements with logistics and delivery companies to include clauses relating to delayed parcel deliveries. This motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body. That is through the process of collective bargaining by GMB members in those areas and the relevant GMB committees.

Motion 229: Energy Prices in the UK. Congress, as the motion states, the public ownership of energy is long standing in existing policy. This position has been debated by Congress numerous times, including in response to the 2021 CEC Special Report on Energy and the Environment. It is an active area of policy work which helped secure the Labour Party's commitment to a Great British energy company under public ownership. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Because there have been challenges, I now have to take individual votes on the challenges and the reference back. This will be to put the motions back into the agenda. The CEC is asking

delegates to vote against all reference-back proposals, but I will take a vote on each one. I will take them in the order I have them before me. Can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put Motion 124 back into the agenda? All those in favour, please show? All those in opposition, please show? Do that again. Can people make sure their hands are really up, please. Can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put Motion 124 back into the agenda? That's better. Thank you. And then all those opposed? That is back in. (*Applause*)

Again, on Motion 144, can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put Motion 144 back into the agenda? Hands well up. Thank you. All those opposed? That is also back in the agenda. (*Applause*)

Can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put Motion 146 back into the agenda? Hands up, please, all those in favour of the challenge? Thank you. All those opposed? That is also back in the agenda. (*Applause*) Everybody loves a challenge, don't they.

Can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put Motion 157 back into the agenda? All those in favour of that challenge, put your hands up? Thank you. I think we know where this is going. All those opposed? That is also back in the agenda. (*Applause*)

Lastly, Motion 229. Can I see all those in favour of supporting the challenge to put Motion 229 back into the agenda? All those in favour? Thank you. All those against? That is also back in the agenda. (*Applause*)

Just before Karen leaves, we do need to vote on the whole of SOC Report No. 1. Can I now ask all of those in favour of SOC Report No. 1? All those in favour, please show? Thank you. All those against? Thank you. You have now adopted Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 with those challenges accepted. (*Applause*)

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The Vice President, Malcolm Sage, took the Chair.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, it now gives me great pleasure to call on our President, Barbara Plant, to address Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Friends, colleagues and comrades, it is wonderful to be back together. Brighton has a special place in my heart. It was here that I was

first elected as President in 2018 and where I led Congress for the very first time in 2019, and I am still as nervous now as I was then. As the song goes, “Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside”. Of course, it is a special place for our Union. After all, as Niki said, Brighton is a GMB town where our members are never afraid to take action to make work better. To the many GMB members in refuse collection, schools and other parts of the county, your union salutes. *(Applause)*

To return here after a period that has included so much change and upheaval in the world feels really good. To everyone here today, as GMB President, I welcome you to the GMB Annual Congress. That is such a lovely thing to be able to do; to say “Welcome” to my GMB family. It is fantastic to see so many new people at Congress. Let’s give delegates who are joining us for the very first time another huge welcome. *(Applause)*

Every year we come together to shape our union. We debate, we listen and sometimes we disagree. We swap stories and have fun. We try to get our speeches done before Malcolm steps in. As we join each other, we refresh our ties of shared commitment and we renew our bonds of solidarity. For me it feels like coming home. The spirit of common endeavour that will flow in the coming days is coursing through the body of our great union. During the past year, Gary, Malcolm and I have visited inspirational GMB people across the country who are doing amazing things. It has been such a wonderful time, seeing up close the efforts of all to make work better.

We often talk about our union covering nearly every job and industry and visiting GMB members and staff proves it. In The Potteries of Stoke on Trent we saw the skilled work being carried out to produce beautiful dining sets for use on luxury cruise liners. In Durham we watched in awe as majestic church organs were made ready to take their place in the grandest cathedrals. In Newport, Wales, we looked on as the most modern of rail carriages took shape, each playing their part to improve public transport on railways everywhere. In London we met Asda workers who proved to the world during the pandemic that they are not simply retail staff. They are key workers and deserve the pay and conditions that respect the essential work they do for the public. Everywhere we saw GMB people – members, reps and staff – pulling together to make work better.

When Gary took the helm, he said that the union needed to get out and start lighting fires. In the last couple of years I have often thought about those words, “lighting fires”. They remind me of the Match Girls’ Strike in 1888 and the brave women who sparked their own flames for better conditions

at work. The Match Girls helped to ignite a new form of unionism where workers took control and organised themselves. Across GMB we are seeing this same courage beginning to set new standards for trade unions.

In the last year, GMB members at the Apple Store in Glasgow won an historic victory in securing union recognition. An amazing achievement! Seven hundred plus GMB members working for Jacobs in Aintree showed incredible solidarity taking action over an 11-week period. For people who produce many of the nation's much-loved snacks stuck it out, although some were cream-crackered! *(Laughter)* But victory was sweet. Women won a land-mark dispute that delivered a decent pay rise after a major shift by the employer, and it has been a year when GMB has taken on global giant Amazon in Coventry. *(Applause)*

As we sit here today we have more than 800 members at the site, more than 50% of the workforce and are battling hard for recognition. When we win – when we win – it will send a message of hope around the world. We are working together everywhere and we are winning to make work better. *(Applause)*

There is still so much for us to do. This Tory Government have failed our country. Their recklessness has created economic and social chaos; foodbanks instead of a decent wage, with the rich getting richer while everyone else gets poorer. What we are seeing is dividing down, not levelling up.

Effective, smart and courageous trade unions are the tonic needed to restore health to our country. Our potent medicine that rebalances power and delivers real justice for working people scares this Government witless. They know that when we campaign and win we make a seismic difference. We show that things really can be better. That is why they are speeding into uncharted waters to try and stop us.

Congress, let's be clear. The new anti-strike laws are a stain on our country. *(Applause)* Withdrawing your labour is a basic right in a decent society. Removing this right for huge amounts of law-abiding women and men tells us so much. It is a desperate act from a desperate Government. They are all about division and we will respond as we always have when under attack. We will strengthen our solidarity. We will come together even more. We will increase our campaigning and we will win! *(Applause)*

It is not just at home where we can offer hope for people. Our international bonds help us unite with sisters and brothers across the world. We've shared experiences with workers in Colombia and Palestine. We are part of a thriving global community, and I am so proud of our continued support to the people of Ukraine. Our union and many people in this very room have been at the forefront of trade union support and assistance to alleviate the suffering caused by Putin's regime. Our message to our comrades fighting this illegal invasion is clear. We stand with you. *(Applause)*

Congress, the sun is shining outside on us. I feel so optimistic about our future. We have made such huge progress in our union from the difficult times of the recent past. Women are at the centre of GMB life in a way that has never truly happened before. More than half of Regional Secretaries are women, and there is gender parity on the Senior Management Team. There is more to do but the difference with the past is night and day. Although women may be breaking the glass ceiling across our society we are still miles away from getting the equality we deserve. It remains a national scandal that women are still having to fight for equal pay. Our ground-breaking Women's Campaign Unit is showing the way here and working with GMB regions to win back the monies that has been stolen from people just because of their gender. Eleanor Marx understood that women have to be economically free to be truly free. This is as true today as ever. As we are showing across GMB, our union's commitment to winning this freedom is reborn.

From the women chainmakers of Cradley Heath in 1910 to the equal pay strikers who took on Glasgow City Council in 2018 and won, and now the women fighting for equal pay in Asda, Birmingham City Council, Cumbria and many other places, stories of courage and commitment of solidarity and unity, it shows together that we can and do make work better. *(Applause)*

As we share the next few days with each other, take a moment to think about the wonderful, wonderful, GMB family of ours, the people who make it so very special, the journey we have been on and how far we still have to travel. Take pride in our achievements and look for the next hills that we will climb together.

I am so very glad to be with you here beside the seaside. Let's have a great week and do our members proud. Enjoy Congress. Thank you. *(A standing ovation)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for that reception. That was lovely.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before we begin our first debate, I would like to explain a few points of procedure. Please listen carefully. To save time, I will take motions in groups. Your session programme will show the grouping. If you are speaking on any of these motions, you must register the number on your delegate pass at the desk in front before going to the chairs here in front of the rostrum ready to speak. Please make sure that you do this every time you speak as we will have changeovers of staff at the desk. I will call movers and I will call seconders. In line with Motion 8 carried at Congress 2018, I will not be calling for additional supporting speakers on motions, unless a delegate is speaking in opposition.

Where the CEC is supporting a motion, I will advise Congress. Where the CEC has any other position, a member of the CEC will give the reasons for their decision. We will then move to a vote of all the motions in that group, either as one or individually.

On Special Reports, the CEC will have moving and seconding speakers, and I will invite one delegate from each region to speak on the report or statement at that time. Any motions or rule amendments which stand in opposition or have been asked to be withdrawn in favour of will automatically fall and not be debated if the Special Reports are carried.

When it comes to moving and seconding your motions, delegates will see a light on their right-hand side when they speak on the rostrum. When the light turns yellow this means that delegates have 30 seconds left to finish their speech. After those 30 seconds the light will turn red. If you are still speaking when the light turns red, you will be encouraged to wrap up or you may even be cut off.

Most importantly, practice your speeches, keep to the time, because that means everybody else has their chance as well, but have fun!

Finally, could I remind Congress that, as you have voted in SOC Report No. 1, all those that have been agreed as existing policy motions and out of order will now not be debated.

So we move on to the first business.

UNION ORGANISATION: CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: Our first group of motions relate to Congress. Could the speakers of Motions 1, 3 and 4 please be ready. To ensure we get through business smoothly, could the speakers of the next group of motions please also be ready. Can I ask the mover of Motion 1 from Southern please come to the rostrum.

BANNER CEREMONY SONG

MOTION 1

1.BANNER CEREMONY SONG

This Congress believes that the song Jerusalem being used during the banner ceremony is non-inclusive. We understand that the words to “Jerusalem” were written by the radical and visionary William Blake, and have been interpreted by many as a pledge to fight for a better society. However, we feel that their original meaning has maybe become lost over time. The song can nowadays often come across as narrowly nationalistic and contains religious references which might exclude many – especially as in the most recent census of England and Wales less than half of the population described themselves as Christian. Also, it could be misinterpreted as insensitive towards Palestinians and Muslims that support the Palestinian right to self identify and until there is a peace settlement it should not be held up as an example of unity and utopia.

We are calling GMB to stop using this song during the Banner Process and request a new song is adopted which is inclusive to all.

We suggest a suitable option would be Bob Marley’s “Get Up /stand Up, Stand Up for your Rights or Don’t Worry About a Thing”.

L26 RICHMOND & WANDSWORTH BRANCH

Southern Region

(Referred)

MARIA CHARLES (Southern): Good morning, President and Congress. I propose the motion on the Banner Ceremony Song. This motion calls on the union to stop using *Jerusalem* during the Banner Ceremony and adopt a new song that is more inclusive. Our suggestion would be something more upbeat like Bob Marley’s *Get Up/Stand Up for your Rights*. The song *Jerusalem* comes from a good place and William Blake was a socialist, but there are elements of the song which might put off some people. The ideas included in it can be seen as nationalistic and the song has often been hijacked by the far-right and racist groups. Also many younger people do not know the song. We think there are other songs that would reflect the

diversity of the union. Bob Marley's *Get Up/Stand Up for your Rights* is much more inclusive. In Southern Region we always play that song on our picket lines and everyone knows the song. It gets people moving, singing along and inspires people.

The song reflects the unity and solidarity that we, as trade unionists, want to promote. We think the song would be a much more up-beat way of beginning Congress and delegates would start with enthusiasm and a positive outlook. We are pleased that the CEC is going to look at our suggestions and we urge them to consider a more positive and inclusive option. Southern Region accepts the reference back and looks forward to hearing more. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maria. Can I have a seconder for that motion. Are you formally seconding it? Thank you very much. (*Motion 1 was formally seconded*)

UPDATING BRANCHES AND MEMBERS ON CONGRESS MOTIONS MOTION 3

3. UPDATING BRANCHES AND MEMBERS ON CONGRESS MOTIONS

This Congress requests that the CEC provide earlier updates on the progress of motions passed at the previous year's Congress so that required action can be taken.

The updates are to be provided no later than the deadline of the 31 January of the following year which is the deadline for branches submitting motions for the next Congress.

This is to potentially avoid a stockpile of motions but also so that members who have had motions passed, can be reassured that where a motion requires action immediate or otherwise that action is being taken. Issuing a regular motions update would be hugely appreciated.

136 ISLINGTON APEX BRANCH

London Region

(*Carried*)

TONY CHOLERTON (London): Congress, I move Motion 3: Updating Branches and Members on Congress Motions.

Every year this Congress passes motions that will determine policy and action on a range of issues from union organisation to international affairs. Yet after those motions are passed, it is difficult to know how the union has progressed on these issues. This motion simply asks for more information about how each motion is being dealt with. Things have improved over recent years but more needs to be done. Regular updates will show how

active the union is and, hopefully, over time reduce the duplication of motions. That means less motions not going forward because they are existing policy.

We are all aware that different motions will be dealt with differently depending on workload, campaigning and legislation, but having regular updates will reassure delegates that motions they have put forward have not been lost. It may also have positive benefits with members and delegates showing greater interest in GMB policy and possibly helping to take on some of the work needed to move these motions forward.

Congress is aware that some motions will take longer to deal with than others and some may become part of a greater awareness campaign but that could be explained in an update. This explanation could inspire people who wrote the motion to become part of the campaign. This could also be explained for other reasons why a motion needs more time to be considered. For example, if the union is inundated with campaigns and other work so that it does not have the staff to deal with the issues within the motion, then the branch putting them forward may have people who are willing to put in the time to alleviate the backlog and progress the motion.

For this to happen, we need to know what is happening and when so that we can move things forward. This motion is being supported with a qualification, which we will accept. We understand that some things take longer than others and that we cannot always meet deadlines but the spirit of this motion is clear. Congress, please support this motion. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Is there a seconder?

VARSHA UNADKAT (London): Congress, I second Motion 3 on behalf of London Region. In line with what the mover has outlined, there is a deadline for branches to get our motion to regional office by the end of January so that regional office can pass that motion to National Office by the rule book deadline of February 7th. This year the report on action on motions from last year did not go on to the national website until February 8th, and this was well after we submitted our motion, which is unacceptable. Before putting in a motion branches really need to know what has happened to their motion from last year so that they don't put in a similar motion. We understand that some actions cannot be completed, but what we need is a quarterly update to be done post Congress. As I wrote this speech, I looked

at the progress on the 2022 motion, which is on the national website and it was still there by February 2023. An entry update on this motion, as it says, will be provided ahead of Congress 2023. Well, we are still waiting. It is important that branches play a real role in policymaking, and to do that we need to be well informed. We are sorry if this is because of the staff numbers, but this is important to us. Can we, please, have a more regular update and we especially need an update by the end of December so we can carefully consider motions for the next year.

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

VARSHA UNADKAT: Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESENT: Can I have the mover of Motion 4.

CHILDCARE SUPPORT AT CONGRESS MOTION 4

4. CHILDCARE SUPPORT AT CONGRESS

This Congress notes that there are 2.8 million single parent families in the UK today.

We as a union, need to give them a voice and allow for equal representation at Congress by lessening the barriers that prevent this happening.

Congress believes that this group of members has an important role to play within this great union and we need to give them the same chance as other members have, to take part. Most have had a difficult time through their lived experiences and would have much to bring to our union family.

Therefore, we ask for an undertaking that creche, or childcare facilities are made available at Congress for those single parents, whose barrier to attending is the care of their children.

These could be provided by sourcing spaces in established facilities, local to where Congress takes place. This would reduce the cost implications of specific insurance and hiring qualified staff, particular to each Congress.

We believe the benefits would far outweigh the costs.

We therefore instruct the CEC to ensure that these members are given an equal chance to be heard at Congress.

We stand for equality; therefore it is time to practice what we preach!

L10 LEICESTERSHIRE BRANCH
Midlands Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN ALEXANDER (Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 4, Childcare Support at Congress. I will try not to get red-lighted this time, Madam President.

This Congress notes that there are approximately 2.8 million single-parent families within the UK today. We, as a union, need to ensure that they are represented and their voice is heard as many of these members, by their lived experiences could make potentially significant contributions to our union family. We believe that these members have an important part to play in our great union and we need to make that opportunity available to them. We note the response from the CEC to this motion and welcome the fact that this has been and will continue to be provided on a congress-by-congress basis.

However, we are saddened to read that it has been several years since this facility has been utilised. Are we failing here? Are we, as a union, not getting this message across loud and clear enough, the one that says “Even if you’re a single parent, you can still attend. You can still be part”?

As part of our equality strategy and to give equality of opportunity, surely we must promote this more. This is a great chance to encourage those who may otherwise have slipped off into a more background role, understandably, because of their children. But it helps them to remain at the heart of the union’s democracy. This will not only help to keep them in our union family but it will also bring their children into involvement from a young age and expose them to the love of a union family and the way we all work together. Also it shows them the benefits of trade unionism. Surely, this will encourage a new generation of trade union members growing up through their families and will help to ensure that the right for our workers’ rights continues through our children. I, therefore, ask you to support this motion and its request. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Is there a seconder for that motion?

NATHAN KEIGHTLEY (Midlands): Congress, I second Steve’s address on the motion, basically. I have lost the bet, by the way, on Steve getting red-lighted. (*Laughter*) We believe that the GMB is inclusive and we believe that the GMB is a family. We understand that the GMB and its future relies on people being brought up into the trade union Movement by family members and friends involved in activism. It is noted that the CEC response says that this is already in place. We believe that it should be promoted so that anyone with childcare issues can join in with Congress and not have to

worry about their little ones. Let's start to get families involved in our family. I support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathan. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to those motions? (*Declined*) No. In that case, I ask Donna Spicer from the CEC to respond, please.

DONNA SPICER (CEC): President and Congress, it's good to be back in Brighton, people! (*Applause*) I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, responding to Motions 1, 3 and 4.

Turning, first, to Motion 1 – Banner Ceremony Song. The CEC is asking that this motion be referred. An alternative to *Jerusalem* would need to be carefully considered. We wish to refer this motion to the Congress Working Party to consider options ahead of Congress 2024.

Moving to Motion 3 – Updating Branches and Members on Congress Motions. The CEC is supporting Motion 3 with a qualification. The CEC is happy to accept that a first update can be made on progress to motions by 31st January. Generally, updates are made three times in the year between Congress. The qualification is that not all motions are possible to action by 31st January. Therefore, we reserve that some motions simply won't have an update to report by 31st January. This might be dependent on legislative timelines overtaking events, staff capacity and competing industrial priorities of the union.

Finally, on Motion 4 – Childcare Support at Congress. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. It has always been the case that creche or childcare facilities can be provided for unaccompanied delegates if requested. For example, the standard nomination form for branch nominations under rule 8.7 states: "We are able to provide creche facilities for children of unaccompanied delegates at Congress". The question is also asked at regional pre-delegate meetings each year, but it has been several years since any request has been received. The qualification is that in accordance with current practice, relevant creche or childcare facilities will only be provided on a congress-by-congress basis if requests are received rather than automatically providing this facility at each congress when none may be required.

Congress, therefore the CEC positions are to refer back Motions 1, 3 and 4 and be supported with qualifications.

THE PRESIDENT: Before we go to the vote, I did hear that Southern Region will accept that reference back on Motion 1. *(Agreed)* Yes. That means if something is referenced back, we don't take a vote. I also heard London Region accept the qualification on Motion 3; is that correct? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Midland Region accept the qualification on Motion 4? *(Agreed)* So I will go to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 3, please show? Hands clearly in the air. Anyone against? That motion has been carried.

All those in favour of Motion 4, please show? Anyone against? That has also been carried.

Motion 1 was REFERRED.

Motion 3 was CARRIED.

Motion 4 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT AND ORGANISATION

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to motions relating to Recruitment and Organisation. I will be calling the speakers for Motions 12, 13, 15 and 18, so please be ready and come down. Could the mover of Motion 12 please make their way to the stage.

GMB APP FOR SMART PHONES

MOTION 12

12. GMB APP FOR SMART PHONES

This Congress wish to request the GMB to fund and develop an application for use in conjunction with smart phones for members.

With a hopeful incoming Labour Government and a repealing of anti-trade union laws, developing an app for smart phones that would allow members to electronically vote in ballots, have access to GMB information, issues and campaigns and contact their union, would be an advantage for reps and officers to be able to organise workplaces.

B76 BRIERLEY HILL BRANCH

Midlands Region

(Referred)

JOHN PAUL WESTWOOD (Midlands): Congress and President, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Today I stand here asking you for your support on the motion that our branch made for GMB to invest in the development and creation of a smart phone application which

could be accessed by all GMB members and officials. As we entered the 21st century, technology began to move at a rapid rate. We believe that, as an organisation, GMB needs to move with it. The idea that people could have GMB in the palm of their hands is one that we should all be looking to make a reality. An app that can incorporate distributing information about local, regional and national GMB campaigns and issues we feel would hugely increase activism within our membership.

We would also look to this app to enable balloting of members. The hopeful onset of a Labour Government and the repealing of anti-trade union legislation would mean that online ballots is something that could be a strong possibility in the not-too-distant future. This app would also enable members to easily keep their details up to date. Any rep or officer who has gone through ballots for industrial action recognises the importance of accurate membership details. Streamlining our approach is essential to successful dispute outcomes. GMB's app would enable this situation to be easier to achieve. Being able to securely move information is a challenge that any organisation has when dealing with personal details. GDPR is so very important and being able to control our own data when transferred would help to avoid the pitfalls of this regulation.

Possibly the most important service this app could deliver is the aim of our union to grow. The app could easily incorporate the ability to sign up new members immediately. Its portable nature means that we could have membership forms in our pockets 24/7. The branch recognises that the cost of the smart-phone application could be high but we hope that the benefits of this application would far outweigh the cost of the investment made and the return on investment would almost be immediate.

Being a trade unionist, it almost comes with the territory that you face an uphill battle when campaigning and organising, but we firmly believe that this application will be an essential tool in achieving our goals. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, John. Secunder, please.

ANDREW HUMPHRIES (Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* We need to get behind this motion, a GMB app for smart phones. It will help our reps and new members. We will be able to see what is happening throughout the GMB. It will promote the GMB into the next century with all this smart technology which people use. This is why I second this motion. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andrew. Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 13.

RECORDING MEMBERS' NEXT OF KIN DETAILS

MOTION 13

13. RECORDING MEMBERS' NEXT OF KIN DETAILS

Sadly, we recently lost a member who passed away. The member was not known to any WorkPlace Organisers. We were informed of her passing by the company. We do not have any details of the family or next of kin for our member. Therefore, we are unable to contact any one to pass on our condolences or for us a Union to pay The Funeral benefit as per Rule 53 to the family or next of kin.

We ask Congress, to consider the way in which we recruit members and specifically ask that we request details of next of Kin when joining. The Member who passed away had been a member for over twenty years. Its extremely unfortunate, that Our Union will not be able to show the family that we not only can provide them something to help towards expensive costs for a funeral. We can't even show our respects to a long-standing member as we have no details of Next of Kin recorded.

WESSEX WATER BRANCH X46

Wales & South West Region

(Referred)

PAUL HUNT (Wales & South West): I move Motion 13 – Next of Kin Details. Congress, sadly we have recently lost a member who passed away. The member was not known to any workplace organisers. We were informed of her passing by the company. We do not have any details of the family or next of kin for our members. Therefore, we are unable to contact the family to pass on our condolences and for us to give details to the family to receive the funeral benefit they so rightly deserve.

We understand that some details of addresses can be obtained from our GMB membership system. However, if the member concerned lived alone we would not be able to contact the relatives accordingly. We ask Congress to consider the way in which we recruit members and specifically ask that we request details of the next of kin when joining. The member who I was referring to had been a member for over 20 years. It is extremely unfortunate that our Union will not be able to show the family that not only can we provide them something to help towards expensive costs for a funeral, but we can't even show our respects to a long-standing member as we have no details recorded of the Next of Kin.

We understand that membership forms online and hard copy will need to be amended. We also appreciate that this will be an on-going task to try and retrieve member details of lay members and officials. This would be

help, indeed, to support this activity. Colleagues, we are not asking for a complicated and costly process. We simply ask that we are able to contact our members' families in times of need and show that their loved ones were valued and respected by their union. Please support this motion.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Seconder?

SUZANNE WILLIAMS (Wales & South West): Congress, I am seconding Motion 13. Congress, we are all aware of the kind messages sent from our regions to our members' families when they, unfortunately, pass away. We should be able to be consistent in our approach and have the ability to contact the next of kin of every member of our union. We applaud the work that has been done by the task force in being able to gather our members' equality data. We should be able to mirror this approach and amend our membership system to add the field required to get family details. Congress, we recognise that we do not require a huge amount of detail of the next of kind, just a contact number and address. We must be able to reach out when needed. Under strict GDPR legislation, it is not so easy to obtain this information from our member's employer, so there must be a process in which reps, officials and activists can contact the family directly. It is imperative that our members receive the benefits they deserve to ensure that their families have some support when they pass, and also to give them the benefits that they signed up for when they joined this great union. Please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Suzanne.

I call the mover for Motion 15, please.

A MEMBERS INTER REGIONAL TRANSFER POLICY FIT FOR PURPOSE MOTION 15

15. A MEMBERS INTER REGIONAL TRANSFER POLICY FIT FOR PURPOSE

This Congress acknowledges that there are different protocols regarding transferring members between Regions. For example, if a member is already involved in a grievance, legal case or disciplinary it makes sense for the Region that is dealing with it to finish dealing with it.

When there is no outstanding or continued need for representation and members are put in the wrong Region it can be difficult and time consuming getting them transferred into the correct Region.

It causes frustration for the member as they are passed from pillar to post in their quest to get representation.

It is not clear if members who put down their place of work (outside the Region) instead of their employer (within the Region) are to be represented by one Region or the other.

Pistols at Dawn situations between Regions stemming from enquiries and discussions over which Region a member is in could be avoided.

Benefits could include:

1) improved optics for the GMB, members do not see or feel like branch and regional organisers are unsure or conflicted over who takes on their case.

2) less time wasted involving organisers at levels up to and above branch level.

We call for a review of these protocols as to whether or not they can be improved.

We believe that Regions and Branches should be consulted on new proposals and procedures for transferring members for full transparency.

C30 CITY OF LONDON BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

BEN CAMPBELL-WHITE (London): Congress, I am a first-time speaker moving Motion 15 – A Members Inter Regional Transfer Policy Fit For Purpose. Let me start by saying that as a relatively newly-appointed branch secretary, I have had first-hand experience of dealing with member requests to transfer from one region to another. It has been frustrating at times and has eventually been resolved by escalating to regional and senior-regional officer level. Here is the rule: “If a member wants to transfer to any other branch, the branch secretary must provide written authority which can either be provided on paper or by digital media. The branch secretary must not allow any member to transfer to their branch without evidence of such approval from the branch secretary of the branch they are transferring from. Transfers will need to be approved by the regional secretary and registered with the regional office. Branch secretaries of both the branch that the transferee is leaving and the branch that the transferee is joining will be advised by the regional office when the transfer takes place”.

Sometimes following the rule book goes well; sometimes not so well. Sometimes new members work for an organisation covered by your branch but they are based at locations geographically situated in other GMB regions. When new members get placed in the wrong branch it becomes a bureaucratic nightmare trying to get them placed in the correct branch. In the meantime, they get denied the opportunity to vote for pay offers or be involved in strike ballots. In short, they cannot engage in the democratic processes of the union.

There needs to be a much simpler way of resolving these issues quickly for the benefit of the branches involved and the individual members. This must be a problem affecting many branches located near the various GMB boundaries situated next to another region or throughout our union. Surely, it should be possible for these issues to be resolved by a phone call or email to an appropriate officer. All we want is for there to be a method of ensuring that members are quickly placed in the correct branch that will represent them particularly when errors occur in processing the initial application to join GMB. A review will benefit branch secretaries. Let's face it. We are all busy enough at times without having to go round the houses trying to get someone in or out of your branch. It will also benefit the member who does not want to hear that they are technically in the wrong branch or region. If the process can be improved upon and simplified in any way, I think it will help organise new joiners into the union and make for a stronger and more united union. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ben. The seconder, please.

TRACEY BEESON (London): President and Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a second-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am seconding Motion 15 on Inter Regional Transfer. I am a new branch secretary and would welcome some assistance from the national union on how we handle transfers between regions as many of our members are often moving to other areas of the country and, as a union, we should ensure that we retain their GMB membership at all costs. Simply, we need an easier to follow process. The mover of the motion has outlined the main problems and we really don't want regions battling each other over members, because that is counter-productive. If I have understood this right, the current rule book states that if a member wants to transfer to another branch then the current branch secretary needs to write to the new branch, and this also needs to be approved by the regional secretary. We would welcome a template letter or form and some guidance which makes this process far less complicated but at the same time preserves the level of integrity which is transparent and respectful to everyone involved. We welcome this motion being referred, to be looked into by regional secretaries and our National Admin Unit and we urge that we all need a quick solution and for this to be communicated to branches, too. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tracey. Can I have the mover for Motion 18?

ORGANISING YOUNG WORKERS

MOTION 18

18. ORGANISING YOUNG WORKERS.

Congress notes:

- Young people are not joining Trade unions like they used to, and it is harder to recruit young people
- into the movement.
- For GMB to thrive and continue to be the bargaining force we must recruit Young people and bring them through into both lay-member and staff structures, to make work better in the future and in the present.
- Young people have too long been ignored and to be a second thought when recruiting, and we try to recruit out-dated techniques or do not know how to approach them.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

- Successive Government's have waged war against the Trade union movement, starting with Thatcher, and Labour not reversing this legislation when they had the chance. They changed the way society viewed us, and helped push the idea we are "scroungers" and those who do hard work are the rich people as opposed to those at the bottom wanting a fair deal for the wealth they have created.
- We must take drastic action to organise young people into GMB and then encourage them to become shop stewards, and other lay member roles within our democracy. As without them, GMB will soon die off and we must do all we can to protect the structures.
- GMB can make work better by organising young people and representing their interests, at work and inside our union, and at a national level including TUC.

Congress resolves:

- For the Central Executive Council and National Organising unit and GMB National Young Workers Network Committee to propose a report to Congress next year on the steps we can take to recruit young members, and how we can target those specifically.
- For the CEC as part of this task, to consider where required any additional resources at a national level so that can be utilised to organise young workers.

A50 BRANCH

Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

DEAN ISMAY (Wales & South West): Congress and President, I move Motion 18. Colleagues, it is time we put young workers at the forefront of the organising agenda. Without them our union will diminish. We must continue to build GMB to be fit for the future. Time and time again, I have heard it said that we should recruit them without asking them about their priorities at work. Most GMB branches have a youth officer as part of the branch committee, but they are not defined as a young worker as per the rule book,

and most of them are only in post because the rule book says so, which defeats the post's object. We can do more to recruit young workers, colleagues. We need to have a clear strategy on how this can be done. In 2019 the TUC published research which stated that one-in-20 young people are in a union, so it is clear that we can and should be doing more, especially at a national level, where GMB young workers committees should be playing an integral role in organising young workers and getting them active in GMB.

I was the Young Workers' GMB National Secretary and I found it was a constant battle to get the resources to help, in organising young workers in workplaces and bringing them into the lay members' structures. This was an issue in the regions in most cases, and still remains an issue with the lack of any young workers networks being set up or promoted. It is time to put this back on the organising agenda to make work better. I urge you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. Well done. Is there a seconder for Motion 18? *(Formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you, Wales & South West. Does anyone wish to speak against any of these motions? *(No response)* No. In that case, can I ask Gary from the CEC to respond.

GARY HARRIS (CEC): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC responding to Motions 12, 13, 15 and 18. The CEC is asking for Motions 12, 13 and 15 to be referred and for Motion 18 to be supported with a qualification.

On Motion 12 – GMB App for Smart Phones – we are constantly looking at options to improve access to GMB information and services for members. This motion requests action that could possibly incur significant financial expenditure along with staff resources. A full analysis of the costs and benefits should be provided to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for their consideration.

On Motion 13 – Recording Members Next of Kin Details – we are asking for this motion to be referred on the basis that we will need to consult with our membership system provider regarding extra fields to be added to our membership record and to our membership forms, both printed and online, to ensure that the data is collected from all future joiners.

On Motion 15 – A Members Inter Regional Transfer Policy Fit For Purpose – it is the case that the inter regional transfers are a responsibility of regions. The

CEC is asking that this motion be referred so that the SMT and the NAU can refer the process, taking into account the views expressed in the motion.

Finally, on Motion 18 – Organising Young Workers – it is vital that young people are engaged in the GMB and know that they are the future of this movement. It is the responsibilities of all of us to identify, encourage and mentor young members from all backgrounds with leadership potential. So watch yourself, Gary. (*Chuckling*) Our qualification is that given the diversity of the UK and Ireland, through the regional young workers' organisers and young workers self-organised groups, they are best placed to investigate the current state of membership amongst workers aged 30 and under in their region. They are best placed to assess what is needed in their areas and industries to recruit and develop for the future. Regions with common challenges and opportunities can then network to share best practices.

To sum-up, the CEC is asking for Motions 12, 13 and 15 to be referred, and Motion 18 to be supported with qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Gary, Before I go to the vote, can I remind movers and seconders of Composite 1, Motions 26 and 28, please, be at the front so you are ready to step up when we take those.

Does Midlands accept the reference back on Motion 12? (*Agreed*) Thank you. There will be no vote. Does Wales & South West accept the reference back on Motion 13? (*Agreed*) Thank you. So there will be no vote. Does London accept the reference back on Motion 15? (*Agreed*) Thank you. So there will be no vote. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on Motion 18? (*Agreed*) Thank you. So that is the one I will put to the vote. Motion 18, all those in support, please show? Anyone against? Motion 18 is carried.

Motion 12 was REFERRED.

Motion 13 was REFERRED.

Motion 15 was REFERRED.

Motion 18 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

THE PRESIDENT: Could the mover of Composite 1 please come to the rostrum.

SUPPORT FOR GMB BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES COMPOSITE MOTION 1

Covering Motions:

Motion 23 – Support for Branch Representatives (North West & Irish)

Motion 24 – Support for GMB Representatives (North West & Irish)

SUPPORT FOR GMB BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES

This Congress calls on the CEC to support GMB representatives.

This Congress recognises and celebrates that GMB Union has reps in thousands of workplaces across the country in every region and nation. Being a GMB union representative can be a really enjoyable activity, fighting for PPE to keep members safe, representing in grievances and meetings and being able to make a tangible difference to our members' work lives.

K28 branch would like to voice that our active reps within the branch are supporting a lot of members with not only workplace issues but members' personal issues, which at times has become quite distressing and emotional for the reps involved.

Apart from the reps communicating and supporting one another in the office, there is no additional support for our GMB reps beyond this.

Our members come to us for advice and guidance which we do to the best of our ability, however, now covid cases are becoming less frequent and a lot of members have now returned to offices, we are being contacted and deal with numerous cases including cases around bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, cost of living crisis, members struggling financially, suicide, self-harm, poor mental health, substance/ alcohol misuse, death in the workplace plus death amongst colleagues within the branch.

Although some of these cases are traumatic, which not only impact our emotional and mental wellbeing we as reps are expected to carry on regardless.

As reps, we provide advice and guidance to members around health and safety and make recommendations to members and their managers to refer to Occupational Health which includes referrals to counselling services.

However, like 1 in 4 in the general population who have difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing, union representatives are not immune from the everyday stresses of everyday life and the impact it can play upon mental health and wellbeing and whilst some employers have good support and employee assistance programmes in place for their employees, many do not.

This motion calls for the introduction of an annual review process for representatives, including branch role holders to identify any training needed whether new or refresher, any support needs and the opportunity to have a conversation about wellbeing.

To conclude, our reps are not only under pressure at work, but they are also under pressure supporting and representing an increasing number of members with all the above issues. It is pivotal that GMB reps receive the right support to safeguard their own mental health and wellbeing. Does this raise questions as to what support systems and training are available for our GMB reps? GMB also has a duty of care to our reps under the health and safety laws and good practice.

MOVING REGION: NORTH WEST & IRISH

SECONDING REGION: NORTH WEST & IRISH

(Referred)

PAUL RICHARDS (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Composite 1 – Support for GMB Branch Representatives. Congress, you will all be aware of the remarkable amount of support provided by our active reps to our members dealing with personal and workplace issues. Our branch acknowledges that the work of these reps can be distressing and emotional, particularly given the recent increase in cases of bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, the-cost-of-living crisis, suicide, self harm, poor mental health, substance and alcohol misuse, death in a workplace and death amongst colleagues in a branch. Colleagues, the list of support is endless. Our reps do the best to support our members but there are concerns about the lack of support for themselves. The reps communicate and support each other in the offices and workplaces but, Congress, this may not be enough.

The increase in the number of cases has brought immense pressure on our reps which has an impact on their wellbeing. We urge the CEC to consider what support systems and training are available for our GMB reps. Having said that, we are aware that the CEC will ask Congress to refer this motion to a working party group. We are happy to agree to this but, however, we would like to enquire about the structure of this working party group and the frequency of its meetings.

Firstly, we would appreciate clarification on who the members will be who will take part on this working party group. We would like the CEC to provide us with the names and positions of the individuals who will be involved, plus any reserves. It would also be helpful to know the frequency of these meetings, whether these meetings will occur on a monthly or quarterly basis or if they will follow a different schedule altogether. We would also like to request details of the procedure for receiving regular updates following each meeting and actions taken by the working party group. Thank you.
(Applause)

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

RUTH PITCHFORD (North West & Irish): Congress, I am seconding Composite 1: Support for Branch Representatives.

As our GMB website tells us when we search for support at work, if you need urgent help within the workplace your GMB workplace representatives are your first port of call. However, when it is the workplace representative that needs urgent help and support for their mental wellbeing or when life becomes too difficult, who do they call? We know that some employers

have really good mental-health support systems but for some reps, including those on full-time secondments, this very often is not in place.

In referring this composite back to the CEC we look forward to seeing this develop and await future discussion. I proudly second this composite.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ruth. Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 26.

REVITALISING GMB BRANCHES

MOTION 26

26. REVITALISING GMB BRANCHES

This Congress recognises our member led Branches are the building block of this Union. Without these we would not have an effective organisation and leadership nor be able to draw on support for democratic Regional structures.

Workplace activity does not always translate into getting members/activists to stand for the full range of Branch Officer positions. Therefore, in some incidents some Branch Officers are needing to double up with many undertaking other roles - such as accompanying reps or being a workplace steward within a workplace.

Congress calls on the CEC and SMT to produce videos and materials to encourage Members to become more involved with Branch activities AND stand for elections to become a Branch Officer.

E12 EAST DEREHAM BRANCH

London Region

(Referred)

TOM REDNALL (London): Conference, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 26 on Revitalising GMB Branches. In bringing this motion to Congress, we want to draw your attention to the struggles faced in some of our branches. Branches really are the building blocks of our union. They are the first point of contact for many members. To some they are a community and to many others a family. Branches help recruit our members, they help membership retention and building strong branches really helps to build the strong and democratic union that we are. We owe it to our members to build and maintain strong and healthy branches. This is a plea to Gary. You say you want to listen to your members. Well, we are saying that you need to listen to your hardworking branches, who are the backbone of this union.

Many branches are held together by only a few members each holding a post; in fact, doing more than one job. This is not fair on them. It is not fair on our members. Instead of admitting defeat and calling it a day, we are calling for action. In supporting our branches, we welcome this being submitted to the branch working party and hope that they produce videos, materials and encourage members to get more active and stand for positions in their branch. These videos by explaining what branch officers do will help de-mystify what our union is and the roles it has. It will go a long way to fill our postholder positions in branches.

We can sit back and leave our over-worked branch officers to struggle on or we can do something to support them. By backing this motion we will be encouraging members and helping to support our branch officers. Let next year be the year that we celebrate our branches. Congress, I hope we can all agree this motion and vote for Motion 26. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

ALAN LAW (London): Congress, I second Motion 26. Taking on a role within one of our branches can be daunting for many reasons. It could be that you are not sure what is required of you. Things like “How much time do I have to give?”, “Do I have the knowledge?”, “Do I have the experience?” and “What if I let members down?” “Do I have to attend meetings with people I don’t know?” “What will they think of me?” There are loads of questions you might ask yourself. Then it is easier not to take on the roles within the branch. If we would like our members to get involved with the GMB to revitalise in the branch, we know that the GMB is taking big strides at the moment and making sure that we don’t make the same mistakes again as we have in the past. The rule book is being brought up to date. We are having to bring the roles within our branches to meet these changes. If we don’t succeed.... No! We must succeed with revitalising branch officer positions by being there and helping in any way we can.

Training needs to be flexible. We need to talk to our neighbour branches. Communication needs to be excellent with help readily available. IT needs to have a good pathway to make things easier and help prospective branch officers so they know what is required of them. Also I can say “Sorry” if I don’t have the time and don’t feel guilty about it. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Alan. Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 28.

GMB MEMBER SURVEY OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

MOTION 28

28. GMB MEMBER SURVEY OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

This Congress is aware that it has become very clear to Branch Secretaries and GMB Reps in particular that there has been a big increase in mental health problems amongst our members, notably anxiety, stress and depression.

This in turn leads to frequent long-term sickness absence, causing further distress to our members and affects people across all sectors, but seems particularly high amongst those working in the NHS and the care sector, but also in education and the private sector.

No doubt recent adverse events (i.e. Covid 19 infections, the cost of living crisis, possibly staff shortages due to Brexit), have played key roles in these developments.

The national media (newspapers, TV, radio etc) have also reported these unfortunate developments. A recent survey found that about 50% of GPs suffer from such problems now, and so apparently do young school children, but for different reasons seemingly (i.e. global warming, pollution etc).

We call on GMB to carry out a Health and Wellbeing Survey amongst members, to ascertain how many do suffer from these problems.

This may also be an opportunity for staff talking about the GMB and thus may increase membership.

R27 REDBRIDGE BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

STEPHEN JONES (London): Congress, I move Motion 28 – GMB Member Survey of Mental Health Problems. We are mindful that this happened a few years ago.

Congress, when preparing this motion we heard that 50% of GPs now suffer from depression and mental health problems as well as a greatly increased number of people in the general population. Such reports have not diminished or gone away. We hear almost daily about the burdens which mental health problems place on the NHS and many other services.

The latest news, which was only in the last week or so, concerned a decision taken by the police, including the Metropolitan Police, not to attend mental health callouts in future unless there is a threat to life. This proposal was met with much media concern and criticism, but the statistics are absolutely shocking. A third of the Met's time is spent on attending to the mentally ill. Such people are held in police cells or prisons because no psychiatric wards can be found to accommodate them. Let me say that 1.2 million people are waiting for community-based mental health services

whilst the police are failing to deal with 69,000 crimes a year as a result. They cannot be expected to provide long-term emergency cover for the mentally ill. Two million people are now considered to suffer from long-Covid depression and anxiety. These people are part of the symptoms and the complexity of it.

The cost-of-living crisis means many people suffer serious financial hardship, causing depression and mental-health problems. The young get depressed because of what is likely to abolish or curtail their futures; ie, global warming, pollution, AI or the threat of nuclear fallout.

As a rep, I see, and I am sure we all see, a huge increase in sickness-absence meetings involving mental health issues. It is, therefore, important to get an updated idea on how prevalent the problem actually is within the GMB and with our members. A new survey, therefore, seems to be the appropriate way forward. We can then consider how to improve the situation; ie, recommending the reasonable adjustments disabled passport, which was generated by the GMB, and the neurodiversity talk-in etc. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Steve. Thank you. Is there a seconder? (*Formally seconded from the floor*) Thank you, London Region.

Does anybody wish to speak against any of the motions. (*No response*) In that case, I now invite Gordon Richardson from the CEC to respond.

GORDON RICHARDSON (CEC): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, responding to Composite 1 and to Motions 26 and 28.

The CEC is asking for Composite 1 – Support for GMB Branch Representatives – to be referred. The health and wellbeing of our postholders is, obviously, very important to us as we have discussed this a number of times at most congresses. Austerity, Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis has undoubtedly impacted the mental health of many of our members and reps. However, we need to be completely clear that the GMB cannot step in in the absence of the state, no matter how poor they are. We are not a charity or specialist mental health provider, and neither our activists nor our employees should be expected to provide these services.

We propose, though, to convene a working group to consider these issues in detail. We will not be able to fund all the support mechanisms that have been requested previously, but we can work jointly to identify strategies and

approaches to safeguard our lay activists and signpost external support on the areas where these are most needed.

Moving next to Motion 26 – Revitalising GMB Branches – which the CEC is asking to be referred to the Rule Book and Industrial Review Group. This group has taken on the work of the Branch Working Party. The group, in consultation with the Campaigns and Communications Department, can consider appropriate promotional videos and materials.

On Motion 28 – GMB Member Survey of Mental Health Problems – the CEC is asking the region to withdraw. The GMB ran a widespread survey on mental health during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, which identified that two-thirds of the members had experienced poor mental health. Given the economic downturn since, it is unlikely that the general mental health picture will have drastically improved since then. As such, while GMB continues to ask questions in sector and employer surveys in the normal course of our business, our resources could be better deployed in campaigning to improve mental health by making work better than repeating that national survey.

Therefore, Congress, in summary, the CEC is asking for Composite 1 and Motion 26 to be referred back and for Motion 28 to be withdrawn. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does North West and Irish Region accept the reference back on Composite 1? I see the thumbs up. *(Agreed)* Thank you. That means there is no vote.

Does London Region accept the reference back on Motion 26? *(Agreed)* Thank you. There is no vote.

Does London Region agree to withdraw Motion 28? *(Calls of 'No')* This is going to be a feisty Congress, isn't it, I can tell. That's fine. That is good. In that case, obviously, the CEC is asking you to oppose Motion 28, but I will take a vote. All those in favour of Motion 28, please show? Hands very clearly in the air, please. All those against? Any abstentions. That is carried.

Composite Motion 1 was REFERRED.

Motion 26 was REFERRED.

Motion 28 was CARRIED.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: TASKFORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Malcolm Sage): Congress, we will now be moving the first of our CEC Special Reports of the week. We will be hearing from our President, and CEC Member, Colin Gunter, on the Taskforce for Positive Change, who will be moving and seconding the report. I will then call each Region in alphabetical order, so could the delegates speaking for their regions make themselves ready.

**CEC Special Report
GMB Taskforce for Positive Change
Final Progress Report to Annual Congress 2023**

GMB Taskforce for Positive Change Membership

CEC members

Barbara Plant – National President, Southern Region
Gwylan Brinkworth – Wales and South West Region
Elaine Daley – Midlands Region
Anne Dean – GMB Scotland
Margaret Gregg – North West and Irish Region
Colin Gunter – Midlands Region
Fiona Heneghan – Southern Region
Mary Hutchinson – North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region
Farzana Jumma – North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region
Carol Robertson – Midlands Region
Robbie Scott – London Region

Staff

Ruth Brady – Regional Secretary, Wales and South West Region
Michelle Gordon – Regional Equality Officer, Southern Region
Cerys Way - Regional Equality Officer, Midlands Region
Tyehimba Nosakhere – National Race Organiser
Krissy O'Hagan – Unite/NNC, London Region
Jenny Preston – admin support, North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region
Jo Hepworth – Project Manager, North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region

Independent external facilitator

Dr. Helen Mott

We would like to acknowledge the work of the following members, Rachel Hookway – London Region and Victoria Austin – Unite/NNC rep, North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region who stood down from the Taskforce during 2022/23 and thank them for their contributions.

It must be acknowledged that due to the unexpected death of her partner, this Special Report has been written without the input of Dr. Helen Mott. Her view has always been highly regarded and significant in the progress that the Taskforce has made to date, and GMB will be forever indebted to her for her considerable contribution in making our union a safer and better place.

Terms of Reference

GMB Taskforce for Positive Change

Purpose

The Taskforce was established in January 2021. Its purpose is to create the structures and processes that will assist the GMB to make permanent positive changes to its culture, policies and practices, so that sexism, sexual harassment, racism and other behaviours that go against our values are not tolerated, contributing to the realisation of GMB's ambition to promote equality and eliminate discrimination across all protected characteristics.

Process

It will do this by:

- Reviewing the recommendations made by:
 - o The Monaghan Review of 2020 which assessed the culture of the GMB; the effectiveness of actions taken by the GMB in response to formal and informal reports of sexual harassment; the policies and procedures relating to sexual harassment and the manner in which these policies and procedures have been implemented; the steps taken to ensure that victim/survivors are not victimised. The Monaghan Review made 27 recommendations.
 - o The Henry Review of 2003 which assessed the demographic profile of GMB officers, employees and lay activists; the ways in which the GMB relates to ethnic minority workers; the impact of recruitment and retention efforts on ethnic minority workers; the employment practices of the GMB with regard to race relations. The Henry Review made 9 recommendations.

- Putting forward clear plans for implementing each recommendation including designating the timescales for implementation and the resources needed for implementation and sustainability of each recommendation. Further actions as required to enact the recommendations.

- Ensuring that governance and accountability mechanisms are in place to assure the sustainability of this work over the long term, recognising that institutional sexism and racism are reflective of deeply embedded social norms and practices.

Principles

The Taskforce will apply an intersectional understanding of inequalities related to sex, race and ethnicity together with all other forms of inequality and discrimination.

The Taskforce will engage with the wider membership to inform its work from planning to completion.

Duration of Taskforce

The Taskforce will continue to meet until all the processes identified above are complete. This is anticipated to be between one and two years, reviewed at one year.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and at a minimum of every two years until the dissolution of the Taskforce.

Should the Taskforce be at risk of failing to complete its work plan, members should agree to advise the TUC who are the recommended external monitors.

Membership and Administration

The Taskforce membership includes representation from different key stakeholder groups, including CEC members, GMB regional and national staff and GMB staff union representatives. It is constituted in the following way:

- 1 external facilitator
- 1 project manager
- 1 LGBT+ Reserved seat
- 1 Disabled reserved seat
- 1 Young reserved seat
- 3 Race reserved seats
- 5 Regional women's seats
- National President Barbara Plant
- 2 seats - Regional Equality Officers
- 2 seats - National Negotiating Committee reps (staff union)

- 2 seats - Director of Human Resources and the National Equality and Inclusion Officer

Of 18 members, 12 seats are held by CEC members, ensuring representation from all of GMB's 5 equality reserved seats, all GMB Regions and industrial sectors.

The Taskforce is accountable to the members and staff of the GMB and all interested parties. Formally the CEC is the body to whom the Taskforce is accountable.

The Taskforce is chaired by the external facilitator, supported by the President. The Taskforce has administrative and resourcing support from National Office through the posts of Project Manager and Project Administrator

Minutes / Action and Decision notes of the Taskforce will be taken by the Project Administrator or Manager (subbed by Victoria Austin) and will be posted for review and comment within one week of each meeting. The chair will be responsible for accepting amendments to minutes.

All members of the Taskforce have an equal vote, where voting is required. The quorum for decision-making is fifty per cent of the membership of the group.

If there are difficulties or concerns with the conduct of the Taskforce or any of its members, in any role, Taskforce members are advised to speak as appropriate to a person they feel most comfortable to approach. This person could be the chair of the group, the President, the National Equality and Inclusion Officer or the HR Director. Reporting to the Survivors' Trust Safe Space is also an available channel.

Ways of Working

Meetings of the Taskforce will normally be conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The potential for face to face meetings will be reviewed on request while attending to the access and equality implications of travelling to take part in face to face meetings.

Members of the Taskforce have a dedicated and private Microsoft Teams site hosted by GMB, where all documentation will be stored and through which information will normally be communicated. All documents and communications will be shared by email and on the Taskforce Teams group. For any questions or concerns please contact the Project Manager.

It is recognised that some members of the Taskforce will be able to direct more capacity and resource into work between meetings than others. The minimum expectation is to attend the majority of Taskforce meetings.

Members of the Taskforce may form subgroups, to address elements of the workplan, as agreed by the Taskforce and reporting in to the Taskforce. Each subgroup will be supported by (at least) one staff member and one CEC member.

Members are expected to attend the majority of meetings of the Taskforce that take place in any calendar year. Members are expected to model inclusive, respectful behaviour at all times.

In the event that these conditions are not met, (if in a meeting) the chair may call upon a member to leave the meeting. Where necessary appropriate GMB procedures may be invoked.

The Taskforce will meet initially once per month and then 6-12 times per year, for 2-4 hours.

Regular progress updates and engagement opportunities are essential and will be communicated via the following channels:

Reports to CEC Led by President

Reports to Congress Led by President

Reports to staff Led by NNC members GMB website - Led by National Equalities Officer and Project Manager to Comms

Member mailings, branch and regional meetings agreed by the Taskforce and led by National Equalities Officer and Project Manager to Comms

Where amendments to policies and procedures are proposed, they shall be circulated for consultation with the membership and shall be subject to agreement by the NNC and senior management team (internal) and CEC and Congress (members) as appropriate.

Confidentiality

It is fundamental to the successful operation of the Taskforce that there is trust and confidentiality: the Taskforce is a safe space for open and honest reflection and respectful dialogue.

Meetings of the Taskforce will normally not be recorded and no participants should be recording them nor should participants allow outside parties to be present at meetings.

Papers received by the Taskforce members and the details of emails, communications, and meeting discussions, are confidential to the members until and unless it is agreed between the members and the chair for them to be published or made public in a report.

Decisions formally agreed by the Taskforce on proposed amendments to policy, strategy and procedure will be published or made public by the GMB.

Introduction

The Taskforce for Positive Change takes pride in the fact that their work, on behalf of the CEC, has been at the forefront of making cultural change. This change, in regard to tackling and preventing sexual harassment and racism, is not just within the GMB but the wider union movement.

The Monaghan Report in 2020 gave rise to a commitment from the TUC to tackle sexual harassment within the union movement as a whole.

“Trade unions do not accept that sexual harassment or the cultures that enable it are acceptable or inevitable.....The strength in our movement lies in our solidarity, diversity and inclusivity – tackling and preventing sexual harassment is a priority for our movement. It is essential that, together, we show leadership by taking the necessary steps to deliver the cultural change demanded by women both in our movement and wider society”.

(Sue Ferns, TUC President 2021/22)

Although the remit for The Taskforce for Positive Change was focused on the recommendations from both the Monaghan and Henry reports, the process of addressing and implementing them creates the changed culture in which every equality strand can feel safe and thrive. As Karon Monaghan KC said in her report: “The GMB needs to address its culture more broadly if it wants to be an inclusive union as its aims declare”.

Organisational culture is a difficult concept to pin down but is often described as ‘the way we do things around here’. Trying to change the culture of any organisation is never going to be easy or quick, and it is certainly not just a tick box exercise. Culture change starts at the top of an organisation, and the leaders of any organisation are the key to making the necessary changes. The work of the Taskforce for Positive Change is therefore only one part of this wider culture change across GMB. The timeline below

has tried to capture all the actions that have taken place since 2020 and thereby contributed to the transformational cultural change that both Karon Monaghan KC and Dr. Elizabeth Henry called for.

Staff terms and conditions

The Taskforce for Positive Change has never been able to change staff terms and conditions. It has made recommendations, but these have to be negotiated between the staff union representatives and senior management. In line with the rule book, and long standing practice, Congress does not debate or determine GMB staff terms and conditions which are matter for consultation with the staff unions. It is appropriate to set out factual information here where these matters relate to progress on the recommendations of the Monaghan and Henry Reports.

Timeline of events, work, and progress

2020

May

Karon Monaghan KC is commissioned to undertake an investigation into complaints of sexual harassment within GMB. Her investigation and call for information opened on 25th May and ran until June 2020.

A safe space phone line with The Survivors Trust is put in place for anyone who feels they need to speak about experiences of sexual harassment or bullying.

August

Karon Monaghan KC report is published in full. She finds “institutionally sexism” in GMB, and significant job segregation and under representation of women throughout. Karon Monaghan KC makes 27 recommendations.

September

The Central Executive Council (CEC) accepts all the recommendations in principle and sets up a Taskforce to look at how best to implement those recommendations. This Taskforce is made up of 6 staff and 12 CEC members, ensuring representation from all Regions, industrial sectors and 5 equality strands.

Senior Management Team (SMT) also commits to implementing the recommendations and making the necessary changes in the culture of the union.

Karon Monaghan KC attends CEC meeting to answer questions from CEC members on her report and recommendations.

October

Equality and Inclusion officer becomes a member of the SMT and attends their first SMT meeting.

The CEC takes the decision, that in line with the recommendations, Regional Secretaries will no longer attend CEC meetings in the short term.

November

CEC agree that job competencies for General Secretary and Treasurer be reviewed in light of Monaghan report.

December

Dr. Helen Mott is appointed through an interview process as external facilitator to advise and chair the Taskforce. Dr. Mott is a sexual harassment and gender equality consultant and trainer, specialising in transforming culture through policy and practice. She also reports on our progress to TUC.

Dr Elizabeth Henry report from 2002 is brought to light. It's 9 recommendations have never been implemented, but the CEC agrees to incorporate them into the work of the Taskforce.

Warren Kenny takes over as Acting General Secretary from John Phillips and welcomed to his first CEC meeting.

2021

January

The Taskforce meets for the first time with Dr. Helen Mott as chair and becomes The Taskforce for Positive Change. The Terms of Reference are agreed and endorsed at Congress 2021. 4 sub-groups are created to address the different areas outlined in the recommendations. They were staff matters, data, training, and race equality.

The first ever woman Regional Secretary Ruth Brady is appointed in Wales and South West Region. In line with the Monaghan recommendation, the CEC receives a report from the independent observer Tom Gillie from Matrix Chambers, regarding the process for the appointment of Regional Secretaries.

March

External project manager is appointed to assist Dr. Helen Mott and The Taskforce for Positive Change.

TUC sets up its own working group on tackling and preventing sexual harassment in the union movement.

Barbara Plant, National President, is invited to be a member of this working group. Dr. Helen Mott also works with TUC to produce materials, based on her work with GMB.

May

Dr. Helen Mott makes an on-line presentation to the CEC on the work of the Taskforce. CEC members and staff reps (NNC) were able to ask Dr. Mott questions.

Dr. Helen Mott makes a presentation to SMT on the work of the Taskforce.

June

Gary Smith elected as new General Secretary. He makes a commitment to "shed the practices and cultures that have blighted us in recent times."

CEC presents their first Special Report to Congress.

[cec-special-report-taskforce-for-positive-change-2021.pdf \(gmb.org.uk\)](#)

Dr. Helen Mott explains the work of the Taskforce to staff in a webinar.

August

Interviews are held for Acting Regional Secretaries in Northern Region and GMB Scotland. Hazel Nolan and Louise Gilmore are appointed to both positions. There are now three women Regional Secretaries.

September

A three quick question survey from the Taskforce goes out to members and staff, asking what GMB are doing well in equalities, what barriers exist and any ideas for improvement. The survey showed that there were still significant concerns around **trust** and **consistency**.

Update on the work of the work of the Taskforce is put onto the website, alongside information on how lay members and staff could engage in consultation with them: www.gmb.org.uk/Monaghan-report-progress-updates

This update showed the status of the Monaghan and Henry Recommendations: **4 Tasks completed, 21 Tasks in progress, 11 Tasks not started.**

October

Rhea Wolfson appointed as Head of Internal and Industrial Relations, to sit on SMT and start the expansion of the equality department.

The General Secretary is invited to attend a special meeting of the Taskforce and gives his commitment to their work. It is noted how important it is that any changes within GMB should be aligned with the work of the Taskforce.

November

The importance of allyship is recognised, and the General Secretary circulates to staff and CEC an article by Paul Nowak, the then TUC Deputy General Secretary, on the need for men to speak up and step up, taking part in the fight for positive change.

2022

January

Dr. Helen Mott delivers anti-sexual harassment training to SMT, which highlights barriers to reporting, and explains how staff and members may feel institutional betrayal when trusted institutions, like trade unions, act in ways that harm an individual's safety and well-being.

February

Real Clear start their leadership training programme for SMT. This programme continued to be delivered throughout the year. The emphasis is on values and living those values to make permanent culture change.

The Zero Tolerance Statement is updated by the Taskforce for Positive Change, and endorsed by the CEC, alongside a new Code of Conduct. A risk assessment approach is taken, and this new Code of Conduct reflects the new hospitality protocol of only 2 free drinks at GMB events.

Following the departure of the project manager, a new project manager is provided to the Taskforce internally.

March

Dr. Helen Mott attends a special (in person) CEC meeting to present the new sexual harassment policy for members. The policy is unanimously agreed.

Voting at CEC on important or contentious issues is done by confidential vote.

A new draft relationship policy is discussed at a Taskforce meeting with HR, and feedback given. The need for a safeguarding policy is also acknowledged, and will be developed by HR.

June

CEC presents their second Special Report to Congress.

[Task Force Update Special Report.pdf \(gmb.org.uk\)](#)

This includes a Rule Change which allows sexual harassment allegations to be dealt with under the new policy.

A new safeguarding protocol which includes key contacts and sign posting resources is distributed to staff and regional delegation leads attending GMB Congress.

National Race Officer Tyehimba Nosakhere appointed. This is a new post in the history of GMB, and in line with Recommendation 7 of the Dr. Elizabeth Henry Report.

Work begins on developing the training needed for investigators of sexual harassment using the new policy. This work is still on-going.

July

Regions go from 9 to 7. Regional Secretaries are no longer in the majority on SMT.

September

CEC given a report on the new Conflict of Interest policy, designed so that noone benefits from a decision taken by the CEC or its sub-committees. This policy will apply to CEC members, Regional Council members, Senior Managers, and all staff.

October

National President, Barbara Plant, speaks at a TUC conference fringe on sexual harassment on the work of the Taskforce.

December

Regional Presidents are invited to attend a meeting with the General Secretary, National President, and Vice President.

A Green, Amber, Red update is given to the CEC on progress of the 27 Monaghan recommendations. 11 completed, 11 in progress (M1, 3, 8, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27) and 5 to be started (M6, 7, 10, 12, 13)

2023

January

Relevant lay members and all staff sent the new Declaration of Interests form to complete. GMB commits to conducting its business in a manner which upholds selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. In completing and signing the declaration members and staff are confirming that they adhere to these principles in the conduct of their GMB duties.

February

Helena Kennedy KC report on sexual harassment and culture within TSSA is published. This report highlights the need for external governance training for lay members on their executive to “ensure absolute clarity of their roles”.

Equality data gathering pilot reaches its conclusion and recommendations.

GMB are invited by the TUC to take part in 3 pilot sessions for their training programme on tackling and preventing sexual harassment in our movement – 45 places available.

General Secretary, National President and Vice-President begin their visit to all 7 Regions – to meet members and discuss the Rule Book and union democracy.

March

HR department is increased to 4 people – Head of People Management and Support, 2 HR advisors and 1 assistant. A new HR strategy will be taken to both SMT and CEC.

Denise Walker is appointed as Regional Secretary in North West and Irish Region. Women are now in the majority amongst Regional Secretaries (4 to 3).

CEC agree for mandatory governance training for newly elected CEC members and for this to be refreshed on a regular basis. CEC also agree for the collection of equality monitoring data across GMB lay structures, nationally and regionally.

Wales TUC launches its own toolkit and action on tackling sexual harassment in the workplace.

Historic meeting of the race sub-group with Dr. Elizabeth Henry.

The Taskforce for Positive Change met 22 times between January 2021 and March 2023. All meetings have been held on-line. As a consequence of Covid, the Taskforce have not had the chance to meet in person.

April

CEC agree to the continuation of the race sub-group to support the National Race Organiser, and the implementation of the Henry recommendations.

CEC agree protocol for Regional Secretaries attending CEC meetings.

June

Third and final CEC Special Report on the work of the Taskforce goes to Congress.

Karon Monaghan KC report

The timeline above highlights the outcomes of the work of the Taskforce, but in no way reflects the level of work that has been necessary to achieve them and the continuing work that is needed to complete them.

The CEC thanks all past and present members of the Taskforce for their hard work, dedication, and ongoing commitment to fulfilling the 36 recommendations in both reports that will lead to lasting transformational cultural change in the GMB.

Whilst the Taskforce has been undertaking its work, it has also become apparent that other unions face the same problems in regard to sexual harassment and bullying. The TSSA commissioned their own independent report by Helena Kennedy KC in 2022, that identified similar issues in terms of the power dynamics, the issues of good governance and honestly listening to the voices of women and other underrepresented groups.

Equality Monitoring Data Project

How do we measure and celebrate success if don't know where we started? Collecting data and knowing where those with protected characteristics are within our union is the first step in addressing inequality, both in our own structures and in the workplaces of our members. Without this essential information we are unable to maximise our efforts to organise and campaign on equality issues to make work better for all workers.

The SMT requested pilot projects on the new form. These pilots have now been completed and were very successful. Online joiners were monitored over a month-long period and 98% of people shared their equality data with us. One region piloted collecting data on existing members in a particular employer and had a 99% success rate (from those that responded). Feedback for the workplace pilots has been considered and actions taken to iron out any issues identified. The equality monitoring questions on the form below have now been added to the online joining form and the membership system. Going forward Regions will be asked that this form will be used for all events, including

training, and information on Congress delegates. Data will also be collected on the make-up of our regional councils/ committees and CEC.

Equality Monitoring Form

GMB collects equality monitoring data in order to ensure diversity in our membership and democratic structures and help us to meet our aims of being a fully inclusive union. We follow the most recent government guidelines, which we understand are not fitting for everyone so there is an option to self-define, although choosing a specific category will assist us with analysing data if you can. Sharing this information with GMB is optional. All data will be kept securely.

You are asked to complete this form and return it to your region.

1. What is your date of birth?

2. What is your gender?

Man Woman Non-binary Prefer not to say Self-define:

3. Do you identify as trans or have a trans history?

Yes No Prefer not to say

(Trans is an umbrella term used by people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth)

4. What is your sexual orientation?

Bisexual

Gay man Gay woman/Lesbian

Heterosexual/straight Prefer not to say

Self-define:

5. Are you disabled or living with a long-term impairment, illness or health condition?

Yes No Prefer not to say

(This can include physical and mental health conditions, a neurodivergence (ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia etc), diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, limb difference, chronic pain, vision impairment, being deaf or hard of hearing, chronic conditions relating to older age, and other conditions not listed here)

6. What is your ethnicity?

Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi

Asian/Asian British - Chinese

Asian/Asian British - Indian

Asian/Asian British - Pakistani

Asian/Asian British - any other Asian Background

Black/Black British - African

Black/Black British - Caribbean

Black/Black British - any other Black Background

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian

Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups - any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background

White - UK/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British

White - Irish

White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller

White - Roma

- Any other White background
- Other ethnic group – Arab
- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group - Self-define (please state below)

.....

Name:

GMB membership number:

GMB collects equality monitoring data in order to ensure diversity in our membership and democratic structures and help us to meet our aims of being a fully inclusive union. We follow the most recent government guidelines, which we understand are not fitting for everyone so there is an option to self define, although choosing a specific category will assist us with analysing data if you can. Sharing this information with GMB is optional. All data will be kept securely.

Providing equality monitoring helps us analyse our membership and get in contact on issues relevant to you.

Please tick this box if you DO NOT wish to be contacted

If you have chosen to be contacted, please tick if you DO NOT wish to be contacted by

- Email
- Phone
- SMS

To understand how your data will be used, please visit <https://www.gmb.org.uk/legal-privacy>.

Dr Elizabeth Henry report

Following Tyehimba’s appointment in 2022, which implemented recommendation 7 of the Dr. Elizabeth Henry report, progress has also been made on five main projects that begin the work on recommendations 4,5 and 6.

- **GMB Race Achievement Scholarship Programme (GRASP)** has been developed for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic members and is due to commence In October 2023.
- GMB centric Anti Racism training for all.
- Kick Starting Race Equality Campaigns in our workplaces.
- Coaching, Mentoring and Support Scheme for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic staff.
- Chronicling the GMB’s historical presence of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic members, race-based campaigns, and disputes.

This has involved working with Regional Secretaries, the race sub-group of the Taskforce, Regional Equality Officers, Regional Organisers, and Education Officers.

In response to Dr. Elizabeth Henry Recommendations 1 and 8, working with the Head of Comms, we are building the framework that will fulfil those recommendations. The content on our website has been changed to reflect our focus on development, organising and campaigning on race.

Real Clear Training for SMT

Real Clear’s Leadership training for the SMT was centred on 3 areas of leadership development:

- Individual leadership including leadership theory and the skills and behaviours of effective leaders and managers.
- Collective leadership including developing the relationships, trust, and effective working of the SMT.

- GMB Values and how to change the culture of the union from moving to campaigning to shared leadership and bottom-up listening.

Next Steps/Conclusion

Although a significant amount of work has been completed by the Taskforce, it has become very clear that the detail of some of the recommendations required work that would need on-going input from bodies external to the Taskforce, such as SMT, e.g., the branch development plan, a portal on the website for members to access relevant documents and policies, and specific training for investigators into sexual harassment.

In addition, there is also the need for the work that has been completed to be monitored, reviewed, and evaluated, to ensure that it is being properly undertaken by the union. It is felt that although the Taskforce has completed a natural cycle, there will still need to be oversight and a culture of accountability so that the cultural change that Karon Monaghan KC and Dr. Elizabeth Henry expected when they wrote their recommendations becomes a permanent part of our union.

As explained in the introduction to this report, this has always been more than just a straightforward tick box exercise. Although new processes and policies have been developed, cultural change takes time to embed. It requires patience and support whilst transformational change occurs. It will require regular monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating through such things as data analysis and climate surveys.

As the TUC states a climate survey “signals commitment to ongoing work, which can help to build trust and transparency.” Regular climate surveys are one way of holding leadership to account.

<p><i>“Above all, if the GMB is to change it must want to do so. It will take robust and committed leadership to successfully push this through. And those who do try to drive through change must be supported and applauded.”</i></p> <p>KARON MONAGHAN KC 31 August 2020</p>

Appendix

Recommendations from Karon Monaghan KC Report

Recommendation 1:

The CEC and other lay bodies within the GMB should claim and exercise the authority the Rules give them over the GS, regional secretaries and the regional bodies.

Recommendation 2:

The CEC should draw up an action plan setting out the steps it needs to take to implement the recommendations in this report. It should establish a task force to drive through the changes required.

Recommendation 3:

Voting at the CEC should not be by show of hands. Regional secretaries should not attend CEC meetings unless it is to speak to a particular item, and then they should remain only for so long as is necessary for that purpose.

Recommendation 4:

The CEC should reclaim any powers or functions delegated by its decisions to the Regions. These include the power to set conditions of employment which should contain fixed hours of work and workplace; arrangements for performance management and reference to a sexual harassment policy.

Recommendation 5:

Regional secretaries should not be in the majority on the SMT. The national equalities officer should sit on the SMT.

Recommendation 6:

The CEC and other lay bodies within the GMB (including any committees the CEC establishes to carry out its work) must mainstream equality considerations when setting their own objectives and standards. The CEC and SMT should undertake an annual equalities audit and conduct equality impact assessments of all significant decisions of the CEC and the SMT.

Recommendation 7:

The CEC should formulate standards for the achievement of equality in the Regions, including among officers and staff and regional lay bodies, including branches. The CEC should require regional councils to prepare action plans setting out the steps they intend to take to meet those standards.

Recommendation 8:

The CEC should require and scrutinise regular reports from regional councils and from regional secretaries. These reports should include a breakdown by sex of the employees, officers, including at branch level, and members of regional councils and committees in their region, including by role and, where applicable, grade. Regional councils and regional secretaries should also identify what steps they have taken to meet any CEC instructions on improving diversity and equality and tackling bullying and harassment, if appropriate by the use of positive action, and their outcome.

Recommendation 9:

The CEC should consider exercising its powers to break up or suspend any region or regional council if they do not comply with instructions from the CEC, one of its committees, or from the GS when exercising functions under the authority of the CEC.

Recommendation 10:

The CEC should take steps to increase the representation of women at all levels in the GMB, among employees and lay officers and bodies.

Recommendation 11:

The CEC should ensure that its guidelines on appointments processes are properly applied in the case of all vacancies. These should include a requirement that all vacancies be advertised, and that recruitment be by open competition, and supported by person specifications and job descriptions. In the case of regional secretaries, the person specification must include the ability to promote equality at regional level, and to demonstrate experience of having done so.

The CEC should not approve an appointment, and should direct that an appointments process be re-run, if the guidelines have not been followed. External observers (lawyers or human resources professionals, or similar, experts) should supervise the selection process for regional secretary appointments. Those external observers should report to the CEC before the CEC approves the appointment of a regional secretary.

Recommendation 12:

The CEC should oversee the performance of the GS and require regular reports from the GS on the steps taken to promote equality and their outcomes.

Recommendation 13:

The GS should undertake proper performance management and appraisals of regional secretaries' performance. If weaknesses are identified in the performance of regional secretaries, including as measured against equality standards, then training must be provided. If regional secretaries are unable

or unwilling to meet those performance standards even with training, then appropriate action should be taken, if necessary under the capability or disciplinary procedures.

Recommendation 14:

GSs and regional secretaries should be provided with management training.

Recommendation 15:

Branches should be required to include equality objectives in their branch development plans. These should be directed at securing the greater participation of women in branch activities, including as officers, shop stewards and staff representatives. Regional secretaries, regional councils and regional committees should not approve or register branch development plans that do not include equality objectives.

Recommendation 16:

The human resources department at national office should be strengthened and additional resources allocated to it, including additional staff. There should be human resources capability at regional level. All human resources staff should be adequately trained.

Recommendation 17:

The GMB should make arrangements for external monitoring of the steps they have taken to meet the recommendations in this report. The GMB should seek the assistance of the TUC in this regard.

Recommendation 18:

Freestanding sexual harassment policies for (i) employees and (ii) members should be drawn up. These should set out clearly what is meant by sexual harassment, giving examples of physical, verbal and other forms of, sexual harassment.

Recommendation 19:

The sexual harassment policies should include bespoke complaints procedures. These should clearly identify to whom any complaint should be made and if the complaint concerns that person, then it should state to whom instead the complaint should be made.

Recommendation 20:

Only a person who has had training in dealing with complaints of sexual harassment should be involved in investigating or reaching a conclusion on a complaint of sexual harassment.

Recommendation 21:

The "safe space" facility (or something analogous) should be retained as a source of support for employees, ex-employees and members and exmembers who have experienced sexual harassment. It should be widely advertised. A person should be permitted to make an anonymous report through the "safe space". The GMB should monitor the number of 23 reports being made through the "safe space".

Recommendation 22:

A portal should be established on the GMB's website on its main page, and behind the members wall, containing all the documents relevant to sexual harassment i.e. its sexual harassment policies for employees and for members, and the complaints procedures and sources of support.

Recommendation 23:

Regular refresher training on sexual harassment should be provided to employees.

Recommendation 24:

Training on sexual harassment should be provided to members of lay bodies in the GMB, including the CEC, regional councils and regional committees and branch officers. This training be refreshed periodically.

Recommendation 25:

Sexual harassment should be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. It should be made explicit in disciplinary documents that even a single incident, depending on the nature of it, may justify summary dismissal or the cancelling of membership even for a first offence.

Recommendation 26:

Complaints of sexual harassment should not be subject to interference outside the sexual harassment policies and procedures.

Recommendation 27:

Employees and members from other protected groups, including Black and ethnic minority groups, that are underrepresented in the structures of the GMB should be encouraged to participate in its activities, including at officer level, and be supported when they do so. Positive action should be taken where appropriate to facilitate this.

The GMB should provide resources for regular events led by women and members from other underrepresented groups, including Black and ethnic minority groups. The availability of resources for these purposes should be widely advertised.

9 Recommendations from Dr. Elizabeth Henry Report

Recommendations to assist GMB in becoming a fully inclusive union, and one which operates as a model of good practice in the area of race equality.

- Ethnicity monitoring - employee, membership and activist levels. Publish and communicate figures annually – **ESSENTIAL**
- Race Equality Strategy - that meets the minimum requirements set by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000: (General Duty to) Promote equality of opportunity, good race relations and prevent unlawful discrimination - **ESSENTIAL**
- National Recruitment Strategy- to include targets for black and minority ethnic membership that reflect the local demographic composition - **ESSENTIAL**
- Membership Development Strategy that encourages member involvement and activism and includes targets and specific actions to improve and support black and minority ethnic representation – **ESSENTIAL**
- A comprehensive training programme for all activists, that includes; increasing awareness and education about what race equality/relations is and isn't. Additional training for senior officials and dedicated race officers on leadership in this area - **ESSENTIAL**
- A positive action programme that includes; expanding and promoting opportunities for black and minority ethnic groups to participate at all levels of the GMB. May involve, shadowing, mentoring and support, training, proactive consultation with black and minority ethnic groups to understand needs and barriers faced in becoming members and/or activists. Sets targets for inclusion, monitors and reports progress – **ESSENTIAL**
- Commit at least 1 FTE (full time equivalent) at a senior level and with sufficient resources to lead and champion this initiative - **ESSENTIAL**
- Communications plan that conveys a distinct message that GMB values the contributions of all of its members and activists. Demonstrates top-down commitment. Includes sharing and promotion of good practice between Regions and provides regular updates on progress - **ESSENTIAL**

- High profile Race Task Group that has the authority to oversee implementation and commitment to race equality – **ESSENTIAL**

Useful links and further reading

GMB union website: Karon Monaghan KC Report: [gmb_investigation_report_2020](#)

Dr Elizabeth Henry Report
[Elizabeth Henry Report \(1\).pdf \(gmb.org.uk\)](#)

18/10/22 Report from TUC Executive Committee on tackling and preventing sexual harassment:
<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sexualharassmentworkinggroup>

TUC (2016) Still just a bit of Banter – women’s experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace:
<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/SexualHarassmentreport2016.pdf>

Wales TUC toolkit for trade unionists on Sexual Harassment in the workplace:
<https://www.tuc.org.uk/sexual-harassment-workplace>

Fawcett Society: Tackling sexual harassment in the workplace: recommendations for employers:
[Tackling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace \(fawcettsociety.org.uk\)](#)

Helena Kennedy KC Report: [Independent Inquiry Report Published | TSSA](#)

6/10/21 Paul Nowak, TUC General Secretary, article in Daily Mirror: [‘Men CAN stop violence against women – but it’s up to us to stop turning blind eye’ - Paul Nowak - Mirror Online](#)

Trade union anti-racism manifesto – TUC anti-racism Taskforce 2022-2027
[ARTF_Manifesto_2022_AW_Revised.indd \(tuc.org.uk\)](#)

Labour Research magazine March 2023 – article entitled “Keeping women safe: setting our own union houses in order.” This article references the work done by GMB and the Taskforce to “take forward Monaghan’s 27 recommendations, together with the recommendations of an earlier report on race equality.”

[Publications Online :: Publications \(Irdpublications.org.uk\)](#) (Log-in to Labour Research will be required to read this article)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Barbara, it is over to you.

BARBARA PLANT (CEC): Thank you, Malcolm. Vice President and Congress, Barbara Plant, moving the CEC Special Report: GMB Taskforce for Positive Change.

This Special Report follows two similar reports to Congress in 2021 and Congress 2022. The aim throughout these past three years has been to provide transparent reports to Congress. This is the final report on the work of the Taskforce to Congress. It sets out the timeline of progress that we have made towards our union truly embedding the values that it was founded to achieve in deeds as well as words. Culture change is not a tick-

box exercise. It is all about us living the values of our movement: equality, inclusion, allyship and solidarity. The setting up of the Taskforce was a consequence of one of the most difficult moments for our union, and that is why it was established two years ago. It was established in a moment of crisis, and I thank the CEC who took the brave decision then and all those since who have supported this work.

Never again should our union fall short of our values: sexism, sexual harassment, racism and other behaviours that go against our values should never be tolerated. *(Applause)* There can be no place in our union for discrimination or harassment of any form.

Although the Taskforce itself has completed a natural cycle, the change it was established to bring will be carried forward and embedded throughout the union. The Taskforce has built the foundations to make positive and permanent change to our union, in our policies, our practices and our culture. Culture change has to start at the top, and it takes time to embed. It will require our patience and support, and will only happen with regular monitoring, review and evaluation that this report recommends. There will still need to be oversight and a culture of accountability maintained so that the changes recommended by the Monaghan and Henry Reports become permanent in our union.

The CEC wishes to thank all past and present members of the Taskforce for their hard work, dedication and on-going commitment to starting this process. I would also like, personally, thank Dr Helen Mott, who sadly lost her partner this year. GMB will be for ever indebted to her for her considerable contribution in making our union a safe and better place. *(Applause)*

Congress, let us not forget what we have begun to change. It was the example we set by publishing the Monaghan Report in 2020. That gave rise to a commitment from the TUC to tackle sexual harassment within the union movement as a whole. By supporting this report today, we will continue to lead by example so that the whole of the trade union movement will be a safer and better place. Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Barbara. Colin.

COLIN GUNTER (CEC): Vice President and Congress, I am seconding the CEC Special Report on the Taskforce for Positive Change. The report sets out the work of this taskforce from its formation following the Karon Monaghan KC

Report to its conclusion. The taskforce has spent the best part of two years working on the 27 recommendations of the Monaghan Report and the nine recommendations of the 2003 Dr Elizabeth Henry Report. This report tracks the development of those recommendations that the taskforce was able to complete. It also tracks those that require further work by bodies other than the taskforce for completion and those that will still need to be progressed through a comprehensive oversight.

The chronology incorporates key moments of the development and the change for the union and illustrates significant changes in the landscape since the taskforce began its work.

The stand-alone Sexual Harassment Policy, the majority of regional secretaries being women, comprehensive valid-based training for the SMT, and the changes to the policy in terms of the reduction of alcohol at social events are a but a few of the significant changes made positively to shape the GMB culture going forward.

Although progress has been made on the Henry recommendations, namely, the appointment of a national race organiser, the 19 years of non-development will require much more time for these essential recommendations to be properly implemented.

To address this, the report recommends that the Race Sub-Group should continue to provide oversight and support to the National Race Organiser in completing the information of the Henry report's recommendations in line with recommendation 9.

At the same time, the leadership of the union will complete the implementation of the Monaghan recommendations with the necessary oversight and accountability as the taskforce concludes.

In terms of the next step, the leadership of the union at every level will be required to lead by example and be accountable by completing the outstanding work. We should all be determined to uphold the high standards of transparency as we continue to implement what is needed. To be meaningful, change within our union must be a living part of our democracy as well as our structures and processes. Change must be something that rises through our branches and regions if it is to have the strength to endure. The change in the living of our values should be easier to see, simple to follow and hard to avoid, regardless of what position you

hold in the GMB as a member or an employee. The change must benefit us all. Please support this report. I second. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. We will now move on to the regional speakers. London?

TARANJIT CHANA (London): I am speaking on behalf of London Region in support of this report but with some reservations and comments. In January 2021 the Taskforce For Positive Change was created to action the recommendations of the Monaghan and the Henry reviews. GMB has a responsible duty to pro-actively implement equality measures and eliminate discrimination and behaviours that go against our values and principles. Projects and programmes have been developed to make us an inclusive union in which all equality strands thrive. Regions are working on initiatives and building on our good work already in place. Clear improvement in culture, practices and policies are being seen two years on. However, it would be great to get more detailed information on the progress, on the next steps, on who will continue the work and accountability on reviewing its progress. Branches feel that they are unable to engage fully in the process, despite the report saying that more input is required from bodies and stakeholders.

A suggestion for the national website to reflect the progress: Taskforce members found a use of the traffic-light system helpful to show progress with each recommendation being colour coded. Page 12 of the report says that 11 recommendations have been completed but it failed to identify which 11. Targeted training and development programmes for black, Asian and minority ethnic activists through GRASP – the GMB Race Achievement Programme – is welcomed (recommendation 6 of the Henry Report).

London Region has started a Race Equality Campaign – EVACAVOR, a joint race and women's campaign unit workshop. See recommendation 3 of the Henry report. GMB London Race, a self-organised group, is beginning an anti-racism campaign to look at the barriers that racism creates. See recommendation 5 of the Henry report. The new template for a national monitoring form to standardise data across our union is welcomed. The aim of the monitoring form is to help identify and organise under-represented groups to fight against inequality and an industrialised campaign through equality bargaining in the workplace.

So, Congress, please support the CEC's Special Report of the GMB Taskforce for Positive Change with the qualifications outlined. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Midlands?

DAWID MAKUCH (Midlands): Congress and President, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am speaking on behalf of Midlands Region on this CEC Special Report: Taskforce for Positive Change.

Congress, before we decide on accepting this Special Report, we have to highlight some facts. The Dr Elizabeth Henry report was brought to life in 2002 with nine essential recommendations, and before this taskforce, for 20 years, none of them have been implemented. In August 2020 Karon Monaghan published her, I must say, shocking report expanding the number of recommendations to 27. In little over two years this taskforce met 22 times with almost monthly meetings. That shows commitment and that has to be applauded. During this time they completed 11 recommendations and started another 11. While five of them still have to be started, we must recognise that this is an improvement from last year where only four completed recommendations had been achieved. We must remember that this is a process. Congress, I read this report as an honest and positive change. I applaud the hard work that has been done. I encourage the taskforce to complete all 27 recommendations and I support the Special Report. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dawid. I call North East, Yorkshire & Humberside.

SHELAGH CARTER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): As we know, the GMB commissioned Karon Monaghan in 2020 to investigate serious allegations of sexual harassment and the way that the management of sexual harassment claims were handled and managed by the GMB.

The decision to commission an independent report was welcomed by members of the union, particularly from female members, as it is acknowledged that sexual harassment has a lifelong impact on those harmed by it. The Monaghan Report put forward 27 recommendations. We are now at Congress 2023 and those 27 recommendations have not yet been fully implemented. The Special CEC Report shows that the GMB is taking the necessary steps to put our house in order and taking the matter seriously. It is acknowledged that the work of the Taskforce for Positive Change is making a difference in the work it has done so far but the number of the recommendations and this momentum needs to continue so that all of the 27 recommendations are enshrined in the GMB as best

practice. How can we expect other people to apply these standards if we do not apply them to ourselves?

In closing, let us not forget the words of our founder, Will Thorne: “There is a world of freedom, beauty and equality to gain where everyone will have the opportunity to express the best that is within them for the benefit of all, making the world a place more to our heart’s desire and the better to dwell in it”. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shelagh. I call North West & Irish.

JOANNE WEIR (North West & Irish): Congress, my region welcomes the report on Taskforce for Positive Change. Our region fully support the report and congratulate the work of the taskforce to bring about real change in the last few years. We have some work still to complete and, on behalf of our region, we support the report. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joanne. I call Scotland.

SHONA THOMSON (GMB Scotland): Congress, GMB Scotland gives its full acknowledgement to the issues outlined in the Monaghan and Henry reports. We also give our full support to the recommendations in making the culture and structures of our union fairer. It is the responsibility for all of us, from branches right through to the CEC, to build that fairer union that treats its members with respect.

GMB Scotland acknowledges the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes by the Taskforce members but, unfortunately, the Special Report is light on detail. After two-and-a-half years of work much of what is included within it is a repeat of the Monaghan and Henry reports. GMB Scotland’s biggest concern, however, is that the work of the Taskforce and the resulting report was conducted with little input from rank and file members, regional councils and committees, and without the input of the self-organised equality groups of the National Equality Forum. The next steps reference such areas as a branch development plan. I want to recognise the important work that all union staff do in organising and in supporting members. However, we are a member-led union, and that ethos and principle must be preserved.

Branches have been largely excluded from the work of the taskforce. Any work that involves the functions and process of branches must actively include branches themselves. We often state that our union is member-led,

as it absolutely should be. There is no greater cause that must be member led than the task of making permanent and positive changes to our union's culture, policies and practices to tackle sexism, sexual harassment and racism.

Our branches are the lifeblood of our union, but their views have obviously been overlooked within this report. Colleagues, in regard to the concerns I have outlined on behalf of GMB Scotland, I would request that before we vote on the Special Report the CEC responds to our concerns and gives us the assurance that they will be fully acknowledged and noted, and that in future regions will decide who will represent them on any consultation groups. These assurances from the CEC would allay the concerns of GMB Scotland. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shona. Southern.

JULIETTE PARSONS (Southern): Congress, GMB Southern Region, supporting the CEC Special Report on the Taskforce for Positive Change. Significant progress has been made by the union since it commissioned and published the Monaghan Report in 2020. It is also important that we have revisited and progressed the recommendations in the Henry Report. The union is a safer and more diverse place by taking positive and pro-active action as a result of these recommendations.

We all know the culture change our union needs will be a long-term project but needs ambition and drive. All of us here are tasked with ensuring that the work continues and that it is meaningful. It is good to remind ourselves of the progress made. We've gone from not a single woman as a regional secretary to a majority of women regional secretaries. We have expanded the union's equality work, including the establishment of the Women's Campaign Unit, appointed the union's first National Race Organisers, established a Race Scholarship Programme, which is starting to provide development for GMB leaders from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, anti-sexual harassment training and leadership training is in place with an emphasis on values and living those values, the zero-tolerance policy has been updated and implemented, which means that poor behaviour is being properly dealt with, and there is the new sexual harassment policy for members and staff.

However, we know that more progress needs to be made on the remaining recommendations, including those which are a matter for the GMB's Senior Leadership Team and the staff of the union.

A radical, cultural shift is not just the responsibility of a small group of people on a taskforce. It is everybody's responsibility to drive these changes. We, as lay members, need to keep the pressure on and ensure there is momentum behind these recommendations. We all want to be able to look back and see how far we've come. These new policies and processes are fundamental to change but if they are not living, breathing and absolutely integral to the fabric of the GMB, then they are meaningless. They need to be part of the make-up of the organisation, so in the next three years we can all benefit from a healthier and happier union which, in turn, means that we will achieve so much more. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Juliette. Wales & South West.

REBECCA JONES WESTCOTT (Wales & South West): Congress, I am speaking in support of the CEC's Special Report: Taskforce for Positive Change. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Congress, we are all aware why the taskforce was implemented – to address the recommendations from both the current from both the Karon Monaghan report and the Dr Elizabeth Henry report. We welcome and praise the hard work of the taskforce over the last two years and applaud the dedication that each member has given.

We have seen a change in leadership that has been groundbreaking, which has changed the history of our union and throughout the trade union movement. The GMB has been applauded by the TUC for our transparency, and they themselves are undertaking changes which have been inspired by what the taskforce has achieved. We welcome the news that all the SMT members have now completed sexual harassment training. It gives us peace of mind to know that the foundations are laid to move the union forward and enshrine the changes needed to eradicate the damning issues raised from the Monaghan and Henry reports.

Monaghan described significant job segregation and an under representation of women throughout the ranks. Well, colleagues, we stand here with four female regional secretaries in front of us, not because of the report but because every one of them deserves the position and have already made changes that they will continue to develop and embed the principles of the taskforce.

The Women's Unit has already made a change in the way we campaign on issues and places women at the forefront of our industrial fight. We also applaud the work of the National Race Officer and Race Taskforce, who continue to tackle racial injustice and organise for anti-racist practice. We support you in all you are doing.

Colleagues, the development of the sexual harassment policy to protect staff and activists has been greatly appreciated. These are landmark policies which have been through rigorous scrutiny to ensure that they meet all the legal requirements and are built into all structures of our organisation. These policies will protect and help prevent any of the issues raised during the history of the union. We have all seen the zero-tolerance statement and code of conduct. Let's embrace these and ensure that we conduct ourselves with the highest of credibility throughout everything we do. Let's be proud of what the taskforce has achieved so far. The on-going work will be history in the making and we should all stand up and promote and embrace what we have achieved. We are, without doubt, in a better place than we were in April 2020.

My last words are to our National President, Barbara Plant. Thank you for staying steadfast. You have done us proud and given us leadership throughout the most difficult time in the history of the GMB. Speaking in support of the Special Report. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rebecca. Colleagues, before I go to the vote, I am going to ask the General Secretary to respond. Gary Smith.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Thank you, Vice President and, Barbara, thank you for your tremendous contribution on the work of the taskforce and, Colin, I thought your speeches were truly inspiring and moving. Thank you for all that you have done.

This Congress is about facing outwards. That's what I want us to do this week. I want us to face bravely into the future. We've got tough things ahead and we need to come together and face into that future, a future that we are going to build together. But we also have to acknowledge where our union has been, the trauma that we have been through, the pain that we have heard from so many of our people and the courage that has been shown, not least by our President, Barbara Plant. *(Applause)*

Barbara, we wouldn't be here without you and we wouldn't be here without the courage and strength and resolve that was shown by the CEC. I

applaud you and I applaud the work of our fantastic CEC members. The taskforce did come together at a point of crisis, and little support was afforded to Barbara and, indeed, the wider CEC membership. Let's not forget that. Did the taskforce get it all right? Did we, collectively, as a CEC get it all right? Did I get it all right? Absolutely not. But the work of the taskforce is something that we should celebrate, not just in terms of the reports that have been given, the policies that have been introduced but because it has had such an impact on the thinking, deliberations and considerations now that go on within our union. It is a very different Senior Management Team, and our thinking and approach has been very much influenced by the work of the taskforce.

The work of building a healthier and stronger union will be ongoing. I give you this absolutely commitment. We want to hear more from our active members and we want more engagement from our branches. I say this to my comrades from GMB Scotland. I will never forget where I came from. We fought to ensure that Scotland and other regions had a strong voice within this union and, as long as I am General Secretary, I can assure you that that will absolutely remain. So we want to reflect on what you have said today. We are listening to what people have said and, as we move forward, we want to ensure that we have the most inclusive process possible. So let's reflect and recognise where we have been. Let's celebrate the courage that has been shown and let's continue to move forward together, building the stronger and healthier organisation that we all desire. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Colleagues, we will now go to the vote on the Taskforce for Positive Change Report. All those in favour, please show? All those against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried.

The CEC Special Report: Taskforce for Positive Change was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: GENERAL

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will now go on to item 16, which is Union Organisation: General. Delegates we are now moving on to Motion 11. Motions 6, 7 and 10 have been withdrawn at the regional delegation meetings and, therefore, will no longer be debated. Could the mover and seconder of Motion 11 please come forward.

ID PASSES

MOTION 11

11. ID PASSES

This Congress notes that when visiting other workplaces to attend meetings to represent our members, it's important to have a **GMB ID**. Just showing a business card with a name and email on is not enough when going into elderly care/ children's homes due to safeguarding policies and going into vulnerable sectors. Having a GMB official identity for the employer to check is more professional as it gives the rep a better standing in front of our members. We would ask the GMB to look at giving our Accompanying Reps a better form of ID, other than a business card. An official ID can be discretely show to the companies on arrival.

K19 SOUTH LONDON GENERAL BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

CHARLAINE NKUM (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 11 on ID Passes. This Congress notes that when visiting other workplaces to represent our members it is important to have adequate GMB identification, especially for those who are accompanying reps. Presenting a simple business card with a name, email and telephone number is simply not enough when entering into an elderly-care environment, schools and/or children's homes. This is due to safeguarding measures and policies within those vulnerable sectors.

Health and safety is another factor to consider, such as fire safety as a visible presence in a foreign building. Having an ID with all the above, plus a professional photo and the incorporation of the GMB logo, will provide instant, basic and visual security to determine who is the representative and their position within our union. It gives us the opportunity to be indirectly boastful of the union's presence, promotion of the union and to spark interest when walking through those office buildings. Curiosity leads to potential enquiries and potential enquiries lead to potentially new members. It's a win/win outcome. Alongside that comes an enhanced professionalism and an enhanced reputation. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charlaine. Secunder?

SILVESTER IJIEH (Southern): Congress and Vice President, I am here to second Motion 11 – ID badges. An ID badges is a badge that seeks to identify the person who wears it. The purpose of the ID badge is to prove who you are and it is to show who you represent. It enables people to know that the person holding is who they claim to be. Giving ID badges to our company reps will boost their morale and produce a better standing in front of our members who can easily identify them any time they go to represent them.

ID badges help to make access to places easier as the information on it clearly states who you are. GMB, being the second-largest union, should have a badge to identify, of identification, to the public who is a hard working accompanying rep who goes to different workplaces. The point is that a mere business card does not define who you are. I am calling on Congress to support this motion to give our accompanying reps ID badges. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sylvester. Does anyone wish to speak against the motion? No. In that case, I will now invite David McLean to respond to this motion with the CEC position.

DAVID McLEAN (CEC): Vice President and Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC, responding to Motion 11, ID Passes. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We recognise the potential value of the scheme promoted by the motion, and we note that a number of regions have such a scheme in place already. So the qualification is that it should be up to the regions to choose whether to pursue this initiative. Congress, the CEC is asking that Motion 11 be supported with the qualification that I have set out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Does Southern accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those in favour? Anybody against? That is carried.

Motion 11 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: EDUCATION & TRAINING

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, we now go on to section 17, which is Union Organisation: Education & Training. These will be the final set of motions before our lunch, and let me thank you so far for keeping to time. Could the movers and seconders for Motions 56, 57 and 59 please be ready, and can the mover of Motion 56 please come to the rostrum.

ANTISEMITISM AND HATE CRIME AWARENESS TRAINING MOTION 56

56. ANTISEMITISM AND HATE CRIME AWARENESS TRAINING

Our union was co-founded by Eleanor Marx in 1889 who, after seeing the dire conditions of Jewish factory workers in London's East End, and led by her sense of justice, fought for a more compassionate world. It is in this great tradition that we have listened to our members and supported their efforts to launch a specialist faith branch for those working for Jewish faith employers. Workers' interests are best

served when people organise themselves, from the bottom up, not the top down. This branch will allow that story to continue and give Rabbinic staff across the community an important voice on their workplace conditions.

Today this bond endures, stronger than ever, written in over 130 years of standing shoulder to shoulder. There is a long history of the Jewish community being part of the trade union story.

GMB London's new Jewish Faith Workers' Branch which aims to represent Jewish faith workers and improve the terms and conditions of their employment had its inaugural launch event last Summer attended by founding members. Since then, they have held Branch elections and elected important Branch officer posts.

At the event Gary Smith, General Secretary of GMB, spoke about the central role in labour movement history played by Jewish workers and how the new specialist branch will help to improve the lives of members who fulfil a religious function in the Jewish community. Over several years, the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) have supported this initiative and assisted in the launch of our ground-breaking branch. It is in the JLM values as an organisation to champion trade unionism in the Jewish community and beyond. Rabbis and Jewish faith workers, just like all workers, deserve trade union representation that advocates for them. Jewish faith workers include rabbis, rebbetzins, student rabbis, chaplains, youth leaders and all those employed to carry out a religious function by synagogues and Jewish faith spaces. The Jewish Labour Movement has been the Jewish affiliate of the Labour Party since 1920. JLM has a long association with the trade union movement including links to Jewish tailoring unions that merged to form the GMB.

The Jewish community and members of the new GMB Branch welcome the work already undertaken to roll out antisemitism awareness training through the JLM for all GMB London regional staff and regional committee. It is only through building this awareness will we collectively rid our society of all hate crime, including Antisemitism. Building on the commitments given at Congress 2022, this Congress agrees to consider how we may deliver Antisemitism and other hate crime awareness training much more widely across all Regions.

Congress therefore agrees to consider forming a small national working group to consider how we may address these concerns and be inclusive to all cultures and religions in how we deliver awareness.

LONDON REGIONAL COMMITTEE

London Region

(Carried)

OMOTAYO OBADINA (London): Congress and President, I am moving Motion 56 on antisemitism, and speaking as a proud member of our regional committee. Our union has deep historical roots in the Jewish community. The Jewish Labour Movement has been the Jewish athlete of the Labour Party since 1920. The JLM has a long association with the trade union movement, including links to Jewish tailoring unions that merged to form the GMB to form our great union, the GMB.

Rabbis and Jewish faith workers, just like all workers, deserve trade union representation which advocates for them. Jewish faith workers include rabbis, rebbetzins, student rabbis, chaplains, youth leaders and all those

employed to carry out religious functions by synagogues and Jewish faith spaces.

Since Congress last year, London Region has opened the very first GMB Jewish Faith Worker branch and elected branch officers. *(Applause)* We have held a training session with all regional staff to raise awareness of antisemitism, and yet we continue to have to challenge those who have either less awareness of the hurt they are causing or who deliberately aims to cause harm to others. The Jewish community and members of the new GMB branch welcome the work already undertaken to rule out antisemitism awareness training through the JLM for all GMB London regional staff and our regional committee. It is only through building this awareness will we have any success of collectively challenging all forms of hate crimes, including antisemitism, from within our society. I am proud of this action taken by the union so far but I would like your support in agreeing today that we will deliver this awareness training more constantly and more widely throughout our membership, maybe starting from our branches.

Colleagues, let us all support our members from the Jewish community and agree to establish a national working party so we can work with our members and raise awareness against this terrible and sadly increasing scourge amongst our society. Please support this important motion.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Seconder?

TONY CHALLERTON (London): Congress, I second Motion 56 – Antisemitism and Hate Crime Awareness Training. GMB's history is full of the great work done to fight prejudice and injustice for those most in need, from Eleanor Marx's passion to improve the working conditions of Jewish factory workers in 1889 to the formation of the Jewish Faith Workers' Branch and their work with the Jewish Labour Movement. GMB has always fought against antisemitism.

Hate and hate crimes are destructive and are fed by misinformation, lies and a lack of understanding. The more we do to fight those who antagonise hatred, the better society will become. For us to fight prejudice and injustice we need to improve our knowledge and reach out to people from minority ethnic backgrounds. The first step in doing this is training. This has already been done for GMB regional staff and the regional committees, but this now needs to be rolled out to more activists.

This motion calls for Congress to continue to support this new initiative and to expand the antisemitism awareness training through the Jewish Labour Movement, for more of our representatives to consider how we may deliver antisemitism and other hate crime awareness training much more widely across the regions. The way to do this is to set up a working group to see the best way forward to fight antisemitism and all other hate crimes. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. I call the mover of Motion 57.

WORKPLACE SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR ALL REPS

MOTION 57

57. WORKPLACE SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR ALL REPS

This Congress calls for specific training for reps in their workplace. We recognise the importance of GMB@Work and believe that reps should receive this training when they first become a GMB Rep. We are calling for further training for reps in our organisation that will benefit a more intricate approach to their own individual issues in their workplaces that would concentrate on industrial relations, terms and conditions and therefore provide a deeper knowledge and understanding when representing members. This is vital to the world of work resulting in excellent representation and playing an integral part in recruitment.

A17 ASDA BRANCH

Midlands Region

(Carried):

IAN POOLE (Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 57. As workplace reps we play a vital part in providing representation for our members. GMB work training plays an integral part in giving reps an insight into the world of becoming workplace organisers. We are asking that following this training the GMB offers workplace-specific training. This training will be around individual policies relating to that rep's place of work. Training should be supported by lead reps, as they are the ones who have a vast understanding so they can share their knowledge and wisdom with the less experienced.

Training days could consist of looking at relevant policies, handbooks, terms and conditions, and recognition agreements. They can be adapted to suit all levels and help reps to attain greater knowledge, helping them to become better equipped at servicing our existing members and recruiting new members. Our aim is to make all reps feel comfortable when dealing with management and looking after our members. As we all know, knowledge is power. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

ANDY HUMPHRIES (Midlands): Vice President and Congress, this is my second time at this rostrum. I am quite passionate about this motion. I think we ought to get behind it. I want to tell you a little thing about myself first. I have dyslexia. The region has supported me to get to where I am at the moment, being a branch secretary. I think this is a good thing to get behind as reps because we all work in different areas of the workplace. This is why I second this motion. Thank you, Congress.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. I call the mover of Motion 59.

MEMBERS TO BE GIVEN ICT, TEAMS OR ZOOM TRAINING MOTION 59

9. MEMBERS TO BE GIVEN ICT, TEAMS OR ZOOM TRAINING

This Congress proposes branches to be given basic Virtual zoom and TEAMS training.

With the new way of working as being online in some instances we are requesting, through the GMB educational department that we have training on virtual meetings.

This includes Zoom and TEAMS

- how to facilitate them
- how to organise them
- how to operate breakout rooms and any other functions of the virtual meeting apps to help with the running of our branch meetings.
 - Hybrid meetings: what you need and how to do them.
 - How to manage your GMB email account with your company's work email account.
 - any ICT ongoing training to help in running your branch example WhatsApp, Twitter and any social media accounts.

LO9 LB LAMBETH BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

CHRISTINE LAMY-GOLDING (Southern): Thank you, Madam President, General Secretary and Congress. I bring Motion 59 to Congress. The motion is to give basic ICT, social media and virtual-meeting training to all branch officers, workplace reps, GMB officers and members to allow them to facilitate full participation in all branch meetings as well as enhancing their ability to communicate with a wider membership base.

I would like to share my experience at my last branch meeting where I sent invites out via virtual TEAMS. I booked a room and a monitor and I had a

short discussion with the staff who gave me advice on how things work. I was told to email the monitors' email address to the TEAMS branch invite, and this would open the monitor and I would be able to use my laptop and start inviting members into the meeting. Simple!

Well, on the day eight members attended the branch meeting face-to-face and another 30 members tried to come in via the meeting online. Guess what? The monitor didn't work and I felt absolutely useless. I was faced with the monitor not being able to connect and me not having the experience on how to fix it, to fix the problems or to get anyone to assist me. For our branches to thrive and succeed, we need to access all members. As research has shown, considering the disparity shown to women, black, Asian, minorities and ethnic members need our support to access all the technology and to be equal in our union.

Hybrid meetings are accessible to more members and, due to the workload, considering the limited time out our reps have, the ability to have virtual meetings has been an asset. But we need to be competent when using social media and virtual meeting apps as a benefit to all of us. With the new way of working due to the pandemic, introducing virtual meetings has become the new normal. Through the GMB Educational Department, we have had a lot of virtual meetings. We are requesting that this expertise be shared to reps and branches. We are requesting training on virtual apps, on how to facilitate them, how to organise them, how to operate break rooms and other functions on the virtual meeting apps, hybrid meetings, what you need, how to access them and how to share the meetings through monitors, how to manage your GMB email account with the company's work email account, and any ICT on-going training to help in running your branch, such as WhatsApp, Twitter and any other social media app. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Christine. Secunder?

FRANCIS DWUM (Southern): Congress, good morning. This motion is seeking the support of this Congress to make a provision for all GMB members, as per the rule book, to have access to virtual change, such zoom and TEAMS training.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, from 2018 until now, the application of zoom and TEAMS has become an inevitably crucial. ICT has evolved. Therefore, to be effective and efficient on how to facilitate and organise all breakout rooms, and any other functions of the virtual meetings apps

require training. The cost that comes along with providing training is horrible. The advantages of using these platforms to echo messages and communicate with our members are obvious, and below I have listed just a few. The training will advance the member's knowledge and skillset and advance the individual member's ability to assess both Zoom and TEAMS easily. Most importantly, reaching out to all members at less cost is phenomenal. Congress, please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Francis. Does anyone wish to speak against the motion?

CHRIS BUTLER (Southern): Congress, I am seconding Motion 59. It's just a quick one. Since the pandemic and we want to stay home with parents turning into schoolteachers – we all know how that went – the world has moved online with meetings, training, education and lots of other things. I am asking Congress to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Chris. I now call Mary Hutchinson to respond to Motions 57 and 59.

MARY HUTCHINSON (CEC): Congress, I am responding, on behalf of the CEC, to Motions 57 and 59, which we are supporting with qualifications.

First, on Motion 57 – Workplace Specific Training for all Reps. The principle of GMB @ Work is that it can be adapted and applied to all workplaces and have space for consolidation training. The ICT should also help identify whether a workplace or an employer will need specific consultation training. The GMB @ Work introductory training is helpful for bringing reps together from different employers and sectors to share experiences and see similarities in issues. We have done further GMB @ Work training with employers, such as Asda, British Gas and National Grid as well as others in the past.

Our qualification is that while we are able to facilitate further employer specific training, it would need to be done on a case-by-case basis with an organising objective, and on a scale with enough reps to attend. It won't be a given that every rep will receive training specific to their employer or industry as part of their mandatory training.

Regarding Motion 59 – Members to be given ICT, Teams or Zoom training – it is vital that our branches and members can have the confidence to meet online should that be required. We support the motion in offering some

basic training for our branches. Our small qualification is that we will offer this on a case-by-case basis when requested by branches. Congress, please support both of these motions with the qualifications outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Motion 56 is being supported by the CEC. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried. Does Midlands accept the qualification on Motion 57? (*Agreed*) Does Southern accept the qualification on Motion 59? (*Agreed*) So Southern and Midlands accept the qualifications on Motions 57 and 59. So they are being supported. All those in favour, please show? They are carried.

Motion 56 was CARRIED
Motion 57 was CARRIED.
Motion 59 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Congress, that concludes the first session of business for Congress 2023. Thank you for all your speeches and, please, enjoy the fringe meetings. You should be able to find a list of them in your Congress Guide, and please do visit the exhibition hall as well!

We shall be starting our afternoon session promptly at 2pm so do make sure you are back in the hall by then. Thank you. Enjoy your lunch.

Congress adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Congress assembled at 2.00 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Congress to order. I am joined on the stage at the start of this session by Ruth Brady, the Regional Secretary for Wales and South West ((*Applause*) and Hazel Nolan, Regional Secretary for NE, Yorkshire and Humber. (*Applause*) Please remember to switch off any devices, or have them turned to silent.

I have two announcements: somebody has left their glasses in the women's toilets; if you know who that is, or they are yours, they are with me.

Also, I would like to welcome Mark Brooks of the Utility Workers Union of America to the hall. I am not sure where you are sitting, Mark, but you are very welcome. It is our pleasure to have you with us. (*Applause*)

A number of motions and rule amendments that had been due to be debated this afternoon have been withdrawn so we may finish this session slightly early; that is a “may”, okay? Fingers crossed! I will advise of motions and rule amendments that have been withdrawn as we go through the session.

I will now ask Karen Dudley to move Standing Orders Committee Report Number 2.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 2

SOC REPORT NO 2

PRESIDENT, CONGRESS

KAREN DUDLEY, STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE CHAIR, MOVING SOC REPORT NO 2.

WITHDRAWN MOTIONS

THE SOC HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS AND RULE AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN:

MOTION 2 PREVIOUS MOTIONS SUBMITTED, FROM LONDON REGION

MOTION 6 DIGNITY AND FAIR PAY FOR TRADE UNION WORKERS, FROM LONDON REGION

MOTION 7 SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM OF THE UNION, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

MOTION 10 SUSTAINABILITY & ETHICAL FUTURE, FROM NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

MOTION 20 REGIONAL BOUNDARY CHANGES, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

MOTION 68 MORNING STAR ATTACKS ON TRANS RIGHTS, FROM WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

MOTION 142 THE POLICE FORCE, FROM SOUTHERN REGION

MOTION 149 A NATIONAL SOCIAL CARE SERVICE, FROM LONDON REGION

MOTION 162 COST OF LIVING PAY, FROM WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

MOTION 163 ENDING LOW PAY CULTURE, FROM SOUTHERN REGION

MOTION 180 CHANGE THE WAY ASYLUM SEEKERS ARE PROCESSED TO FILL THE SKILLS GAPS IN THE UK, FROM LONDON REGION

MOTION 222 BRING LOCAL AUTHORITY CARE PROVISION BACK IN-HOUSE, FROM NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

MOTION 223 INCREASE THE THRESHOLD OF SAVINGS WHEN HOME OWNERS HAVE TO GO INTO CARE, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

COMPOSITE 15 KEEPING PRESSURE ON LABOUR REGARDING SOCIAL CARE COMMITMENTS, FROM WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

RA 268, FROM LONDON REGION

RA 270, FROM LONDON REGION

RA 271, FROM SOUTHERN REGION

RA 272, FROM SOUTHERN REGION

RA 275, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

RA 276, FROM LONDON REGION

RA 277, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

RA 278, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

RA 279, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

RA 286, FROM GMB SCOTLAND

RA 291, FROM MIDLANDS REGION

RA 298, FROM GMB SCOTLAND

RA 302, FROM SOUTHERN REGION

RA 305, FROM LONDON REGION

RA 307, FROM SOUTHERN REGION

AGREED COMPOSITE MOTIONS

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE, & HUMBER AND NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION FOR AGREEING TO COMPOSITE MOTIONS 74 AND 75 TO FORM A FURTHER COMPOSITE MOTION 18, WHICH WILL BE HEARD LATER THIS AFTERNOON.

BUCKET COLLECTIONS

THE SOC HAS AGREED THREE REQUESTS FOR BUCKET COLLECTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

FROM GMB SCOTLAND FOR GUIDE DOGS, THE SOC RECOMMENDS THAT THIS TAKES PLACE AT THE CLOSE OF THE MONDAY MORNING SESSION.

FROM MIDLANDS REGION FOR AMAZON STRIKERS. THE SOC RECOMMENDS THAT THIS TAKES PLACE AT THE CLOSE OF THE TUESDAY MORNING SESSION.

FROM NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION FOR ZOE'S PLACE AND ANGEL EYES. THE SOC RECOMMENDS THAT THIS TAKES PLACE AT THE CLOSE OF THE WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION.

THE PRESIDENT HAS VERY GRACIOUSLY AGREED THAT LONDON REGION MAY CARRY OUT A BUCKET COLLECTION AT PRESIDENT'S NIGHT THIS EVENING FOR CARE 4 CALAIS.

WE WOULD ASK THOSE CARRYING OUT THE COLLECTIONS TO ADOPT AN APPROPRIATE COVID SAFE METHOD IN DOING SO.

PRESIDENT, CONGRESS, I FORMALLY MOVE ADOPTION OF SOC REPORT NO 2.

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Withdrawn Motions – The SOC has been informed that the following motions and rule amendments have been withdrawn:

Motion 2 Previous Motions Submitted from London Region;

Motion 6 Dignity and Fair Pay for Trade Union Workers from London Region;

Motion 7 Senior Leadership Team of the Union from Midlands Region;

Motion 10 Sustainability and Ethical Future from North West & Irish Region;

Motion 20 Regional Boundary Changes from Midlands Region;

Motion 68 *Morning Star* Attacks on Trans Rights from Wales and South West Region;

Motion 42 The Police Force from Southern Region;

Motion 149 A National Social Care Service from London Region;

Motion 162 Cost of Living Pay from Wales and South West Region;

Motion 163 Ending Low Pay Culture from Southern Region;

Motion 180 Change the Way Asylum Seekers are Processed to Fill the Skills Gap in the UK from London Region;

Motion 222 Bring Local Authority Care Provisions Back In-house from North West & Irish Region;

Motion 223 Increase the Threshold of Savings when Homeowners have to go into Care from Midlands Region;

Composite 15 Keeping Pressure on Labour Regarding Social Care Commitments from Wales and South West Region.

RA 268 from London Region; RA 270 from London Region; RA 271 from Southern Region; RA 272 from Southern Region; RA 275 from Midlands Region; RA276 from London Region; RA 277 from Midlands Region; RA 278 from Midlands Region; RA 279 from Midlands Region; RA 291 from Midlands Region; RA 302 from Southern Region; RA 305 from London Region, and RA 307 from Southern Region.

A complete list will be circulated in due course with SOC Report No. 2.

Agreed Composite Motions: We are grateful to the North East, Yorkshire & Humber, and North West & Irish Region's for agreeing to Composite Motion 74 and 75 to form a further Composition Motion 18, which will be heard later this afternoon.

Bucket Collections - The SOC has agreed four requests for bucket collections as follows: from GMB Scotland for Guide Dogs; the SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the Monday morning session.

From Midlands Region for Amazon Strikers; the SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the Tuesday morning session.

From North West & Irish Region for Zoe's Place and Angel Eyes, the SOC recommends that this takes place at the close on Wednesday morning session.

The President has very graciously agreed that London Region may carry out a bucket collection at the President's Night this evening for Care for Calais. We would ask those carrying out the collections to adopt the appropriate Covid safe methods in doing so.

President, Congress, I formally move to adopt the adoption of SOC Report No. 2.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Is there anybody who wants to speak in opposition to Standing Orders Report No. 2? No? In that case, can I ask Congress to show to adopt it, all those in favour please show hands? Thank you. Anyone against? That is adopted. (*Applause*)

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2 was ADOPTED

THE PRESIDENT: In regards to the bucket collection, obviously many of us do not carry cash as much as we used to so just be aware that you might want to have some ready for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and for tonight at the President's and Vice President's Evening.

We will now play the regional campaign videos for Wales and South West and North East, Yorkshire & Humber, and please could the speaker on the CEC Special Report on Our Rulebook – A Process of Change be ready as this will be the next item of business. Thank you.

Videos played to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Great videos. Well done, Ruth, Hazel, and your staff, but mostly the members who have taken those actions and we are certainly lighting some fires in those two regions. I look forward to the next videos to come. Thank you.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT DEBATE

THE PRESIDENT: Now we go on to the Special Report Debate and, Congress, I will now set out how I will take this debate. The Special Report will be moved and seconded by Cath Pinder and Margaret Gregg from the CEC. I will then invite each region to speak on the report. RAs 277 and 278, and Motion 20, have been withdrawn in favour of the report. Please can I have Cath Pinder to move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

CEC Special Report to Congress 2023 Our Rulebook - A Process of Change

Why are we doing this?

The work on the new Rulebook should be seen as an ongoing process that seeks to strengthen the democracy and accountability within the union's structures. This will aim to embed GMB's regional and federal structure, with its rights and responsibilities within our culture; and to increase the levels of industrial democracy and workers' participation across the union and, particularly, within representation on the Central Executive Council (CEC) and Regional Councils.

A strong healthy democracy is vital to ensuring that power is held to account at every level in the union and that the union is genuinely representative of the priorities of members.

We want to ensure that the Rulebook is accessible and facilitates participation in the internal democracy of the union. Whilst there is still work to be done, we have been listening to lay members about their experiences with the Rulebook and about the barriers that they perceive exist and that prevent them getting more involved in the union's internal democracy.

It is also clear that in the current Rulebook, there is a lack of clarity about our purpose and vision. Moreover, the current Aims and Objectives do not fit with the approach we have adopted in starting to reverse the membership decline that set in over the past period. We have started to turn around the fortunes of the union by listening to members and building industrial campaigns around their priorities. We need to ensure that the Rulebook properly reflects our newfound focus on running industrial campaigns. The proposed revised wording reflects the principles that guide our union. The revised wording seeks to capture the founding principles and mission of our union: we are truly looking to re-tie the knot of history.

We recognise that transforming the Rulebook is a process that will, in time, broaden out to include all aspects of our work, including our commitment to Equalities and Branch life. However, this year we will take some significant steps in transforming our Rulebook and strengthening our internal democracy. The work on the Rulebook, involving a scrutiny group of lay activists from all Regions, will be ongoing with a view to bringing further amendments to Congress in 2024.

As part of the work we have been doing on updating the Rulebook, we have listened to the concerns raised in Congress motions and noted the consequence of merging regions upon the size and number of seats on the CEC. In 2019, there were 61 lay member seats on the CEC. As a consequence of merging of regions, on the current model, the effect would be to reduce this to 53 seats for the next CEC elections.

In order to bring new industrial voices to our debates, it is proposed that four new industrial seats would be created on each Regional Council. The effect of this is to establish industrial priorities within the core business of our democratic structures and to restore the numerical strength of the CEC in order to rebalance the effects of mergers upon the regions.

In addition, the economic and industrial realities facing our union suggest that now is the appropriate moment to move from three industrial sections, to two (with the continuing provision for the Fine Manufacturing sector (This was established at the time of Unity's transfer of engagements to the GMB, in 2015, and we are keen to honour our commitment to that union and its members).

The status of the nations of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, within our federated union remains unchanged, guaranteeing a distinctive voice for each and a reserved seat for Ireland as part of the North West and Irish Region.

Nationally elected reserved seats remain as currently constituted.

What does this look like?

The proposal before you, for implementation within the Rulebook, would provide 60 lay member seats on the CEC, plus the General Secretary (see the attached breakdown of CEC seats). This would be achieved through the creation of two new industrial seats per region and would not otherwise – save for the move to two sections – affect any other existing CEC seats.

The intent is to introduce regionally determined industrial reserved seats onto Regional Councils and the CEC. Under this model, each region will be obliged to report on the focus of its industrial priorities with a

view to filling four new seats to be created on Regional Council, and two new seats to be created on the CEC.

These seats are to be targeted, as determined by each region, in order to reflect the industrial voices of workers in sectors that are key to the region. The region will determine, each time regional council elections are held, their two industrial priorities and these will be replicated in the following CEC elections. However, regions do not have to select the same industrial sectors in every successive election cycle, allowing for flexibility in line with a constantly developing regional economy.

The members elected to Regional Council and the CEC in these new industrial reserved seats must be working in the specified sector at the time of nomination and election.

It may well be the case that there are already Regional Council members who would be eligible for election to the new industrial reserved seats but in order to ensure the greatest levels of participation, and that regions have a sufficient pool of eligible Regional Council members for election to the CEC. Under this new model, if they so choose, Regions will hold elections to their Regional Council before the next CEC elections take place.

During the period prior to the next CEC elections, regions can also hold by-elections to fill any vacant seats on their Regional Councils.

The Timetable for Elections

This will necessitate a change within the CEC electoral cycle.

The union has taken legal advice and can report that we are within the provisions of the TULR (A) 1992 Act, to extend the current term of office for the CEC beyond the four years provided in Rule.

Therefore, the proposal to Congress would be that we move to two sections (Public and Private) effective from 1 July 2023; and create new industrial reserved seats in order to change the dynamic of the CEC.

To do this, we would defer the CEC elections to the first half of 2024, so that the newly elected CEC takes up office at the conclusion of Congress 2024 and would hold office for four years.

Following Congress 2023, regions would notify the General Secretary of which two sectors they will choose for the holding of industrial reserved seats elections to their Regional Council. For the Regional Council seats there will be an open seat, and a women's reserved seat, in each of the two identified sectors (this is consistent with existing election procedure for the reserved seats on Regional Councils).

Following notification of their choice of industrial sectors, by the end of December 2023, according to a timetable of their choosing, regions can, if they so choose, hold elections for two new Regional Council members to each of the new reserved sector seats, with one open seat and one women's reserved seat in each.

At the same time, on the same timetable, regions can also hold by-elections for any vacancies on Regional Council in line with rule 19.7.

Congress is asked to support this proposal and related rule amendments to facilitate this process of change. The rule amendments for consideration have been framed in such a way as to mirror the existing rules governing elections to Regional Councils, necessitating as little change as possible.

(Line numbering refers to rules as printed in the GMB Rulebook)

CECRA1. Delete "Our Purpose"; Insert:

Our Purpose and Vision

Our union was forged amid the fires of the Beckton gas works. It was created as a grassroots organisation by self-organising groups of workers under the leadership of Will Thorne. As the first general union, it was open to all grades, professions, and trades; to both women and men, without distinction, on the basis of equality and inalienable human rights.

Its purpose, then as now, is to make work, and the general conditions governing life, better for its members through organising and campaigning in the workplace. GMB recognises the inherent dignity, creativity, and value of working people, who represent the productive class within our society, that generates the wealth of the nation but which sees so little of its benefits and rewards.

While we will find common cause with good employers and work alongside them in the rebuilding and planning the economy: GMB realises that the interests of employers and workers are fundamentally different and that, as a result our members will often be in dispute with their employers. Therefore, GMB exists to rebalance the economic and productive forces in our society, in order to ensure equity, and to achieve economic and industrial, as well as political, democracy.

GMB's strength stems from the ability of its members to self-organise and campaign in their workplaces; in order to fight at all times for the betterment of wages and conditions at work. It is the collective strength of the members that generates protection at work and provides them with the opportunity for advancement.

GMB recognises its internationalist duty to offer solidarity towards workers across the globe, who find themselves engaged in the same struggles as our own members, as an attack on one is as an attack upon us all.

GMB understands the insidious nature of racism and how it systematically harms, divides, and destroys workplaces, communities, and the fabric of civil society. We stand united, poised, and proud, ready to resist, eager to challenge and certain to defeat it whenever and wherever it manifests, itself. GMB firmly believes that hope, courage, and decency, will overcome – through organisation and education – fear and blind hatred. As a working-class organisation, we seek to celebrate our class in all its rich diversity.

Our values are eternal, rather than transitory. The right to work, to produce, and to create, without the threat of exploitation and discrimination; and to control the results and rewards of our labours, is – we believe – the greatest of freedoms. It is best achieved in current conditions through the solidarity expressed in the organised Labour Movement and within our own ranks, built-up from branch and industrial group level. We are, therefore, stronger when we act together, organised and ballot-ready within each and every workplace.

As a result, GMB remains an organisation in which every member has an equal share in the sovereign power of the union and stands as a strong pillar of a vibrant, and just, civil society and of a vibrant, and growing, union. Each member gained in the workplace builds upon our industrial power and enables GMB to effect the changes that we desire in order to ensure a world of freedom, beauty and equality, where everyone will have the opportunity to express the best that is within them for the benefit of all.

CECRA2. Delete “Rule 2 Aims”; Insert:

Rule 2 Aims and Objectives

The Aims and Objectives of the Union shall be:

2.1 To recruit, organise and represent all workers.

2.2 To act to redress the imbalance of power at work between workers and their employers through organising and campaigning on a collective basis.

2.3 To maintain and improve the wages and working conditions of our members.

2.4 To organise the Union, in each and every workplace, in order to make work better and to build the Union from the grassroots upwards; to ensure that every workplace is organised as if a ballot for action was due; recognising that the employers have different interests to our members; that it is active struggle and campaigns that grows membership; and that our members are strongest when they organise themselves. We intend to achieve this through the development of our workplace leaders and representatives; and by listening to members and helping them build campaigns around those issues that they, themselves, have identified.

2.5 To campaign to ensure that work is secure and safe; providing, as a basic minimum, a genuine living wage.

2.6 To promote industrial, together with political, democracy.

2.7 To achieve and to maintain equal pay for women; and to act to redress historic pay discrimination on the grounds of gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and disability.

2.8 To ensure equal opportunities within the Union, the workplace, and wider society; and to end harassment, prejudice and discrimination at work on the grounds of gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, disability, age, marital status, sexuality, or social class.

2.9 To provide benefits, including legal assistance, to members, in line with our Rules.

2.10 To impart the organising and industrial skills, and the knowledge required to implement the aims of the Union to members through flexible and accessible training programmes.

2.11 To ensure Trade Union freedoms to organise, recruit, and campaign in order to grow the Union and to achieve its aims, with access to workplaces; free from fear of victimisation and blacklisting by employers.

2.12 To promote or support legislation in the interests of members, especially in connection with the legal rights of trade unions; industrial health and safety; social and economic welfare and democracy; and environmental protection.

2.13 To secure the election of members to Parliament, and public authorities, who will promote the policies of the Union and further the interests of Union members through political means, providing that the candidates are pledged to collective ownership, under democratic control, of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

2.14 To undertake any such lawful acts as are incidental or conducive to the achievement of the above aims (or any of them) or that the Central Executive Council may consider to be in the collective interests of the members, or may be likely, directly or indirectly, to benefit the union or its members as stated under Rule.

CECRA3. Rule 11

Insert New Clause 1a:

1a One member will be elected as a representative for each of the two industrial sectors in each Region.

Insert New Clause 1b:

1b One member will be elected as a representative of the Manufacturing Hub in Midlands Region.

Clause 2a: delete “on 31 May in the year the election takes place”; insert at end of clause: “as stated in the membership figures for the previous September.”

2a One member will be elected as a general representative in each Region which has 75,000 or fewer members as stated in the membership figures for the previous September.

Clause 2b: delete “on 31 May in the year the election takes place”; insert at end of clause: “as stated in the membership figures for the previous September.”

2b Two members will be elected as general representatives in each region which has more than 75,000 members as stated in the membership figures for the previous September.

Clause 4: After first sentence insert new sentence: “No member will be eligible to be nominated for election to an industrial sector seat unless they are working in the sector at the time of nomination and election.”

4 No member will be eligible to be nominated for election to a section seat unless they are a member of that section. No member will be eligible to be nominated for election to an industrial sector seat unless they are working in the sector at the time of nomination and election.

Only women will be eligible to be nominated for election to a women’s reserved seat. Only members of a relevant racial group will be eligible to be nominated for election to a race reserved seat. Only members under 30 years of age on the first Tuesday of December in the year they are elected (or on the date of election if elected in a by-election) will be eligible to be nominated for election to a young members reserved seat. Members must be members of the region in which they are nominated. No-one can be nominated for election in more than one group. All candidates must have the relevant qualifications set out in rule 18.

Clause 5: After second sentence insert new sentence: “Only branches having members in an industrial sector can make nominations for the reserved industrial sector seats for that sector.”

5 Each branch in a region may nominate members for general seats, the women’s reserved seat, the race reserved seats, the young members reserved seats, the disabled reserved seats and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender reserved seats. In line with rule 35.21 (Composite branches), only branches having members in a section can make nominations for that section seat. Only branches having members in an industrial sector can make nominations for the reserved industrial sector seats for that sector. Only branches in Ireland can make nominations for the general seat under clause 2c, and these branches will not be entitled to make nominations for any other general seat. If a branch is entitled to nominate a candidate for election to any seat, it cannot nominate more than one candidate for election to that seat.

Clause 7: Line 1 delete “2007”, insert “2024”. Line 4 delete “first Tuesday in December”, insert “end of Congress in June”

7 Beginning in 2024, elections under this rule will be held by secret ballot for all groups every four years. Members of the Central Executive Council who are elected in this way will hold office for four years from the end of Congress in June in the year they are elected. Except where the Central Executive Council decides otherwise casual vacancies that arise during the first two years of the term of office will be filled by a by-election held on a day decided by the Central Executive Council and

casual vacancies that arise during the last two years of the term of office will not be filled. Any member who is elected to fill a casual vacancy will hold office for the rest of the above four-year period.

Insert New rule 11.10

10 The term of office of the Central Executive Council elected in 2019, will expire at the end of Congress in June 2024.

CECRA4. Rule 19

Clause 4, Line 7 insert “or industrial sector delegates”. Line 8 insert “or industrial sector”. Line 9 insert “or industrial sector”. Line 10 insert “or industrial sector members”

4 Members of the regional council will be elected every four years from nominations sent in by the branches in the region. Branches will only be entitled to nominate one member for each seat elected under this rule and rule 20, and will not have more than one representative for each seat elected under this rule and rule 20. Members who are nominated for election as section delegates or industrial sector delegates must be members of the appropriate section or industrial sector and can only be nominated by a branch of their section or industrial sector. However, these nominations can be made by the appropriate section members or industrial sector members of a composite branch in line with rule 35.21. Members who are nominated must have the necessary qualifications as set out in rule 18. Only members under 30 years of age on 15 April in the year they are elected (or on the date of election if elected in a by-election) will be eligible to be nominated for election to a young members reserved seat.

Insert New rule 19.15

15 Prior to each Regional Council election each Region will determine, for that election and the next following CEC election, two industrial sectors.

CECRA5. Rule 20

Insert New Clause 1a:

1a Two representatives for each of the two industrial sectors will be elected to seats on Regional Councils reserved for those industrial sectors. Only members who are working in the sector at the time of nomination and election will be eligible for nomination under this clause. One of the two seats in each industrial sector will be reserved for women.

CECRA6. Rule 35

Clause 21, line 2 insert “or industrial sector”. Line 7 “insert or industrial sector” Line 6 insert “or as appropriate, that industrial sector”. Line 9 insert “or as appropriate, industrial sector,” Line 10 insert “or as appropriate, industrial sector”

21. If a branch ('a composite branch') is made up of members of more than one section or industrial sector of the union, procedures for things such as nominating candidates (including nominating candidates for election to the Central Executive Council under rule 11, and nominating candidates for election to regional councils under rule 19) and voting (which is usually carried out by branches or members of one particular section or industrial sector) will be carried out by the members of that section,

or as appropriate, that industrial sector, in the composite branch. The number of members of that section, or as appropriate, industrial sector, in the composite branch will, where appropriate, be counted as the number of members of the branch. The Central Executive Council can make by-laws to set out how this rule should be applied, and the procedures that composite branches must follow.

CECRA7. Rule 1A The Sections of the union

Delete Rule 1A. Insert New Rule 1A

Members of the Union will be grouped into two sections.

- The public section
- The private section

[INSERT TABLE FROM SPECIAL REPORT]

CATH PINDER (CEC): Congress, President, Cath Pinder, CEC and Manufacturing member, member of the Rulebook Working Group, and proud President of the NE, Yorkshire & Humber Region. (*Applause*) I am calling the CEC Special Report: Our Rulebook – A Process of Change.

First of all, I would like to thank the many branches who submitted rule amendments to Congress this year. There were many proposals which we have incorporated in a special report and CEC rule amendments. I hope we have captured the spirit and good intent of those rule amendments, which only seek to improve our great union. All that we do stems from our rulebook. It sets out our aims and values, our hopes and aspirations. It protects our rights as members and seeks to extend those rights and proclaim our values across wider society. It is inclusive because ours was the first general union in 1889, one that sought to bring in workers, both men and women, who had been previously excluded from trade unionism and being told, bluntly, that they were marginal and unskilled and so were incapable of organisation.

The success of GMB, including this wrong, in maintaining its identity and winning for its members for more than a century should be embodied in our rules; indeed, our first rulebook, the product of the combined work of Will Thorne, Ben Tillette, and Eleanor Marx, did precisely that. However, from the 1930s onwards this message was watered down and our vision while never entirely lost was obscured and overlaid by the language of compromise and partnership, and by the loss of distinct industrial voices at the heart of our councils. It is increasingly apparent that in the current rulebook there is a lack of clarity and vision. Our current aims and objectives do not fit with the approach adopted by GMB in order to begin to reverse the membership decline over the past period. We have started to turn around the fortunes of our great union by listening to members and building campaigns around their priorities. We now need to turn our rulebook in a similar direction. Consequently, we need a rulebook that properly reflects the principles and actions that guide our union.

The CEC Special Report placed before you today does this, strengthening the democracy and accountability within the union's structures. It speaks to our past and to a great future. It strengthens our commitment to equalities, to the fight for equal pay, to internationalism and to industrial as well as political democracy. This, Congress, is not a once and for all measure, it is part of an ongoing process. It has begun with the work of the

Scrutiny Group comprising of lay activists representing our regions and nations and as part of this work we have listened to the concerns raised in motions to Congress and noted the consequences of merging unions upon the size and the number of seats on the CEC. We have listened to advice from the grassroots expressed during tours conducted by our General Secretary, President, and Vice President over the Spring, over the need for greater industrial democracy, industrial focus, and the representation of industrial members across the GMB structures. Further amendments will be brought to Congress 2024.

In order to bring these new industrial voices into our debate it is proposed that four new industrial seats will be created for each regional council and that two new industrial reserved seats will be created per region on the CEC. This will not affect any existing provision of CEC seats. At the same time we are now looking to move from three to two industrial sections, divided between public and private service sections and providing continuing recognition to the fine manufacturing sector, which was promised as part of the Unity union's transfer engagement to GMB in 2015.

Congress, it is important that GMB is honouring its commitment to our merger partners. It is also important to recognise that if we do nothing our CEC would look very different. After the merger of regions and approved by Congress in 2022, our regions reduced from nine to seven. This has a potential impact drastically upon the number of our CEC members reducing them from 61 to just 53. This would put our levels of lay representation significantly below those enjoyed by comparable unions, such as Unite and Unison.

As a member of the CEC, as a member of a merged region, and as someone who puts the rights of lay membership first and foremost, I have to tell you, Congress, we cannot permit this to happen. Instead, as proposed in this Special CEC Report, through limited and targeted measures that touch no other existing arrangements for selection or election, the CEC is recommending that we increase the number of elected seats in our Executive Council to 60 through the adoption of these reserved industrial seats. This will necessitate a change in the electoral cycle.

We have taken legal advice and are happy to report that under the provisions of the 1992 Trade Union Act we can extend the lifetime of the CEC for up to a further year. To do this, we would defer CEC elections until the first half of 2024 so that the newly elected CEC would take up office at the conclusion of Congress 2024 and would hold office for four years.

Congress, this CEC has seen the union through some dark days but re-emerging into a new era, one of growth, of positive change, through organising and campaigning and one where our members' industrial voices are heard loud and clear. It is only right and proper that we show our appreciation to the outgoing CEC who have done so much to safeguard the dignity and to secure the future of our union. At the same time, it is only right that we equip the incoming CEC with the tools and structures needed to enhance the quality and the strength of our industrial democracy.

Congress, our future is bright. Our future lies in our ability to respond to the needs and priorities of our members in a fast-changing world of work and to channel our energies, insight, and abilities, in building the GMB. The proposals before you are a vital step along that path, retying the knot of our history and providing for our future success. We win when we are united. We win when we are able to speak with our members' collective voice. Congress, this CEC Special Report allows us to do just that. I wholeheartedly move this report and the related CEC Rule Amendments 1 to 7 contained in it as an important step forward and as one that enables us to carry on our core business of bringing on the industrial fight to rebalance the world of work in favour of our members, and in doing so transform their lives and those of their families for the better. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Can I have the seconder, Margaret, please?

MARGARET GREGG (CEC): Margaret Gregg, CEC member, a member of the Rulebook Working Group, seconding the CEC's Special Report: Our Rulebook – A Process of Change.

Congress, standing still is not an option. The CEC Report provides a sure means of guaranteeing lay members' participation in the governance of the union, focusing our members' industrial voices, and of offsetting any shortfall of CEC seats occasioned by the merger of regions. It is all about gain, the gain in representation, the gain in industrial power, and the opportunity for regions to gain through serving and managing their own industrial priorities. It is also a gain in terms of the engagement of members within our own internal industrial democracy, breaking down barriers to participation and encouraging the distinct culture of work experience by our members, whether in the care sector, in schools, in hospitals, shipyards, and nuclear power plants, to be represented more fully across all our structure.

The new reserved industrial seats will be targeted as determined by each region in order to reflect the industrial priorities of workers that are key to that region's concerns. This gives the regions agility and adaptability when seeking to develop their membership and to build their industrial power. At the same time the existing mechanisms for elections are being left untouched; as the saying goes, *If it isn't broken, don't fix it*. This report touches only upon those areas of the rules which are creaking with their weight or age and which are no longer fit for purpose. Therefore, we have arrived at these changes through a period of consultation and lay member discussion.

These proposals will frame our aims and objectives showing that organising and campaigning are at the heart of everything that we do, just as we have seen from other deals, they articulate all that we think and feel, with commitments to social justice, economic democracy, equality, and antiracism. They define what it is that is part of the GMB in the membership and the world of work and capturing our pride in belonging to an organisation that is changing to meet the needs of the present but which is growing and adapting and remains true to our internal belief and the dignity and value of our members' labour which provides the true wealth of the nation. Therefore, with pride in seconding this motion I have focused upon our recent gains and achievements confident that it will secure a brighter and better future through the union we love. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Regions are now invited to speak on the report and I will go in reverse order this time, so Wales and South West to speak first, please.

GARETH BAKER (GMB Wales & South West): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Thank you. GMB Wales & South West Region moving this CEC Special Report on rulebook changes. Industrial issues are at the heart of the GMB, it is what we do. It is vital that any democratic organisation keep its rulebook up to date, even more so trade unions which we empower, empower working people to have their say in the workplace. We need to outline our vision and purpose, and underline the value of every action we take. Whilst our purpose remains the same now as it did when the union was founded, many things have changed. It is important that we underline in our mission statement reflecting on our victories that it is transcribing the story of the GMB. If we are clear about what the GMB represents, there can be no doubt where we stand.

It is great news that we will have seats targeted on industries and sectors in regions allowing for an understanding of industrial issues at the heart of the CEC decision-making process and the regional councils across the UK. It is imperative that we focus our energy and effort into supporting our industrial campaigns to make work better. GMB needs to build around the workplace and workers that we represent not trying to force them into any other structures. The changes with the CEC structure in place will take the membership to the heart of the decision-making process. It will mean better decisions taken more frequently which benefit our members. That can be only a good thing. Congress, a point was made the membership is too low as part of the British workers. Too many companies in retail, finance, security work, construction, energy, have extremely low density and that will affect the wages and terms and conditions of our members, all our workers. The 21st century will not be won by driving the public sector membership to low importance but will be won by building membership in the private sector and, Congress, by organising into two major sections, public and private. We will be able to better focus our resources on building the union. Congress, these changes are important steps to ensure the GMB in the 21st century is making changes and winning for our members. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gareth. Southern Region speaker, please.

CHARLES ADJE (Southern): President, Congress, speaking in support of the CEC's Special Report, Our Rulebook - A Process of Change. We note that the Special Report outlines the reasons for this change and describes it as an ongoing process that seeks to strengthen the democracy and accountability within our structures. We welcome this, which in our opinion has been long overdue. We also note that although this is a start, it would ensure that the rulebook is more accessible and would ensure participation in the internal democracy of our union. It gives the opportunity to regions to select from the two proposed strands, private and public. The proposals outlined in the report are worthy of note and Southern Region supports the proposal. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charles. GMB Scotland.

ANNETTE DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): Congress, GMB Scotland supports the recommendations of the Special Report on the Rulebook Changes - A Process of Change. Over the years there have been piecemeal changes to the rulebook to improve the general structures of our union but piecemeal changes do not address the challenges that members are having to face. At times members have struggled to participate in their branch, in their

council, and in the regional committees. Our union procedures and the decision-making forum have not been accessible or transparent enough. We can and must do better. To have members' priorities at the core of all the work of our union, members must be able to drive and reflect their own priorities from branches right through to CEC.

Congress, this is a significant time for our union. We are one of the few unions in the UK which is genuinely growing. This is because the reps and staff have listened to what members want and building campaigns around their needs. We have achieved incredible wins as a result from recognition of Apple in Glasgow to Amazon strikes in Coventry, and equal pay victories up and down these islands. Members have driven change in the workplaces but they also have a bigger part to play in driving our union at every level. That will take time and an act of involvement of its membership will get it right. The Special Report is one of the first steps to that path and putting members front and centre will do it all. GMB Scotland supports the Special Report. *(Applause)*

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

BILLY GOULDING (North West & Irish): We appreciate that with change comes concern and we must ensure at each step of the way the process and progress is fully consulted and the great traditions of our union and our sections are fully represented, and that the voice of our members be made a focus, heard and raised in all we do. Congress, North West & Irish Region welcome the report and we support the proposals. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Billy. North East, Yorkshire & Humber, I got it in the right order that time!

CHRIS WINKS (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Chris Winks, 245 Branch, Working in Manufacturing in Pontefract, North East, Yorkshire & Humber, First-time attending, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I got involved in GMB because I know the power the union has in our workplaces, how we can use that to make things better at work and in the community. As a son and grandson of proud union men who were both miners, I always knew what the union movement was. I was brought up with it running through my blood as I saw my community adapt. Today I use that experience to keep the traditions alive and fight for the workers of today and tomorrow. I really value that nationally and regionally the union bringing us together providing training, campaign materials, and organisers that put in all the effort to help us out. They turn us into the very best reps we can be.

Congress, I think the rulebook should be another tool that they have to make it better for our members yet at the moment, as raised in the report, it says there is a lack of clarity about what it is for and how it helps others. To me when I read it, it sounds like it is written for people in the House of Lords, not the ordinary working class people that we represent. I know that works sometimes, our rulebooks are written to have two purposes; they are hiding meanings to get round things. We should be better than that. I think the rulebook should be easy to understand, easy to interpret and easy to action.

This Special Report is about taking steps towards making our rulebook fit for purpose. I will be honest, I have been a member of the GMB for a year and I still do not understand all the different committees, structures, and everything behind the scenes. I really do not want to see anybody put off from getting involved because our rules are out of date. I want to see a rulebook that is really open, understandable, a rulebook that helps new members get involved and to understand the inner workings of the union, a rulebook for the modern GMB.

As a young worker working in manufacturing, I know that we built up the sector for the first time in decades, despite not having a separate manufacturing section at National Office. This is because they are listening to those who are in the workplace. It is not having a separate section that has made the change but having a union fit for purpose in today's world.

Lastly, to be clear, if we vote against this report then we are voting to shrink the size of the CEC. Congress, we need to vote in favour of the report, in favour of a larger CEC, and more scrutiny in favour of more democracy. This Special Report should only be a start. We need to move forward. I think more radical work needs to be done to really bring the rulebook into the 21st century but, Congress, I also think this is a good start, something we can build on. I urge you to support the report, guys. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Chris. Thank you. Midlands Region?

IAN BURKETT (Midlands): Speaking proudly as a member of the new Midlands Region on the inaugural conference in its new format. I say this deliberately because as a region we are not against change. I have listened to the speeches on this motion and 99% of the things I cannot disagree with, we want the aims, we want the things to be simple, but I am here to speak

against the CEC Special Report on the rulebook changes for two main reasons.

Reason one, as far as I am aware the only rules against standing for election to the regional councils and CEC is that you have to be a fully financial member. The new industrial membership on regional councils and CEC creates a new class of membership. I attended the road shows the President, the Vice President, and the General Secretary held around the regions and not once did I hear this as a concern; indeed, the reasonable changes could well have unintended consequences.

The aim of the CEC is to manage the direction and control of the union and requires a lot of time and commitment from people from it. We have problems in getting the right number of members to sit on regional councils, stand for election to Congress, citing that they have great difficulty in getting paid release, or even unpaid release. To create these new roles we are just creating problems for ourselves and likely to leave empty seats on regional councils and the CEC.

Reason two, this union is a proud industrial union representing members from wherever they work but also to feel that we understand their problems. To do away with our manufacturing section is a backward step. This is half-recognised by creating a special seat for fine manufacturing as its lead in the amalgamation. On the amalgamation of the boilermakers it was also agreed that we would have a new manufacturing section to recognise the important area on this of employment to our union. We cannot allow this section to disappear; indeed, this rule change could also have unintended consequences. We have at the moment difficulty in putting out regional council seats at branches to nominate in the three sections providing they have the membership. If we go down to two sections, we will be running very light on them and so we will be running light on the regional council because we can only nominate on two.

Whilst as a region we agree that the rulebook needs looking at, we saw these changes as having been rushed through without understanding the full consequences. I note that what the report says is that this is work in progress but this report, if agreed, will be in fact and as a region we need to ask the CEC to go away and study the full consequences of the proposed rulebook changes. With this in mind, I implore Congress to vote against these rule changes. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. London Region.

MARY GOODSON (London): Speaking in support of this report. I am a member of the Rulebook Working Party and we welcome the setting up of this group. It is no mean feat to change the rulebook, and our aims and our purpose is a good start with emphasis on workplace organisation, international solidarity, and accountability. From all our members' consultations it is clear that we need to enhance and strengthen members participating in the GMB democracy. We welcome a revitalisation of our branches. As a start the changes to Congress nominations to allow larger branches to nominate more delegates will help. However, regions would welcome national guidance on how we will manage this new system and how we will handle what could possibly be a flurry of nominations for Congress next year. Gary, you said you want to listen to our members and you have delivered, both Gary and Barbara visited our region, spoke to our branches, and attended workplaces. We had some similar things coming up from members.

Our members and branches need a rulebook that is modern, relevant, and helpful. In our consultations London Region members wanted the rulebook to be more interactive, accessible, with changes to the language, links to templates, and guidance to all members, and post holders fully understand the rules and their responsibilities and the rules of the union. I am looking forward to continuing to work with the group and bring in a fuller rulebook special report to Congress next year which strengthens regional democracy and autonomy. We also look forward to the union rolling out programmes of training and guidance. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Because there has been opposition to the report, I will ask Cath Pinder to come back and make the right of reply.

CATH PINDER (CEC): Congress, this Special Report is the result of months of work by our regional lay representatives, including, respectfully, in the Midlands. Hundreds of members have taken part in the President's and General Secretary's consultation road show and the Rulebook Review Committee listened to that feedback by scaling back the amount of changes going to Congress this year; instead, we will spend the next year debating and consulting on the changes in full.

Changing our rulebook to ensure it is fit for the 21st century is a work in progress and, yes, there is more to do but, let's be clear, voting against this report would be a regressive step, a step that would take us backwards, a step that ignored the voices of all our members who have had their say. I

listened to the speech by the speaker from the Midlands, manufacturing is not disappearing, it is growing. I am from manufacturing and I am not disappearing.

All the elected CEC members have had the chance to amend these proposals. They were in the meetings, they were part of the decision-making process. In my region, we ran consultations, we listened to members, and used their views to influence this report because that is how the process is supposed to work. We have agreed that we have the whole of next year to build on this report. Our regional council has set up a sub-committee to support the work of our regional delegates in reviewing the rulebook and scrutinising the work of the rulebook with the committee.

But, Congress, what we are voting on right now in this Special Report, and let me be very clear, a vote against this report is a vote for a smaller CEC, a vote against this report is for less industrial representation on our national governing committee, and a vote against this report is for a weaker Central Executive Council. Having CEC scrutiny is what kept this union alive during the recent dark days. We should be demanding more scrutiny, not less, and as someone from manufacturing I make no apology for saying that we grew when we had a combined section with commercial services.

So, Congress, let's not go backwards, let's support this report and build on it towards a stronger more democratic union. Gary, you know I never shy from speaking up as I believe it is my job to hold you to account. At times we have had many disagreements but on this we are united. Congress, vote for the report. Vote to increase the size of the CEC. Vote for more scrutiny. Vote for more democracy. Vote in favour of this Special Report. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. I now move to the vote on the Special Report. All those in favour please show? Thank you. All those against? Are there any abstentions? No. That is carried. Thank you.

The CEC Special Report: Our Rulebook – A Process of Change was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Can I also say thanks to Steve Short and John Callow who are on the platform with me and have led the work on this Special Report and the Rulebook change. Thank you. *(Applause)*

I have been asked by the SOC to make an announcement that RA286 and RA298 have been withdrawn by the regions and will not be debated. This

was omitted from Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 this morning by mistake.

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to section 5, Union Organisation: representation and accountability, and to the debate on Motion 25, Revitalising Branches. Please, can any speakers on the CEC Rule Amendments also make themselves ready and come down to the front. Can I ask the mover from London Region to move Motion 25, please?

REVITALISING BRANCHES

MOTION 25

25. REVITALISING BRANCHES

This Congress notes that it has been some time since the CEC Special Report on Branches and the Branch Working Party was set up. Much has changed in the world of work and we need to ensure that our Branches are fully functioning and recruiting members.

We call on Congress to revitalise our branches to ensure full democracy and participation and we call for a National health check of all our Branches to ensure that we have fully active lay member structures in all Regions.

W17 THREE VALLEYS WATER BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

ADRIAN STOHR (London): Congress, I have been a Branch Secretary only for one year but there have been many people that have been for years, and I have worked hard in my past year to grow my branch and make sure all my members fully participate in the democracy of the union. Our motion mentions past Congress reports. In 2014, Congress set up the Branch Review Working Party, looked at the branch recruitment and branch meetings, and produced a template for a model branch development plan. It also recognised that branches can determine their own officers' positions outside of core positions but are branches aware of this? In 2015, the Branch Review Working Party reported on surveys and looked at non-member control of branches and drafted a branch secretary handbook which is still on the website unchanged.

We still have branches that are not recruiting, not submitting branch plans, not meeting, not submitting motions or nominate delegates to Congress, or

regional council, and not filling in all their rulebook positions. Our motion is asking us to encourage members to feel part of their branch, be active and participate in union democracy, campaigns, and structures. This may mean acknowledging that some branches struggle to hold meetings and so need help with online meetings.

Congress, the world of work has moved on and we need to move along with it. Over the past year our region has opened new branches in the gig economy, Evri and Deliveroo, and in the community such as secure space workers. We need to embrace change. We are asking for health checks so that we can assess where we are across all seven regions. Congress, please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adrian. Secunder, please?

LEE PLUMMER (London): First-time speaker, first time at Congress. (*Applause*) Thank you. Congress, I am a new branch secretary and I welcome any training or assistance to carry out my role. Our region met with branch secretaries asking for training needs and over the next few months we will see a programme of training in branch accounts, equalities, CP, branch plans, and political awareness. London Region has taken the 2014 Branch Organising template and revised it by incorporating equalities and GMB@Work initiatives making the plan more user-friendly. We can see a lot starting to happen and we welcome being part of the journey. We welcome having a say in what we want to see in the rulebook review but we also need some help to understand it and share ways we can improve participation and activity. Our motion asks the union to take a fresh look at branches again, which we understand will be ongoing work as the rulebook working party. Let's breathe life into our branches and jump-start some of the branches who need help. We are asking for a national health check to take place as the world of work workplaces and the make-up of our branches has changed drastically since this was last done in 2014, nine years ago. Let's make 2024 ten years on from the branch report a real celebration of our branches. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Lee. Everybody has been brilliant about sticking to time. Thank you so much everybody for that. Does anybody wish to speak against this motion? No? Then I will ask the CEC speaker, Shailesh, to respond.

SHAILESH GAGLANI (CEC): The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. In the light of the ongoing work undertaken by the rulebook

working party the qualification is that a national health check that the motion calls for would be conducted through their own rulebook working group with the informed recommendation on the new rulebook to be brought to Congress 2024. Please support the motion with this qualification. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shailesh. Does London accept the qualification? (Agreed) Thank you. I will move that to the vote, all those in favour of Motion 25? Thank you. All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 25 was CARRIED.

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS (CECRAs 8, 9, 10, 11)

THE PRESIDENT: We are now on to CEC RA 8, 9, 10 and 11. I will invite Vice President Malcolm Sage to move the CEC rule amendments. These CEC rule amendments have been introduced in response to proposals put forward by individual regions. A number of regions have withdrawn their rule amendments in favour of the CEC proposals. These were RAs 268, 271, 272, and 302. I intend to take a single vote on these rule amendments unless there are speakers against. Malcolm, thank you.

Central Executive Council Rule Amendments (Line Numbering refers to rules as printed in the GMB Rulebook)

CECRA8. Rule 6

Line 4 insert at end of sentence “who will consider the complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.”

Line 21 insert at end of sentence “as soon as reasonably practicable.”

Rule 6 Complaints procedure for members

1 Subject to other provisions within this clause, any member who wants to complain should ordinarily do so in writing to their branch secretary who will take the matter to the branch who will consider the complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.

If the complaint is one of sexual harassment, the member should raise their complaint under the sexual harassment policy issued under Rule 5A and this rule shall not apply.

Any member may raise a complaint with their Regional Secretary if the complaint concerns the branch secretary or for any reason it would be inappropriate for the matter to be raised with the branch secretary and considered by a branch meeting, when it will be considered by the Regional Committee.

If raised with the branch secretary then if either:

- a. the branch decides it does not have the authority to deal with the matter or provide a remedy; or
 - b. the branch considers the complaint, and the member is not satisfied with the branch's decision and provides written notice of appeal to the regional committee within one month of the branch meeting.
- the Regional Committee will consider the complaint as soon as reasonably practicable.

There shall be no right of appeal against any decision of the Regional Committee.

The Regional Committee may order a complaint to be struck out for scandalous vexatious or unreasonable behaviour by the complainant or for excessive delay in proceeding with the complaint.

Before making such an order the complainant will be sent notice giving them an opportunity to show why the order should not be made.

CECRA9. Rule 8

Clause 5, Line 3: Add new sentences “A branch whose financial membership exceeds 1,500 as stated in the membership figures for the previous September may nominate one further member per additional 1,500 members of the branch, as stated in the membership figures for the previous September. Where a branch nominates more than one member at least one nominee must be a woman.”

Clause 7, Line 1 delete “one further member”, insert “further members”. At end of clause add new sentence “A branch may have no more than three members on the Regional delegation.”

5 For 90% of delegates, each branch of a region may nominate one member to stand for election as a delegate to represent the region at the Congress. A branch whose financial membership exceeds 1,500 as stated in the membership figures for the previous September may nominate one further member per additional 1,500 members of the branch, as stated in the membership figures for the previous September. Where a branch nominates more than one member at least one nominee must be a woman. These nominations must be sent to the regional office no later than 31 December. The region will then print and issue lists during the third week of January, setting out the name and branch of each candidate. The closing date for voting will be 28 February. The candidates who receive the largest number of votes will be elected.

7 Each branch will be invited to nominate further members to be considered by the Regional Committee in appointing delegates under clause 6 of this Rule, and in appointing delegates to make up any shortfall in the delegation following the election process in clause 5 of this Rule. In making these appointments, the Regional Committee may also consider members recommended by other committees, forums or post-holders within the Region.

A branch may have no more than three members on the Regional delegation.

CECRA10. Rule 19

Clause 2, line 1 after “meet” insert “at least”. Line 2 after “six months,” insert: “and may, as determined by the Regional Committee, meet up to four times per year.”

2 Regions will be managed by regional councils, which will each meet at least once every six months, and may, as determined by the Regional Committee, meet up to four times per year. However, the councils can hold special meetings to consider emergency issues – the regional secretary and regional president have the power to decide whether to hold meetings.

CECRA11. Rule 43

Clause 2 insert new sub-clauses 2e, 2f, 2g:

e The term of office of these representatives will be four years.

f. A member holding office as a representative under this rule on 30 June 2023, for the purposes of clause 2e, above, will be deemed to have commenced their term of office on 1 July 2023

g. In accordance with the Union’s established practice, representatives will be eligible for re-appointment or re-election on the expiry of their term of office.

2 These representatives will be appointed in any of the following ways, depending on which is the most suitable.

a By a majority vote, through a show of hands or a ballot, of the members at the workplace.

b By a majority vote, through a show of hands, at a branch meeting.

c If all the members concerned agree that a member appointed by the regional secretary should act as representative.

d By shop stewards or staff representatives at the workplace electing one of themselves as convenor or chief staff representative.

e The term of office of these representatives will be four years.

f. A member holding office as a representative under this rule on 30 June 2023, for the purposes of clause 2e, above, will be deemed to have commenced their term of office on 1 July 2023

g. In accordance with the Union's established practice, representatives will be eligible for re-appointment or re-election on the expiry of their term of office.

CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE VICE PRESIDENT: President, Congress, moving CEC RAs 8 through to 11. Congress, these RAs represent ideas put forward by our branches. These ideas have been adopted by the CEC and turned into amendments that are compliant with the rulebook. I would like to set out the CEC's sincere thanks to the branches and regions who have put these proposals forward.

RA 8 would establish a requirement under rule 6 that complaints will be heard as soon as is reasonably practical. RA 9 would entitle larger branches to nominate additional delegates to Congress to reflect their industrial voice while ensuring that the dominations and gender balance are capped at three. RA 10 will permit regional councils to meet up to four times a year as determined by the regional committees. Finally, RA 11 introduces term limits for workplace reps which may be reviewed.

Delegates, these rule amendments have come from our branches and they stand in the rulebook. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm; and you stuck to the time as well. Well done. Can I have a CEC member formally second the rule amendment, please?

Formally seconded by CEC member.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anyone wish to speak against? In that case I can take these as a group of CEC rule amendments so you are voting on

all of them, 8, 9, 10 and 11. All those in favour please show? Thank you.
Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you.

RA 8 was CARRIED

RA 9 was CARRIED

RA 10 was CARRIED

RA 11 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: We are now on to section 7, RA 297. I will now invite Southern Region to move and second RA 297. RAs 298 and 270, which appear on your programme, have been withdrawn and this rule amendment is supported by the CEC, so there will be no CEC speaker. Please can we have the speakers on RA 274 and 292 also be ready to speak afterwards. Mover of RA 297?

BRANCHES

RA 297. RULE NO: 35, CLAUSE: 3

RA297. RULE NO: 35, CLAUSE: 3

TITLE: BRANCHES (as shown in the 2022 Rulebook)

Print Existing Rule or Clause:

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

State Amendment:

On line 4 Replace the word and before youth officer with a Comma. Insert the words and race officer after youth officer.

Print how amended Rule or Clause is to read:

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

D30 COUNTY COUNCIL BRANCH

Southern Region RA298.

(Carried)

ROBBIE DONNELLY (Southern): Under rule 35 each branch is required to have a branch secretary, branch president, equality officer, race officer, and a youth officer. It is also required for those roles to be part of the committee

except for the race officer. This rule amendment will correct that so it will now read, "the president, the secretary, the equality officer, youth officer and the race officer will all be members of the committee". As a union we should want a more inclusive committee joining on a race officer's input when developing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to tackling the obstacles and the barriers faced by their members due to their race and ethnic diversity. So, let's not make a member jump twice by requiring them to stand for election for a race officer and then stand for election again to be part of the committee. Let's put it in the rulebook that the race officer is automatically part of the branch committee. Thank you.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Robert, and the seconder?

TELMO BATALHA (Southern): First-time speaker, first-time delegate.
(*Applause*) Thank you. I am seconding this motion because having a race officer automatically present in the branch committee shows that our union takes race and racism seriously and we will always be committed to improve race relations and because our union cares about race please support this motion. Racism has no place in our GMB family and race officers will have a crucial role to play in this. Thank you very much, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, thank you. Does anyone wish to speak against this rule amendment? No? As I say, the CEC is supporting this and therefore all those in favour please show? Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

RA 297 was CARRIED.

RULE AMENDMENTS 274 AND 292

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to section 8, RAs 274 and 292. Southern Region are moving both rule amendments and Gwylan Brinkworth will then respond for the CEC. Malcolm will take a vote on each motion. RA 275 also appears on your programme but this has been withdrawn. Could speakers on this afternoon's equalities and inclusion motions also be ready to come to the front after this debate. Can I have the mover of 274, please?

RULE 10 CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

RA 274. RULE NO: 10, CLAUSE 2

RA274. RULE NO: 10, CLAUSE: 2

TITLE: RULE 10 CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (as shown in the 2022 Rulebook)

Print Existing Rule or Clause:

2 The Central Executive Council will be made up of voting members elected from each Region under rule 11. The general secretary and treasurer will also be a voting member of the Central Executive Council.

State Amendment:

Add new sentence "Regional Secretaries also have the right to attend and participate at the CEC but will not have voting rights."

Print how amended Rule or Clause is to read:

2 The Central Executive Council will be made up of voting members elected from each Region under rule 11. The general secretary and treasurer will also be a voting member of the Central Executive Council. Regional Secretaries also have the right to attend and participate at the Central Executive Council but will not have voting rights.

B50 SUSSEX BRANCH

Southern Region

(LOST)

ANDY NEWMAN (Southern): Colleagues, it is tough out there for our members. Rents going up, mortgage rates are high, food inflation, energy costs, this is a terrible challenge for working people and it is a challenge and opportunity for our union and where we have taken that opportunity and we fought for improving the living standards of our members we fought and we won. We have had nine consecutive months of growth in our region and that is because we fought. We have had battles on the bins, we have had battles with traffic wardens, we have had battles in the NHS, with cleaners, we have fought and we have won for our members and that is why people are joining us and why we are a union that is growing.

Now, great credit goes to our members who fought and great credit goes to our officers but there is also a question of leadership. We have a fantastic regional secretary in Justin Bowden, who works really closely with his regional committee, an experienced and battle hardened regional committee that knows how to take on employers, but through a quirk of the election process nobody on our regional committee sits on the CEC. So, there is no voice in the rulebook whereby the experience of our union in of our region and what we are doing right gets fed into the debate from the CEC.

The solution is to put the regional secretaries on the CEC, not with voting rights but as observers to help the CEC deliberate and to share the experience both ways. Colleagues, there is a democratic deficit at the moment that the regional secretaries are not there and we want there to be a change to the rules to address that. This is the best solution.

Comrades, before the 1980s the regional secretaries did sit on the CEC. You know why they are not on it because Margaret Thatcher brought in anti-trade union laws which took the regional secretaries off. Now, do you think Margaret Thatcher did that to strengthen the unions or to weaken the unions: she did it to weaken the unions. We are proposing the regional secretaries are there at the CEC meetings because we want to strengthen the union. We want to strengthen this union.

I have a message for a number of people. The regional secretaries here, we are so proud of you we want you on the CEC; that is what Southern Region thinks. The CEC, we think you are wrong to oppose this. This is about strengthening the union. For you, please vote for this, it will strengthen the union. Please do this, make us a stronger union for our members.

I have a final message for employers out there: this is a motion, a rule amendment that is designed to strengthen this union, which is already a tough and fighting union. If you are a good employer you treat our members with respect, you pay them well, then we will work with you to make your business a success. If you are an employer who bullies, who discriminates, who oppresses and underpays, then GMB is coming for you, we will fight you, and we will win. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Seconder?

TROY WRIGHT (Southern): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Seconding RA 274, regional secretaries to attend CEC meetings but without voting rights. This is a policy which has been debated at length in our region and which our members feel strongly about, as you just heard. I am an operator in a nuclear power station and in my industry effective communication up and down within the hierarchy of the organisation has vital importance so I fully understand why the regional secretaries need to be at the CEC meetings. Our members deserve the best the union can provide and with that we need to put the best team on the pitch. We have fantastic professional and dedicated regional secretaries and I think they need to be at CEC meetings. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Troy.

RULE 23 REGIONAL SECRETARY – TO ATTEND CEC MEETINGS

RA 292. RULE NO: 23, CLAUSE: NEW CLAUSE 4

RA292. RULE NO: 23, CLAUSE: NEW CLAUSE 4

TITLE: RULE 23 REGIONAL SECRETARY – TO ATTEND CEC MEETINGS (as shown in the 2022 Rulebook)

Print Existing Rule or Clause:

Insert new clause 4. Existing Clauses 4, 5 and 6 to be renumbered, as 5 6 and 7

State Amendment:

The regional secretary will attend meetings of the Central Executive Council to answer questions from Central Executive Council members, to observe proceedings and to assist in the business of the Central Executive Council as required.

Print how amended Rule or Clause is to read:

23.4 The regional secretary will attend meetings of the Central Executive Council to answer questions from Central Executive Council members, to observe proceedings and to assist in the business of the Central Executive Council as required.

23.5 The regional secretary will supply the branches in their region with copies of a half-yearly financial statement and one copy of the annual report.

23.6 The regional secretary will have power at any time to examine the books and accounts of branches, or authorise any regional organiser or other officer to examine the books and accounts on their behalf.

23.7 The regional secretary must give three months' notice before they resign

W15 THREE SHIRES BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

ANDY NEWMAN (Southern): Sorry, it's me again, Andy Newman from Southern Region. We were hoping that Dave Clements would speak but for those of you who know him you will not be surprised that he has gone for a walk. We were caught out by the agenda change. What I do know is that Dave wanted to make the point about this is a slightly different rule amendment 292, which actually puts attending the CEC into the rulebook as part of the job description of regional secretaries. The point that Dave wanted to make was that if you have a professional organisation like a council, a borough council, the directors and heads of service are there for the formal council meetings so that they can answer questions and they can inform the councillors. He makes the point as a delegate to the GMB pension fund it is the lay members and the employee members who make the decisions but they are informed by the experts who advise them on the committee. It is absolutely vital that when the CEC is deliberating that they have the experience of these most senior managers in the union who are there who

can inform them about what will and will not work, what is working, what is not working, and how they can improve things. We need to be a professional organisation, we need the regional secretaries at the CEC, so please support not only the motion or the rule amendment I have already moved for you but also this one, 292. Please support both rule amendments. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Seconder 292?

MARTHA DE BRUXELLES (Southern): Seconding Rule No. 6 and Amendment 292, to allow regional secretaries to attend CEC meetings as part of their duty. Congress, you will all understand that our union went through a very challenging time with improper behaviour by senior staff and, as a result of that, we had the Monaghan Report. We commend the drive of our national President, Barbara Plant, in bringing forward the recommendations for this report. Following the region's comments as well the CEC waved their hand over the matter but a rulebook needs to reflect the normal and proper running of the trade union, as my colleague, Andy Newman, just expressed. It is not that staff would behave in an improper manner but sometimes the argument is used that the CEC delegates may be intimidated by the regional secretaries or they put inappropriate pressure on them to behave in a certain way. We know we have since then made recommendations for a change to who are our regional secretaries with more women as regional secretaries and some of those who were in the past are no longer with us. The new regional secretaries do not have the experience to deal with the CEC and vice versa. It would be great for them to communicate and to build trust and move forward and reach a compromise. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Anyone want to speak against? No? Does the Southern Region seek withdrawal of Motion 274? Sorry, I apologise.

GWYLAN BRINKWORTH (CEC): The CEC at the 2023 meeting agreed Standing Orders and protocol for the attendance of regional secretaries and other staff members at the CEC meetings. There was a series of detailed discussions on how to address this problem. During these discussions we were mindful of the fact that GMB has accepted the recommendations of the Monaghan Report, including that report recommendation on regional secretaries' attendance at the CEC. A lot of work has gone into finding a balanced approach and the CEC believes a good solution has been found. The CEC therefore believes that RA 274 and 292 have therefore been overtaken by events and that it should be for the CEC to determine

attendance and speakers on an item by item basis. The CEC is asking that the rule amendments be withdrawn and that you oppose if they are put to the vote. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gwylan. No right of reply. Does Southern Region seek withdrawal of RA 274? No? Does Southern Region seek withdrawal of RA 292? No? We will now put those to the vote. The CEC is asking you to oppose RA 274, all those in favour please show? Sorry, all those in favour of RA 274, you are asked to oppose it. All those in favour show? All those against? We are holding the vote now on RA 274; right? The CEC is asking you to vote against RA 274, all those in favour of RA 274 please show? All those against RA 274? That fell.

RA 274 was LOST.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We are now asking you to vote on RA 292. The CEC is asking you on RA 292 – RA274 fell. On RA 292 they are asking you to withdraw. They will not withdraw, so the CEC is now asking you to vote against this motion. All those in favour of the motion please show, RA 292? All those against? I will just take that again. All those in favour of RA 292? All those against? That is carried.

RA 292 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: A point of order? Come on.

Point of Order – call for a card vote.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: No, we took the vote. One failed and one got through. I am moving on.

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION (73, Composite 28, 76)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: RAs 276 and 279 appear next on your programme, but these have been withdrawn. We will now debate Motion 73, can I have the mover and seconder, please, to the rostrum?

MY NAME IS....

MOTION 73

73. MY NAME IS.....

Congress notes:

According to a Race Equality Matters Survey 73% of ethnic minorities reported that they've had their names pronounced incorrectly in the past. Names mispronounced can make people feel "disrespected" and "not valued or important". Pronouncing a name correctly is the building block of inclusion.

Congress Believes:

Pronouncing a colleague's name correctly is not just a common courtesy but it's an important effort in creating an inclusive workplace, one that emphasises psychological safety and belonging. It's about dignity, respect and inclusion. It may seem trivial to some but names are our identities; linking us to family, culture and heritage and no matter how difficult a name may seem we deserve the respect of it being pronounced correctly and without abbreviation.

Congress Resolves:

That with the support from the CEC we should

1. Add phonetic pronunciation to all GMB email signatures, all communication channels e.g. meetings, social media, name badges, Congress Video, captions etc.
2. That activists and branches are to encourage employers and networks to put the phonetic pronunciation of their names on their emails.
3. Produce a campaign around "What's in a name" and become an affiliate of the Race Matters Campaign #MyNames

A50 BRANCH

Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

MAXINE BUTLER (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, our names are incredibly important as part of our identity. They carry deep personal, cultural, familial and historical connections. They also give us a sense of who we are, the communities in which we belong, and our place in the world. That is why this campaign "My Name is...." is about acknowledging the importance of identity in all its forms and the fact that getting the pronunciation of a name right is important, or try and get it right.

According to the Race Equality Matters survey 73% of ethnic minorities reported that they had their names pronounced incorrectly in the past. A name mispronounced can make people feel disrespected and not valued or important. Pronouncing a name correctly was a building block of

inclusion. Getting it wrong once is acceptable but if you have been corrected it is important to get it right next time. Repeatedly mispronouncing someone's name or choosing to shorten it without permission is a behaviour that can make people feel dismissed and undervalued. No matter how difficult a name may seem it deserves the respect of it being pronounced correctly and without abbreviation.

When we meet a colleague, friend or stranger, the first piece of information we share is our name, our brand, our identity. People should be more proactive when learning how to pronounce someone's name. There are many different tools available to assist with pronunciation. The simplest message is just to ask how to pronounce it, how to spell it, what would they prefer to be known as, or where the name originates. It will show interest, build rapport, and help people to feel respected and included.

Be conscious of the language you use. Instead of saying it is a hard name to pronounce, try explaining that the name is not familiar to you. You might need help with pronunciation. If so, just ask, not see it as a big deal and make excuses about how difficult a name is to pronounce as an easier option that is detrimental in the form of implicit bias. Congress, there is still a lot of work which can be done to challenge this. Speak up and speak out if you hear someone mispronouncing a name. Correcting others constantly is exhausting and frustrating for the individual and support from others is well received and drives change.

We can make a difference on this issue in the GMB and in the workplace of our members. That is why our region calls on the CEC to, one, use an inclusive tool. Add phonetic spellings or pronunciation soundbites to GMB signatures, or communication channels, for example, meetings, social media, name badges. Two, the activists and branches are to encourage employers and networks to put the phonetic pronunciation in of their names on their emails and to educate employers on the importance of inclusion by correct pronunciation. Three, produce a campaign around *What's in a Name*, and become an affiliate of the *Race Matters Campaign #My name is*. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maxine. A seconder?

JONATHAN STRACHAN-TAYLOR (GMB Wales & South West): Many of us have heard the phrase, "What's in a name" – "*beth Sydd Mewn Enw*" in Welsh. The simple answer to that question is that it is our language, heritage, and culture. When we learn to read we use phonetics and sounds to break

down the words so that we can pronounce them correctly, and we are confident, yet when it comes to pronouncing a name we seem to forget the basics. At this point I have to apologise to anybody who has ever forgotten my name or mispronounced it. Having your name phonetically spelt on an email name badge means we are more likely to get the pronunciation correct and less likely to upset or offend. When people feel that they need to compromise their identity for social acceptance their emotional wellbeing inevitably suffers, simply put, Anglicising names undermines inclusivity. When you refuse to make an effort to pronounce somebody's name correctly it suggests that you are choosing your own comfort over their identity. It shows their identity is not important enough to make the effort and that makes your behaviour a micro aggression. So, how did we do this? Fair play or *chwarae teg* in Welsh. Congress, we do this by using a tool developed to name shots. We need to ensure it is inclusive and covered by multiple languages. There is an international phonetics alphabet which makes up all speech sounds. We need this tool to allow us to add our phonetically spelt name in text. If we want to live in a society that truly values dignity, respect, and inclusion, it is something we must address by starting and, most importantly, address the cultural heritage attached to their names. (*Welsh spoken*) Congress, please support this motion. I second.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jonathan. Composite 18, North East, Yorkshire & Humber.

STOP USING THE TERM BAME!!!

COMPOSITE MOTION 18

(Covering Motions 74 and 75)

74. STOP USING THE TERM BAME!! – North East, Yorkshire & Humber

75. Stop using the term BAME!! – North West & Irish

COMPOSITE 18: STOP USING THE TERM BAME!!

This Congress asks the CEC to campaign to stop using the term BAME.

This Congress “We need to identify ourselves with language that resets us on a level playing field. It is not about being a minority or majority, it is about our TRUE identity”.

BAME is a catch-all term used to group all ethnic minority people together. Not only can this disguise huge differences in outcomes between ethnic groups, but also excludes others such as mixed, gypsy, Roma, travellers and other white multi ethnic groups, that also face negative disparities. It is a general term used for “non-white” people which can be intentionally divisive.

On 17th March 2022, it was reported that the UK government will no longer use the term BAME, to refer to different ethnic minority groups within our society. This was based on one of the recommendations

from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report as it strives to “ report responsibly on race” in this way.

As a result of this, the London Local Government Tackling Racial Inequality Programme launched a “Demonstrating Leadership Working Group”. This was to establish a partnership narrative around language and terminology through the lens of racial equality. One that advocates for the disaggregation of BAME, proposing that we must refer to our communities at the most granular level possible.

As a result, a survey was conducted. This ran from 10 June 2022 to 22 July 2022. We received 903 responses spanning London’s anchor institutions including: Local Government, Health, Police, Fire and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.

It was found that the four highest positive preferences were:

- Ethnically Diverse
- Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic
- People of Ethnic Minority Backgrounds
- People of Colour

With this new data, organisations are now in a position whereby they can swiftly move away from using the term BAME. Therefore, we expect the GMB union to do the same.

Congress, the proposed action we expect the GMB union to undertake should be as follows:

- Conduct a similar survey, targeting all Ethnically Diverse members of the union.
- Adopt the most popular term.
- Champion the change of terminology and embed it into all GMB correspondence.

This will demonstrate the commitment to supporting, advocating and empowering change for our Ethnically Diverse members.

MOVING REGION: NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
SECONDING REGION: NORTH WEST & IRISH

(Carried)

CINDY GAVIN (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): This term does emphasise certain ethnic minority groups and excludes quite a few others, the same ethnic minority groups that also face those negative disparities. The term “BME” originally had its roots in the idea of political blackness, used by many anti-racism movements in the late ‘70s, later evolving to include “A” for Asian.

The use of BAME is problematical in itself and is used as a catch-all phrase which fails to recognise those individual identities and masses differences

between communities and their experiences. Let's talk about the Bs, the Blacks, a Western invention used as a shield against racism, a description for skin pigmentation to a group so vastly varied. I look across this room today and I cannot see just one colour black. I see different shades. Again insert the letter "A" for Asians, not all of us emanate from Punjab, for example, not all of our parents arrived in the '60s or '70s.

In this motion we ask for our differences to be articulated, for more diversity and accuracy in how our communities are described. How you are identified when it comes to your own race and your own ethnicity is your own personal choice. The report by the Race Disparities Unit found that where it is absolutely necessary to group people together from different backgrounds we should say something like "ethnic minority". Inclusive employers no longer use this term, even the BBC, for goodness sake, has decided it is going to try and not use it, and the Government.

Research carried out by the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity found a lack of trust around the term and that it can hide a lot of representation or overlook issues found by particular ethnic groups. Change does not happen overnight. We have seen that. Collective long-term goals for obvious reasons with better outcomes for all is in everyone's interests. Congress, in the GMB undertaking we asked in this motion it is laying out a step in the right direction. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cindy. North West & Irish to second?

JAMES KEITH (North West & Irish): When I speak on this motion today I am doing so because Kelvin Alabulaley from C17 Cumbria General Branch cannot be here today. This motion calls on GMB to survey its ethnically diverse members and to adopt the most popular term whilst also championing the change in terminology and embedding this into all GMB correspondence, and rightly so.

The term BAME is an exclusive term and is generally used for non-white people. Kelvin, I hope I did you proud. It is time for change. Congress, support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, James. Mover of 76? Mover of Motion 76?

**ENCOURAGING MORE BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC MEMBERS INTO THE
TRADE UNION ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE
MOTION 76**

**76. ENCOURAGING MORE BLACK ASIAN MINORITY ETHNIC MEMBERS INTO THE TRADE
UNION ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE**

This Congress notes that participation in the 10 days GMB Union Representatives induction training and other available courses has historically been low amongst Black Asian Minority Ethnic lay members.

Therefore, Congress believes there is a need to widen the opportunities or provisions for Black Asian Minority Ethnic lay members who are not GMB Trade Union Representatives to attend the relevant training courses and ensure that places can be filled up.

Congress believes that a higher participation in training courses by Black Asian Minority Ethnic lay members will help to broaden their knowledge of the GMB Union. Furthermore, it will encourage them to become more active members of the GMB Union and contribute as GMB Union Representatives or in other capacities.

Congress notes that the absence of paid release time from work is a major cost barrier for Black Asian Minority Ethnic lay members to attend the training courses which typically last for multiple days.

Congress believes that the cost barrier can be overcome given that funding is already available to all regions.

Congress instructs:

- The TUC or GMB Union Central Executive Council (CEC) to work towards reaching an understanding with employers to pick up the cost of the paid release time from work for Black Asian Minority Ethnic lay members where possible
- The GMB Union to help cover the cost of the paid release time from work (partially or in full) for Black Asian Minority Ethnic lay members should an agreement with employers not be reached. Doing so will demonstrate an intent on getting more Black Asian Minority Ethnic members involved with the GMB Union.

K19 SOUTH LONDON GENERAL BRANCH

Southern Region

(Carried)

SHERINE THOMPSON (Southern): This motion is listed as the last motion for today, that is by far not the least. As a proud black GMB representative for over 10 years it is truly an honour to stand and move this motion advocating and championing for GMB to really start thinking creatively and innovatively to encourage and retain black and ethnic majority members and reps into the organisation and structures of the union.

As I look around the auditorium it is a pleasure and an honour to be reconnected with so many of my comrades. However, you know me, I

always like to keep it real and as I look around the auditorium I do not see many people like me from the top of the table even down to the bottom of the auditorium. Now, Congress, I know it is no mean feat to be able to replicate me, I am not that easy. *(Applause)* I was uniquely and wonderfully made. However, we are in a process of change. Imagine what it would be like if you had many more Sherine's. *(Laughter)* As you could imagine it would be very challenging because I am not slow in coming forward when it comes to speaking up against injustice. So, yes, it would be challenging but it would also be a step in a positive direction for commitment to championing for our members, and encouraging them to step out of their comfort zone advocating on behalf of others. By attending training it will empower them as it empowered me to agitate, irritate, and educate, okay, and this was trained by GMB. Congress, today I place a challenge on the GMB taskforce to push that little harder and further to fight for the values and changes GMB stands and fights for. Equality for all. Congress, please support this motion as it means taking more positive action and investing back in black and non-white members who burn for this process of change to be made. Congress, this requires funding to be paid for release time which is a barrier, a major barrier for many who would want to stand as a representative and attend training, but doing so would demonstrate a genuine intake for all black and ethnic majority members as we work towards a BAME community, which stands for Building a Multicultural Environment where it is equality for all, equality of action, responsibility, and accountability. Congress. please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sherine. Seconder?

DAVINA BROWN (Southern): As a union it is important that we are representative of our members. This accelerates and speeds up our position of power providing equal access and encouraging training among lay members, increase our overall membership numbers, activity and commitments. GMB ensure that equality is at the forefront of everything that we do, and making work and society a better and safer place for everyone is a part of our core value. Diversity creates effective decision-making, better opportunities, involvement, creativity and solutions bringing richness to the workforce.

The cost-of-living-crisis, as with the pandemic, has had a disproportionate negative impact on minorities, or as I like to say the global majority. We should bust the myths and demonstrate how we tackle inequality in our society. We must embrace and involve reps and officers who bring lived experience of oppression, racism, and injustice. This brings solidarity and

solidarity is all about sticking together, all of us, and this is a powerful core value of the GMB. Personally, the training I completed with GMB has strengthened my role and abilities to support my members. It has opened opportunities for networking and further learning, such as the trade union and politics diploma – sign up if you have not already – which is why I support this motion. I urge everybody in the room to do the same. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Davina. Anyone want to speak against? No? I will call on Elaine Daley to give the CEC response.

ELAINE DALEY (CEC): The CEC is supporting all these motions with some qualifications. The first qualification is that Motion 73 calls on GMB to affiliate to the *Race Matters Campaign*. In line with longstanding practice any affiliation should be considered, first of all, by the CEC Finances & General Purposes Committee. This is so that any financial implications can be considered as well as compatibility with GMB's aims and values. The CEC fully supports Composite 18 on phasing out the use of the term BAME. GMB is committed to discontinuing the use of the term BAME. We know that many of our members do not identify with it. The National Race Organiser will be leading the work to find an appropriate alternative. The process outlined in the motion for finding a new term is both acceptable and achievable and therefore we support the composite motion.

Motion 76 makes a number of specific calls on the union. We support these with qualification. One is to note that negotiating paid release is already part of the role of the officers and reps and that we are more likely to secure more paid release by focusing on local agreements. GMB already covers the cost of some paid release in specific circumstances. Part of these local negotiations should always be to ensure that there is no discrimination in the granting of paid release. The National Race Organiser is currently developing bespoke training and development courses for members from under-represented groups. We will also continue to work with the TUC on this issue. Therefore, the CEC ask that you support Composite 18 and that you support Motions 73 and 76 with the qualifications that I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on Motion 73? (*Agreed*) Thank you. We will put that to the vote. All those in favour please show? That is carried.

Motion 73 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Composite 18 is being supported, all those in favour please show? That is carried.

Composite Motion 18 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Southern accept the Motion 76? Yes? That is accepted. All those in favour please show? That is carried.

Motion 76 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Malcolm. Delegates, that concludes the formal business of this session of Congress but before we close I would like to invite to the stage Simon Day, Ian Burton, Richard Harlington, Wendy Cox, and Jackie Murphy, who are ambulance members from Midlands, Southern, and London. They are going to address Congress on some of the current problems and campaigns in ambulance services. We all saw our ambulance members out on the picket lines over the winter so please give them a warm reception. Thank you. (*Applause*)

RICHARD HARLINGTON: President, Congress, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) I have now been working in the ambulance sector in various roles for the last 12 years. Assaults on ambulance staff have never been higher. GMB announced in the press that assaults against ambulance workers have risen by 27% over the last few years which equates to 9,500 assaults. GMB did amazing work to bring stronger laws to protect our protectors. However, unfortunately, this only works if people are charged and at this time, unfortunately, many people in the ambulance sector do not see this. At least five ambulance workers are assaulted every single day in the trust. They are forced to return to work before they are ready due to pressures from management and the sickness policies without regard for their actual welfare and needs. So many staff suffer from both physical or sexual assault which also results in traumatic mental health issues such as PTSD and they get no real support from their employer.

Ambulance workers deserve so much better than to be assaulted when they are just trying to help the public. We deserve to be protected from assault. We deserve for assaults to be properly prosecuted and we absolutely demand to be fully supported and treated with dignity. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Richard. The next speaker?

WENDY COX: President, Congress, I am London Ambulance Service Branch Secretary. I have worked for the ambulance service now for 28 years. *(Applause)* As Richard said, we have seen an increase in assaults. We have also seen a worrying amount of sexual assaults against members of staff. I have two examples, one female member of staff who had been left with PTSD after having her chest grabbed aggressively by a mental health patient whose condition had spiralled waiting for treatment. The second example of this was inflicted on a paramedic whose testicles, sorry, chaps, were grabbed and twisted by the son of a patient who believed his father had had a stroke, and they had been waiting four hours for an ambulance.

There is simply not enough staff to meet the demand for ambulances. We are also experiencing increased waiting times at hospitals, sometimes up to four to five hours. GMB are now campaigning for a zero tolerance approach against all forms of assault against all of our staff. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Wendy.

IAN BURTON: President, Congress, good afternoon. I am President of the East Midlands Ambulance Service Branch, first time I have been here and said anything in public. *(Applause)* I feel a bit of a geek because I am fiddling with my laptop but maybe I should have been a doctor, I cannot read my own handwriting. *(Laughter)* I am in fact a paramedic. I do not feel I need to stand here and defend the profession of the staff in the ambulance service or those in the wider NHS. Our skills and training enable us to do what we do but we do face challenges every day so I have therefore decided to tell you about a particular incident that I went to very recently to highlight the challenge that I faced and it demonstrates why all NHS staff deserve better pay. My apologies if it is going to be hard-hitting but I think you need to hear it. I only wish I was embellishing on the truth but this is going to be told how it is, how it was, for myself and many others.

Two days ago, Friday, I declared a 16-year old boy dead. He had hanged himself. There is no training that can prepare you for this. He needed no clinical intervention. He was beyond help. All I needed was compassion, communication, and the skills that come along with those like following policy. Why am I telling you this? Sadly, within the last couple of years our branch lost a rep, he hanged himself on station in his uniform. He was facing a lot of trouble, one of those being financial hardship. We deserve to be paid better.

I am actually here now to lighten the mood and talk about pay. Last year we got a mandate for industrial action. The Government said, "We will not talk," so we went on strike. We put derogations in place to make sure those with the most life-threatening emergencies still received an ambulance. After a while the Government said, "Okay, we will talk but not about pay." So we continued to strike, and so on. In early March, though, this year the Government said, "Okay, we will talk pay," and the negotiations began. Several offers never came out of that room but then eventually one did; not a perfect offer but when we considered the position from, "We will not talk, we do not have any money," to "Let's talk, and okay here is an offer." With the strength and solidarity of all the GMB ambulance staff and more than a little help from our National Officer, Rachel Harrison, we achieved this. *(Applause)* We should be proud, we should consider this a win, and we do deserve this. My thanks go to all GMB members within the ambulance service and those that supported us from other sectors. However imperfect the offer may feel, it is a win, we are proud, and we did it. Thanks. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian, for sharing that story with us.

JACKIE MURPHY: Good afternoon, President and Congress. I am from the A02 ambulance branch, which is in the Midlands Region. This is my first Congress and my first time speaking. *(Applause)* GMB has been campaigning for a lower retirement age for ambulance workers for several years following the Public Services Sector Conference in 2018 and 2019. There is a motion to this Congress which will be debated later this week. Ambulance workers are made to work to their state pension age unlike other emergency services and blue light workers who can retire at 60. Ambulance workers are instead considered to be essential services and not an emergency service.

The reality is that many frontline ambulance workers are forced to leave employment in the ambulance service years before their retirement age due to the physical and mental strains of the job and inadequate redeployment opportunities. Research undertaken by GMB shows that the issue of ambulance workers' retirement age has been debated and forgotten in parliament on several occasions since 1974. There is no way I can physically carry a patient down flights of stairs safely at 67 years of age, especially while struggling with my chronic pain developing arthritis and a right pair of dodgy knees. I am 55 years old and already feeling the effects of 23 years in the ambulance service. *(Applause)* Each year as I age it gets harder and harder to carry out some of the more physical parts of

my role effectively. Moving and handling of patients can be time-critical and at times a matter of life and death. It is unfair to my patients that I cannot guarantee I am physically able to transfer them safely without putting them and myself at risk. They deserve better and we deserve better. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jackie.

SIMON DAY: Good afternoon, again, Madam President, Congress. AO2 Branch Secretary from Midlands Region. As Ian told you, we won a pay award from the Government after quite a number of strike events and strike action. It was not what we wanted entirely but it was what we democratically agreed and it is where we are. Unfortunately, the Government may confer the commitment which is why we are telling you about the campaigns we are looking to build as a National Ambulance Committee and ambulance workers. I do not think they really knew how hard we were going to hold them to that commitment and how hard our members want to fight to see justice across their workplace.

What I want to tell you about is section 2, pay in the ambulance service work. Introduced by Jeremy Hunt in 2018 and applied to all new staff and all new changing roles, effectively passing on efficiency savings for the ambulance service by directly attacking workers' terms and conditions and pay packets. Ambulance staff now pay for savings in NHS ambulance services. A national survey of our members just recently that finished at the end of May confirmed what the National Ambulance Committee always had believed in regard to section 2, that this attack on our terms and conditions has significantly stifled the progression and career development of our staff, financially punishes staff who go off sick and has increased the number of inconsistencies in the application of terms and conditions between ambulance service trusts up and down the country, effectively re-instigating regional bargaining for terms and conditions because of the differences. Your National Ambulance Committee is determined to build a campaign and engage ambulance workers up and down the country to organise against making ambulance work worse for its staff. As well as calling on GMB more widely to support this campaign we intend to fight consistently and constantly as one voice and one unit and we thank you in advance for your support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Richard, Wendy, Ian, Jackie, and Simon, before you disappear can you all come back on the stage as a group, as a collective, and let's

give the ambulance workers the round of applause they deserve. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

Thank you once again. What a brilliant way to end the first day of Congress, hearing from our members on the ground. (*Applause*)

Before we conclude this session of Congress can I remind you that anyone who holds Congress credentials is invited to Congress President and Vice President's Welcome event tonight, in Room 2, the East and West Bars of the Brighton Centre, so you are back here. The event will start at 9 o'clock so you have plenty of time to get ready and go out and eat. The dedicated entrance for this event is at the back of this building in Russell Road and doors will open at 8.45 p.m. There will be a live band. As you know I like my dancing. You will need to show your Congress credentials and you will be entitled to two free drinks vouchers.

Please be in the hall for start of business by 9.30 tomorrow and please do not leave any bags or personal possessions in the hall overnight. Thank you for a good first day. Have a good evening. See you later.

Congress adjourned.