



GMB

UNION

GMB Congress

Bournemouth 2024

Award Winners Report

Eleanor Marx Award 2024

2023-2024 has been an exceptional year for GMB lay women leaders and it was impossible to select just one winner for the Eleanor Marx Award.

The 2024 award is therefore shared by two exceptional women activists.

Award Winner: Ceferina Floresca Midlands Region (Amazon A25 Branch)

Ceferina's nominator summed up her work:

Ceferina has been a key player in growing GMB membership in Amazon Coventry to fight for better pay and recognition.

Ceferina is a trainer at the facility. She is well trusted by her co-workers and talks to lots of workers about the dispute, about joining the union and about joining the strike.

Amazon is a really hostile environment and managers are constantly undermining the union. The credibility and respect that Ceferina has nurtured with fellow workers has meant that their under-handed tactics are being exposed.

Everyday Ceferina puts her own employment on the line because she wants dignity and respect for her work colleagues. She wears her GMB rep t-shirt to work even though we are not yet recognised.

Ceferina has identified new leaders and has been able to cross over into different communities to find the influential leaders there, and has worked with them bringing them to training and guiding them in how they should be organising other workers from their communities.

As a direct result of this work we have seen the membership grow each month. Ceferina and others are now representing their colleagues and winning. They have secured a 20% pay increase, a £500 bonus, a leaders' network and an active branch. She brings a message of hope to workers that came to England for a better life and who have been beaten down by Amazon.

Amazon has used the diversity inside their warehouses to divide the workforce. Ceferina has bought them together. I don't know anyone that doesn't know her and when she speaks, they listen.

Ceferina has also brought on board other women leaders. I think she embodies everything Eleanor Marx would have stood for: Unity of workers, with the same goal - to make work better.

Award Winner: Rachel Webber Southern Region (ASDA A10 Branch)

Rachel's nominator says:

Rachel is the lead rep for GMB at Asda Gosport. She became a rep in 2023 and over the course of her first year grew the membership by 80 and led the first GMB strike in an Asda store.

She has also worked closely with the officer and branch to visit other stores in the area, to undertake representation and recruitment and to spread the word about our campaigns. In the store she has a great relationship with her members. They trust and respect her which led to us hitting the threshold for strike action. Rachel ensured that the turnout in the strike was solid. Rachel is kind, caring, funny, sympathetic, empathetic, brave and a real people-person. Rachel has shown in her time as a GMB rep that she is not without fear or worry - but she is always tenacious and courageous in standing up for GMB members and for what is right.

The strike action at Gosport has spawned a wider GMB campaign in Asda and prompted the GMB's commitment to truly take the fight to Asda in a way we just haven't in the past.

She has inspired the spread of industrial action across Asda in the GMB and is now supporting other reps to run strike ballots in their own workplaces.

Rachel is an Asda community champion so does a huge amount of work in her community, including supporting low income families to cook, and raising money for charity. She has received a B.E.M. for services to the community.

Mary MacArthur Health & Safety Rep of the Year Award 2024

Award Winner: Martina Vrajitoru Wales and South West Region

Awarded for outstanding campaigning using equality and health & safety to create change and improve standards at Hinkley Point C.

Martina only became a GMB member in 2023, yet has created remarkable cultural change through her activism. Using health and safety issues to push equality at Hinkley Point C, she has led a successful campaign for proper PPE for women in construction, with a view to pushing this campaign into all workplaces. Her campaign has been adopted by the Regional Wales and South West Equalities. Martina has pushed for HPC to better manage welfare issues, and has encouraged all reps to partake in neurodiversity training.

Martina then developed a campaign on menopause at HPC, including an awareness day for members and involving the branch (male dominated as is the workplace) and ultimately getting the Hinkley Point C Senior Management Team on board with the Smash the Stigma policy.

Martina has also tackled issues affecting welfare and mental health – demanding and seeing implemented healthier food options, reflecting different religions and cultures.

She has also successfully campaigned for improved toilet facilities on site, critical for health and hygiene in a nuclear construction environment.

Most importantly, Martina demonstrates that drive, determination and a willingness to challenge management are as important as technical knowledge for a safety rep. She has achieved remarkable results in her short time as an activist, and is a worthy award winner.

John McClean Health & Safety Branch or Workplace of the Year Award 2024

Award Winner: RCN@GMB X10 Branch London Region/Nationwide

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has a number of office premises across the UK, and GMB@RCN is an active branch covering the whole organisation. The Health and Safety Team attend regular health and safety committee meetings with senior management where data is analysed and challenged and policies are reviewed and updated.

The Health and Safety Team worked closely with management throughout Covid to ensure that staff were safe working from home and more recently have worked on the new hybrid model that is being adopted.

A member of the Health and Safety Team was involved in the development of a Workplace Adjustments Passport and the team are now actively promoting this to members to make sure that adjustments are honoured whenever there are workplace changes.

The Health and Safety Team worked alongside management on a new policy designed to keep staff safe at conferences and events which was implemented successfully at RCN Congress 2023.

All of these changes together are helping to improve health and safety standards and the working lives of GMB branch members.

The RCN nomination is a textbook example of organising around a multi-site organisation, using committees and the power of Safety Representatives to make tangible gains. The new event safety policy is a particularly noteworthy achievement, and follows GMB's adoption of a similar policy.

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