

GMB

CONGRESS 2024

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BARBARA PLANT
(National President)
(In the Chair)

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Held in:

**The Bournemouth International Conference Centre,
Bournemouth**

on:

Sunday, 9th June 2024
Monday, 10th June 2024
Tuesday, 11th June 2024
Wednesday, 12th June 2024
-and-
Thursday, 13th June 2024

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY ONE
(Sunday, 9th June 2024)

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FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SUNDAY, 9TH JUNE 2024

MORNING SESSION

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

Call to Order

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to Order. Welcome all to Bournemouth. I know that some of you had really difficult journeys down yesterday to Bournemouth. It is lovely to see you all. We will now move to the traditional opening of Congress, which is the Banner Ceremony

Banner Ceremony

THE PRESIDENT: We now move to the traditional opening of Congress, which is the Banner Ceremony. This year Wales & South West will be forming the Banner Party. It is a great pleasure that The Race Network and RMA banners will also form part of the procession this year. *(Applause)*

We have another change. In line with Motion 2 from last year's Congress, the music for this year's ceremony will be Bob Marley and the Wailers' 'Get Up Stand Up'. *(Applause)*

I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. Congress, please stand to greet the National Banner. *(The music of 'Get Up Stand Up' was played)* *(Applause)* Congress, please take your seats again. That is always a very emotional and lovely way to start Congress with the banners.

Obituaries

THE PRESIDENT: I now call on Congress to stand in silence as a mark of respect for departed GMB colleagues. Names will be shown on the screen, and a copy of the Obituary list is on page 9 of the Congress Guide. Please stand.

Obituary list shown on screen

Congress stood in silent tribute.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Too many people gone but not forgotten. Their legacy is that we continue their fight to make work better for our members. They will never be forgotten.

Safety Procedures

THE PRESIDENT: I now have a few housekeeping and safety points to make. You will find details of the fire and evacuation procedures for the venue in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide document. There is prayer room located in Solent Hall Dressing Room 1 on the Ground Floor.

Welcome to Delegates and Visitors

THE PRESIDENT: I would now like to introduce the members of the platform party. Here on my right is Malcolm Sage, Vice President, and on my left is Gary Smith, General Secretary and Treasurer. Throughout the week we will be joined by members of the CEC and Regional Secretaries, as well as the Research & Policy team who will be assisting with the agenda, and other members of GMB staff assisting with Congress.

Could I please welcome the following guests and visitors: Our General Member Auditors, who will be supervising counting of votes are: Jane Davies (North West & Irish Region), Kevin Fox (North East Yorkshire & Humber Region) and Stephen Horton (Midland Region).

And, of course, our verbatim shorthand writers Phyllis Hilder and Michael Thear.

This year we are also joined by sign language interpreters from Interpreting Matters, so please welcome Karen Green, Russell Andrews 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 would like to thank are Exhibit World, U2 Events, Full Spectrum Printers, and of course Pellacraft, who without these organisations we wouldn't 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 can I extend a warm welcome to all our first-time delegates, and welcome back all our delegates who we haven't seen in a few 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 S*n newspaper from all GMB buildings, GMB conferences and all GMB meetings. This paper remains hostile to our movement and we shall never forget the suffering it has caused through its lies and misreporting.

Could I also remind delegates that all Congress sessions are transmitted live on the GMB website and You Tube. 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.

When you come up to speak, please make sure you remember to say your name and region clearly for the verbatim record, and so we all get to know each other. Please also mention if you are a first time speaker because you will get a big round of applause.

Delegates will be able to find all the important documents for the week in your delegate pack, which should include the one page Delegate Outline Programme and Order of Business, the Income and Expenditure Report and the Final Agenda and 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. So it is all in there so make sure you have your copy of the Final Agenda and Congress Guides. If there are any changes to the programme, I will give you advance warning.

Roll Call

THE PRESIDENT: 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 Standing Orders Committee

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.

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.

Standing Orders Committee

THE PRESIDENT: Moving on to the Standing Orders Committee, could I congratulate Karen Dudley on her election as Chair of the Standing Orders Committee for the second time. (*Applause*) Well done, Karen, and best of luck! The names of members of the Standing Orders Committee is on page 21 of your Final Agenda. I would also like to remind Congress that the Standing Orders Committee is made up of Congress delegates, each elected by your own delegation. They are your colleagues and work to ensure that Congress runs to preserve our debate and democracy in this hall.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1

GMB CONGRESS 2024 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 9 June

9.30 am – 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Monday 10 June – Tuesday 11 June

9.00 am – 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm – 5.30 pm

Wednesday 12 June

9.00 am – 12.30 pm

Thursday 13 June

9.00 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
Secunder 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 alison.turtle@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 are Out of Order for the reasons specified:

Motion 8 GMB Vehicles/Office Branding

The motion covers the conditions of the union's car fleet. This is a matter which is a subject for consultation with internal staff union representatives and is not appropriate for Congress to debate.

Motion 28 Branch Funds

The Motion calls for changes to branch funds. This would require an amendment to Rule 34 to give effect to its provisions. Congress 2024 is not a rule change year.

Motion 65 Risk to Female Drivers, Couriers, and Carers

The Motion relates to industrial bargaining issues which ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body than Congress, that is the existing industrial structures will be better placed to consider and advance the calls of the motion.

Motion 69 Full Decant for the Restoration and Renewal for the Palace of Westminster

The motion relates to the terms and conditions of members who work in this area which ought to be negotiated at a local level and Congress does not have the authority to bind the hands of those negotiators in the workplace. The motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body than Congress.

Motion 147 National SEND Campaign

The motion relates to industrial NJC issues which should be considered by the membership, and Congress cannot bind the hands of the negotiators. The motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body than by Congress and as part of SEND reform which the School Support Staff Negotiating Body will consider.

Motion 155 Standardised Meal and Rest Break Procedure and Penalty Payments across all NHS Ambulance Services

The motion relates to industrial issues affecting ambulance staff which ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body than by Congress that is by the national ambulance committee and through the NHS Staff Council.

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 10 Embracing Digital Organising

Motion 29 GMB Branch Finances

Motion 34 Inclusive Membership

Motion 58 Promoting Neurodiversity inclusion in the Workplace

Motion 59 Paid Paternity Leave extended in certain circumstances

Motion 61 Flexibility for Workers with a disability

Motion 62 Mandatory Disability pay Gap Reporting

Motion 73 H & S – Working Temperatures

Motion 74 Covid Policy

Motion 75 National Insurance Pension – Stop the increase in pension age

Motion 95 Demand for a 4 day week

Motion 107 Procurement Agreements

Motion 121 Build the FSSS in the UK

Motion 140 Cash is King

Motion 141 Ofsted Inspection Difficulties

Motion 153 NHS Staff Parking

Motion 154 Free Parking at work for NHS staff

Motion 162 A New Deal for Waste Services
Motion 175 Age Discrimination – National Living Wage
Motion 176 Remove Age Band Hourly Rates
Motion 191 Stronger Laws and Sentencing for Knife Crime
Motion 199 Mental Well Being for the Future Workforce
Motion 201 Using Bus Concessions before 9.30 am (weekdays)
Motion 204 Appropriate Prostate Cancer Screening for all different nationalities
Motion 217 End Fuel Poverty by Electing Labour and Renationalising Power Supplies
Motion 220 The Global Challenge to achieve Net Zero and the role of the UK Place within this Challenge
Motion 255 Recognition and Support for Unpaid Carers
Motion 258 Universal Basic Income

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.

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.

THE CHAIR OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Karen Dudley, London): Congress, I am formally moving SOC Report No. 1.

President and Congress, before I move the report, with your permission, I would like to mention the passing away of one of the SOC members. Madan Lal had been an SOC member from the former Birmingham & West Midlands Region. He is sadly missed and we offer our sympathies to his family, friends and colleague trade unionists.

President and Congress, I will now move on to the Report. Congress, you will find a copy of SOC Report No. 1 in your Final Agenda starting at page 18. I formally move adoption of that report and, in doing so, would colleagues please note the long-standing Guidelines for Congress business, to be found on page 13 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 the SOC Report on behalf of the SOC will be issued to delegates later today, and 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: The SOC has been informed that a number of motions have been withdrawn since the printing of the Final Agenda. We will report these later in full today but for now, please, just note that the following motions have been withdrawn as they were due to be heard this morning: Motion 1, Banner Ceremony Song from Southern Region, and Motion 8, GMB Offices/Vehicle Branding from North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region. In addition, Motion 147, National SEND Campaign from North East Yorkshire and Humber, has also been withdrawn.

Would Congress delegates please note that if any further Congress motions are to be withdrawn during the week then, please, advise your Regional Secretary who then, in turn, will inform the SOC.

Agreed Composite Motions: The SOC would like to thank delegates and their Regional Secretaries for agreeing 18 composite motions that also appear in your Final Agenda, starting at page 102.

Existing Policy Motions: Congress, in accordance with Congress decisions adopted since 2008, the SOC is recommending that motions which are existing policies are endorsed by Congress without the need for debate, following advice from the CEC on the particular motions in question. The existing policy motions are listed in SOC Report No. 1 at page 19 of your Final Agenda.

There is one further motion to add to this list, and that is Motion 132: Fight for Immediate Improvement in Workers' Pay and Conditions. There is also one further motion which is listed as "EP" or existing policy, which we will review and report back to the region and Congress as soon as possible. This is Motion 199: Mental Wellbeing for the Future Workforce. You may also find it helpful to refer to the detailed report from the CEC which is at page 114 of your Final Agenda. The letters "EP" also appear at the side of such motions in the Final Agenda.

Motions out of Order: Congress, the SOC has ruled that there are four motions remaining on the agenda that are out of order for debate. First, there is one motion that would require a rule amendment to give effect to its provisions, and this is not a rule amendment year. This is Motion 28: Branch Funds.

Secondly, there are three motions which are about industrial strategy and are matters for the GMB members in those areas and the relevant GMB committees, which are not policy matters for Congress. They are Motion 65: Risk to Female Drivers, Couriers and Carers; Motion 69: Full Decant for the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster, and Motion 155: Standardised Meal and Rest-Break Procedure and Penalty Payments across all NHS Ambulance Services. The details of the out-of-order motions are contained in your Final Agenda at page 18.

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

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Is there any delegate who wishes to speak on any of the SOC's recommendations? I see you. Would you make sure you say the motion and just keep it to the relevant point and not your speech for it. Thank you.

TARANJIT CHANA (London): Congress, I am challenging the SOC's position that Motion 62 is existing policy. Motion 61 was passed in 2021, although on the disability pay gap it refers to a level playing field, and Motion 77, Fair

Pay For All, refers to a duty, but there is no mention of a mandatory disability pay gap. This motion is brought to Congress because of the TUC's November 2023 analysis calling for a mandatory disability pay gap. Congress, we know that things change. There is updated information and reports and analyses. Would the supporters provide us with the tools so that we can support our members? This is the case here. The TUC's November 2023 analysis is calling for a mandatory disability pay gap. If we took the SOC's stance on similar motions previously we would never have any motions at Congress as such a position will not allow for updates. For this reason, this motion is not existing policy. We ask you to oppose the SOC's position so we can debate this very crucial motion at Congress. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Will you tell me again, clearly, what motion it was that you were talking about?

TARANJIT CHANA: Motion 62.

ADRIAN STOHR (London): London Region wishes to challenge Motion 75 on National Insurance. The SOC says it was debated last year as a motion on pensions. We ask for a national awareness campaign for our members to continue to be worried about the state pension. Congress, Motion 75 extends the pension debate talking about national insurance contributions. This is a new angle, as we have seen, challenging this year. Please allow this motion to be debated so our policy can be enhanced.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MATTHEW WRIGHT (London): Conference, I'm a first-time delegate (*Applause*) challenging SOC No. 1 on Motion 69, the Restoration of the Palace of Westminster. We support decanting, moving out of a building that desperately needs restoration. The position is shared by our members, the branch, our great team of reps, their industrial officer and our region. While the argument that Congress does not have the authority bind the hands of those negotiators in the workplace, what we are asking for is this: find a way, as it is the negotiators, the members and the reps who want this motion to be heard and it is our duty to support them. So, please, let us use the current political climate to raise the profile of a health and safety concern for hundreds of members and the public and vote to hear Motion 69. Thank you. (*Applause*)

ELIZABETH GARELICK (London): Congress, I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)*. I am challenging SOC No. 1 on Motion 65: Risk to Female Drivers, Couriers and Carers. This motion is about the safety and wellbeing of countless women in our workplaces and membership. Here there are critical concerns that deserve our immediate attention and open discussion in the conference hall. Female drivers, couriers and carers face a unique set of dangers on the job from harassment and discrimination to unsafe working conditions. The risks they encounter are unacceptable. Their safety is non-negotiable. Please vote to overturn SOC No. 1 and support Motion 65 so we can draw national attention to the various dangers facing members in our profession and send a clear message that we stand with women in these sectors. We are their voice in the corridors of power, actively seeking change on their behalf. Let us stand together for the women who keep our society moving forward. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Next speaker, please.

HANNAH BUTLER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Congress, I'm a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Thank you. Congress, I think the SOC has made a mistake regarding Motion 73. The policy is out of date. Climate change and the aftermath of Covid on office maintenance following remote working and in Asda factor 50 suncream won't benefit members working with woolly hats, coats and duvets over their knees. With this in mind, please support bringing this motion to the floor. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I ask Karen to respond.

THE CHAIR OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (Karen Dudley, London): President and Congress, responding to challenges to SOC Report No. 1.

Out of order motions: 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 and the guidance for Congress business, which are adopted by Congress each year and is contained in your Final Agenda at page 13. I will deal with each challenge in turn.

Motion 65 – Risk to Female Drivers, Couriers and Carers – relates to industrial bargaining issues which ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body than Congress, and that is the Union's existing industrial

structures, which are better placed to consider and advance the cause of the motion.

Motion 69 – Full Decant for the Restoration & Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. This motion relates to the terms and conditions of members who work in this area which ought to be negotiated at local level. The motion ought to be dealt with by a more appropriate body than Congress, and that is the negotiators in the workplace.

Motion 62 – Mandatory Disability Pay Gap Reporting. This is an important issue but it is existing policy through Motions 51 – Disability Pay Gap Reporting – carried at Congress in 2021, and Motion 77 – Fair Pay For All – carried at Congress in 2022. As the motion admits, it is calling on Congress to do what it is already doing by continuing to highlight and campaign on the issue.

Motion 73 – Health & Safety Working Temperatures. The items covered in the motion are long-standing existing policy. Starting with Composite 1 – Health and Safety Reps and Temperature Extremes – which was carried at Congress at 2010, and Motion 110 – Working in Excessive Heat Conditions – was carried at Congress in 2015. This motion also called for the GMB National Health & Safety Department to co-ordinate a campaign with the TUC and other organisations to introduce relevant legislation to protect workers from excessive heat exposure.

Finally, Congress 2023 carried Motion 95 – The Sun is Out – which called for employers to provide sun cream and regular skin checks for those who work outdoors.

Motion 75 – National Insurance Pension. Stop the Increase in Pension Age. The calls of the motion and the opposition to proposals to raise the retirement age are existing policy. Congress 2023 carried composite motion 6 – Retirement Age. Will my Children Ever Get a Pension – which supported this call.

President and Congress, I formally move the responses to the challenges to SOC Report No. 1.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. I will now put to the vote the challenges and the references back. I will take one motion at a time. In terms of Motion 65 – Risk to Female Drivers, Couriers and Carers – all those in favour

of reference back, please show? Put your hands up. All those against? Do people understand what they are doing? I am not sure people understand what they are doing because I have not seen any hands going up. There has been a challenge to the SOC. Some people want those motions to be put back into the agenda. If you are in favour of putting those motions back into the agenda, please show in favour. If you are against those going back into the agenda, please show against. Okay. Does that make sense now? So I will take it again.

Motion 65, which is Risk to Female Drivers, Couriers and Carers. All those in favour of it being referred back? Thank you. All those against? That is referred back.

Motion 69, which is Full Decant for the Restoration & Renewal of the Palace of Westminster. Again, if you accept the challenge and you want it referred back into the agenda, can you, please, vote in favour. If you don't, vote against. All those in favour of Motion 69 going back, please show? All those against? That is lost.

Motion 62, which is the Mandatory Disability Pay Gap Reporting. Again, all those in favour of the reference back, the challenge? Thank you. All those against? That is referred back.

Then Motion 73, which is the Health & Safety Working Temperature. All those in favour? All those against? That is also referred back.

The last one is Motion 75, which is National Insurance Pensions – Stop the Increase in Pension Age. All those in favour? All those against? That is also referred back. Those challenges were successful. Thank you. I hope that becomes clearer. *(Applause)* Well done to all of those challengers.

I will take the vote now on the rest of Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1. All those in favour of Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1, please show? Thank you. Any against? That is carried. Thank you, Karen. Thank you, Barry.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 was CARRIED.

These are the rules then in the Standing Orders Committee Report that you have adopted for the conduct of Congress for the coming week.

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Malcolm Sage): Conference, it gives me great pleasure to call on our President to address Congress. Before she does that, I would like to show you a short video. (*Video shown*)

President's Address

THE PRESIDENT (Barbara Plant): Friends, colleagues and comrades, welcome to GMB Congress 2024. It is wonderful to be with you here in Bournemouth back together again amongst so many fantastic GMB people.

Congress is a special moment in the life of our great Union. I remember the first time I came to a GMB Congress, which was in 2010 when it was in Southport. It was a memorable congress for me, I made my first speech, I got red-lighted, I got told off by Mary Turner and, to top it all, I had my purse nicked in the town centre. Yet I still came back for more and I have been doing so ever since. I am looking forward to catching up with everyone and I know you, too, will be keen to renew acquaintances. So, for those who have been before, its "Hello" again from me, and for first-time delegates it's great that you have been able to come along. Be assured you are joining a very special group of people. Congress, let's give our Congress newcomers a very warm welcome. (*Applause*) You will have a fantastic time in the coming days and be making a huge contribution on behalf of your members and to the life of our great Union.

GMB Congress last came to this lovely part of the UK in 2016. In many respects, our country was a very different place back then. We were still in the European Union. David Cameron – Boo! – was Prime Minister and Leicester City had just won the Premier League. I support Crystal Palace who, once again, have flirted with relegation so whilst the world has changed in so many ways, I know that some things will always stay the same.

So much has changed in the last eight years. Certainly things are very different in GMB. We are growing again. More and more people are joining our union every day. We turned our focus to the workplace. GMB members are taking back power from bad employers everywhere. We have rediscovered our resounding voice. GMB is speaking truth to power, making sure that policymakers and politicians hear the reality of our members' lives. I have seen the power of those changes at first hand and central to this policy shift in our union has been you, the lay leadership of

the union. Many of you here today are the ones who have been at the forefront of this progress, so please give yourselves a big round of applause. *(Applause)*

The importance of lay leadership to our Union is shown by our fantastic reps, who are there for GMB members every single day. All the work our reps do is so important, so I would like to give a particular mention to their crucial role in tackling injustice for disabled workers. You will remember that disabled workers are less likely to be in work, to earn a good wage and to be in secure work. GMB reps are at the forefront of this battle and we are developing a new, unseen disability campaign toolkit that will help in workplace campaigns to make work better.

The Union has also provided a central support to reps to a ground-breaking programme of leadership training for reps across GMB, and well done to all those who took part in that training. Congress, let's celebrate the milestone that is the creation of our GMB Race Achievement Scholarship Programme or GRASP. We call these GMB lay leaders the first who have graduated from the programme as 'Graspers', and many of them are in the hall today. Can I please ask our Race Ambassadors to stand up and, Congress, let's show them just how proud we are of them. *(Applause)* This is such an historic moment for our union as 20 years after the Henry Report we are taking action on key recommendations. We are investing in our people for greater diversity; we are making the changes that are so overdue. I cannot tell you how proud I am of these achievements. Our Union's Central Executive Council members have been at their heart.

Sadly, in recent weeks candidates in the elections for our CEC have suffered racist abuse online. We immediately reported it to the police and are doing everything we can to identify those responsible. Colleagues, GMB will fight racism and discrimination wherever it rears its ugly head. *(Applause)*

During a challenging few years for our union it has been this CEC that provided leadership and stability. Their dedication and determination is truly remarkable. Let's show our thanks to what they have done with their vision and commitment to a better GMB. *(Applause)*

Congress, here in Bournemouth during the next few days it will be you, GMB's lay leadership, who will decide how we keep this momentum going, how we keep improving and keep getting better. The last years have

shown that when we get it right we make a huge difference. We have taken on countless industrial disputes, with GMB members coming together in struggle across a huge range of issues. Each battle shows the incredible canvass upon which our union paints its stunning picture: Workers Fighting for Better.

GMB Midlands is fighting hard for equal pay in Birmingham City Council, and we have campaigns running on the same issue in Renfrewshire, Cumbria, Sheffield and so many other local authorities. Women – GMB members – are rising up everywhere to reclaim the money stolen from them through years of discrimination.

Our amazing school support staff members have been campaigning hard for proper recognition of the complex jobs that they do. GMB North East, Yorkshire and Humber's SEND campaign in Leeds City Council is an inspiration to all support staff across the country, just like GMB London's and Southern's battles for equality on London weighting. Of course, the solidarity of our support staff members taking action in Northern Ireland is awe inspiring. We took these messages to the heart of Westminster, meeting with Labour's Shadow Minister for Schools, stressing the critical importance of bringing back the School Support Staff Negotiating Body.

The incredible success achieved by GMB Scotland in winning £15 an hour for care workers in Moray is an inspiration to us all. In a sector characterised by long hours and low pay in female-dominated jobs, once again it is GMB leading the way. Of course, GMB members fighting for recognition at Amazon shows the very best of our union. Congress, please stand and let these glorious warriors know that we are with them all the way. *(A standing ovation)*

During the last year I have travelled to so many parts of our Union and met so many wonderful impassioned people, but sadly I don't have time to talk about them all. I know that if I tried, Malcolm would give me the red light. I ask Malcolm, please, to indulge me for a moment while I mention just a few. I spent a fantastic day at the Pride Festival in Weston-Super-Mare. The members and reps of GMB Wales and South West were so welcoming that it was a joy to spend time celebrating diversity and showing GMB support as an ally in the fight for equality. I visited the garment district in Leicester and I saw the challenging conditions experienced by workers. This is what outsourcing looks like, and its harmful impact is as much in evidence here as overseas. International solidarity matters, not just because it is morally

correct but we cannot be free from exploitation at home if others are suffering elsewhere. So it was a privilege to meet withOlulingham, the inspirational female President of Sri Lanka's Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union and listen to how her members are facing just the same sorts of problems.

In April I spent a special weekend in my own region – GMB Southern -- at their Women's Conference. The feedback from activists at this hugely successful event shows that we have made great progress. Here are some of the quotes; "Blown away by the sisterhood and integrity", "Feel empowered", "Team of women behind me", "An environment where I belong", "I'm inspired to get involved even more", "It was my first conference and I was blown away", "I'm a woman on a mission now to recruit as many members as possible". Such sentiments from our members makes my heart sing and should make everyone here very proud. It shows that when we get it right, when we are unified, we really make a difference. It's unity that is our strength. That's how we move mountains.

At our best, GMB is a big family, and like all families we can have our disagreements. We must be honest and reflect that we have had some challenging moments in recent months where our family unity has been tested. I hope, though, that this week will show that whatever our views, we know that there is more that unites us than divides us. We are better when we are together.

Congress, our unity is needed more than ever. In the coming weeks there will be a general election and a chance to change our country, a chance to remove this tired, chaotic, failed Tory Government. We have fought and won so much with Labour's *New Deal for Working People*. If we are united and campaign for it, we have a golden opportunity to be at the heart of shaping a better future. That is our challenge, that is our chance. Winning a brighter tomorrow would be a wonderful victory for all that makes GMB great, not least our people.

Before I finish, I want to take a moment to pay tribute to a person who has been central for making GMB what it is today, the one and only Malcolm Sage. (*Applause*) Malcolm, come and join me. This Congress will be Malcolm's last as GMB Vice President. He has been a CEC member for 32 years, and 20 years as Vice President. Our union owes him so much. He knows how highly I value him as a mentor, friend and wise counsel. I am

proud to have worked alongside him. Let's show our thanks to an amazing person and a GMB stalwart. (*A standing ovation*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT (Malcolm Sage): Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Every day, in all parts of the land, GMB people make work better. Like Malcolm, who has dedicated his life to our Union, let's submit at this Congress to making our members proud. It's a great responsibility but also a wonderful opportunity. Friends, colleagues and comrades, enjoy Congress. (*Applause*)

Announcements

THE PRESIDENT: Conference, before we begin our first debate, I need to explain a few points of procedure. Please listen carefully. To save time I will take the motions in groups. Your session programme will show the grouping. We are talking about *this* document. 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 because we will have change overs of staff at the desk. I will call movers and any seconders. In line with Motion 8 carried at Congress 2018, I will not be calling for addition supporting speakers on motions unless a delegate wants to come up and speak in opposition.

If you are moving a motion without the support of your region, you must declare it at the beginning of moving your speech. 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. I will make sure to repeat this throughout the week, but when voting, you are voting for the motion, not the CEC stance. The CEC stance advises Congress on how it may wish to vote. For example, if the CEC is to support a motion, it is advising Congress to vote for the motion. Or, if the CEC stance is to oppose a motion, it is advising Congress to vote against the motion.

On Special Reports and Statements, the CEC will have moving and seconding speakers. I will then invite one delegate from each region to speak on the report or statement at that time. Motions relating to Special

Reports or Statement that remain on the agenda will be debated. I will advise Congress on the voting process during those sessions.

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 will be cut off. This is just so that all the business can be done and it is just polite not to take too long over your speeches and go over time because that does cut down other people's time. Most importantly, practice your speeches, keep to time and have fun!

Finally, could I remind Congress that as you have voted in SOC Report No. 1 existing policy motions will now not be debated other than the ones we have put back nor will those motions that are out of order apart from the ones we put back.

Union Organisation: Congress

THE PRESIDENT: We are starting the week off with our first set of motions relating to Congress. We understand that Southern have withdrawn Motion 1, so I am asking Motion 2 to be moved first. Could the movers and seconders for Motions 4 and 6 if they could come forward as well and be ready to speak. Could you remember to say if you are moving your motion without the support of your region. I call the mover of Motion 2 from North East, Yorkshire and Humber to come to the rostrum.

Accessibility at Conference

Motion 2

2. ACCESSIBILITY AT CONFERENCE

This Congress we ask that Congress motion numbers and titles are displayed on the main screen whenever a vote is called.

As Congress may recall there have been some confusion on Congress floor in the past when key votes have been held.

It can be particularly difficult for first time delegates, or delegates with accessibility needs when votes are held in a fast-moving debate.

This could be resolved utilising our existing technology.

R62 ROTHERHAM GENERAL
North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

(Carried)

JULIE SHAW (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Congress, I am moving Motion 2. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am proud to be speaking for the first time for North East, Yorkshire & Humber. I am here to speak about some of the confusion that has happened in the past at Congress. There have been some great motions and great speakers, but on a couple of occasions there was a lot of confusion across the hall on the vote. There has been confusion amongst delegates who used to come to Congress, including people who attend every year. It is a nervous time for new delegates who are speaking on motions for the first time. There must be an easier way to explain motions we are voting for and motions that have been withdrawn and when composites are discussed. I think this should be by putting it on the big screen. Congress is the supreme body of the GMB. Nothing is more important in our union than the democracy. Democracy means making decisions with clarity and transparency. Too often there has been confusion on which motion we are discussing. Calling out the number of the motion on its own without the title is inaccessible to many, so this motion is asking for an extra visual aid to display the number and title of this motion as voting takes place. Congress, we are looking forward to a great week and let's make it even better by making a simple change that will protect our democracy, make Conference more accessible and better for everyone. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: I call the seconder.

HANNAH BUTLER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Conference, I am seconding this motion. As members of the lifeblood of this great union, is it not better that we simplify the system thereby making it more inclusive to the eventual entire Congress to the first-time delegates and first-time speakers? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hannah. I call the mover of Motion 4.

CONGRESS POLICY AND THE TUC
MOTION 4

4. CONGRESS POLICY AND THE CEC

This Congress notes that Congress is the supreme policy body of the Union, and that the CEC has the responsibility to manage and administer the Union.

Congress resolves and instructs the CEC that,

1. Any recommendation for remission must be based on a commitment to consider and accept the motion as policy.
2. After a motion has been remitted in the case of affiliation mandates, it is to be rejected only if such an affiliation would be illegal or in breach of the aims and objectives of the Union.
3. A recommendation for remission should not be made in the case of disaffiliation motions. The recommendation must be to withdraw or oppose.
4. When considering qualifications, and the maintenance of policy, the date of establishment of a policy is of prime relevance. More recent policy must supersede older policy.
5. As Congress is the supreme policy body, the CEC is not to ask for remission to consult other parts of the Union such as an unrepresented branch, a Region or a Sector.

Congress further resolves that either within the General Secretary's Report, or as a separate document, the report on actions taken as a result of Congress resolutions is presented to Congress and circulated to delegates and delegations.

In addition, as is the case with the CEC Finance Report, that the opportunity to review the report on actions is offered in a fringe meeting and as is the case with the CEC Finance Report, delegations can submit questions to the General Secretary & CEC on progress or otherwise taken in pursuit of Congress policy and that these questions will be timetabled within Congress sessions.

X58 LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH London Region

(Fell)

DAVID LEVY (London): Congress, President, I am speaking without the support of my region, although the vote on it was quite close. However, that means I have an uphill struggle as the whole region will now be voting against this position.

The motion seeks to do three things. It seeks to give guidance to the CEC on their use of refer and qualified support recommendations; demands that the CEC recognises the supremacy of Congress in the development of policy and it also asks that the GS Report is presented to delegates in a fringe to allow questions to be asked.

When the CEC seek referral they do so with the explicit threat to oppose. This threat will often lead to regions agreeing to referral despite a significant commitment to the policy. The idea put forward by the CEC that this is an agreement of equals is just not so. The request to refer would seem to be an offer to bury the policy and do so in the privacy of sub-committee minutes, which are difficult to follow, particularly if you are an ordinary member and not a member of the CEC.

Two years ago I measured the actions of the CEC against motions both carried and referred. Only 30% of such motions had any recorded action. If the CEC is to ignore Congress policy with impunity, there is little point in its debating and carrying it. I suggest that the CEC owe Congress a more straightforward presentation of their position. So I am willing to confront the logic of this argument about the need to have the debate on Congress floor rather than in committee rooms.

The CEC has decided to argue against things that the motion does not say. The motion does not, and explicitly does not, suggest that affiliation motions could be used to contradict our aims, objectives, rules or the law. There is no blank cheque in this motion.

I also considered the request for time to investigate, to consult further, to be spurious. These requests have often been on policy which all branches, all regions or the moving branch have significant expertise and interests. How we should deal with sectional interests requires a level of complexity. I am not sure we have it right today, but we should not allow the tail to wag the dog. Congress can and must represent the interests of the whole union. I suggest it is wrong of the CEC to promote these sectional interests above the need for common policy and for Congress's right to speak for the whole of the membership.

The motion does not seek to mandate industrial demands on affected members and qualified support while consulting for a mandate remains something the CEC can and should do. The CEC should be explaining the policy of the Union, which is why we requested that disaffiliations are opposed since the establishment of the affiliation historically is the policy of the union. While affiliation is the sharp point of this motion, policy on bullying, training and development, non-compete clauses and campaigning on legal aid have all been buried using the refer/ignore tactic. I accept that in some cases the proposal to affiliate may be virtual

signalling by the movers of the motion, and personally I plan to think harder about asking for it, but the undermining of policies is due to priorities, which I believe systemic and deliberate.

The proposal to discuss progress on mandates from Congress at Congress strikes me as a trivial request. I suppose we only do it for finance because it is the law. However, there have been significant and useful discussions in these private fringe meetings, which have informed debate and reduced conflict within the Union. I can't believe – well, I can believe it – that even this modest proposal is opposed.

I believe the CEC position to be disrespectful of both Congress and our policy book. I would ask you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Can I just check with London Region that you are not supporting this motion and that there is no seconder?

THE LONDON REGIONAL SECRETARY: That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. So that motion falls because there is no seconder.

Motion 4 FELL

THE PRESIDENT: I will now take Motion 6. I ask the mover and seconder of Motion 7 to make themselves ready as well as Motions 9 and 11.

WILL THORNE AWARD

MOTION 6

6. WILL THORNE AWARD

This Congress resolves to add an additional award that can be applied for called the Will Thorne Award.

Each year at Congress, there are three awards that we celebrate, the Eleanor Marx Award for inspiring women members and reps, the Mary MacArthur Award Health and Safety Rep of the Year Award, and the John McClean Health and Safety Branch or Workplace of the Year Award.

However, this means that a lot of the fantastic work that members and reps across our Union do is not being recognised in the same way, and we should have an award that anyone can be put forward to receive. Be that for outstanding bravery in calling out bad behaviour, through to championing equality in our workplaces.

Our founder, Will Thorne, once said, 'there is a world of freedom, beauty and equality to gain, where everyone will have an opportunity to express the best that is in them for the benefit of all, making the world a place more to our heart's desire and the better to dwell in.' As such, we should be celebrating the work of our members and reps that have made our world the better to dwell in.

C15 CUMBRIA PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Referred)

JOANNE WEAR (North West & Irish): Congress, I am moving Motion 6, the Will Thorne Award. Last year we heard of the fantastic work done by some truly amazing people and we celebrated these people with awards. Two of these awards are for health and safety, and the Eleanor Marx Award for a woman who had outstanding work helping and supporting others.

Last year my branch nominated Maddie Wilkinson for this award, which she won. So, Congress, it is absolutely right that we celebrate and commemorate the hard work that people in our Union do to make things better. Even to be nominated for such an award means that someone somewhere is thankful and appreciates you. But what if you have done something that is truly outstanding or required a huge amount courage and bravery to do. If it is health and safety related, there's an award for it. If you're a woman, there's a reward for it. But what if it is neither of these options? What then? What about those who don't identify as a woman? That's a lot of people in this union. So this motion calls for an award that anyone can be nominated for. It is about outstanding courage and bravery in building this union, to champion equality in our workplaces and it is to be named after our founder, Will Thorne. We could always shorten it to the 'Willy Award'.

Lastly, to the reason and the real inspiration behind this motion. Kelvin, you have shown amazing courage and bravery in the work you have done. You have been part of the GRASP programme. You have spent time in our branch and on days out meeting our members and helping us grow the union. You have held up a mirror to our union and made it a better place. You are an excellent example of what it means to be a trade unionist.

(Applause and cheers) So, Kelvin, stand up, be seen and let's give him our thanks. *(Applause)* Congress, I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Joanne. Seconder? (*Delegate spoke – inaudible*) Are you accepting the reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you very much. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to any of these motions? (*No response*) No. In that case, I will ask June Minnery from the CEC to give the CEC response, please.

JUNE MINNERY (CEC): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 2.

I want to make it clear that the CEC is serious in making our Congress an event that allows members to debate their ideas in pursuit of policy which improves lives and working conditions. It should be a safe place and one which is inclusive. We will strive to make improvements for delegates in this hall and their branches. The following decisions have been made in this spirit. I will now outline the positions only on Motion 2.

The CEC is asking that the region withdraw. Whilst the CEC appreciates the sentiments of what the motion is asking for, it is not practical to display both the motion number and title on the screen during the voting process. There are good reasons not to put motion titles on the screen with a word limit. Many motion titles simply will not fit. In addition, our existing technology is quite manual and has potential to slow down the running of Congress, which is already on a tight agenda, as this motion is carried in full. However, we will commit to ensuring that the Chair makes it explicitly clear, as she has done already this morning, what items are being voted on and refers to the Order of Business document. Therefore, the CEC is asking that Motion 2 be withdrawn. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, June. We are voting only on Motion 2. I will just explain it again. On Motion 6, the CEC stance was to refer back, and because the region accepted the reference back we don't vote on those motions. Motion 4, the delegate was speaking without the support of their region and they did not have a seconder, so that motion fell. So we are only voting on Motion 2. In relation to Motion 2, the CEC is asking North East, Yorkshire & Humber to withdraw it. Are they agreeing to that? You are going to have to shout. (*Calls of "No"*) Okay. I thought that might be the answer. In that case, the CEC stance is to oppose the motion. Remember, you are voting either for the motion or against, and the CEC stance is just to advise you. The CEC stance is to oppose it. I will put it to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 2, please show? All those against? That motion is carried.

Motion 2 was CARRIED.

Motion 4 was FELL.

Motion 6 was REFERRED.

Union Organisation: General

THE PRESIDENT: That takes us on to Union Organisation: General. Could I have the mover and seconder of Motion 7, please, to come to the rostrum. Again, could delegates please get ready for Motions 9 and 11.

MICHELLE McCROSSEN PUBLIC SERVICES WOMEN'S RECOGNITION AWARD MOTION 7

7. MICHELLE MCCROSSEN PUBLIC SERVICES WOMEN'S RECOGNITION AWARD

This Congress notes we have a long and commendable tradition of recognising and celebrating individuals who bring about positive change for members. Worthy of exceptional note is recognising and celebrating our changemaking women who have overcome, often particularly increased and institutionalised, inequality and unfair treatment. Such recognition serves as motivation and encouragement for others to strive for positive change and equality across all the workplaces in which they are the face of our union. We believe that there is more we could do to recognise this group of activists and encourage, value and celebrate those who bring about change for our oppressed women members and encourage GMB to instigate a new Public Services Women's Recognition Award.

This Congress believes creating a yearly award that recognises and celebrates our female changemakers, who have fought and won for women across the previous year should be associated with a standard that exemplifies what the award is about and what the recipients of it have achieved. We, in the Midlands, believe that we have a worthy candidate, a paragon whose name encapsulates and inspires such action and commitment. Michelle McCrossen was instrumental in the fight for equal pay for women in the potteries and of course, in Birmingham City Council. She was courageous and stood up to the discriminatory practices against our women members, resulting in a commitment to treat all members of staff fairly, to ensure justice and fair pay once and for all. Michelle was tenacious and kept campaigning and fighting, even throughout her illness, during which Birmingham City Council admitted liabilities of £176,000,000. This Congress resolves to establish an award in Michelle's name to honour up-and-coming women who are actively contributing to increased equality in their workplaces is a commendable initiative. It rightly recognises and honours the shoulders on which we stand and the actions of those women changemakers that have gone before us and achieved so much for so many. In recognising and celebrating the actions and achievements of new, upcoming women changemakers it will help us keep the importance of the issues and the individuals who are fighting hard to overcome them, in our sights year on year. It will act to encourage new changemakers to put their heads above the parapets and be the union to their members, in their workplaces. It will communicate to them that we support them, we stand with them and we recognise their valiant, tireless efforts to uphold the values of equality and equity that are fundamental to us all.

A02 AMBULANCE BRANCH
Midlands Region

(Carried)

JACQUELINE MURPHY (Midlands): Congress, I am a member of the A02 Ambulance Branch in the Midlands Region.

This Congress notes that being a woman is not a limitation. However, even in our modern world, women are limited by prejudice, inequality and the barriers placed before them in the world of work and society at large. Throughout history women have done amazing things, but at times we hear very little about them. Most things are swept under the carpet and can be overshadowed by the achievements of men. Great women, such as Rosa Parks, who bravely sparked the Montgomery bus boycott was a major factor in the ending of legal segregation, Malala Ushafti....., the girls' education activist, who survived an assassination attempt by the Taliban, and at the age of 15 is the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and Mary Anderson, who invented windscreen wipers. Who knew a woman invented windscreen wipers? Go, Mary!

These are just a few examples of outstanding achievements by women. This Congress believes that GMB women still face tangible barriers to equality and inclusion in their workplaces. We have clear demonstrations of this in the ever-increasing equal pay claims across local councils and other workplaces.

Our sister, Michelle McCrossen, who we sadly lost to cancer in 2023, was instrumental in the fight for equal pay for women in the Potteries and, of course, Birmingham City Council. She was courageous and stood up to the discriminatory practices against our women members, resulting in a commitment to treat all staff fairly and to ensure justice and fair pay once and for all. Michelle was tenacious and kept campaigning and fighting, even throughout her illness, during which Birmingham City Council admitted massive liabilities.

We want to celebrate these women change-makers, shout about their achievements and communicate our support to them. Now is the time to recognise these public-sector servants, to put them on a pedestal alongside their male counterparts and remember their strength, their

achievements and their ability to inspire other women. We want to stand with them and recognise their valiant, tireless efforts to uphold our values of equality and equity, and inspiring more women to become the changemakers of the future. From the beginnings of our movement, the only thing that has brought meaningful change is when we have stood together against the barriers of injustice and inequalities.

This Congress resolves to establish an award which recognises women whose work has encouraged us to stand above the parapet, join together and be the Union to our members. This award in Michelle's name celebrates, commemorates and inspires up-and-coming women within the public services who are actively contributing to increased equality in their workplaces. It will, rightly, recognise and honour the shoulders upon which we stand and the actions of GMB women who have gone before us and achieved so much for so many. Congress, I move this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jacqueline. That was perfect timing. Secunder?

ARSHAD HUSSAIN (Midlands): Congress, I am a first-time delegate.
(Applause) I am speaking in support of Michelle McCrossen's Public Service Women's Recognition Award. As we know, the courageous stands against discriminatory practices has resulted in the history commitment to fair treatment and justice for all members within the Birmingham City Council, and Michelle was very much instrumental in that.

In the Midlands we have already established an Annual Equality Award in Michelle's name, but we would like to push it further and we ask that Congress looks at making it a national women's award.

Anthony Brown, one of my colleagues from the Midlands, was the first recipient of the award this year. He was very humbled to have received the award from Michelle's husband. He, unfortunately, is not here due to illness so, therefore, I am speaking on his behalf. He really believes that Congress should support this motion. Although the GMB annually honours women's remarkable achievements with the Eleanor Marx Award, the award that we are seeking to create is specific to women in public services, where women account for over two-thirds of the public sector workforce. Therefore, I ask that Congress pushes for this award. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Arshad. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to Motion 7? *(No response)* No. In that case, can I ask the CEC speaker, Viv Smart, to come and give our response.

VIV SMART (CEC): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC responding to Motion 7. Before I outline the CEC's very small qualification on this motion, we want to thank the branch and delegates of the Midlands region for putting forward this proposal to honour the work that Michelle embodied. Michelle was a formidable campaigner and organiser who did extraordinary work for GMB. Michelle identified the equal pay issue facing our members in Birmingham City Council and inspired thousands of women to take up their fight for equal pay. That fight continues.

Michelle inspired a new wave of equal pay campaigns across the country and she is missed desperately by her union family. We know that there are many GMB activists who do not expect to win awards for the effort and determination they put into their campaigns, and certainly not Michelle. They do it to get justice. They do it to ensure that workers – our members – can live and work in dignity.

However, the CEC, and I am sure Congress will agree, want to celebrate our activists, which is why we support this motion. Our very small qualification are that the liabilities admitted by Birmingham City Council are more than £800 million, and that a number of awards have been brought to Congress this year, so the Congress Working Party would like to look at all awards and ensure there is no repetition and that all criterion are clear. Thank you, Congress. Please support this motion with the qualification set out.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Does Midlands accept the qualification? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Again, as a reminder to Congress, you are voting for or against the motion. All those in favour of Motion 7, please show? Anyone against? That is unanimously carried.

Motion 7 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Union Organisation: Recruitment & Organising. Can I have the mover and seconder of Motion 9, please. As a

way of moving through the business, could the movers of Motions 12, 13 and 14 also be ready.

GMB APP FOR UNION MEMBERS AND ACTIVISTS MOTION 9.

9. GMB APP FOR UNION MEMBERS AND ACTIVISTS

This Congress is aware that members are increasingly using their mobile phones in order to access information about Rights at Work, Employment Advice and Health and Safety issues.

We are asking the CEC of the Union to look at introducing a GMB App that brings together the information needed about their membership, key contacts and sources of employment information. Also, GMB activists need fast access to key areas of information, legal and employment guides as well as referral routes to information on issues they are dealing with.

We also request that through the App, members can update or inform the Union about changes to their address, employment status or working hours. This should reduce the amount of time it takes to ensure that members details are accurate on the GMB membership records.

A number of Unions already have very good Apps which gives members a lot of information and ways to interact with their Union. It is a tool that has enabled recruitment and increased satisfaction due to the services and information being available all in one place.

The Congress calls upon the NAU, Communications Team and CEC to review how best to streamline the access to important information for members and activists thus enabling us to service the members and activists needs more effectively. We ask that a report on the options for a GMB App be prepared and reported to the CEC within 6 months, this should include the costs involved in developing and maintaining a modern and easy to use GMB App to promote the Union and the services we offer.

Q22 MANCHESTER CENTRAL BRANCH North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

THOMAS WILLIAMS (North West & Irish): Congress, I am moving Motion 9. We are increasingly used to using phone-based apps for important tasks. Many of us bank, order food and book taxis all through apps on our phones. We do this because they are an easy and convenient way to access information and services, and why should our trade union be any different? In our branch, we represent members across several low-density sectors and across many different workplaces. Member engagement can be challenging. An app would create another avenue of communication to members as well as helping to keep records up to date. A number of other unions are already developing apps and we are asking for a report

reviewing options of feasibility for a GMB members' app to make sure we keep up with the changing way that society accesses information. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tom. Secunder?

ANDREW TRICKETT (North West & Irish): Congress, I second this motion on the development of a GMB app for union members and activists. As a young member myself I see firsthand how digital tools can bridge gaps and enhance communication and engagement within our union. The creation of an app is not only a forward-thinking initiative but a necessary step in adapting to the evolving landscape of communication. An app would serve as an effective tool for all members and activists regardless of age or technological proficiency. It will provide instant access, give critical updates, resources and support ensuring that everyone stays informed and connected. Congress, your support for this motion is not just an investment in technology but a commitment to the future of our union, fostering greater unity and engagement across all demographics. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. I call the mover for Motion 11.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE PAGE FOR GMB SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS MOTION 11

11. SUPPORT AND ADVICE PAGE FOR GMB SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS

This Congress notes:

- The vital role played by school support staff in ensuring the smooth functioning of educational institutions.
- The unique challenges and concerns faced by school support staff.
- The need for accessible and reliable resources to provide support and advice to school support staff members.

Congress believes:

- That establishing a dedicated support and advice page on the GMB national website for school support staff would greatly enhance their ability to access essential information and resources.
- That such a page would foster a stronger sense of community and solidarity among school Support staff members in schools.

Congress resolves to:

- Call on the CEC to take immediate steps to create a dedicated support and advice page on the GMB national website specifically tailored for school support staff.
- Ensure this page includes resources addressing common concerns, legal information, and

avenues for seeking further assistance.

- Allocate necessary resources and support for the development, maintenance, and promotion of this page.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including representative experts in education support, to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the content provided.

Congress calls on GMB to actively participate in the planning, development, and promotion of this support and advice page and regularly review and update the content of this page to ensure it remains relevant and beneficial to all school support staff members.

H37 HILLINGDON BRANCH **London Region**

(Carried)

LUKE SIMCOCK (London): Congress, I am moving Motion 11, the Support and Advice Page for GMB School Support Staff Members. This motion addresses a critical aspect of our educational support and advice for our school support staff. These individuals play a vital role in a smooth functioning of the education institutions, yet their unique challenges and concerns go unrecognised but never by us.

This motion highlights the importance of establishing a dedicated support and advice page on a GMB national website tailored specifically for school support staff members. This page would not only enhance the ability to access essential information and resources but also foster a stronger sense of community and solidarity. By providing a centralised platform with support and advice, we can empower these individuals and ensure that they have the necessary tools to negate their roles effectively.

Therefore, we call for the GMB to take immediate steps to create a dedicated support and advice page. It is imperative that this page includes resources for addressing common concerns, legal information, avenues for seeking further assistance and campaign materials. Allocating the necessary resources and support for the development, maintenance and promotion of this page is critical for its success.

Collaboration with relevant people including representatives and experts in educational support will be essential to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the contents provided. By effectively participating in the planning, development and promotion of the support and advice page, GMB can demonstrate its commitment to supporting our support staff and our members within schools. Furthermore, we ask for regular reviews and

updates of the page contents to ensure that it remains relevant and beneficial for all support staff. Our commitment to providing on-going support and guidance for these individuals should never waiver.

In conclusion, the establishment of the dedicated support and advice page for school support staff members is not only just a motion but it is a testament to our dedication and to ensuring the wellbeing and success of all members within our education community. Let us stand together and support this motion, work towards a better and brighter for the schools and our school support staff members across this nation.

As someone who works and walks in these shoes and now has the honour of representing my fellow support staff, I can say with certainty that this step is a step towards us having a better and more supportive role within education. Thank you. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Luke. Thank you. I call the seconder.

ABEDA UDDIN (London): Conference, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding Motion 11.

I have been a member of GMB since 2013, and even though the national website has been useful for generic advice on work-related issues, I have noticed that there is not a page which is allocated to school support staff. This has become more noticeable since I work in a school and I became a rep last year yet I could not find information in order to support members or colleagues at work. It would be beneficial for school support staff to have this information to hand so that they can be more confident in finding relevant information relating to their concerns instead of having to rely on their full-time officer or branch to seek that information. It would also be beneficial if this page was set up and promoted to all school staff in addition to emails going to members which may not always be regular or specific to the advice that members are seeking help with. We would like Congress to agree this motion so that school-based members and reps feel supported by GMB. I would like Conference to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. The CEC is supporting both of these motions. So, therefore, there is no need to have a CEC speaker. Again, as a reminder to Congress, you are voting for or against this motion. So all those in favour of Motion 9, please show? Thank you. Anyone against?

That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 11, please show? Thank you.
Anyone against? That is also carried.

Motion 9 was CARRIED.

Motion 11 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: RECRUITMENT & ORGANISING.

THE PRESIDENT: We are continuing with our motions on Recruitment and Organising with Motions 12, 13 and 14. Can I ask that the movers and seconders of the next block of motions please be ready, which are motions 16 and 18.

I ask that the mover for Motion 12 comes to the stage.

DEDICATED SIGN-UP PAGE FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF ON THE GMB ON THE GMB NATIONAL WEBSITE MOTION 12

12. DEDICATED SIGN-UP PAGE FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF ON THE GMB NATIONAL WEBSITE

Congress notes that our aim is to enhance our national website to ensure accessibility and efficiency for our valued school support staff members.

We need to acknowledge the unique circumstances and requirements of our school support staff members so by providing them with a specialised sign-up process, we will demonstrate our commitment to their welfare and professional recognition.

We need to ensure that GMB is seen as the lead union for all school support staff. We call on GMB to create a dedicated sign-up page on the GMB national website, specifically tailored to the needs of our school support staff.

The key features of this are that the sign-up page and process:

- should use a QR code allowing school support staff members to register quickly and effortlessly.
- should automatically recognise those working 28 hours a week or less, on a term time only contract as being eligible for the part time membership rate and place them on the correct rate from the outset.

There is also the potential for the join page to be a valuable resource in assisting in making sure we are ballot ready if a drop-down box of job titles within schools is included.

H37 HILLINGDON BRANCH

London Region

(Referred)

LUKE SIMCOCK (London): Conference, I am moving Motion 12: Dedicated Sign-Up Page for School Support Staff on the GMB National Website.

I am here committed to enhance our National Website and ensuring the accessibility and efficiency for our valued school support staff members. We recognise the unique circumstances and requirements of these individuals. It is imperative that we demonstrate our unwavering dedication to their welfare and professional recognition.

As someone who works as a support staff member in schools – later, I've got the honour of representing them – I have seen firsthand the challenges that my colleagues face daily. Their dedication is unmatched, yet they often lack the streamlined process and resources that could make their professional lives easier. This motion addresses these issues head on by calling for the creation of a dedicated sign-up page on GMB national website catered specifically for the needs of our support staff. This initiative seeks to simplify the sign-up process, making it easier and more effective for these individuals to join our Union.

Key features of this dedicated sign-up page include the utilisation of QR codes allowing school support staff members to register quickly and effortlessly. This approach acknowledges the fast-paced nature of their work and provides a seamless registration experience. Therefore, the sign-up page should automatically recognise those working 28 hours a week or less on a term-time only contract as being eligible for the part-time membership rate. This provides pro-active membership ensuring that these members are placed correctly on the correct rate from the outset, demonstrating our commitment to fairness and transparency.

Additionally, by creating a drop-down box for job titles within schools, the sign-up page can serve as a valuable resource for ensuring that we are more ballot ready when the time comes. This feature not only facilitates the sign-up process but also contributes effectively to the representation of school support staff within our union. In creating this dedicated sign-up page, we reaffirm our commitment in the GMB as the lead union for all school support staff and getting rid of people who shouldn't be there. By providing a user-friendly tailored sign-up page process, we would not only

enhance the accessibility but also strengthen our union bonds with these vital members of our educational community.

In conclusion, the establishment of a dedicated sign-up page for school support staff on a GMB national website is a testament to our dedication and welfare of these professionals. Let us stand together and support this motion and continue to work towards the future where all of our members can feel valued and empowered. Please support this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Luke. Well done. A seconder for Motion 12?

MALCOLM DORAN (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate.
(Applause) In the previous to this one the mover has outlined in great detail the importance of dedicated national web pages for school support staff. We need to be seen as a leading union for school support staff. We need a sign-up page as it should make it easy for members to join and for school support staff members to feel GMB is the most relevant union for their profession.

We are happy for this motion to be referred for further investigation but we do not want too much delay getting this up and running. We know regions have different approaches as to how they process term time only workers so we would ask that any working party this motion is referred to should include members from regional finance departments, and reps, and school support members. If this dedicated sign-up initiative works it could be extended out to other industrial sectors. Please support this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Malcolm. A mover for Motion 13, please?

GMB ANALYSIS OF LARGE EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTS AND OPERATIONS MOTION 13

13. GMB ANALYSIS OF LARGE EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTS & OPERATIONS

This Congress notes that generally the GMB do not currently have a process for analysing the accounts or operations of employers holistically other than during bargaining processes with this primarily based upon in year profitability or dividend figures.

This Congress believes that the role of a modern and forward-looking trade union is to represent the views of members in the short, medium and long term. The viability of the employer and its operations, securing continued employment and income for as many members as possible,

alongside the continued employer funding to any deficit which may arise in a pension scheme should therefore be a consideration of the GMB.

This Congress resolves that the GMB should firstly develop and implement a strategy where early warning signs of business distress are recognised and given an internal risk ranking to enable the relevant allocation of GMB resource and attention for employers with significant GMB membership. Secondly, develop relationships with relevant accountancy, insolvency and business turnaround specialists to enable timely advice to be sought by the GMB to prompt management action, counter management misinformation and support our negotiating body to engage proactively. Thirdly, develop and proactively deliver training on the potential impacts of restructuring and insolvency processes to the activist leadership in workplaces identified as at critical risk, ahead of any potential implementation or business failure.

W47 WILKINSONS BRANCH Southern Region

(Referred)

SYED RAZA (Southern): President, Congress, moving Motion 13. This motion was inspired by our experience when the retail chain Wilkinsons went bust tragically leading to thousands of GMB members losing their jobs. We are lucky in GMB to have such professional and dedicated people at National Office and in our region. This motion asks them to take on a new task. They are a major employer who is struggling. We need to pay attention to those early warnings and we need to develop a relationship with accountancy, insolvency, and business turnaround specialists to guide us in our activities dealing with companies in trouble and support our members. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Syed. Thank you. A seconder?

BYRON AZARUS (Southern): First-time speaker, first time at Congress. *(Applause)* I second this motion for several reasons. Currently, GMB's approach to analyzing employers' operations and financial help is limited to periods of bargaining, focusing mainly on in-year profitability or dividend figures. This narrow scope does not capture the complete picture of an employers' long-term viability. By implementing a strategy to assess employers' holistically this would allow the GMB to understand and influence factors that contribute to a long-term sustainability of the employer thereby securing continued employment and income for its members. Developing a system for recognising early warning signs of business distress and assigning internal risk ranking is crucial. This proactive approach will ensure that GMB can allocate resources effectively

addressing potential issues before they escalate. By identifying mitigating risks early GMB can protect members from sudden job losses, abrupt changes in working conditions, and the adverse impact of business failures. Establishing relationships with accountancy, insolvency, and business turnaround specialists will provide GMB with expert advice and time intervention strategies. This access to specialist knowledge will empower GMB to challenge management misinformation, negotiate more effectively, and support members through complex financial or operational restructures. A modern and forward looking trade union must represent members' interests in the short to medium, and long term. This motion aligns with the broader role of GMB and ensuring the continued viability of employers thereby securing stable employment and income for members. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Byron. Could I have the mover of Motion 14, please?

BRANCH REVIEW FORMS SPECIFICALLY FOR MISCELLANEOUS BRANCHES MOTION 14

14. BRANCH REVIEW FORMS SPECIFICALLY FOR MISCELLANEOUS BRANCHES

This Congress notes that members are best represented by workplace reps where possible, but the GMB proudly defends ALL workers regardless of their workplace or recognition.

This Congress notes that our union therefore requires miscellaneous branches that may represent several hundred employers or workplaces.

Congress notes that the current branch review forms are set up and worded as if all branches are on one workplace with one local council and has one notice board.

This Congress requests that the CEC looks at creating new branch review forms that allow for the understanding that some branches when reviewed may have several hundred workplaces, dozens of councils, multiple trades councils and CLPs within their branch, and that a simple yes or no box, may not demonstrate the work and effort being put in behind the scenes for our membership.

E35 EXETER AND NORTH DEVON BRANCH Wales & South West Region

(Referred)

CHRISTOPHER MARSH (Wales & South West): Colleagues, we understand the importance of branch plans and how to navigate and prioritise actions to ensure our workplaces are organised and set out with appropriate

campaigns to ensure our members' asks are met. We have a good position where we have one workplace, one plan. It gives us easy access to our members and gives us the ability to map the workplace and get our membership records as accurate and as efficient as possible. With the industrial action ballots thriving, accurate records are essential in providing the data needed to prevent challenge by the employer. Regardless of these workplaces, we should be able to represent and defend our members to the best of our abilities and find corrective actions where in miscellaneous workplaces membership data and a lack of campaigns cause us problems. Congress, this motion addresses the issue and asks for the CEC to create new branch review forms that allow for the understanding and recognition of mass branches that contain several workplaces, multiple councils, and CLPs. We have proven that we are the campaigning union that listens to our members. How can we listen and engage with our members if we are unaware of the issues they have and where they are in the workplace. Colleagues, we need to develop a process where branches can organise as if they were a single site. We need to look at the branch reviews and branch plans which give us the opportunity to reach out and be able to understand what is needed from the branch when, and by whom.

The CEC have asked us to refer this motion which the Wales and South West Region have agreed. The CEC asks that this motion is referred so each region can consider changes to the branch development plan form when sending to general branches which cover multiple workplaces. Please support this motion to enable us to organise in every workplace platform where we have members. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Christopher. Thank you. A seconder?

JONATHAN STRACHAN-TAYLOR: (GMB Wales & South West) seconded the motion. Colleagues, GMB has been at the heart of advocating for workers' rights for over a century. GMB reps play a crucial role in ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and equitable treatment for all employees. However, the effectiveness of the union hinges on the ability to connect with and support their members, wherever they may be. Your primary function as trade union representatives is to be a voice for workers, representing their interests in negotiations with employers and policy makers. First to fulfil this role reps must have complete access to their members when and where it is needed. Effective communication is essential. Regular and open communication between unions and their

members ensures the concerns and needs of members are accurately understood and addressed. This is particularly important in workplaces or dispersed workforces where individual voices may otherwise go unheard. Congress, we all know the strength of any union rising in solidarity. When representatives can engage directly with their members they adopt a sense of unity and collective purpose. This collective working is crucial for effective organising and campaigning, especially during negotiations or industrial action. Our members often face urgent issues that require immediate attention and support. Accessibility empowers workers by ensuring they are informed about GMB events, campaigns, and industrial issues. This empowerment is essential for creating a workforce that is both resilient and proactive in advocating for its interests. This motion is asking for the branch review to be designed for regional needs. As my colleague advised, the CEC has asked for this motion to be referred. Colleagues, let's work together to achieve this collective understanding, what fits and share best practice for our members and for our union's growth and collective voice. Comrades, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jonathan. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to those motions? No? In that case, the CEC speaker I have down as Kevin.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (CEC): I am responding to Motions 12, 13, and 14 on behalf of the CEC, all of which we are asking to be referred.

On Motion 12, the CEC is very sympathetic to the arguments laid out in the motion and after some of motions in previous years has established a representative working group to review any options put forward and to try and establish the viability of applying amendments to the current contribution rates. A referral would give the CEC the opportunity to assess, one, the effect on GMB finances of the changes proposed and, two, the steps and costs of reminding the online and membership joining systems to accommodate signing up on the correct criteria.

On Motion 13, the CEC is asking for this motion to be referred for further consideration while we explore what more information could be helpful to establish early warning signs of business distress. We do not believe that creating an internal risk ranking system could be done within existing budgets, nor would it add value to how the GMB already allocates its resources and attention for employers with significant GMB membership. It should also be noted that GMB undertakes research and includes

information for bargaining that indicate the financial health of companies other than in profitability and dividends. However, it is for the negotiators to consider and raise them as they believe it informs GMB's bargaining position and interests.

As has been indicated, Motion 14 the CEC is asking for the motion to be referred so that each region can consider the adaptations to the branch development plan form when sending it to general branches which cover multiple workplaces and that are relative to that region.

To sum up, the CEC is asking that Motions 12, 13, and 14 all be referred.
Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. I did hear in the speeches that the regions would accept reference back. Just for the record for our note-takers, London Region do you accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. Southern Region, do you accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) Yes. Wales & South West, do you accept the reference back? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

Motion 12 was REFERRED.

Motion 13 was REFERRED.

Motion 14 was REFERRED.

UNION ORGANISATION: REPRESENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

THE PRESIDENT: Because they have accepted there is no vote on those motions so we can move to Union Organisation: Representation and Accountability and could I ask the mover of Motion 16, please, and could I also ask for the movers and seconders of Composite 1, Motions 50, 51, and 52, to come down the front and be ready.

THE CEC IS NOT A JOB FOR LIFE

MOTION 16

16. THE CEC IS NOT A JOB FOR LIFE

This Congress is aware of the fantastic work that the Central Executive Council (CEC) does, but we believe it shouldn't be a job for life.

We believe a maximum of two terms should be allowed at any one time, members wishing to re-stand for election after two terms can do so after, one term has passed.

We also believe that to elect the whole CEC at one time could remove valuable experience, so a staggered election process should be considered.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH
London Region

(Referred)

MIKE TINNION (London): Good morning. When I first put out to the branch about motions for Congress I was quite surprised when I go this one, so this is it. I also believe it is a bit moot now that 50% of CEC has actually changed in the last ballot. However, as the motion says, we are aware of the fantastic work the Central Executive Council does but we believe the CEC should not be a job for life. Other unions limit the time anyone can sit on their executive central committees; for instance, a particular rail union allows two terms, which is standard in most unions. A staggered system of change with different regions would elect their members at different times and would prevent the loss of knowledge within the CEC and those with a higher paid grade than mine can work out the small print. Change is a scary thing but used well it can be a benefit to the union. No one wants change for change itself no more than anyone wants the same faces saying the same things over and over again. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. A seconder?

TRACEY BEESON (London): The branch submitted this motion around the time the current CEC agreed the election timetable and byelaws. As we all know the election has now taken place and new CEC members start their term in office when Congress ends this week. I am proud to say that I am a newly elected member of the CEC and I am proud to be representing the London Region. Looking at the election results of the 60 regional and national seats 36 new members were elected to the CEC, so that is over 50% of the CEC are new, which to me sounds quite a lot. As the motion says the CEC is the union's lay governing body who agree our strategy, policy and direction, and so as a current position it is good that there are still some experienced CEC members remaining on the CEC so they can guide and mentor the new members. The current term of office is four years which may or may not be long enough to see the full impact of any new strategies and policies. We all know that in any new governing role the first thing is to familiarise yourself with what has happened in the past year and

the next few years will allow you to think of fresh ideas and see them all out in full.

Our motion is just asking the union to consider a different approach to limit the number of terms a CEC member can hold office, to look at having a rolling election programme so a percentage of the CEC is re-elected each time. I understand other unions operate in this way, so there is always a new and experienced member in the CEC with fresh ideas. We are happy for this motion to be referred to a working group to look at the selection process that has just taken place but we do need to tweak some of our processes as the world of work and communications have changed. Please support our motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Tracey. Spot on time. Can I have the mover of Motion 18, please?

**BRANCH REVIEW FORMS SPECIFICALLY FOR MISCELLANEOUS BRANCHES
MOTION 18**

18. RE-INSTATE THE NATIONAL BRANCH REVIEW WORKING PARTY.

As Congress may recall, there was group called the National Branch review working party set up a number of years ago to look at a number of Branch Related issues. However as far as we are aware no meetings have been convened or are planned in the near future. Due to the ever changing make up of GMB membership we feel it would be beneficial to us all if there was a Branch review working party to look to share best practice and address any cross branch challenges.

This congress we therefore ask for a National Branch Review working party to be set up.

**W22 –SUNDERLAND CITY LA
North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region**

(*Carried*)

DAVID RIDDLE (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): This Congress recognises the need and the importance of a national review of branches' working parties. Congress notes that this issue has arisen from the planned working party not convening for the last six years. Congress, some six years ago I was asked about would I sit on the national branch review working party. To date, no meetings have been convened or are planned for the near future. It is 135 years since our great union formed. In these years there has been a lot of change with regards to branches and membership. The set up of branches does not reflect the requirement of branches,

whether that be public, manufacturing, or commercial services. It no longer can use the philosophy of one cap fits all. We have branches that are self-sustaining yet others are using roving reps at significant expense to their branches. We have branches that are located on one site whereas other branches may cover a large geographical area. We have branches competing with other trade unions for membership and others where GMB are the only recognised trade union. We have different campaigns throughout branches and yet at times we do not share the experience or knowledge of such campaigns. Branches do not have a centre for the discounted promotions and retention, and very little account is taken with regards to size of branches in respect of nominations for various committees, congress, or councils.

Congress, this is just a few of the issues that branches encounter sometimes on a daily basis. We need to have in place a system whereby branches function to their best ability, where experience and knowledge is shared, especially when running campaigns, a system that takes into account membership, democracy, training and communication. I believe the introduction of the national branch review working party with reporting lines in place would be of benefit to all.

Congress, I ask that you support this motion that we reintroduce the national branch review working party so we can move forward with the times and have branches that are fit for purpose and, more importantly, serving our members' interests and delivering an excellent service. This would also complement the work being undertaken at present with regards to the rule review book. Congress I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder?

LESLIE TIMBEY (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President. Congress, this motion is about reinstating the national branch working review party. As my comrade has already stated, this review party has not sat for over six years. This review party sat for many years prior and a lot of positive things were achieved for the members of the GMB. Branch secretaries from every region were on this working party sharing best practices and how these practices could be used across the GMB not just in their own branches. An example of this was the Branch Secretaries' Handbook being adopted. Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Les. Does anybody wish to speak in opposition to those motions? No? I will now ask Anne Dean of the CEC to respond, please.

ANNE DEAN (CEC): President, Congress, responding to Motion 16 and 18 on behalf of the CEC. First on Motion 16, the CEC wishes to refer the motion for consultation with regions and the CEC review group that will be set up to review the 2024 CEC election. The CEC will also need to seek legal advice as these directions are part of re-election held under the TULR(C) Act 1992.

Second, Motion 18, the CEC supports the re-establishment of the branch working party in order to share best practice. The qualification is that the branch working party cannot cut across regional primacy for branches and needs to take into consideration obligations around employment status and make concrete proposals to regions by March 2025. We thank the branches for these motions and hope that the regions and Congress accept the positions I have outlined. Thank you. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. Again I heard it in a speech but just to confirm does London accept the reference back for Motion 16? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does North East Yorkshire & Humber accept the qualification on Motion 18? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I shall just put that one to the vote because the reference back does not need to be voted on. All those in favour of Motion 18 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 16 was REFERRED.

Motion 18 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE PRESIDENT: We move on to Union Organisation: Equality & Inclusion. Could I have the mover for Composite 1, please.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE/SIDE BY SIDE MOTION – INCLUSION OF LIVED EXPERIENCES ON VENUE RESERVATIONS AND THE NEED FOR INPUT FROM MEMBERS OF BOTH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DISABILITY STRANDS TO ASSIST IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF GMB PREMISES AND THE ORGANISING OF GMB EVENTS

COMPOSITE MOTION 1 (Covering Motions 48 and 49)

48 – Leading by example – side by side – inclusion of lived experiences on venue reservations – Midland Region

49 – The need for input from members of both regional and national disability strands to assist in the planning and development of GMB premises and the organising of GMB events – Midland Region

LEADING BY EXAMPLE/SIDE BY SIDE MOTION – INCLUSION OF LIVED EXPERIENCES ON VENUE RESERVATIONS AND THE NEED FOR INPUT FROM MEMBERS OF BOTH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DISABILITY STRANDS TO ASSIST IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF GMB PREMISES AND THE ORGANISING OF GMB EVENTS

This Congress agrees that just because we carry it well, it doesn't mean it isn't heavy. Actions speak louder than words, how many times have we all heard this said?

Comrades, those of you who identify with an unseen/seen disability will undoubtedly understand when we say, 'just a tick box exercise', because even though our great GMB union have been at the forefront of our disability campaigns, we now ask Congress to 'lead by example'. Let's practice fully what we preach, let us please engage our comrades who have lived experiences with unseen and seen disabilities in our movement in every way.

Engage us when choosing our venues, let us be part of our union's welcome speech at conferences and meetings by taking our lived experiences into account when making announcements for emergency evacuation, engage us in all processes in our communications and allow our lived experiences as a tool to enable our great union to proudly say, 'we practice exactly what we preach'.

This Congress agrees that as we are meant to advocate for our members and follow the equality Act 2010, this is another important reason why we should be leading the way when it comes to making our premises accessible to all. We have heard and been told directly from one member that they will not attend any conference or some of our premises as they deem them inaccessible to that persons needs. A user from another union who has a full-size chair was asked how she accessed the lifts in a building which unfortunately is listed, (Congress House). Her answer, with the assistance of someone else, she can marginally get her chair into the lift.

The need to incorporate onto planning and design committees someone who has both lived experience and knowledge of what it is truly like to manage access when you have a disability, I believe will enrich the decision-making process. Not only are we as an organisation promoting equality but we need to continually, as with health and safety, review our inclusiveness. In addition, this needs to be addressed with our existing buildings as I myself have noticed when visiting some of our offices. (Give an example London)

Therefore I ask that the GMB to invite members within their regions who sit under disability to help analyse/view prospective venues. I ask GMB to invite the opinion and assistant of current reviews that we carry out under H&S with our current venues and choices for conferences and events. Ideally appoint someone onto planning committees with lived experience. Essential add on would be the accommodation that we use where we hold events, should reach not an average leave but above average on that standard as well as hygiene.

Conference we ask you to support this motion in full because there is no transition without conversation.

Comrades, next time an employer tries to convince us that they care, we can look at what they do, not what they say because we will be able to evidence that 'we do practice what we preach' in every way.

Moving Region: Midlands
Seconding Region: Midlands

(Carried)

THE PRESIDENT: Could I have the mover for Composite 1, please, and also the movers and seconders for Motion 55 and 54 get ready.

ANGELA GILRAINE (Midlands): Morning, President. Morning, Panel. Morning, Congress. Hope you are all okay. Leading by Example is meant to ask Congress to ensure that GMB practises what we preach because, remember, staff members reps, in fact anybody we engage with, will never forget how we made them feel in whatever circumstances we find them, even when we forget what we have said. I ask Congress to take the first step forward ensuring that GMB union can say to our sister unions, politicians and other organisations, the list can go on and on but, most importantly, to our employees, members and delegations, reps organisations on the front line, that GMB is about being proud to say – sorry, you will have to excuse me, I have dyslexia – GMB provides all forms of accessibility to seen and unseen disabilities in place for all staff and members across the UK. Instead of saying things like this or that are in place, we should be able to say we can provide information in all known accessible formats because we did the legwork and asked when the employer asked staff. Registration of members list and organisations whenever accessibility is needed at the point of employment join in and review this yearly as we do for other stuff. Let us lead by example by showing GMB values, accessibility, inclusion for all. We provide all our information in several formats and if we do not currently have them our motto should be, “GMB will include you.” Let us be able to say GMB ensures that all venues reserved by us will meet the needs of all attendees, those with seen and unseen disabilities. Apart from having disabled parking and a ramp there are many other things to ensure are in place inside the venue too. We can ensure we are the leaders by linking with our staff and national networks in a way that can make us lead by example. Congress, let’s stop being one of the followers and start making strides to lead by example. It is unfair to always experience that because you have a seen or unseen disability. You are only included after you are emotionally excluded or left behind. Congress, please remember there is no transition without conversation. Please support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angela. Secunder?

DAWID MAKUCH (Midlands): President, Congress, when I first read my colleague's motion I was surprised and disappointed. Surprised at how our union is saying all the right things recognising union colleagues stance to discuss day-to-day issues that may include our workplace, but at the same time fail to engage with this stance when organising our own events. I was disappointed with myself. I just assumed that surely the GMB was on a level when it comes to looking after all our members. We can complain with words and actions. Like during this Congress I have seen that we have sign language and speech transcription, and in this particular way to persons without a disability perspective it looks like it has been well thought out. I was disappointed with myself that I never asked people for anything. People understanding everyday terms of being disabled is not enough. Congress, even if we have done everything possible to assist, we forgot about inclusion. We must engage, be involved, and listen to our members from all equality strands. Congress, this motion is a composite with another one, which means that more of us are aware of the issue. I now ask this Congress to show true understanding, which means that it was overlooked by us and will be done correctly and efficiently. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dawid. The mover of Motion 50.

THE BRITISH STAMMERING ASSOCIATION (STAMMA) MOTION 50

50. THE BRITISH STAMMERING ASSOCIATION (STAMMA)

This Congress notes that there are a significant number of people who are afflicted with a stammer. The British Stammering Association (STAMMA) was established in 1978 and supports people who stammer.

It can offer a variety of support to Branch, Members and indeed the Union as a whole. These supports consist of informal consultation to discuss questions and issues around stammering and work, a reasonable adjustments resource, bespoke training meeting or webinar, bespoke training video and quarterly newsletters for Unions and Branches.

Congress calls on the SMT to consider affiliating to the organisation and at the very least, gather information and circulate to branches, urging them to affiliate.

K53 – FIFE PUBLIC SERVICES GMB Scotland

(*Referred*)

ROBERT GRAHAM (GMB Scotland): Good morning, President, Congress. The British Stammering Association Motion 50, we support that organisation for our members who are affected by stammering. We hope there is awareness of our organisation and the benefits of affiliation and I understand the CEC are going to put this for referral and GMB Scotland accepts that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Robert. Secunder? Formally. Thank you. Could I have the mover of Motion 51, please.

EQUAL PAY MOTION 51

51. EQUAL PAY

Over the last year we have run a number of very high-profile equal pay campaigns in local government across the country.

These campaigns have been highly effective in raising the discrimination against women workers, who are often the lowest paid council staff.

Additionally, campaigns have generated members and seen new union activists emerge.

In our experience to be successful these campaigns need to maintain momentum, keeping activists and members alike informed and inspired. They are also most successful when led by local women activists on the ground, backed by their branch, WCU and regional office.

We are asking Congress to create an informal Equal Pay campaign best practice group consisting of officers and lay members who have run real campaigns on the ground to share lessons learnt and practical tips that can be shared with colleagues looking at running campaigns across the country.

Campaign materials, graphics, press releases, briefings and other information should be shared centrally so that all regions can benefit from previous campaign ideas.

Additionally, all regions should invest in their WCU and where LA branches have facility time, ensure at least one rep with facility time (regardless of gender) is responsible for the championing of Equal Pay locally and supporting the lead local activists.

W22 – SUNDERLAND CITY LA North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

(*Carried*)

DAVID RIDDLE (North East, Yorkshire, & Humber): Madam President, Congress, Sunderland Local Authority City Branch, speaking on behalf of

my members and activists to move Motion 51 on Equal Pay. Congress, last September a number of brave women who work as carers in Sunderland decided to take a stand. So, listening to our members GMB realised there was a big injustice happening to all care workers. They were being systematically underpaid and to add insult to injury they had been locked out of the local authority pension scheme. Together this meant that some of the lowest paid women across the city were owed thousands of pounds. These brilliant women from my branch stepped up and launched a campaign for equal pay. Today that campaign is going strong. We have had quite a lot of successes. The week we actually launched the campaign we gained 172 members, picked up some new reps, and we even hit the national press. We know there are lessons we could learn from our brothers and sisters who were running campaigns on equal pay across the country and, equally, we know we have examples of great ideas that will help others driving forward this fight for equality. We are asking Congress to create an informal equal pay campaign best practice group consisting of officers and lay members that will run real campaigns on the ground to share lessons learned and practical tips that can be shared with colleagues looking at running campaigns across the country. This would not only encourage a campaign but would also allow women activists to grow their own networks across the union. Finally, whilst I am proud that our union is leading on equal pay nationally, it is vital that we also lead on it locally. Equal pay campaigns must be led locally by branches and organised face-to-face with the women on the ground, and that means us all making it central to our thinking. Congress, I would like to pass on the thanks to each and every one of you who reached out to the Sunderland ladies to offer your support and solidarity. This campaign for equal pay is not one we will give up as we know the campaign for pay and justice for all women workers is not one GMB will give up on nationally. Thank you.
(*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Seconder?

SALLY RYAN (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Good morning, Congress. Can I just say I am a first time delegate and a first time speaker so please go easy on me. (*Applause*) I am seconding Motion 51 on equal pay. I start this speech today frankly in disbelief that women are still valued less than our male colleagues, not only in terms of pay but also in working terms and conditions. I have spent my whole career working in children's services and family support and I am proud to be part of making sure that does happen and I am so honoured that I have had the opportunity to make a difference

to countless families throughout the years. Despite the difference of professionals working in these vital services and reforming lives, they have been underpaid simply because their roles are dominated by women. Today in Leeds we are running a major equal pay campaign because of discrimination that Leeds women workers have faced has not just been going on for years and years it is also across every grade in the authority. I am telling you now, Congress, you should really keep your eyes open on Leeds over the next few months. As a union we have a fundamental responsibility to deliver on equal pay up and down the country. It is our job to make sure that every local authority is held accountable for the job allocation scheme, for ignoring continuous job creep, and for letting down working women for so long. This motion is all about learning the lessons of the campaign that we are engaged in is now and using them to make our campaigns even better in the future. The brilliant women we have inspired and engaged with have so much to offer the next generation of equal pay activists. I am so proud to be part of history in righting the injustice of unfair pay and I am so proud my union is leading the way. Congress, please support your sisters across the Movement and support this motion.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Mover of 52? The mover of 52?

SANITARY BINS ARE NOT JUST FOR WOMEN MOTION 52

52. SANITARY BINS ARE NOT JUST FOR WOMEN

This conference notes that Men have no direct access to sanitary bins to dispose of waste, such as incontinence pads, colostomy or catheter by-products.

According to Prostate Cancer UK that almost one third of men been forced to carry their own waste in a bag, one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

This conference calls upon GMB Union to take the following action.

- 1) Back Prostate Cancer UK's campaign Boys Need Bins which is asking for the law to be updated so that sanitary bins are placed in all toilets.
- 2) For all GMB Union buildings to have sanitary bins placed in all toilets and not just in women's in a bid to end "stigma".
- 3) Encourage venue's that GMB Union uses to have sanitary bins in all their toilets.

G36 SECURITY Southern Region

(Carried)

RACHEL WEBBER (Southern): Madam President, Congress, I am a first-time delegate. (*Applause*) Today I am moving Motion 52. This motion has three points we would like to propose. One, we ask that the GMB support the Prostate UK campaign for these new bins. It is asking for the law to be updated so that sanitary bins are placed in all toilets. Two, for all GMB buildings to have sanitary bins placed in toilets, not just in women's, in a bid to end the stigma. Three, encourage venues that the GMB uses to have sanitary bins in all of their toilets. Did you know that one in eight men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. More than 52,000 men are diagnosed every year so, on average, that is roughly 144 men every day. Around 490,000 men in the UK are living with prostate cancer and, sadly, one man dies every 45 minutes in the UK from prostate cancer, which means just today whilst Congress is running 10 men will sadly lose their battle. Today we are asking you to consider what living with conditions like prostate cancer, Crohn's disease, IBS, IBD, and bowel cancer is like. These conditions I have mentioned can have a range of complications but they have one common symptom of incontinence. So why as a woman am I raising the issue about prostate cancer. As a daughter of a prostate cancer survivor I know firsthand that men do not talk about their waterworks. With incontinency being one of the main symptoms and 15% percent of men still suffering after surgery this is a fact that cannot be ignored. Incontinency pads worn by men still need to be disposed of so what do these men do with their waste products. Prostate Cancer UK estimates that one-third of men have to carry their waste products home with them. This is just not acceptable. As a mother of two children both of whom have lifelong health conditions that can cause incontinence I want them both to have equal access to sanitary provision. My son who wants his own independence and dignity is forced to use disabled toilets to deal with his sanitary issues. This is often with negative comments and looks from onlookers as he appears able-bodied, something I am sure that men with similar issues will have also faced. This causes embarrassment and inconvenience. Why should any male not be given the equal opportunity to deal with their condition discreetly and conveniently. As my son approaches his teenage years I want him to have the same independence and dignity that his sister is automatically given as provision is already provided for her. The good news is that 78% of prostate diagnoses result in survival. We can join with groups like Prostate Cancer UK whose top priority is research and is the campaign that we are asking you to back today, Boys need Bins. The campaigns are offering free prostate testing for all men over 45 and to groups like the Andy Man's Club

who are getting men talking. We can stand with them and help them to remove the stigma. This is a really simple solution to a problem that is not talked about and will make a difference to so many men. As a GMB member we can make a difference and raise a voice for those affected. Let's do what we do best, let's help them to be stronger together. Today and going forward we have an opportunity, no, a responsibility to break the stigma and be the voice for these men. Let's lead the way together. I ask you to support this motion and make the change. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rachel. Secunder?

RICHARD NUNEZ (Southern): First time at Congress, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Please bear with me. Having been put in this position yesterday afternoon I thought, "Oh, my god," but then I saw the motion and I thought, "Yes, that's right up my street." My 87-year old father has recently had his prostate removed so it is a subject quite close to my heart. Why can't we all be able to dispose of these products in a safe and dignified way. It is shameful enough for a man to be using these products. Through time and probably with the intervention of trade unions women have been able to dispose of sanitary products, so why can't men. Like my colleague said, one in eight men is likely to suffer from an enlarged prostate, or even worse, prostate cancer. Some men go as far as trying to dispose of these products down the toilets themselves, which causes all sorts of problems in already overflowing sewers. Tories please explain. Having had a toilet break a few minutes ago I did not see any bins at all in the toilets. Comrades, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Richard. Does anyone want to speak against any of these in opposition? No. Right, we go to the vote. Does Midland and Southern accept the qualification on Composite 1. Sorry. I now call Elaine Daley to speak on behalf of the CEC.

ELAINE DALEY (CEC): President, Congress, Elaine Daley, responding to Composite 1, Motion 50, and Motion 51. First of all, the CEC supports Composite 1 with qualifications. The Equality and Inclusion Team will make recommendations on best practice based on lived experiences of members with unseen and seen disabilities, including to the Congress Working Party. We are assured that this venue is accessible for our delegates as outlined in the written stance to the region. Regions are asked to identify any delegate or visitor with accessibility requirements so that these can be addressed prior to Congress. Ramp access to the stage

at Congress is always incorporated into the set design. We have also had positive engagement from activists in the refurbishment of National Office who have advised on the accessibility requirements for the building. The first qualification is that emergency evacuation procedures are set by the Congress venue themselves and are published in the Congress Guide. We would defer to the staff of the venue on safety matters in an emergency. The second is that GMB premises are managed at a regional level and refurbishments are carried out on their time lines. Considering the success of activists' engagement in refurbishment we will look to replicate when they occur in regions.

On Motion 50 the CEC ask that this motion be referred to the Finance & General Purposes Committee to consider affiliation at a national level. All motions with financial commitments and affiliation must be authorised through the Finance & General Purposes Committee of the CEC. Regions are free to circulate information to branches on local affiliation should they see fit.

Finally, on Motion 51, the CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. The CEC continues to support the work of the National Women's Campaign Unit and local equal pay campaigns. We celebrate the work of Sunderland activists in leading the way against pay discrimination in their workplace. The qualification is that Congress is unable to dictate regional spending or the use of regional facility time. However, the idea of dedicated regional support has been considered and actioned by many regions already and the National Women's Campaign Unit will consider how we might take forward the idea of branch equal pay groups. Congress, please support Composite 1 and Motion 51, with those qualifications, and to refer Motion 50. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Does Midland and Southern accept the qualifications to Composite 1? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Scotland accept to refer Motion 50? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does North East, Yorkshire, & Humberside, accept the qualification on Motion 51? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour of Composite 1 please show? Any against? That is carried.

Composite 1 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Motion 50 has been accepted to refer, to move back, so there is no vote on that.

Motion 50 was REFERRED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 51 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 51 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 52 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 52 was CARRIED.

UNION ORGANISATION: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Conference, thank you. We are now moving to the Union Organisation: Equality & Inclusion. These will be our final set of motions for the morning. Thank you to all the speakers. Could the mover of Motion 54 come to the rostrum, please?

SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND REPS WITH DYSLEXIA MOTION 54

54. SUPPORTING MEMBERS AND REPS WITH DYSLEXIA

Congress, we ask the GMB to create and maintain a shared database containing information and resources to help members with dyslexia to perform their role at work.

The database could contain information on speech to text programs and other tech solutions, as well as information on system requirements and costs of the programs.

This would assist members with dyslexia to find sources of assistance which would help them to achieve equality at work or in the role of a rep.

We feel that the information should be available to members on the GMB members area of the National website.

We feel that such a database is needed because much of the information available online is focused on aids to education for dyslexic students or is commercial information more directed to selling products rather than unbiased information about available products.

There does not seem to be a 'one stop' place where this information is readily available, which puts dyslexic people at a disadvantage.

We therefore ask GMB to act to 'close the gap' for its members and reps.

B22 BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ADRIAN STOHR (London): Congress, we are grateful for the role that all our reps undertake on a daily basis on behalf of our union. This role has got increasingly difficult through lockdown and where our reps have been bombarded with many online documents to read and take action on. Dealing with online documents is easy and dyslexic reps would have to turn to the technology to help them navigate these documents. However, information about these tech solutions and help is hard to find as much online information is concerned with education of children and students rather than adults aiming to achieve. Our motion is asking GMB to create and maintain a database or library of resources accessible for all members with information to help members with dyslexia better to perform their role at work. We see this database as having information about tech solutions such as speech and tech programmes, and associated costs, system requirements, capabilities, and capability with our tech and system programmes. This will help our dyslexic reps offer the same support to our members as our reps on an everyday basis at work and not feel isolated or in fear of trying to understand members' needs. This would also assist dyslexic members wishing to become reps and branch officers to more easily fulfil these roles since for many this is a hidden disability with some stigma attached. Opportunities should be out there for all, the need to help others to feel part of an organisation that reaches out to all and to show encouragement that anyone can aspire to become a workplace rep, and dyslexic reps that will inspire members to stand up in the workplace with confidence, they will be armed with the correct resources and that will give them the power to fight for their members. These reps will inspire through the determination to help others and not feel stigmatised and left with feeling they cannot do this. I pay tribute to one of our branch reps who has severe dyslexia but has the desire to become a strong rep in the workplace through GMB values: the desire to help, the desire to achieve and a desire to fight and become the voice of the vulnerable regardless of their disability.

Congress, all they need is a little help along the way, let's help them achieve those resources and for our reps and members to achieve their goals. Congress, GMB recognises all workplace skilled and non-skilled workers, private to public sector workers at GMB, we recognise members

with disabilities like dyslexia. So, let us give them the right resources and support for people who suffer from dyslexia. Finally, we know GMB is supporting the motion and we welcome the work done on neurodiversity and we look forward to GMB dyslexia guide. Please support this motion. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adrian. Secunder?

BISMILLA MAHOMED (London): What is dyslexia and how does it affect us in the workplace? We could go on for ever with that question but in a nutshell dyslexic people often need adjustments such as large easy-to-read fonts, or page filters to be able to read off a page or website. These are just a couple of examples that I have learned from speaking to my fellow reps. I am not diagnosed dyslexic but I do prefer stuff on paper rather than reading it off a screen. Maybe that is a symptom. I do not know and I did not know any of this before I spoke to the reps. I bet a lot of our members are not sure either. We are asking for a shared database created and run by the GMB where we can pool together data that would help reps and members obtain information and resources they need that would help them do their job more efficiently. This is very much needed. In fact, anything that can make life easier for our members is welcome. We need this. We want this. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, colleague. Mover of 55?

PRIDE IS A PROTEST – THE NEXT STAGE MOTION 55

55. PRIDE IS A PROTEST – THE NEXT STAGE

Congress will be aware that GMB has agreed that Pride demonstrations should be a protest and not just a party. Therefore, the union must make the protest when in a Pride parade.

This motion calls for regional equality forums to agree upon an annual issue that can be promoted whilst GMB activists participate in any Pride event.

I.e. The issue could be LGBT International support.
It could be LGBT Unionists against poor migrant treatment or racial discrimination.

Or LGBT Unionists against poverty or climate issues.

Or any other suitable cause that would benefit from LGBT Activist support.

Once an agreed campaign has been identified, regions to meet and with the purpose to adopt such a campaign nationally and promote at any Pride event in that year. It will also give regional LGBT forums purpose continuing with any lobbying or campaigning needed until the purpose of such campaign is achieved.

Such campaigns will put purpose back into protesting, present a united GMB campaign and could be shared with our TUC affiliates to increase momentum.

A55

Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

JEFFREY SUTTON (GMB Wales & South West): This motion is calling on region equality committees to identify one campaign and submit it to nationals so that one national campaign can be chosen. Once such a campaign has been identified and agreed, regional activists can then work to promote the aims of this campaign whilst in attendance at any Pride event around the country. This would give the GMB activists purpose whilst on any Pride march so we could be promoting this cause whilst marching. We could also organise our stalls when joining events around this purpose focusing our activities to promote this and other campaigns, raising awareness, gathering information or signatures that could help us progress such a cause, one annual national cause for GMB activists to promote together with any local campaigns they may wish to prioritise. For too long Pride events have morphed into a carnival atmosphere, being hijacked by big business. This is partly due to the success of previous LGBT campaigns which have brought about legislation giving LGBT better equalities in the eye of the law. However, there is always something that can be used to give us a protest. As trade unionists we should always have some purpose to fight for when representing the GMB at such events. This motion is asking for the GMB to identify one purpose per year that activists nationally can promote to Pride thereby bringing back the spirit of the original purpose of Pride which was to campaign. It will give us a unifying purpose to regional LGBT forums as they continue to fight towards achieving successful outcomes to a GMB national cause whilst simultaneously promoting local concerns. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeffrey. Secunder?

MARK BOWLER (GMB Wales & South West): Colleagues we have been frustrated that Pride events around Britain have lost their purpose of protest

and have adopted a more relaxed carnival atmosphere celebrating achievements and the legal acceptance of LGBT into equality law. Whilst this is all good and not to be forgotten, we must remember the original purpose of Pride and its campaigning origins. As a trade union activist our focus should be on core activities of trade unionism when attending events and representing GMB. The motion will encourage the union to better coordinate activities at Pride and give us a foundation to make protest, bringing Pride back to its origins. All our LGBT victories came about after the symbiotic support given to the 1980s miner strikes by a group of London-based lesbian and gay men who supported the miners, collecting much needed funds to help miners remaining on prolonged strikes. This won over hard line homophobic attitudes of coal miners who returned their support by putting pressure on their union, the NUM, to put pressure on the Labour Party which brought about the introduction of the Equality Bill. Building on such examples as this one national campaign could help us to help others in a fight for solidarity gaining the respect and support of others. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition? No. I will now call the CEC speaker, Tracey Ashton.

TRACEY ASHTON (CEC): President, Congress, Tracey Ashton responding to Motions 55 and 54 on behalf of the CEC.

On Motion 54 the CEC appreciates the difficulty that dyslexic workers experience in seeking out the best advice, resources, and assistive technology in order to perform at work. There can be both a baffling range of information as well as an insufficient amount of support for dyslexic adults and a one stop shop could be of great assistance. The CEC is seeking to support the motion with a qualification. Regrettably, GMB does not have the resource and expertise which would be required to build and maintain a database. However, GMB Thinking Differently at Work - Neurodiversity Toolkit and a Legal Guide do contain guidance and signposting and we encourage all branches to review it. Work on other guides will begin in earnest this year. The campaign guide on unseen disabilities in the workplace will also be available nationally, which includes areas in which branches can run campaigns pressuring employers to remove barriers to work for dyslexic workers, and provide some support and assisted technology directly.

On Motion 55, the CEC supports the clear stated and practical campaigning ideas outlined in this motion. Our qualification is that it is important in some cases for regions and regional equality forums to have local autonomy in the campaigns they undertake. Due to differing regional contexts and different capacity it may not be possible to coordinate across all regions. However, the aspirations to do so is admirable, to organise groups of members with members of the LGBT+ network perfectly placed to undertake this coordination.

To sum up, Congress, we are asking that both motions are supported with the qualifications I have outlined. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tracey. Does London accept the qualification on Motion 54? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on Motion 55? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour of Motion 54 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 54 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 55 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 55 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. That concludes our first session of business for the week. We will resume at 2 p.m. or 1400 hours.

Adjourned for Lunch

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

Conference reassembled at 2 pm

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, I call Congress to order. That means please take your seats. Thank you. I hope you have had a good lunchtime, enjoyed the sunshine and gone to some fringe events. I will now ask Karen Dudley to move Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 2.

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): Congress, I am moving SOC Report No. 2.

Withdrawn motions. The SOC has been informed that the following motions have been withdrawn: Motion 1 – Banner Ceremony Song from Southern Region; Motion 8 – GMB Offices/Vehicle Branding from North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region; Motion 45 – Union Learning Fund from North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region; Motion 103 – Right to Strike from North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region; Motion 105 – Minimum Service Levels from London Region; Motion 106 – Minimal Service Legislation Act from North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region; Motion 123 – Feasibility /Scoping Study into the Regulation of Postal/Delivery Services from Midlands Region; Motion 130 – Bring our Security Services into Public Control from London Region; Motion 146 – Ending 39 Week Contracts for School Support Staff from London Region; Motion 147 – National SEND Campaign from North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region; Motion 167 – Fully Funded Pay Award from London Region; Motion 178 – GMB Policy on EU Trade from London Region; and Motion 183 – Immigration, Citizenship and Asylum from London Region. We will circulate the full list in writing to you all.

Bucket Collections: The SOC has agreed two requests for bucket collections as follows: From North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region, for the Rob Burrow MND charity. The SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the Monday Morning session. From London Region for BLISS (Baby Life Support Systems), the SOC recommends that this takes place at the close of the Tuesday morning session.

We would ask those carrying out the collections to adopt an appropriate Covid-safe method in which to do so.

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of Report No. 2.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Is anybody opposed to what Karen has just said? (*No response*) No. In that case, I will put it to the vote. All those in favour of SOC Report No. 2, please show? Thank you. Anyone against? Thank you, Karen.

Standing Orders Report No. 2 was ADOPTED.

REGIONAL VIDEO – MIDLANDS

THE PRESIDENT: We are going to start our afternoon session off today with the first of our Regional Success videos – this being from our Midlands Region. (*Midlands Region video was shown*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, GMB Midlands for that video. It shows both the heartbreak of our members at Wilko but also the inspiration of our members at Amazon. I know there are lots of other campaigns going on as well. Thank you.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

THE PRESIDENT: I would now like to invite Gary Smith to the rostrum to move the General Secretary's Report. You should all have a copy of the report in your wallets. This report chronicles the whole Union's activities over the last 12 months, and what we wish to aspire to for the next.

Could I also ask the speakers on Motion 77, Composite 3 and Motion 84 to, please, be ready to move their motions after the General Secretary's Report.

Welcome Gary. (*Applause*)

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, I'm Gary Smith, your General Secretary and Treasurer. Folks, we are a family. We win together, we hurt together, we laugh together and we cry together. Like all families, sometimes we fall out. As we know, it is the family fallouts that are often the worst, with some who have chosen to protest today. They have the right to protest and it goes to the heart of our movement and it is something I will defend till my dying breath.

But, Congress, we also have a responsibility to talk to each other, to face into difficult situations and to make common cause because that is what families do. (*Applause*)

At Congress we can have our disagreements. It was good to see Standing Orders getting beaten on the first vote this morning. (*Chuckling*) That's part of it. A union that doesn't have different opinions isn't serving its members, but we also know that our members expect us, when we undertake this vital debate, to behave and act with responsibility, and that's what we will do this week. We will have our disagreements, we will

have our back and forth and then we come together in the spirit of the GMB to build a stronger and better union.

I do want to address the GMB Midland's film. Jesus, that was emotional! Carol, hearing you speak with such courage reminds me of what an honour it is to lead this union, to represent such incredible people is an immense privilege. Carol, you are the very best of us. We are with you today and tomorrow. We are with you always. *(Applause)*

Congress, it is never lost on me that this event is about lay members, but I do want to pay tribute to our wonderful staff, the staff who put on this wonderful Congress for us all, and the staff who day in and day out work with us, helping us build the industrial campaigns that are growing our union. We have been through some difficult times as a union. The year 2020 was a watershed moment for many of people it was tough. I would like you today to join with me in saying to our staff that we do appreciate all the work that you do on behalf of the members in this Union. *(Applause)*

I mean what I say when I say that I'll never, ever, forget where I come from because, like you, I was a GMB lay representative. I know how hard you work for our members and this union every single day. Please accept my thanks and the thanks of everybody across this Union for the incredible things that you do to make work better. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Since our great union's birth 135 years ago, our union has been a force for good in this country, a force for justice and a force for change. We have fought for dignity and respect in workplaces and in society. At all times, the people leading this charge have been an unstoppable band of sisters and brothers, our amazing members, and we should never forget that the reason this union exists is because of the people on the walls. They sent you to Congress, they put me in this seat and it is their hopes and their dreams which will inspire us this week.

I have been a GMB member for more than 40 years – I don't know where the time goes – and you may not know this but I joined the union when I was 16 on my first day as a gas apprentice. If you haven't heard it, you've not been listening because it's about the only thing I've spoken about consistently for the past two years. But my GMB membership, like for many of you, is a golden thread that runs through my life. It has inspired me in everything that I do, as a shop steward, as an officer, as a regional secretary and now, more so than ever, as your General Secretary. The

commitment to putting GMB members at the heart of all we do is what drives this union on and it is what drives me on every day. Everyone – everyone – in this hall has played a role in returning GMB to its members and from bringing this union back from the abyss.

However, I want to give a special mention to those who have helped shepherd us safely into a better place, and that's the outgoing members of our Central Executive Council. They have been fundamental to putting our Union on the right path again. They have overseen a transformative time for GMB, and they leave a powerful legacy for the next CEC. I, and all in our Union, want to thank the members of the CEC. Thank you. *(Applause)*

I, too, need to pay a very special tribute to a really good pal of mine, a good comrade, and this will be his last Congress as Vice President. Malcolm Sage has been an incredible friend and a great servant to this Union. His contribution will never be forgotten and, Malcolm, your experience, your wisdom, your solidarity and your friendship is going to be much missed. We salute you, brother. *(A standing ovation)*

And, of course, our National President, Barbara. Barbara has been crucial to putting our union back, getting the union standing up again on its feet. Her determination and strength has been vital to ensuring we have remained true to our members. Barbara, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for everything you have done. *(Applause)*

Congress, as this family does come together, it is also time to remember those who are no longer with us; those who gave so much to our Union. There are so many to thank but I need to give a particular mention to a wonderful friend and comrade to me and others in this hall today. Jacqueline, thank you for speaking about Michelle McCrossan this morning. Michelle did amazing things for this union. She was the one who identified the equal pay crisis in Birmingham City Council. She led the campaign to return the stolen wages to low-paid working women. She bravely spoke up about the problems with the culture in her own union at that time as well, and I will never forget that. Michelle's legacy lives on, and when, as we will, win the equal pay battle in Birmingham, it will be in her honour. *(Applause)* I miss that woman so much, and I am so grateful for people your appreciation for her fantastic contribution to this Union. The energetic spirit that drove Michelle on is still there. It is seen in the countless GMB campaigns that we now run around this country in the fight to make work better.

In London Region we've seen school support staff members campaigning to get equality with teachers on London Weighting. The strikes in the Asda – I've seen the pictures and the clips – and I've seen Warren Kenny's sunburn when he came off one of the picket lines. What energy was taken onto those picket lines. It was truly inspiring. Our members in Evri, NSL and many other employers across the region, we have been campaigning, we have been fighting and we have been winning. Mellie, I think you are in the hall today, please send all our best wishes and solidarity to our members at Pilgrim Foods who are fighting for justice and jobs.

Our members in Amazon have been a huge part of the GMB Midlands' story. You've done incredible things already, but the best is yet to come with union recognition in sight. Ceferina, I saw you on the video. What a contribution! Thank you. *(Applause)*

On equal pay in the Midlands, it's a top priority. Only last month 35 Birmingham schools took historic strike action. We salute our members at Medirest in the Midlands, a private contractor in the NHS. Those members went the extra mile during Covid and it is time they were treated like the key workers they are. *(Applause)*

I want to say to the Manufacturing team in the Midlands, what a job you are doing! The Manufacturing Committee is bringing activists together from different employers across the region. Thank you for what you are doing. It's making a difference and we are going to build. We are going to get better and stronger in the manufacturing sector because of your hard work and your contribution.

Members working in special educational needs in GMB North East, Yorkshire & Humber have linked up with parent groups to start fixing this crucial part of the school system. James, I saw you earlier today. Thank you for the role you are playing in leading the campaign, and please take our best wishes from everyone here at our Congress back to those fighting that good fight.

Our members in South Tyneside Refuse Service are about to start taking all-out strike action in response to the constant failings of the management in the council. Their struggle is on-going and their activism has resulted in 100% GMB membership in the service.

In terms of equal pay, in Sunderland, Leeds and Sheffield, we are fighting, campaigning, we are winning and we are building.

In North West & Irish Region, our members working in the public sector in Northern Ireland have, literally, shaken the political system to its core with that huge day of strike action that you undertook. It was humbling to be in Belfast with you. The school support staff, I know, our members remain in dispute. Kay and Katherine, we salute your work, your courage and your campaigning, and 270 members in one week in schools is simply incredible! You're going to win your fight and your Union is 110% behind you. *(Applause)*

The energy from our campaigns in the NHS in 2023 and from the ambulance strike – that wonderful ambulance dispute – that energy continues and recruitment and membership levels are continuing to go up. There has also been huge growth in BAe Systems, in the yards across the UK, not least Cumbria. Our membership is going up because we listen to our members because we are campaigning, we are fighting and we are winning.

In my old patch, I've again seen some disputes in Glasgow City Council. We, kind of, are getting used to that. We never tire of it, to be fair. I think that one of my highlights was the strike by the parking attendants, the parking services, last year. What an incredible dispute. It happened, for those who don't know, on the day of the Scotland-England game. Next time they've got to make sure that the match gets cancelled as well because we're not going to talk about the result.

There have been huge equal pay wins in Scotland. In Renfrewshire Council – my own council – thousands of pounds are going into members' pockets, and there have been great victories for our members working in care in Moray and South Lanarkshire Councils, where we have gone through £15 an hour. If we can do that in the Highlands of Scotland, we should be doing it through the length and breadth of the UK. *(Applause)*

Raymond, I saw you briefly this morning. I wanted to pay tribute to your work: a hundred new members in schools, and what an ally you have been to women workers in Falkirk in the fight for equal pay. That's a model that we need to see across the country. The fight for equal pay is everybody's fight in this union. *(Applause)*

In Southern Region, I am pleased to say that not everybody is in a police cell today. They've taken a day off from the picket lines. We had the tremendous dispute at Canaco where we won a double-digit pay rise after industrial action. In fact, I don't think there's been a refuse and street cleaning service across the South of England which has not been impacted by industrial action during the past period. And the discontent in Asda has spread to Southern Region as well. There have been ballots in Gosport, Brighton and Eastbourne. We've seen members taking up the cudgels and taking up the fight and we are going to take the fight to Asda this week here in Bournemouth as well. *(Applause)*

Danielle and Adrian, I need to pay tribute to the fight that you have led at ISS Mediclean and the 17% increase you got in pay for our members working in south London. That's absolutely inspirational. *(Applause)*

There's a special mention for our members and the whole team who are resisting the attempts of Wiltshire County Council to cut our members' pay in Parking Services by 10%. Their defiance is inspirational. Please take back our solidarity greetings from this Congress.

I was in Port Talbot in south Wales and it makes me so angry, so angry to think that they are going to close blast furnaces and try and throw thousands of workers on the dole. I am sick to the back teeth of getting lectured by other unions and politicians about just transitions. Where is the just transition for our people and our communities? We absolutely celebrate the fact that our members at Tata Steel are standing up, they are fighting for their jobs and they are fighting for their communities and our members have just voted for strike action. Our very best wishes to you all. *(Applause)*

The gay campaigning at Hinckley Point. This is the largest construction site in Europe. The membership has continued to grow and the campaigning is on-going there. Martina and Brendan, I think you are both in the hall today, thanks for all the work you are doing and the incredible stuff that you are doing around diversity and inclusion. Our members in the region are also working across different water companies, joining together to build a new water forum so that campaigns can be organised across the whole sector.

Finally, I do want to pay tribute to our members in G4S who work in the DWP job centres. Dave and Tonia I saw you earlier today. The Department for Work and Poverty, as we call them, has been shaken as well. They've been

shaken by the solidarity of you and all of the shop stewards and members who have stood up and taken strike action. The work that you are doing is truly inspiring.

Congress, these are your amazing efforts. They are your victories. This is your union. Let's celebrate that and let's celebrate all the fantastic campaigns that we are running throughout the length and breadth of this country. *(Applause)*

Congress, in workplaces everywhere we are a powerful presence again. We are strong, relevant and influential. We have got our campaigning mojo back, and new members are joining us in huge numbers. We are not just joining members, but we are also doing more to retain members as well, and we are seeing positive results.

I am absolutely delighted that coming into Congress our overall membership has continued to grow. Very importantly, our financial membership, those paying grade 1 and grade 2 have also been growing because that is important to the financial stability of the union.

When you elected me, and let's never forget this, this union was at a point of crisis. Year on year our membership was falling. The truth is that we faced a very uncertain future. But because of the changes you have made and the changes that we've made together, we are in a much stronger position today. We have addressed matters that for too long were left in the long grass. It was 20-plus years ago that the Henry report made recommendations on GMB being a fully inclusive union and being a model in race equality. It has fallen to us, this generation of leaders, to take action. We appointed our first National Race Officer, the fantastic Tye+++++++ *(Applause)*. You have heard about it already today, but the GMB Race Achievement Scholarship Programme, or GRASP, that Tye leads, is a landmark moment for our union, and the GRASPERS, who have undertaken that programme and who will go on in the programme this year, are truly making history because those activists are on a mission to transform workplaces everywhere. I want to say a huge thank you to all of the GRASPERS for the work that you have been undertaking and this ground-breaking initiative which you have made happen. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Congress, we are far from perfect. We have a long way to go. I'm not perfect and I have a lot to learn, but because we have changed we are ready to meet the moment before us as this country makes a choice at a

general election. I have always been clear. GMB doesn't believe in political superheroes, but we know that the last 14 years have been a terrible time for working people. The Tories have imposed austerity. They have hollowed out our public services and left our economy in tatters. They are the agents of chaos and the Tories' time is up! (*Cheers and applause*)

My challenge to Labour is to recognise that change can't just be a simple, snappy election slogan. It must be brought to life in Government. People have had enough of the way the country is being run and they want and demand a better future. (*Applause*)

The *New Deal for Working People* is a promising sign that Labour gets this. GMB, along with our sister unions, have battled so hard to get commitments that will make work better; the right to access and organise in workplaces; strong action for the first time on equal pay and a national School Support Staff Negotiating Body. There is so much more within that document. Our job is to hold the next Labour Government to account and bring that *New Deal* to life. (*Applause*)

But there is the prospect of a brighter future, and it stands in stark contrast to what the Tories have done when in power. Their disgraceful minimum service level law is a spiteful attack on trade union members, and we should celebrate the fact that Labour has committed to scrapping this dreadful piece of legislation. That is a big concrete win for us and something we will welcome. (*Applause*)

However, I do need to warn you that as the media focus on Labour increases, the attacks on us and other unions are getting louder. Today there is a piece in the *Mail on Sunday* about the Dental Plan Benefit that many of our members and some of you will use. Apparently, the Dental Plan Benefit programme is somehow a threat to contemporary British capitalism. But let's be clear. These attacks are going to increase, and there may be some even from our own movement and from our own past who will feed the Tory machine and their media supporters. That, Congress, cannot be and is not right! The Tories and their enablers have always been the enemy of trade unions. Congress, attacks are coming but if we stand together and stay true to the change we are delivering, we are going to emerge victorious. (*Applause*)

People are desperate for change in the world of work. Our members know just how broken things are: low pay, long hours, insecurity, discrimination.

Fourteen years of chaos and failure have hacked away at the buildings blocks of fairness, decency and respect at work. Working people deserve an economy that delivers for all, not just for the super-rich few. Workers feel shut out on the conversations of things that matter, and our Union is crucial to fixing this; bringing members' voices to the fore, building campaigns, shaping the debate and influencing the decisions of a future Labour Government.

Two years ago in Harrogate I sent a clear message to employers that GMB is coming for you on equal pay and that's just what we have done. But many are still putting fingers in their ears. They are hoping this issue will go away. Congress, let us send a message on equal pay. Employers can run but they cannot hide. They have a choice: change and give our members the justice on pay they deserve or GMB will find you and you will pay!
(Applause)

Equal pay remains a huge issue for our members in Asda – we know that – but there is so much more that is wrong with that great old company. I was talking to some of our members this morning: cuts to hours, increased workloads, the lowering of standards. The new owners of that company are draining the very life out of that business, but our members across the country are fighting back. We say to Asda: you need to change direction and fast, and if not GMB will take you on. *(Applause)*

Our NHS, our ambulance members and our school support members are holding the nations' health and education systems together, but the Government still won't properly recognise our members and the incredible efforts that they undertake. Again, GMB is clear. It is time to show respect for public servants and that starts with a proper pay rise. *(Applause)*

Our energy members are the beating heart of our economy. Without them there is no power, no heating, no lighting, no schools and no hospitals. Everything grinds to a halt. Our onshore and offshore industries are undergoing huge change, but right now many workers feel they are being ignored. GMB's message to political leaders is clear. Our energy members give so much to this country that you need to put them at the centre of the conversation about their future, and you need to do it now. *(Applause)*

Each and everyone of us is aware that we live in an increasingly volatile world. Sitting back while crucial heavy industry and capacity is lost and watching our vital manufacturing work go overseas doesn't just cause

carnage in our communities but it's dreadful for our national security, too, and it's GMB that's going to do something about it. Because we say, very clearly, enough of exporting work and importing virtue and no surrendering of our essential industries at the altar of globalisation, for the safety and security of our country, for the benefit of our communities, it's time to start bringing the jobs home. *(Applause)*

Nothing – nothing – demonstrates why work must change more than that fight for recognition at Amazon. This global giant has used every trick in the book to stop our union from organising. It's no surprise that they want to keep us out what with the extraordinary demands that I've heard that are put on our members. I've listened to you when I've been on the picket lines; the long hours, the low pay, the health and safety issues. Well, Congress, we are on the cusp of a victory that is going to send shock waves around the world. Congress, let's support our members in getting the ballot over the line. Let's make history. Let's win at Amazon. *(Applause)*

All of the key battles that will decide our future are about change. We either get involved and shape our destiny or we will become victims of the whims of others. We have changed our Union, but there's much to do. We have changed. Our members' voices are back. The workplace is the focus again. We are listening and we are building campaigns once more. It is not just the right thing to do but it is working as well.

Congress, as we keep moving forward we will be tested, but whatever we face we must remain true to our members. We have done so much together. We are on the right track. Let's keep going and let's keep making work better. Congress, thank you. *(A standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now put the General Secretary's Report to the floor for endorsement. All those in favour of adopting the Report, please show? Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

The General Secretary's report was ADOPTED.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: Could the mover of Motion 77 come to the rostrum please?

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

MOTION 77

77. A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

This Congress calls upon the CEC to back a campaign to ensure that all staff within football clubs with the same qualifications are paid the same wage and same terms and conditions. A qualified 18-year-old coach should be paid the same as a qualified 30-year-old coach.

W60 WELLINGTON BRANCH Midlands Region

(Carried)

IAN PREECE (Midlands): Congress, I am here to talk about Motion 77: A Level Playing Field. I call upon the CEC to back a campaign to ensure that all staff in the football industry with the same qualifications are paid the same wage and the same terms and conditions for working. A qualified 18-year-old coach or staff member should be paid the same as a qualified 30-year-old coach or staff member when doing the same job.

Unfortunately, this is not true in a lot of clubs. I have heard today that we fight for gender, we fight for race so let's fight for age equality as well. Equal pay for all. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ian. Secunder?

MILES SHORT (Midlands): I am seconding the motion. Ian's right. It's not a level playing field and it ought to be. It ought to be the most level playing field there is. Why shouldn't somebody who is qualified as a coach, which means basically looking after young kids – it's a safe environment – be paid the same?

Gary, you forgot to mention Scunthorpe. Scunthorpe Steel Works is losing 2,500 people. Please back this campaign. I'm begging you to back it because Scunthorpe is a small town and just think about 2,000 people out of work? You're talking about other places, but just think about Scunthorpe with 2,500 people out of work at one go. Please help. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Miles. I call the mover of Composite Motion 3, please.

FURLOUGH TO BECOME THE MINIMUM STANDARD FOR LAY OFF PAY, SICKNESS PERIODS AND AGENCY WORKERS' RIGHTS.

COMPOSITE 3

Covering Motions: 78 Furlough to become the Minimum Standard for Lay Off and Sickness Periods – Midlands Region.

81. Standardised Lay Off Pay – Midlands Region.

82. Agency Workers' Rights – Midlands Region.

FURLOUGH TO BECOME THE MINIMUM STANDARD FOR LAY OFF PAY, SICKNESS PERIODS AND AGENCY WORKERS' RIGHTS

This Congress has observed and wishes to action that during the pandemic in 2020, the UK government decided that furlough payments of 80% of your wage would be made as a minimum standard for people to survive and required to live off. So how can companies who are facing slow downs and downturns lay people off with no pay?

Our members should be treated with the same respect and their standard of living should be respected in the same way. All current company sickness schemes that are below the furlough arrangements should be replaced with this standard of living.

No GMB member who is placed in a situation where they are laid off from their employment or they are dealing with illness should have to worry about the financial situation they find themselves in.

This Congress wishes the GMB National Officers and political lobbyists to ensure agency workers' rights are enhanced in the next government.

We would like to promote a system where layoffs during a downturn in the production, are backed by form of 'furlough pay' rather than redundancy pay, or in the worst case, termination of contracts.

We call for a standardised lay off payment law that is 80% minimum of an employee's wage.

We want a standard quality of living and not a race to the bottom.

Moving region: Midlands

Seconding region: Midlands

(Referred)

DAVID SADLER (Midlands): I am from the GMB Midlands Manufacturing Committee, forced Media and Publicity Officer. I'm a first-time delegate and speaker. *(Applause)*

Years before the birth of furlough, during the period now known as 'Covid', our branch tabled a motion to request a form of parachute payments to workers whose employers were temporarily hit by an economic slump or cyclical downturn for whatever reason. Our company, with the backing of the GMB reps, agreed to go on a shorter working week but temporarily during the recession. We tried to introduce a payment partially to pay for the shortfall as a viable alternative to layoffs or redundancies. Agency workers are even more vulnerable and commonly used as a watershed

even by their fellows workmates. It's only natural, but to our trade union it is alien to our objectives of equality and fairness.

European countries, Australia and the US have a system that the Germans call 'Furlough' to bypass layoffs. When our original campaign reached the desk of Peter Mandelson, he said he had something not in mind but not exactly as we had asked for, and an alternative has never been promoted since.

With the cushion part of the system similar to furlough employers can retain their fully-trained workforce and keep morale up rather than layoffs, which is the most demoralising part of anyone's work career. Secondly, the burden falls on the Government eventually in the form of benefits. At the time nobody bought into the short-term agreement but it did retain jobs and any compulsory redundancies.

What we are asking for now is a better regulated scheme, similar to furlough, to stop primarily agency workers having to leave a role, in some cases returning a few months later having lost their service. Our Manufacturing Committee, when asked about the scheme, found that furlough was above what everybody wanted.

In short, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to move that furlough becomes standard through British national policy. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

DARREN McLARREN (Midlands): Congress and President, I am a Midlands Manufacturing Committee member. I'm a first-time speaker and this is my first-time at Congress. *(Applause)*

In 2020 the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, announced that the Government would pay everyone 80% of their salary to cope with the fact that we all had to stay at home due to the pandemic. He said that this was the amount needed for a family to live on. As David has just said, we should be pushing an in-coming Labour Government to ensure that any worker who is off work through illness, to a lack of work or similar occasions like the pandemic, should be paid 80% of their salary as the Government said was the norm. That is why I second our motion for furlough being the norm. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Darren. Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 84.

STATUTORY NOTICE PAY COMPENSATION, STOP MAKING DEDUCTIONS MOTION 84

84. STATUTORY NOTICE PAY COMPENSATION, STOP MAKING DEDUCTIONS.

This Congress notes that compensation paid from the Redundancy Payments Service to cover unpaid Statutory Notice Pay in an insolvency situation is subject to deductions of new or increased employment income as well as new or increased income related benefits entitlements whether or not claimed during the notice period.

This Congress believes that this places those made redundant during an insolvency process under undue pressure to claim income related benefits immediately rather than seeking work at an increased processing cost to the taxpayer. Conversely it also discourages others from seeking work immediately due to the perceived lack of personal benefit in doing so. Why take a job immediately if any new wages would be deducted from your notice entitlement is the view of some, discouraging meaningful engagement for almost the entire 13-week period during which additional support is provided to those made redundant in England by the Job Centre Plus Rapid Response Service.

This Congress resolves that the GMB should alongside TUC and Labour Party colleagues where appropriate develop and implement a strategy to reduce the stress experienced and support and encourage the speedy return to work of those made redundant following an insolvency by ensuring Statutory Notice Pay is claimable in full, from the Redundancy Payments Service.

W47 WILKINSONS BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

ADRIAN URSEIU (Southern): Good afternoon, President and delegates. I am a proud GMB representative and Branch Secretary of W32 in Wimbledon, Southern Region. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker.

(Applause)

I am moving Motion 84: Statutory Notice Pay Compensation, Stop Making Deductions. In the event of a business becoming insolvent the Government pays certain benefits to dismissed employees, such as redundancy payment, holiday pay, outstanding payments, like unpaid wages, overtime,

commissions and money you would have earned working your notice period, Statutory Notice Pay.

The notice pay, however, is compensation for lost statutory notice and paid subject to mitigation. This means that the claim can be submitted until the end of the notice period using, and I quote, an "LN" reference number, that will be sent after the notice period would have ended. This usually takes no more than 12 weeks after the dismissal.

The Government will deduct all new employment income received in the notice period if a new role is secured. In addition to this, any new or increased benefits, such as Universal Credit or contribution-based Job Seeker's payment that you have received or had an entitlement to claim are also deducted.

After applying for Statutory Notice Pay, it usually takes up to six weeks to get any payments but it can be longer. Then as an employee who is made redundant starts thinking, "Do we go and start looking for a job and risk losing Statutory Notice Pay?" or "Do we stay home for the full length of the notice and get help from the Government?, which is after six weeks. Here is a crossroad that puts a lot of pressure on the dismissed employees. He is thinking about available and upcoming income if it is enough for rent, mortgage, car payments and other bills. Does he have enough to last until the Statutory Notice Pay comes from the Government?

Congress, I am asking for the Statutory Notice Pay to be claimable in full from the Redundancy Payments Service and encouraging a speedy return to work of those made redundant following an insolvency. Congress, thank you for your time and please support my motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Adrian. I call the seconder.

MIKE FERGUSON (Southern): Good afternoon, Congress and President. This is my second time here but first time speaking. *(Applause)*

I am seconding Motion 84: Statutory Notice Pay Compensation, Stop Making Deductions. Why should people get punished for going out to find work after having been made redundant? At the end of the day, they shouldn't be. If you go and find work, you sign on and if you have any kind of benefits from the Government you are going to get punished financially for up to 12 weeks. We ask Congress to stop the Statutory Payment

Compensation and bring it into line with PILON, which is Payment In Lieu of Notice. Thank you for your time. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mike. Thank you. Are there any opposition speakers to those motions. *(No response)* No. Can I have Colin Gunter, the CEC speaker, for the CEC's response?

COLIN GUNTER (CEC): President, I am responding to Motion 77 and Composite 3 on behalf of the CEC.

On Motion 77, whilst we are against age-related pay, our qualification is that we believe there is a role for incremental pay in line with experience and qualification.

On Composite 3, GMB is fully committed to campaigning for the rights of those with protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, of which religion is a protected characteristic. The composite raises an interesting issue worthy of consideration. The recommendation is to refer to allow research into the subject to develop policy and to formulate any demands of a new government. In the UK there is a wide range of religions which are followed, and it might be beneficial if there was an overall number of holidays which could be raised for the specific religious holiday for that individual. By law employers are not obliged to grant holiday leave for religious holidays for example. Obviously, in the UK the Christmas and Easter periods contain bank holidays, which employers close for those who would not necessarily need to be booked off as annual leave.

As the case law stands, at present, in relation to religious discrimination, an employer can take consideration of the needs of other staff into account. Accommodating the needs of one worker can make it harder for co-workers to plan holidays and, potentially, it increases the cost and reliance on agency staff. For these reasons we would like to take time to research the issue further.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC position is to support Motion 77 with the small qualification, and to ask that Composite 3 be referred. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Colin. Does Midlands accept the qualification on Motion 77? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Do you accept the reference back on Composite 3? *(Agreed)* So we don't vote on Composite 3 but we do vote on Motion 77. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is

carried. The CEC is supporting Motion 84. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? That is also carried.

Composite 3 was REFERRED.

Motion 77 was CARRIED.

Motion 84 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PRIVATE SECTION

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Industrial & Economic Policy: Private Section. There are a number of motions now relating to industrial issues of our Private Section, starting with Composite 8 and Motion 126. We are joined on the stage by the Private Section National Secretary, Andy Prendergast, who has just arrived. Could the speakers on Motions 119, 120 and 122 also be ready to speak next. I call the mover of Composite 8.

OFWAT TO CONTROL WATER INDUSTRY COMPANIES CEO'S SALARIES & BONUSES IN LINE WITH PERFORMANCE

COMPOSITE 8

Covering Motions:

125. OFWAT to Control Water Companies CEO's Bonuses in Line with Performance – Wales & South West Region.

127. Water Industry Salaries & Bonuses – Wales & South West Region

OFWAT TO CONTROL WATER INDUSTRY COMPANIES CEO'S SALARIES & BONUSES IN LINE WITH PERFORMANCE

This congress recognises that access to clean and reliable water is a fundamental necessity for communities, and the provision of water services is a critical responsibility carried out by water companies.

Concerns have been raised regarding the performance of certain water companies, reflecting inadequacies in service delivery and potential negative impacts on consumers and GMB Members.

During the last year our Water Industry CEO's have been receiving huge salaries and bonuses at the expense of our normal working employees who have to forfeit a decent cost of living pay rise year on year. This has been going on for far too many years within the water industry. Within the water industry more and more employees are struggling with the ever-increasing cost of living and we hear stories of members having to use food banks as a source of looking after their families.

This congress recognises the need for accountability and responsible corporate governance in the water industry, especially in instances where performance has been deemed unacceptable.

This congress calls upon OFWAT to establish measures ensuring that executives of water companies are not in receipt of disproportionately large bonuses, particularly when the overall performance of the company is deemed unacceptable by OFWAT.

This Congress Calls on the government and OFWAT to make these Water Company CEO's more accountable and to impose more tightly controlled salaries and bonuses in reference to how the company performs.

This Congress also asks for the CEC National Private committee to campaign for OFWAT to engage in a comprehensive assessment of the performance of water companies, considering factors such as service quality, customer satisfaction, and adherence to regulatory standards, before approving any executive bonuses or stakeholder's rewards.

To conclude, this congress highlights the importance of transparent and accountable practices within the water industry, to ensure that consumer interests are prioritized, and bonuses are aligned with overall performance of the water company.

Moving region: Wales & South West
Seconding region: Wales & South West

(Carried)

PAUL HUNT (GMB Wales & South West): President and Congress, this congress recognises that access to clean and reliable water is a fundamental necessity for communities, and the provision of water services is a critical responsibility carried out by water companies.

Concerns have been raised regarding the performance of certain water companies, reflecting inadequacies in service delivery and potential negative impacts on consumers and our members.

This Congress recognises the need for accountability and responsible corporate governance within the water industry, especially in instances where performance has been deemed unacceptable. This Congress calls upon OFWAT to establish measures ensuring that executives of water companies are not in receipt of disproportionately large bonuses, particularly when the overall performance of the company is deemed unacceptable by OFWAT.

This Congress also ask for the CEC National Private Committee to campaign for OFWAT to engage in a comprehensive assessment of the performance of water companies, considering factors such as service quality, customer satisfaction, and adherence to regulatory standards before approving any executive bonus or stakeholder rewards.

To conclude, this Congress highlights the importance of transparent and accountable practices within the water industry, to ensure that consumer interests are prioritized, and bonuses are aligned with overall performance of the water company. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. I call the seconder for Composite 8. Is there a seconder? *(Formally seconded)* I call the mover for Motion 126.

A NEW REGULATORY BODY FOR THE WATER INDUSTRY MOTION 126

126. A NEW REGULATORY BODY FOR THE WATER INDUSTRY

This Congress calls on the GMB to start a campaign / action for the Government to set up a new regulatory body to oversee the Water Companies because we believe that the present system has been failing for years and is no longer fit for purpose.

Congress notes that the failings of the financial status of Thames Water has been alluded to into an almost unworkable situation with financial instability.

Thames Water continues to employ senior staff on huge salaries the most recent example being Thames Water's new CEO Chris Weston who will be paid £850,000 in basic salary with a pension allowance of 12% and a potential bonus of 150% a package worth over £1.3 million.

We call upon Congress to fight for a new regulatory body to be set up. This call for action not only affects the 8,000 GMB members in the water sector but also affects all the UK.

E15 THAMES GENERAL BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

CLIFF RONEY (London): Congress, I am moving Motion 126, a New Regulatory Body for the Water Industry. As you can see I am joined on the platform by 'fat cats'. *(Laughter and Applause)* Thank you. These can often be found stalking the Stock Exchange looking for prey. In 1989, thanks to Margaret Thatcher, they found the water companies. Since that time, they have taken £57 billion in share dividends, bonuses and wages to CEOs. Hopefully, these fat cats will become extinct with the help of a new regulator and a new Labour Government.

Now for the motion. This Congress calls on the GMB to start a national campaign of action for the Government to set up a new regulatory body to

oversee the water companies because we believe that the present system has been failing for years and is no longer fit for purpose.

Congress notes that the failings of the financial status of Thames Water has been alluded to into an almost unworkable situation with financial instability. The CEO of OFWAT earns between £145,000 and £164,000 a year, but is in charge of a failed regulator. This can't be right! What do we think of that? Disgusting! The Industry and Regulators' Committee reported failures in water and sewage in September 2023, stating that the water companies have been overly-focused on maximising financial returns at the expense of operational performance and protecting the environment. The water companies should not be able to receive substantial bonuses when their companies have missed performances and targets and polluted the water and the environment. Disgusting!

OFWAT has done nothing to stop this for more than 35 years. This must stop! We need change and we need it fast. We need a new regulatory body set up, hopefully under a new Labour Government, that is committed to the regulation that is not about money and profits. At the moment, Thames Water, the largest water company, is financially unsustainable and, overall, the water companies are environmentally unsustainable. The UK needs a new regulatory body to oversee the companies that ensure that the fat cats can no longer gain from an industry that has failed to deliver for over 35 years.

OFWAT finds themselves under increasing pressure from Thames Water to increase bills by as much as 59%, highlighting just how bad the investment infrastructure has become. If this increase is allowed to happen, we could find ourselves in a situation where the water would be treated by customers in the same way as gas and electricity, so some customers would be scared to use it for fear that they wouldn't be able to pay the bill at the end of the month! Disgusting! Imagine not flushing your toilet for fear of not having enough money to pay the bill. This is disgusting!

I have been involved in the water industry for more than 45 years and nobody who works in the industry wants it to fail. The commitment from the staff is 100%, as it has always been. More than 8,000 GMB members are working flat out to try and keep this industry running. I would like, personally, to thank all the members and all the staff, including the National Water Forum, for all their help and amazing support for so many years. I,

most sincerely, hope that my grandchildren – Henry and Logan – will one day be able to play on beaches and swim in the sea safely.

Congress, please get behind this because, at the end of the day, it's our water, we own it, the people of this country. Nobody else should take profit from it. We need to get behind it. Delegates, with your support and our members' support we can get ourselves back to where we used to be, having the finest water companies in the world. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Cliff. I was going to say that your fat cat did look a bit deflated by the end of that speech. *(Laughter)* Well done. The seconder, please.

STEVE DAVIES (London): Good afternoon, President and Congress. I am seconding Motion 126: a New Regulatory Body for the Water Industry.

In May of this year South-West Water had a serious cryptosporidium outbreak, leading to 46 confirmed cases, and more than one hundred other people reporting symptoms. This incident further highlights the lack of infrastructure, maintenance and investment that the water industry is desperately crying out for.

The regulator has failed in its duty to regulate the water companies for over 30 years, whilst allowing fat-cat owners and shareholders to drain the financial resources by omitting to put pressure on the companies to properly maintain the infrastructure. To echo Cliff from his speech, this is also disgusting.

This motion calls for a new regulator who will address and bring to task the fat-cat water companies. We must have a regulator that doesn't allow water companies to increase bills to pay for their failings over so many years. Congress, please get behind this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Is anyone opposing either of those motions?

(No response) No. Then I ask Margi Clarke from the CEC to speak.

MARGI CLARKE (CEC): President and Congress, I am responding to Composite 8 on behalf of the CEC, which we are supporting with qualifications.

First, I would like to echo what the delegates have said. The state of our water industry is a national disgrace. Like all of our nationalised industries, the water industry took decades to build at great expense under the public purse and sold of for virtually nothing by Thatcher. It is one of the clearest examples of how damaging this ideology has been to our country. This decay was inevitable. We hope that a new Government will bring back our water industry into national control.

Now I shall outline the position on Composite 8. We support the motion's call to grapple bloated executive pay within the water industry, and we are supportive of caps on executive pay and bonuses. Our qualifications are that executives shouldn't get bonus linked to customer satisfaction as there is no consumer choice as a bill payer for water.

However, we support the renationalisation of the water industry, therefore taking power out of our shareholder committees. We are also sceptical that OFWAT is a competent enough body capable of grappling with the issue to make these assessments. We support an overhaul of OFWAT and renationalisation of the industry. Thank you, Congress. We hope you support this composite with the qualifications that I have laid out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margi. Does GMB Wales & South West accept the qualification on Composite 8? *(Agreed)*

Thank you. All those in favour of Composite 8, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

The CEC is supporting Motion 126. All those in favour of Motion 126, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 8 was CARRIED.

Motion 126 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PRIVATE SECTION

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Industrial & Economic Policy. It is still the Private Section. Whilst those motions are being moved, I ask that the speakers on Motions 131, 133 and 134 also to be ready. You will have heard

that Motion 130 from London Region has been withdrawn. I call the mover of Motion 119.

**SUPPORT FOR MIDLANDS MANUFACTURING COMMITTEES CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE
MOTION 119**

119. SUPPORT FOR MIDLANDS MANUFACTURING COMMITTEES CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE

This Congress calls on GMB to rejuvenate manufacturing by supporting the campaign for change outlined by the Midland Manufacturing Committee. We wish GMB to provide financial support, use political influence, campaigning, connections within the media and relationships with employers to try and kickstart a new growth in manufacturing in the UK, providing better jobs for our members. The campaign for change calls for a UK manufacturing procurement agreement, layoffs and sickness to be paid at 80% of wages as per the job retention scheme, for apprenticeships to become mandatory 10% of the workforce at manufacturing workplaces, manufacturing to become part of the education system, government to invest in UK hydrogen infrastructure, all temporary employees to be given a full time contract after 12 months of service and industrial voices to be acknowledged and add value to the credibility of GMB in the workplace. We believe that this is the sound strategy that GMB should adopt nationally as a foundation to rejuvenate UK manufacturing and call on GMB to do so.

B76 BRIERLEY HILL BRANCH

Midlands Region
(Referred)

JOHN-PAUL WESTWOOD (Midlands): Congress, I am a GMB Midlands Manufacturing Committee member. This motion was raised by my branch because we represent members who work in the industry that has been in decline for decades.

Manufacturing, particularly where I grew up, was the bread-and-butter jobs for workers like my parents. My mum and dad met at work, BSR in Halesowen, to be precise. So I might not even be here if it wasn't for manufacturing. BSR was a proud company that was once a leading manufacturer of record players. My dad was convenor at that workplace. He fought hard for the members he represented there. The workers were let down by owners and government, and the company closed its doors in the '80s. Some 40-odd years later that trend has continued, with seeing multiple manufacturing companies close. Lay reps in the Midlands decided that we wanted to inspire change. We came together to form a committee of workers who would put focus on the interests and needs of manufacturing workers in the region. That regional committee spawned a

campaign, a campaign for change for manufacturing workers. That campaign is what I am here asking for your support on.

The Midlands Manufacturing Campaign calls for a UK manufacturing procurement agreement for the minimum standard of sick and layoff pay to be 80% of wages as per the job retention scheme, for apprenticeships to become mandatory in the manufacturing companies to 10% of the workforce, for manufacturing to become part of the UK's education system, for our Government to invest in UK hydrogen infrastructure, for all temporary workers to be given a full-time contract after 12 months service and for industrial voices to be acknowledged and add value to the credibility of GMB in their workplaces.

The CEC has called for this motion to be referred, which our region has accepted, but I wish to urge the GMB to move on this issue because if the UK wants to have good, well-paid jobs in the future, manufacturing has to be part of that. Without the skilled workers required to build a thriving manufacturing industry, the UK economy will struggle to recover from the pit it has been failed in by this failed Conservative Government. This is not just a vote for a motion but a vote for an industry. I move. *(Applause)*

The Vice President took the Chair

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Seconder?

DALE DWYERS (Midlands): Congress, I second this motion supporting the Midlands Manufacturing Committee's Campaign for Change. I am employed in the house-brick producing industry. This is a multi-million pound industry in the UK, but in downturns previously they lay you off very quickly with very little notice. I know first-hand what it is like to be laid off. It's stressful for members and their families with, literally, no pay coming in. We need to campaign for the government to set the minimum layoff levels, with a minimum of 80%, as they stated furlough was because this situation cannot go on. Members are in dire straights when this happens. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dale. I call the mover of Motion 120.

FACTORY SHOPS & LOCAL OUTLETS

MOTION 120

120. FACTORY SHOPS & LOCAL OUTLETS

This Congress believes that the pottery industry has suffered over the years due to the decline of the industry and bad management. The industry had a fight and is still fighting against the back stamping issue that ruined a lot of our factories.

Now we are facing a new challenge that not only can affect our industry but our city as well. Ceramic employers are having work outsourced but not only are they having it done cheaply overseas but they are selling it in our city with products saying made in Indonesia and made in China on the ware in their local factory shops and our local tourist attractions where people come from far and wide to get an experience of the pottery industry. The industry is struggling and our members are working hard to produce ware that is made in Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire & England for it to be shipped out.

The employer having cheap imports displayed in shops when the products sold in local shops should be made in England is not only disrespectful to employees but to the city of Stoke on Trent's heritage.

Congress, we need to campaign, we need the political parties to take this up and fight against this disgraceful act by the employer and make everyone aware.

Congress please support.

S75 STOKE UNITY BRANCH Midlands Region

(Carried)

SHARON YATES (Midlands): Congress, I am moving Motion 120: Factory Shops & Local Outlets.

President and Congress, over the years the pottery industry has suffered greatly with the wrongdoings of employers. I stand here today, yet again, with another disgraceful act against people of the potteries. Stoke-on-Trent is known as the capital of the ceramics industry and is famously known all over the world. This, to me, means that if you produce ceramics in the city, then you should be selling these products in your local outlets, through local factory shops and through the country. But this is not happening.

If you go to attractions where our companies have outlets, they are not selling home-made products like ceramics but selling products made in China and Indonesia. This is disgraceful. People travel to the Potteries to see, to learn of our history and to buy our products. Yet they are being sold cheaply made imports for the same price for ceramics that have been produce in Stoke-on-Trent.

A few weeks ago another factory closed its doors with the loss of more than 100 members. This is devastating for the pottery industry and the city itself. Never mind the people who work there! But their shops and outlets aren't closing but continuing to trade with imported wares and will be using our famous Potteries' status. Our city is fast turning into a museum city by this, and it needs to stop. We, as a union, have got to stop talking about it and we need to act. We have lost enough industries. Please let us stand and fight to save our precious industry and the people of Stoke-on-Trent.

I will leave you with this. How many stores out *there* have got ceramic products that are made in other countries? Just think, we are one union and we need to take back control of our industry. My GMB family, please, for the pottery industry and the people of Stoke-on-Trent, support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. Secunder?

LISA McCREADY (Midlands): President, Congress, a continuation of our great pottery industries is very important. By letting companies carry on outsourcing our products is unacceptable. We need to make a stand against this and fight for the survival of our industry. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lisa. The mover of Motion 122.

FMSP & NSIGN (NAVAL SUPPORT INTEGRATED GLOBAL NETWORK) MOTION 122

122. FMSP & NSIGN (NAVAL SUPPORT INTEGRATED GLOBAL NETWORK)

This Congress notes with concern the Tory Government's strategy on future Royal Navy Warship Support maintenance/upkeep contracts, namely "NSIGN", which is due to supersede the current FMSP "Fleet Maintenance Support Program". The Ministry of Defence has indicated that they believe there is more room for cost savings within the workforce.

Congress believes that where contracts have been broken up in the past, this causes outsourcing of workers (often including the only areas where we have good representation of women workers), a reduction in trade union bargaining groups, redundancy, cuts to quality of pension provisions, and general worsening of terms and conditions.

The more contracts are broken up, the more the collaboration risk with no "line of sight" across multiple contractors creating efficacy. Resource across every sector within the country is currently at a premium, and with the introduction of disaggregated contracts, the sector risks

developing into a boom-and-bust environment with highly skilled employees leaving the sector. Our members understand that availability to deliver requires working together and are keen for true joined up enterprise, bringing social value.

Breaking-up contracts is not in the best interests of the Royal Navy or trade union members and is a false economy of the MOD.

Outsourcing is fundamentally an attack on workers deemed to be “non-core business” but whom the CSEU believe to be essential workers and who often include many women and minorities, whilst all the while the employers in our industries are profitable and awash with cash.

NSIGN needs to be fundamentally rethought out and this Congress calls on the GMB to lobby and campaign cross party for this to happen.

DEVONPORT D19 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

LORRAINE PARKER DELAZAJETE (GMB Wales & South West): Colleagues, this motion covers a critical aspect of our national defence strategy, the future of our Royal Naval warships and our fleet maintenance programme. The Minister of Defence has indicated that they believe there is more room for costs savings within the workforce of our shipyards. Congress, this motion asks you to recognise that where contracts have been broken up in the past this causes outsourcing of workers, often including the areas where we have women members in the industry, a reduction in trade union bargaining groups, redundancy, cuts to quality of pension provision, and generally worsening of our members’ terms and conditions.

Colleagues, the more that these contracts are broken up the more we risk having to cross multiple contractors creating unfair and lower terms and conditions, breaking up contracts and outsourcing is not in the best interests for our members and a false economy to the MOD. The Tories’ commitment to ensuring that our naval fleet remains robust and state of the art is unwavering and our strategy focuses on leveraging the expertise and capabilities with our own border to achieve this goal.

Colleagues, to clarify two crucial components of our naval strategy is that the fleet maintenance programme and naval support integrated global network while both are vital to the operational effectiveness they serve distinct purpose and operate in different capacities. Understanding these differences is key to appreciating how our Navy maintains its readiness

and global reach. The fleet maintenance programme is the backbone of our naval upkeep and operational readiness. This programme focuses on the routine scheduled and preventative maintenance of our warships. Its primary objectives are routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, readiness, and available with cost effective processes. Maintenance addresses potential issues, minimises the risk of unexpected breakdowns and extends the life span of our ships. Readiness and availability ensures that our ships are always ready for deployment. The fleet can respond quickly to any emergency threats or crises and the fleet maintenance programme reduces the long-term effects associated with major repairs and overhauls. This sufficient process of resources ensures that the taxpayers' money is spent wisely. It protects terms and conditions for our members and removes the need for outsourcing contracts to several unrecognised workplaces. Breaking up contracts is not in the best interests of our members. The naval support integrated global network would be false economy for the MOD.

Congress, the ensign process needs to be fundamentally rethought out. Please support this motion and our members. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. Seconder? Seconder for 122? Formally. Thank you. Does anyone wish to oppose? No. I now call on Shailesh to give the CEC statement.

SHAILESH GAGLANI (CEC): President, Congress, responding on behalf of the CEC to Motions 119 and 120.

On Motion 119 we can take best practice and successful campaigning from all areas of the union and see who is best placed to campaign. We are asking that this motion be referred to look at the various details. This is on the grounds that some employers have better terms and conditions than the motion outlines and some employers and persons do not want to undercut agreements we already have. We also do not wish to commit to persons placed for apprenticeship in case employers replace full-time and qualified workers to fill the quota.

On Motion 120 levelling of products is important to ensure that countries must know that they are buying products that we too are buying. The qualification is that the importing branches could lead the campaign. Therefore, Congress, we are asking that 119 is referred and that 120 is supported with the small qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Shailesh. Does Midland accept the reference back on 119? (*Agreed*) Does Midland accept the qualification on 120? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour of Motion 120 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 119 was REFERRED.

Motion 120 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 122 please show. Against? That is carried.

Motion 122 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Congress. Could the movers of 131, 133, and 134, please be ready and also those who are due to speak under motions in the next block. Could the mover of Motion 131 of Southern please come to the rostrum?

GMB SAFEGUARD CAMPAIGN

MOTION 131

131. GMB SAFEGUARD CAMPAIGN

This conference notes that back in 2010 GMB launched SafeGuard Campaign and Charter for security workers. This was the direct result of the significantly increased levels of verbal abuse (and, often, violent physical assaults) that these workers have either seen, dealt with or been subjected to on a personal level.

Over 14 years later things have got worst with not just security workers being verbally abused and physically assaulted (which has increased) but many other frontline workers from those working for the NHS to School support staff and those working in the retail sector.

Many employers and their clients are more concerned about our members completing paperwork first before seeking medical attention and are not financially supporting our members.

This conference calls upon GMB Union to take the following action.

- 1) To update and relaunch the SafeGuard Campaign and Charter across the whole of GMB Union to protect all our members.
- 2) Encourage all employers both in private and public sectors to sign up to the Charter (including clients of employers within the private sector).
- 3) To get the Labour Party to back and adopt our SafeGuard Campaign and Charter to protect

workers.

- 4) Get the current government to take tougher action on those who have verbally abused and physically assaulted our members and frontline workers.

G36 SECURITY Southern Region

(Carried)

DANIELLE SEYCHELLE (Southern): President, Congress, I am a first time speaker. *(Applause)* According to recent reports there are more than 600,000 incidents of violence at work that happened in 2023 in the UK. Violence in the workplace can cause difficult and emotional harm leading to workers taking time off, or leading to physical or mental health disability which means they can never work again. Violence at work can cause emotional distress and financial pressure for families of the worker's group. Companies have a lack of high maintenance and lack of empathy with workers who are suffering doing a job. This is also a lack of investment and training for the managers for them to recognise and understand this issue and the consequence to the workers who have been assaulted at their place of work. It is more important to companies and managers to fill in reports than deal with assaults or incidents. The companies need to go back to supporting workers against the violence. I ask for your support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Danielle. Seconder?

MARGARET FINNOCK (Southern): Good afternoon, Congress. I am a first time delegate today. *(Applause)* I would like to second Motion 131. As we gather here today it is crucial that we address the alarming escalation of verbal abuse and physical assaults suffered by our members and frontline workers across various sectors. It is a stark reality that demands our immediate attention and action. Reflecting back to 2010 when the GMB launched the groundbreaking safeguarding campaign and chartered the security workers it was a critical moment in our history. This initiative was born out of a pressing need to protect our workers from the scourge of verbal abuse and violent assaults that were becoming all too common in their line of duty. Fast forward to the present day, over 14 years later and the situation has only worsened. It is not just security workers who are bearing the brunt of such despicable behaviour but also our colleagues in the NHS, all support staff, and those working in the retail sector. The rise of

incidents of verbal abuse and physical assaults is deeply concerning and it is high time that we take a stand to protect our members and frontline workers. Today I stand before you to propose a course of a course of action that must be undertaken without delay. The GMB union must rise to the occasion and move the target safeguarding all our members who must update and re-launch the safeguard campaign and take it across our entire union extending it to reach every worker who faces a great risk. Furthermore, we must call upon all employers both in the private and public sectors to sign up to the charter. It is imperative that they commit to creating a safe and secure working environment for their employees and not prioritise paperwork over the wellbeing of those who serve on the front line. In our pursuit of justice and protection for our workers, we must also seek the support of the Labour Party. We urge them to back and adopt our safeguard campaign and charter, giving their commitment to the welfare and safety of workers across the nation. Finally, we must demand proper action ----

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Can you wind up now, please?

MARGARET FINNOCK (Southern): Sorry?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Just say, "I second."

MARGARET FINNOCK (Southern): I second this motion. Thank you.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. (*Applause*) The mover of 133?

SECURE JOBS AND BETTER PAY MOTION 133

133. SECURE JOBS AND BETTER PAY

Congress notes that the government does not provide as much support to the security sector where we have GMB members. Notwithstanding this, security personnel fulfil an indispensable function in upholding public safety and safeguarding valuable resources. It is discouraging to observe the lack of acknowledgement and appreciation for their diligent effort and commitment. As with any other essential worker, they are entitled to fair pay, improved working conditions, and equivalent acknowledgement in recognition of their immeasurable contributions to our society.

It is critical to recognise the psychological and physical strain that can accompany the responsibilities of a security officer. These individuals frequently put in extended periods of labour, including nights, weekends, and holidays, to guarantee the security and protection of others.

They maintain an ever-vigilant stance and are prepared to address emergencies and potential dangers. However, despite the arduous demands of their occupation, security officers are frequently granted inadequate benefits and restricted avenues for professional growth. The absence of adequate support and acknowledgement has a detrimental impact on both the morale of personnel and the overall efficiency of the security sector.

The security sector plays a crucial role in safeguarding our communities, businesses, and infrastructure. However, it has long been undervalued and underfunded, resulting in low wages and poor working conditions for security personnel.

We call on Congress to work with employers to raise the pay of security workers to at least £15 per hour and guarantee that it corresponds with the degree of accountability and peril inherent in their occupational responsibilities.

Enhancing benefit programmes and providing avenues for career progression would not only serve as a magnet for more competent candidates entering the security sector but also motivate existing officers to remain in their positions and achieve exceptional performance.

We need to acknowledge and value the contributions to society made by security personnel to enhance their morale and job satisfaction.

X19 CAMDEN APEX BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

ALASTAIR BLUNDELL (London): First time speaker. First time delegate.

(Applause) Congress, let us hope that we all wake up on the morning of 5th July with a Labour government in power so we can push forward this motion. Of course, all our sectors are low paid workers, all with difficult and sometimes unsafe working conditions, long hours, and often abuse. We also name a few of the low paid workers such as security, care assistants, teaching assistants, key areas in other words, cleaners, and others; in fact, London has almost one million workers on zero hour contracts and they have no idea what they are going to have that day, never mind that week. All these provide a valuable service that we need and in their varied working life we ask them to be watchful, to look after our children, and our grandchildren, keep areas clean, and safe, for us in shopping centres, airports, ports, and our children, most importantly, whilst they are in their care. This motion came from one of the security branches and highlights the Government does not provide support for security workers; in fact, we go further to say they do not support low paid workers at all, but that is what you get with a Tory government. Having been a security officer myself and being required to work over 60 hours plus to take home a living wage I know exactly how unfair some workers are being paid. We must try

and make sure that employers, no matter what part of the country they are in, try to increase pay and benefits for all our brothers and sisters no matter for who or where they work. As a plus side, we would also increase the pension of staff and their mental well being. We call on Congress to work with the Government, employers and low paid sectors to guarantee our brothers and sisters who work in these roles a minimum of £15 an hour. We recognise the role they play in our daily life and furthermore, Congress, I recommend this and let's get the job done. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alastair. Secunder?

ANDREW HEWITT (London): President, Congress, first time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Colleagues, I represent one of the sectors just mentioned in which staff are consistently low paid people suffering the tightest squeezes in household budgets and having to push themselves both mentally and physically to breaking point to earn a decent living wage. It is my belief that for far too long we have marched and pushed for secure jobs and better pay waving our flags and in return getting very little. £15 an hour has been promised by various partners for the last decade. It is high time we demanded delivery. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. The mover of 134.

UNPAID ON-SITE WORKING HOURS MOTION 134

134. UNPAID ON-SITE WORKING HOURS

This Congress recognises the extra on-site hours in the Private Sector not being paid to employees.

Large amounts of our members working in warehouses, airports and distribution centres on zero hours contracts are expected to arrive on-site at least 15 minutes early allowing time to go through security validation points.

Our members are not being paid for this time requirement which results in unlawful deduction of wages due to unrecognised extra hours.

Congress it's time we stand together and put pressure on the new Government to pass a Bill supporting the payment of arriving early to our workplaces.

S71 STANSTED BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

SARAH MILLER (London): I am a first time delegate and first time at Congress. *(Applause)* In the commercial service sector there are several industries where our membership is suffering time inefficiencies to their working day. Let me explain. Across the UK in aviation and distribution centres as an example there is a mandatory security validation point to check all staff. These checkpoints are often understaffed in small areas causing congestion and long waiting queues. Our membership has to arrive up to one hour before starting at their point of employment so that they can successfully get through security. My colleagues can elaborate on several difficulties our membership has to endure from the moment of arrival on site to starting work at Heathrow Airport due to the lack of infrastructure by the authorities. Congress, in this motion we believe all our members who suffer from security checks are suffering a detriment to their pay. Last year there was a case raised against a well-known sports distribution centre by their employees. The case was based on zero hours contracts staff being kept on site and subjected to body searches at the end of every shift, which can take up to 15 minutes and is unpaid. This practice contributes to staff being paid less than the minimum wage. The case was carried and awarded to staff as a deterrent. In aviation we may not be searched at the end of a shift. At every start of a shift we are searched resulting in the same principle as the aforementioned case but in reverse. Congress, we would like your support in this motion to justify the GMB campaigning to the Labour Party for change in the law on the work time directives. In certain industries where checkpoints are made mandatory the employee should be paid at point of entry to site, not at the point of an employer checking pay systems. Congress, support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. Secunder?

BRUCE WILLMOT (London): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Of course, we all have a journey to work and expect to arrive ready to start work for the time we are paid for. How long that journey is a personal choice where we choose to live, where we apply for a job, for instance. However, some of our colleagues in the industrial and commercial sector cannot choose how long it takes to get to their actual place of work rather than the car park. For instance, working on aircraft gates at London Heathrow, Terminal 5, requires them to park a very long distance away from our actual swiping-in point. They have no option but

to queue for a staff bus to take them from their allocated car park to the terminal, quite often that will entail a wait of at least 10 to 15 minutes and at peak times they might not even get on the bus, the first one to arrive, because of poor provision. Then they may have a journey of up to 30 minutes before arriving at the terminal where they then wait again for the security checks. Unlike the passengers, there is generally just one staff security point, often undermanned, so another queue. Once finally through the security, another long trek awaits them on foot, another bus, or a so-called rapid transport. By the time a colleague arrives at their place of work and swiping in it can easily be over an hour from when they first parked their car. After a gruelling 12-hour shift there will then be the same journey in reverse, albeit most of the time without security checks. That means the colleague has been at work for at least an hour-and-a-half all that time being unpaid. That cannot be allowed to stand. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bruce. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? No? Thank you. I will call on Dean Gilligan on behalf of the CEC.

DEAN GILLIGAN (CEC): Hello. Supersub, not dressed for the occasion, a bit rough, and wearing my regional secretary's glasses! Here we go. Vice President, Congress, Dean Gilligan responding on Motions 131 and 133, and 134.

On Motion 131, safeguard, it was not just about reducing violence, it was also designed to shame the security sector into making proper sick pay provisions. We have moved away from the charter-based initiative for the most part, so extending safeguard would not be the preferred method of campaigning. We are looking to launch a new campaign tackling work-related violence across the whole of the UK workforce at Congress. This motion would fit well with that approach. We support this motion with a qualification, that the national campaign will replace the proposed safeguard element.

On Motion 133, the motion calls upon us to work with employers to raise wages in the security sector. The first qualification is to remind Congress of the existing GMB@Work policy, specifically point 3. The employer has different interests than our members. We will, of course, look to work with employers but if it were that simple then employees would already have been paid £15 an hour. The second qualification is that we are looking to

establish a working relationship with the SIA to pick up on industrial-wide issues such as training and regulation of skills.

Finally, on Motion 134, the CEC notes that hourly paid workers should be paid the agreed contractual rates for every hour they are required to work. The union will wish to support the objectives of the motion and the qualification is that there may be in place a mechanism already to address the issue but the motion proposes to make the position more specific.

To sum up, the CEC is asking that Motions 131, 133, and 134, be supported with the qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dean. Does Southern accept the qualification on Motion 131? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does London accept the qualification on Motion 133? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does London accept the qualification on Motion 134? (*Agreed*) Thank you. All those in favour of Motion 131 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 131 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 133 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 133 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 134 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 134 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PRIVATE SECTION

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We will continue now with the motions in the Industrial & Economic Policy: Private Section. Could the mover of Motion 124 please come to the rostrum?

CHARTING A JUST TRANSITION FOR MARITIME PROFESSIONALS MOTION 124

124. CHARTING A JUST TRANSITION FOR MARITIME PROFESSIONALS

Congress believes that the transition to a net-zero carbon future must be a 'just transition' that not only tackles emerging environmental issues but also confronts systemic injustices within the world of work.

Congress believes the transition must be ambitious, timely, democratic, safe, equitable, diverse, funded, and thus "just." It must future proof skills and training for workers, secure workplace safety and protect and enhance pay and working conditions.

Congress understands that in shipping industry achieving net-zero by 2050 will require innovative technologies and the use of alternative fuels, having significant impact on those working in the industry.

Therefore, Congress calls on:

- i. the government to future proof skills and training of maritime professionals by ensuring skills and training are fully accessible and fully funded.
- ii. employers to secure safety at sea through consultation with trade unions in the procurement and design of new vessels.
- iii. the government to work with other member states at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for regulations for the implementation and use of alternative fuels.
- iv. the government to establish a financial safety fund, to support those who cannot make the transition, like the 'Kolenfonds' in the Netherlands
- v. employers working in offshore renewable energy to engage in collective bargaining processes with trade union Svi. government to prioritise offshore renewable energy contracts to shipowners utilising the UK Ship register.

F23 FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

MATTHEW BROWN (Wales & South West): First time attending. *(Applause)* Colleagues, charging a just transition for maritime professionals. As members of trade unions we hold the collective power and responsibility to shape the future of our industry ensuring it remains sustainable, fair and just, for all those involved. The maritime industry is undergoing significant changes with various factors, including technological advancement, environmental regulations, and shifts in global trade patterns. Once these changes bring opportunities for growth and innovation they also pose challenges to our members. As the General Secretary said earlier, just transition is not a buzz word, it is a necessity to ensure that benefits of these changes are shared equitably and no worker is left behind. By proactively

engaging in the transition, trade unions can negotiate job security measures and advocate for the creation of new roles within the industry. As we move towards greener technologies and practices new jobs will emerge in such areas as renewable energy shipping, sustainable logistics, and digital navigation systems. Ensuring our members are at the forefront of these opportunities will secure their livelihoods and strengthen the industry as a whole. As trade union members and activists it is crucial that we actively participate in discussing with industry stakeholders, including employers, governments, hopefully a new one soon, and international bodies. Congress believes the transition must be ambitious, timely, democratic, safe, equitable, diverse, funded, and therefore just. It must future-proof skills and training for workers, secure workplace safety, and protect and enhance pay and working conditions. Congress understands that in the shipping industry achieving net zero by 2050 will require innovative technologies and the use of alternative fuels having sufficient impact on those working in the industry. We welcome the CEC qualification and ask you, please, to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Matthew. Seconder?

LINDA MOORE (Wales & South West): Vice President, comrades, colleagues, a just transition emphasises the need for comprehensive training programmes as this trade union must play a pivotal role in facilitating access to upskilling and re-skilling opportunities. This will empower our members to adapt to new technologies and practices, enhancing their employability and ensuring they remain competitive in the evolving job market. The transition to a more sustainable maritime industry offers a chance to improve working conditions for our members. This includes negotiating for better safety standards, fair wages, and decent working hours ultimately leading to improved quality of life for our members. A just transition is linked to social justice. It seeks to address inequalities within the industry ensuring that all workers regardless of their background have access to opportunities and are treated with respect and fairness. The GMB can champion diversity and inclusive initiatives adopting a more equal industry where everyone can thrive. We should continue to advocate for the rights and welfare of our members. This includes lobbying for supportive legislation, fair contact, and robust total protection. We agree with the CEC qualification to work collaboratively with other unions to help develop innovative solutions that benefit both our members and the environment. Congress, we need to charter a just transition for maritime workers now into the future. Please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. The mover of Motion 128.

**BELL TO BELL WORKING
MOTION 128**

128. BELL TO BELL WORKING

This Branch calls on Congress to support a detailed report into the abuse of Bell to Bell working in the hotel and catering industry. We ask Congress to agree that all workers should be paid from when they work and should not be mandated to arrive at work early to prepare for work and to leave any later than when their shift ends unless being paid for any additional time.

The small amount of unpaid time accumulates, and over a period of time mounts up and encroaches on the worker's personal unpaid time. The practice, we believe, may be widespread in the industry, but we ask that a full report is undertaken nationally by the GMB to present these findings as the basis of a campaign against this abuse which has gone on unabated far too long.

**P05 HOTELS AND CATERING BRANCH
London Region**

(Carried)

MARK WATSON (London): The UK hospitality industry generates £70bn of revenue for the UK every year yet despite this its employment practices lag far behind those of other sectors. One such practice is bell to bell working where workers are paid only for the time they spend at their work stations doing their work tasks. They are not paid for the time they spend preparing to begin their work or for movement to and from their work station. For example, a line cook can spend 15 minutes or more after arrival at work changing into uniform and preparing their work station. After a long working day with typically erratic breaks they will finish their shift. They will then spend another 15 or so minutes cleaning their station for the next day, which, if added up, is about 30 minutes a day, two-and-a-half hours a week, 168 hours a year allowing for holidays or so, and considering a shift may be about eight hours, that is 21 unpaid days a year. For long hours, irregular breaks, early starts and late finishes leave our workers with little personal time and compelling workers to attend work without pay is unfair and exploitative. We call upon the GMB union to investigate the practice of bell to bell working across the regions and if it proves to be a problem, which it will, to make this an issue of priority to champion on behalf of the hospitality workers and fight against the exploitation of workers and improve their lives. Congress, support this motion to end bell to bell working across the hospitality industry. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark. Secunder?

DAVE LEVY (London): Congress, President, Vice President, the case for justice in this motion is clear and simple, we must oppose wage theft wherever it occurs. The CEC response correctly faces the issue in the context of industrial action in an industrial campaign, though much of the work in our branch about wage theft we respond with legal challenges and intend to take it to tribunal by alleging wage theft. My branch, the London Central General, has a number of members in retail and hospitality where employers are shaving time off the period when they are on site and for which they are paid. My co-delegate, Sarah Miller, in moving Motion 134, brought out some egregious examples and clearly this fell between arrival on site and workplaces, with masses on the airports, not so much in department stores in the UK and in London, but the same thing applies. These examples I felt to be powerful and I hope you did too. Maybe demands about paying people when they are on site rather than when they are at their work stations should be included in the new deal and maybe our response would be political, not industrial. It is another issue to consider, though. It is not just about wage theft. It is not just about loss of income. This is often or occasionally used for disciplinary action against individual workers who while they arrive on time or fail to arrive on time are capable of getting to the workplace on time, certainly I have had to deal with those. These people in lone company workplaces are members too and they deserve the solidarity of the union where it is strong. Thank you. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: The mover of Motion 129.

RE-NATIONALISATION OF THE BUS INDUSTRY MOTION 129

129. RE-NATIONALISATION OF THE BUS INDUSTRY

This Congress. Aberdare branch at Stagecoach Aberdare call to place a motion to congress to re-nationalise the bus industry. During the time of commercialism and de-regulation there has been a drastic cut to rural and inter urban bus services, particularly in Wales. These cuts severely interfere with members plans of getting to and from their workplaces, this in turn forces them to spend high percentages of low wages on cars and fuel to run the car which also has a detrimental environmental impact by increasing each and every member's carbon footprint.

We feel it is time these services were reinstated and re-nationalised so that they can be run as a service industry to support the public not feed the members of the executive boards already heavily lined pockets.

The re-nationalisation could also see a nationally negotiated set of terms and conditions of employment for each sector of the industry bringing fairness and equality across the board.

ABERDARE A17 BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

IAN DAVIES (GMB Wales & South West): Vice President, Congress, there is an old saying about buses, we all know it, you wait for ever for one and then two come along at the same time. That is the story from a different age. For many of our communities there is not even a bus nowadays as private companies cut back on expensive routes more interested in putting pounds in shareholders' pockets than looking after its passengers. While shareholders and pension pots win from this deal the British public loses. In particular, it is the most vulnerable that lose out, the elderly, those with mobility issues, the sick and young people. They are the ones who can least afford this system of cutting back services and routes in the pursuit of private profits. Congress, buses are a union issue, our members drive them, our members run them, and the current deal is not good for our members who work on the buses. Different pay rates from area to area and, to be honest, not great rates either. It cannot be right for a bus driver in Cardiff to earn a pound more an hour than someone who lives in the same post code but works at Pontypridd. We need to take action, overhaul this timetable that does not work for working people. It is time for buses to be taken back into public ownership so that they provide for the people who need them. With a nationalised service we can prioritise the service for those who most need them and inequality only rising in a rapidly ageing population we have to act now. As we go green this is only going to become more of an issue. With the increased demand there will be a call for more investment and, Congress, we cannot afford to waste taxpayers' money in tough times and a pay day for private investors. For our members we demand national collective bargaining so they can negotiate the rates across the board rather than have people paid different rates for doing the same job. Congress, it is time to take the buses back inhouse. With all that we face in the next few years this is not a bus we can afford to miss. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder? Formally. Thank you. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? No. I now call Sue Walker on behalf of the CEC. Sue?

SUE WALKER (CEC): Vice President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 124, 128, and 129.

On Motion 124, we support the aims of this motion. Our qualification is that some of the bargaining units expressed may be covered by our sister unions, such as the RMT and Nautilus. We will not encroach on or interfere with those areas of union membership but support their campaigns where appropriate.

On Motion 128, the CEC is supportive of the members wishing to combat encroachment on their time and money through the taxes outlined. Our small qualification is that the starting point for research on this issue should be with evidence gathering from the branches affected and planning and organising campaigns.

Finally, on Motion 129, we are seeking to support the motion with qualifications. The first is to note that the municipal-owned bus companies continue to be successful where they are provided, including in Nottingham, Reading, Edinburgh, and Cardiff. We should in no way withdraw the support that GMB Congress 2023 expressed for defending and extending the municipal ownership of buses. It is also Congress policy to support deregulation of bus services through franchising. It should also be noted that decisions over the future of national and local bargaining arrangements are not matters to be determined by Congress. They must instead remain in the hands of our members who work in the relevant industries.

To sum up, Congress, the CEC is asking for Motions 124, 128, and 129, to be supported with the qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sue. Does Wales and South West accept the qualification on Motion 124? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does London accept the qualification on Motion 128? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Wales and South West accept the qualification on Motion 129? (*Agreed*) Thank you.

All those in favour of Motion 124 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 124 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 128 please show. And against? That is carried.

Motion 128 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 129 please show. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 129 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We move on to Motions 135, 136, 137, 138, and 139. Can the mover of 135 please come to the rostrum and the rest of the speakers in this round of motions please make yourselves ready.

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS TO PASS AN ADDITIONAL DRIVING TEST MOTION 135

135. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS TO PASS AN ADDITIONAL DRIVING TEST

This Congress is aware of the falling standard of driving right across the country.

Bus, Lorry, Taxi and Private Hire Drivers are all classed by Local Authorities and the judiciary as Professional Drivers.

Bus and Lorry drivers must take a specific test and up until a few years ago Taxi drivers in London had to pass a separate driving test.

Raising safety standards for both driver and travelling passengers must be seen as a priority so we are calling for a level playing field across all professional drivers.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH London Region

(Referred)

DAVID MUNYEMWERI (London): Vice President, Congress, a good afternoon to you. I am a first time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Everyone can see that driving standards right across the country have gone down. Professional drivers such as London taxi drivers used to have to pass an additional driver's test to be allowed to drive the streets of London. This has now stopped. How can professional drivers like taxi and private hire drivers be held in high esteem if they cannot get themselves a pass on the normal

motorway. Bus and lorry drivers both must complete a series of tests to qualify for their licence. Raising the standards for both taxi and private hire drivers would increase safety on the road and for the travelling public and the others. Congress, I now ask you to support this motion. I move Motion 135. Thanks very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder please, for Motion 135?

JIMMY GOLDING (London): London Region accepts that we need to improve road standards. If our private hire taxi drivers are to be classed as professional drivers they do need a higher degree of driving awareness and ability. You must agree that we need to make our roads safer and we are asking for national standards for all drivers. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jimmy. Thank you. The mover of Motion 136.

MEDICAL TIMELINE MOTION 136

136. MEDICAL TIMELINE

This Congress demands action for its Taxi and Private hire drivers. Many drivers have been left in limbo after an illness that has prevented them from working.

However once passed fit by their doctor, licencing authorities can take months to allow our driver members back to work.

We must work with our GMB Assembly Members, Councillors and MPs to put in place safeguards that would allow driver members back to work at the earliest opportunity.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH

London Region

(*Carried*)

MIKE TINNION (London): Afternoon, Congress, Madam President. Congress, anything that prevents our taxi drivers and our private hire drivers from going to work must be addressed. It is the responsibility of licencing authorities right across the country to make sure their drivers are fit and healthy. If a driver has been ill that local authority may ask for more information about why was he ill. This information must be gained from the driver's GP or his consultant. Once a driver has responded some licencing authorities are taking months to clear the driver for work, even though their own GP or consultant has passed them fit. We cannot allow this to

continue. We demand that our drivers are given the go-ahead to work within a maximum period of 21 days. They expect us to respond to them, therefore we should have the same reciprocal agreement where they respond the same to us. With the help of those who seek our help GMB Assembly members, councillors, and MPs, it must be taken up actually in every local authority to demand change for the better for our member drivers. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

ALISON CUNNINGHAM (London): President, Congress, I am a first time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) When somebody such as a driver has been off ill and away from work, whether it is a short term or long term illness, they should be made fit to return to work by their doctor or medical professional. If they are fit for work they need a confirmed date of when they can return to work to ensure they can make up for their loss of earnings and in order to pay bills and support their family through our current cost-of-living crisis. There should be no delay in members being able to return to work if they are fit to do their job. It does not happen in other sectors so why does it happen with these drivers and these members. We understand the importance of health and fitness for drivers in their jobs and for the road safety and for their safety, and the public. This motion highlights that there may be an unnecessary delay in these drivers getting back to work when it can also add and possibly cause them further stress, depression, and a relapse of their illness. We need to raise this issue both through the powers that are regulating licensing authorities and maybe the HSE. Congress, to prevent our taxi and private hire driver members from going to work must be addressed. It is the responsibility of every licensing authority to make sure their drivers are fit and healthy, sometimes asking for more information from the driver. Once the driver has responded it can currently take months for the relevant licensing authority to make a decision for a driver member's livelihood. This cannot be right. Please support. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Alison. Thank you. The mover of Motion 137, please?

**JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH
MOTION 137**

137. JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH

This Congress is appalled that our Taxi and Private Hire Driver Members are being treated as a number and not as human beings, with due respect.

Local Authorities across the country demand responses to their threatening letters, with seven or fourteen days but can take months to reply to driver responses, which could lead to loss of earnings with no compensation to the driver.

We demand that Local Authorities across the country, should as a minimum respond back to our driver members within fourteen days of the receipt of the driver's response.

We must work with our GMB Assembly Members, Councillors and MPs to put in place safeguards that would allow driver members back to work at the earliest opportunity.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

MIKE TINNION (London): Congress, taxi and private hire drivers right across the country are being treated like second-class citizens, like a number on a page and not as a valued worker. Local authorities demand a response to any letter that they write to our drivers within seven, 14, or 21-day period with threats of revocation if they do not respond to these letters in a timely manner. However, the local authorities can then take up to a month or more to respond to our drivers' responses leaving our members in limbo not knowing whether or not their livelihoods are in jeopardy. We as a union must seek support for those who seek support from us, our GMB London Assembly members, our councillors, our MPs. It must be right that these local authorities hold themselves to the same criteria that they expect our drivers to conform to. Responses to drivers in a reasonable time must be given for our drivers' peace of mind and not leave them in limbo. I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mike. Well done. Seconder?

TONY CROOK (London): First time speaker, first time delegate. *(Applause)*
As Mike said, we must make sure our members are treated the same as other members with regards to the local authorities taking their time with important paperwork and letters from our members, through which the members can lose their right to earn a decent living. We must now show support for this motion and put the necessary pressure on the authorities to make sure this happens. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tony. Mover of Motion 138.

**HOLIDAY FROM HELL FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS
MOTION 138**

138. HOLIDAY FROM HELL FOR TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS

This Congress to address the difficulties encountered by taxi and private hire drivers, particularly when they are out of the country for periods exceeding three months, including extended holiday breaks. A specific concern is the mandated requirement by certain licensing authorities for drivers or individuals to provide a certificate of good character during the application and renewal process for licenses, such as Taxi, Private Hire, or Operator licenses.

This rule is unjust, and it singles out and affects specific drivers in our country, including those from the global majority. Moreover, getting the necessary certification can be tough, costly, left out of work and, in some cases, even risky.

We demand a policy that upholds fairness and balance, refraining from singling out particular groups within our community. We should avoid having policies that use safety as an excuse for discrimination or creating unnecessary hardships, particularly for individuals who may be less privileged workers in our society.

**S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
Southern Region**

(Carried)

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): President, Congress, on 1st July Transport for London plans to extend its current policy on the requirement of a certificate of good conduct plus character. The policy will change from covering three years to 10 years from the date of a driver's licence application. It will now also include holidays and extended breaks for those who spend three months or more outside the UK during that period. However, no evidence has been provided to support and justify this move. Congress, obtaining that certificate is very difficult, costly, and to find the process can be complex and slow with the requirement in different countries for different processes. Some drivers may need to get certificates from multiple countries making it even more complicated, delayed and dangerous. Congress, our recent survey shows that our members find this policy to be racist and unfair towards certain communities in our society. It clearly targets and impacts those from black, Asian, and global majorities. Congress, there is no national consistency for these requirements for drivers yet Transport for London wishes to go ahead with its plan. Congress, instead of listening to our members Transport for London refers to Home Office guidelines to back up their facts as if it is something that we should

take as comfort. Congress, is this the same Home Office run by squatters from No. 10? Is this the same Home Office that still has the odour of one Suella Braverman? Congress, I find no comfort in Home Office applied fairness. Licensing authorities like Transport for London must take our members' concerns seriously and avoid rules that are unfair and over the top because for the last 14 years the Tory government have influenced and infected departments like the Home Office and Department of Transport with their right wing behaviour and ideas which are now bearing proof as they like it. It is time for the Tories to go. It is time for a fair and balanced taxi and private hire national policy for all. It is time we fight all forms of racism, including indirect racism, which hide behind so-called public faces measures. Congress, together let's try for a future where justice and equality flourish for all. Congress, please support this motion. I move.
(Applause)

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

SYLVESTER IJIEH (Southern): Congress, today I stand before you to express my deep concerns and opposition to these changes by some authorities of this policy that will undoubtedly create difficulties for taxi and private hire drivers. These policies drawn up by the Transport for London and other licensing authorities are not only flawed but also discriminatory and outright racist. The Tory government has granted accommodation to the licensing authorities to introduce a policy of requiring a certificate of good conduct or character, which is deeply problematic. Not only is this certificate costly but it is also difficult to obtain from several countries; in fact, obtaining such a certificate can be dangerous in some cases. If an individual has travelled to multiple countries, such as a world cruise, or extensive travel, they will be required to provide this certificate from each and every single country they have entered. This is not only problematic but also inappropriate and unfair. It is important to note that those who require long holidays, or are individuals with families, friends and connections outside the UK, this policy directly targets communities such as those from a black, Asian, and global background. Any policy that is inherently racist has no place in our society. In a fair and just society policies must be fair. I am sorry it affects so many individuals but there is no evidence to suggest that this policy will prove different. In conclusion I urge you to ask the authorities to reconsider the policy as we must strive for a society that has equality and justice. Congress, please support. I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Mover of Motion 139, please.

**EXTORTIONATE STAFF CAR PARK CHARGES AT HEATHROW AIRPORT
MOTION 139**

139. EXTORTIONATE STAFF CAR PARK CHARGES AT HEATHROW AIRPORT

This Congress notes that on 14 December 2023; one week before Christmas, GMB members were informed by Heathrow Airport that staff car park charges would be going up from £27.28 to £81.05 from 1 January 2024.

With only 2 weeks' notice, this is an extortionate rise of 198% to GMB members, especially those low-paid airport staff struggling to make ends meet due to the high cost of living; food inflation, energy bill rises, and the daily ULEZ charge – an additional cost to handle.

- Heathrow Airport admit that the decision was not profit-based, and lay blame on the Civil Aviation Authority imposing the increased charges.
- The CAA's own regulations state that months of consultation, and notification of changes, are required before implementation. We have seen no evidence of this from any of our contacts.

We call on GMB to get local MPs, Sadiq Khan, and Government to step in and support low paid workers as Heathrow (SP) Limited made £1.344 billion in profit up till 30 September 2023.

We feel that it is these low-paid workers coming to work at all hours, from across London and the wider South-East, that keep the airport running efficiently and help create this profit, and thus their treatment by such a lucrative business is appalling.

**A37 AVIATION SECURITY BRANCH
London Region**

(Referred)

ANDREW HEWITT (London): First time delegate, first time speaker.

(Applause) On 14th December 2023, with only two weeks' notice, and one week before Christmas, GMB members were informed by Heathrow Airport that staff car park charges would be increasing by 200%, a trebling of their parking costs. This is appalling and extortionate of rights for low paid workers in a cost-of-living crisis, a cost that is incurred by part-time and full-time staff irrespective of how often the car park is used, even when off peak or on leave. Heathrow Airport has admitted the increase was not a profit-based decision and claim it was being imposed by the Civil Aviation Authority. The CAA's own regulations require a month of consultation and prior notification before implementation. Local MPs have been contacted. It has been raised with Parliament whilst petitions have been made

through the Aviation Minister. We are losing members over this. I urge Congress to support our members. Our hard work makes the airport a highly lucrative business and demand that Heathrow Airport reverse this change. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andrew. Secunder?

BRUCE WILMOT (London): Just as we choose where to live and where to work, some might say we also choose how we get to work. To an extent that is true. However, I work at Heathrow Airport and working at a busy airport such as London Heathrow brings other challenges. Many, if not the majority of our members, who work at the airport work shifts, many of those long 12-hour shifts. Because we have unsociable start and finish times with those patterns, public transport is just not an option for them as a safe and available alternative to using their car. These members are already smarting from the daily cost of the ULEZ charge and overnight to be presented with a trebling of the fee for parking their vehicle is nothing short of scandalous. At least a thousand low paid workers are affected by this increase. Our members are not handsomely paid and nor are they highly paid individuals. Often they are working on or near minimum wage. They cannot afford such increases especially when the cost of living crisis has had such a devastating effect on an already tight budgets. Let's use the GMB's collective voice to add fuel to our campaign and help us shout louder about this to the re-elected Mayor, Sadiq Khan, and hopefully a newly elected Labour government, for a real deal for working people. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bruce. Is anyone opposing these motions? No. In that case can I call CEC speaker, Dave Flannigan, and while he comes to the rostrum can I call speakers to Motions 249, 250, 109, and 114 to the front please.

DAVE FLANNIGAN (CEC): President, Congress, responding to Motions 135, 137, 138, and 139 on behalf of the CEC. First, turning to Motion 135, the explanation received from the branch stated that driving standards in the private hire and taxi industry had gone down. Further information and research will be needed to uphold this claim. There is also a question as to what matrix this should apply to, such as the old DVSA administered taxi driving assessments. If this is potentially a barrier to employment we would need to engage with the membership nationally on this issue after

conducting further research. Therefore, we are asking for this motion to be referred.

On Motion 137, we are seeking to support the motion with two qualifications. The first is to note that some of the timetables that relate to suspension and revocation of notices are set out in primary legislation and are not at the discretion of local authorities. The second is to acknowledge that while 14 days will likely be reasonable in most cases, a substantive requirement reply may take longer than some other cases depending on their complexity.

On Motion 138, the CEC recognises the injustices that the motion rightly highlights. Fundamentally, though, the requirement of the certificate of good character disproportionately affects people who have family overseas and who are overwhelmingly from a minority ethnic background. We agree that a better and fairer balance needs to be struck across all local authorities. At a national level GMB will work with regions to ensure that local authorities adopt standards that respect the diversity of drivers impacted by any proposed changes and campaign against those that have introduced unnecessary punitive standards. Our qualification is that we will seek to work with the Labour Party through their commitment to ensure there are national minimum licensing standards across local authorities and we will incorporate our work on other private hire and taxi motions into those broader efforts with an incoming Labour government.

Finally, on Motion 139, the CEC would like to make it clear that we support the calls in this motion and join with the branch in calling on Heathrow to reverse this needless and damaging change. In line with the approach to previous motions that primarily affect a single workplace we are asking that the motion be referred to London Region and, if appropriate, Southern, which is better placed to lobby local MPs, the London Mayor, and the Government, to take forward its demands.

Therefore, Congress, we are asking that Motions 135 and 139 be referred, and Motion 137 and 138 be carried with those qualifications set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Does London Region accept to refer Motion 135? (*Agreed*) Yes. Do you accept the qualification on Motion 137? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Does Southern accept the qualification on 138?

(Agreed) Thank you. And does London accept to refer Motion 139?

(Agreed) Thank you.

I will just take the vote on Motion 136, all those in favour please show. Thank you. Any against? That is carried.

Motion 136 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 137 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 137 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: All those in favour of Motion 138 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 135 was REFERRED.

Motion 138 was CARRIED.

Motion 139 was REFERRED.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to motions under Social Policy: Transport and could the mover of Motion 249 come to the rostrum, please.

MAKING DISABLED BUS PASSES 24-HOUR USAGE MOTION 249

249. MAKING DISABLED BUS PASSES 24 HOUR USAGE

This Congress notes that Disabled bus passes are only operated after 9.30am and weekends. Many disabled people work and some full time, also many start work before 9.30am. Not only work but people have early appointments, and others travel in the early hours.

This means that having a disabled bus pass this can't be used for going to work, or travel in the morning for a lot of disabled people. It is almost like being discriminated against, as they get a perk that they are unable to use.

I call upon congress to challenge the DWP to change the rules of using a disabled bus pass to 24 hours. This would entitle anyone that as been awarded one has the opportunity to use the metro bus system to go to work, appointments and many other travel requirements anytime of the day, without restrictions.

L27 LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF.BRANCH

North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

(Carried)

DONNA PADGETT (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): First time at Congress, first time speaker. *(Applause)* I rely on buses to get to and from work every day as in June 2021 regretfully I had a little stroke and upon instructions due to this particular area I had to stop driving. I have since relied on public services. I am eligible for a disabled bus pass. I was hoping at this stage that that would actually cost me little money. However, on the first day of use it came to my attention that I could only use this item from 9.30 to 11 a.m. Like most working people with disabilities we need to be able to be on a bus before 9 a.m. to get to and from our workplace. Because concession form of travel is not valid until 9.30 this leaves an amount of spending, which approximately for myself is up to £500 per year even with a particular pass. Over one in five people in the UK are disabled and in July 2021 Government UK released a statement entitled, Job Transport National Disability Strategy Explained, which outlined the way in which they wanted to apply for more exclusive accessibility and increasing the accessibility and experience for an everyday journey. Essentially, encouraging those who are able to work and want to work with a disability, Congress, but what is the point of offering a pass when you cannot even use it when you need to use it. Many disabled people face obstacles to work and mainly due directly to their disability. This limits the range of their jobs and even the consideration of what they may face. Some people who are disabled face additional obstacles to get to work and have gone back to driving. They may take a longer or even a lower paid job to get to and from work or even part-time. Congress, allowing disabled people to travel on buses for free at any time would help disabled people to work and encourage them even actually to travel further if need be. The Government set the statutory time for a disabled person to use this sort of bus pass from 9.30 to 11.30 am. However, in London you can actually use a bus pass before 9.30. This is not fair for people with less rights and independence of mobility just because they do not live actually in the capital.

Congress, I am asking GMB to call upon the Government to show that they are serious about supporting disabled people into employment by allowing the bus passes to be used before 9.30 in the morning so that thousands of disabled people are able to get to and from work and participate in the labour market. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Donna. Thank you. Seconder for Motion 249?

PHILIP STEER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): As my colleague just said about people who work with disabilities, it is not just about them it is people that want to work that cannot work because they cannot get the jobs because they cannot afford to get the transport. The bus pass would also let them get to interviews that may be at 9 o'clock in the morning. What is the point of paying out money to go somewhere at 9 o'clock in the morning when you have a bus pass at 9.30. There is also a downside to it. The Government want people back in work, disabled people back in work, yes, fine, no problem. To get registered as disabled you have to go for an assessment. If you do not go for that assessment they will not class you as disabled, it will not lead towards your transport, or living allowances so you are in a worse situation to start with. You need to get to these appointments. If you don't get to them you are stuffed. Full stop. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Philip. Thank you. Could we have the mover of Motion 250, please?

**FREE TRANSPORT FOR THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THEIR
DEPENDENTS
MOTION 250**

**250. FREE TRANSPORT FOR THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE AND THEIR
DEPENDENTS**

This Congress believes that victims of domestic abuse and their dependants should be able to avail of free travel to facilitate them to a safe and stress-free journey to their refuge by the introduction of a scheme similar to the "Ask for Angela" scheme where anyone who is feeling vulnerable can identify themselves to hospitality staff who will facilitate their safety. With proper training and advice for Bus Drivers, Taxi Drivers etc they would be able to offer similar assistance to these Victims. We feel that the introduction of this scheme would remove some of the concerns and stress of the victims when they decide that they need a safe refuge and may be forced to flee to safety at short notice with no means of payment or other means of travel.

We call on the GMB to campaign to secure this vital programme.

**U88 ULSTERBUS BRANCH
North West & Irish Region**

(Carried)

MICHAEL BRADY (North West & Irish): The *Ask for Angela* scheme was introduced by Lincolnshire County Council to offer support in bars and other venues such as gyms and leisure centres for those who have been under threat of sexual violence and assault. The scheme is known throughout the UK and it is gaining momentum internationally with countries such as the USA, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand now using the scheme. However, those under threat of violence, sexual or otherwise, do not always have ready access to a safe place or venue to avail of the scheme. Many assaults and incidents such as coercive control in a court and victims going home to places not familiar to them, as in the case of Angela Kalfman, who the scheme is named after, was assaulted by her husband during a domestic dispute and died in hospital two days later. Her husband was convicted of manslaughter. During such incidents of domestic abuse or assault many victims must leave quickly with nothing but the clothes they are wearing and without the means to enable them to get themselves away from the threat. Colleagues, bear in mind it is possible that incidents such as these could easily affect a friend or family member and it is for this reason that a scheme similar to the *Ask for Angela* may be implemented into a public transport system, which will allow victims to remove themselves from the risks they are facing as quickly as possible and the scheme ensures that the public transport workers are provided with suitable and adequate training to enable them to provide safe transport for victims in a place of safety such as a police station or specialised refuge or shelter. I call on Congress to urge GMB at national level to spearhead a campaign in support of this motion which will involve lobbying politicians at local and national levels to introduce such a scheme. We also need to encourage public transport companies to buy into the scheme to ensure that unfortunate victims of domestic abuse are given a vital lifeline to remove themselves from potentially a life threatening situation. Please support the motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael. Secunder?

ALAN MALCOLM (North West & Irish): Congress, as a union we should be lobbying for free transport for victims of domestic abuse and their dependents, a measure akin to the previously aforementioned successful *Ask for Angela* scheme. Domestic abuse victims often face significant barriers when trying to escape dangerous situations with transportation being a major obstacle and providing free transport we can offer them a lifeline ensuring they have safe and acceptable means to shelters, support services, or the homes of trusted friends and family. This initiative would

demonstrate our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of our society, offering them a tangible route to safety and support. Just as *Ask for Angela* empowers individuals to discreetly seek help in public venues, free transport for abuse victims would be a powerful tool in a collective effort to combat domestic violence and provide hope and security to those in desperate need. Congress, I urge you to back this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alan. Does anybody wish to speak in opposition to those motions? No? Then I can ask Carol Robertson of the CEC to respond, please.

CAROL ROBERTSON (CEC): President, Congress, responding to Motion 250 on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supportive of the aims of this motion. The CEC's qualification is that the submitting branch would be well placed to have a trial campaign with their employer campaigning for this provision locally. Campaigning support and advice can be sought regionally and nationally. If successful locally this would provide excellent learning for a potential future nationwide campaign. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol. The CEC are supporting Motion 249, so all those in favour of Motion 249 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 249 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Does North West & Irish accept the qualification on Motion 250? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you. All those in favour of Motion 250? Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 250 was CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to our last motions of the day before the statement, under Industrial & Economic Policy: General, and can the mover of Motion 109 come to the rostrum, please.

AMAZON AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT MOTION 109

109. AMAZON AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

This Congress notes that Amazon made £222 million from government and other public sector contracts in 2022. At the same time, Amazon refuses to recognise GMB union and has spent millions of pounds on union busting. We further note the commitment from Labour Party leader Keir Starmer at our 2023 Congress: "There is a framework for public procurement, at the heart of which is dignity and respect, and we expect to see unionised jobs and support unionised industries."

This Congress believes that it is wrong for public money to be paid out to companies that deliberately conspire to obstruct and deny workers' rights to union recognition. It cannot be right that workers who pay UK taxes see their money go to companies who refuse to sit down and negotiate with their trade unions.

We therefore resolve to campaign to commit the next Labour Government to:

- Outlaw public sector contracts being granted to companies that do not recognise trade unions.
- Ensure that this legislation applies to every part of a corporate empire so that for instance, Amazon Web Services Ltd would not be allowed to bid for public contracts if Amazon UK Services Ltd or any other arm of the entity refuse to recognise trade unions.

These commitments must form part of the Labour Party manifesto for the next general election. Only by doing this can we implement Keir Starmer's pledge to introduce a framework for public procurement of dignity, respect and unionised jobs.

A25 THE AMAZON WORKERS' BRANCH Midlands Region

(Carried)

GARFIELD HYLTON (Midlands): Good afternoon to the President and the table, and the delegates in attendance. My name is Garfield Hylton. I am a Midlands Region delegate. I am a second time delegate and a second time speaker. *(Applause)* As Congress knows Amazon made £222m from the Government and other public sector contracts in 2022, yet Amazon refuses to recognise GMB union and has spent millions of pounds on union-busting to block statutory recognition in 2023. The moment the application was submitted they went on a recruitment drive and hired 1,300 new staff which led to that application being withdrawn. The workers had to regroup and push again, talking to our brothers and sisters sharing our hopes and dreams of better pay and conditions. We spent a further eight months planning our strategy and then executed it this year running up 1,400 members, almost half the current workforce, we encouraged non-members to vote, *We Want Yes*, and Amazon has gone into overdrive, they want No.

As I speak at Congress today, we have been subjected to five weeks and counting of daily briefings, messages as you enter the building, in the toilets, in the cubicles, managers seeking to find indecisive ones to get them to cancel their GMB membership, constantly bombarding day and nightshift with the message, "You are free to join or not to join a union, why pay while you wait for a ballot. You can cancel your GMB subscriptions any time by scanning the QR code with your phone." Amazon Associates have relabelled this by using my voice in the internal messaging system. When we say something that is deemed to be inappropriate the message is removed. Censorship is applied so no one else can see what has been said. Here is an example from me but it was not deleted this time. I want to point this out. On the feedback form provided by Amazon, entitled, ballots can be decided by one vote, it states that no one should tell us how to vote. I pointed this out to HR in the meetings who told us that if we are undecided we should vote No. I counter, "Shouldn't that be simply, you decide how to vote and not HR saying, 'Vote No.'" The general manager has come back on my reply, "Hi, Garfield," because we are quite good friends at this point in time, "all Amazonians should respect associates' right to vote without influence and I believe I did not mention this in all teams ..." Regards, Gareth." Give the GM credit, he is really trying now but as I told him in the past conversation it is four years too late.

Let me now bring the motion to a conclusion. We further note a commitment from the Labour Party Leader, Sir Keir Starmer at Congress 2023: "There is a framework for public procurement, at the heart of which is dignity and respect, and we expect to see unionised jobs and support unionised industries." Congress calls upon Sir Keir Starmer and his Labour Party to address the employer abuse of the position of power over the workers to give us hope and belief that we the workers are important and valued members of society who support and promote the economic growth for the UK. We don't demand much but we certainly want more than 50p. We want fair pay, treated with dignity and respect, and stop being slave-driven. This Congress strongly believes it is wrong for public money to be paid out to companies that deliberately conspire to obstruct and deny workers' rights to union recognition. It cannot be right that workers who pay UK taxes see their money go to companies who refuse to sit down and negotiate with trade unions. We therefore resolved a campaign to commit the next Labour government to outlaw public sector contracts being granted to companies that do not recognise trade unions, ensure that this legislation applies to every part of corporate empires, for

instance, Amazon Web Services Limited would not be allowed to bid for public contracts as Amazon UK Services Ltd or any other arm of the entity which does not recognise trade unions. These commitments must form part of the Labour Party manifesto for the next general election. Only by doing this can we implement Sir Keir Starmer's pledges and use the framework of public procurement with dignity, respect and unionised jobs. Now is the time to rein Amazon in and make them pay. I am putting my faith in you, Sir Keir Starmer, and incoming Labour Party to make good those words from my past conversation. Thank you. I move this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well said, Garfield. Secunder, please?

CEFERINA FLORESCA (Midlands): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Today we stand united in our unwavering commitment to the fundamental rights of workers across our nation. The motion before us strikes at the very core of what it means to champion fairness and dignity, and I am proud to say that the CEC stands firmly in support of this aim. It is indeed unconscionable that public funds are being funnelled into the coffers of employers like Amazon who flagrantly disregard the basic rights of their workers. The DMD substantially believes that those who deploy insidious tactics and have spent millions to stifle workers' efforts to organise should not be rewarded with lucrative public contracts. This is not merely a matter of equality, it is a moral imperative that demands our collective action. For years the GMB has been at the forefront of this vital campaign tirelessly advocating for change and through a legal arrangement with the National Policy Forum we have secured crucial commitment aimed at reshaping the landscape of public procurement. Moreover, the words of Sir Keir Starmer during last year's GMB Congress resonate deeply with our cause. His words are not just rhetoric. They signify a seismic shift in the way our society perceives and values the rights of all workers. In conclusion, let us move forward with renewed vigour and determination. The road ahead may be fraught with challenges but we are fortified by our collective resolve and unwavering dedication to the cause. Together let us continue to be the voice of the voiceless, the champions of tenacity in an ever changing world. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, and perfect timing, too, with your first speech. Well done. Mover of Motion 114, please?

FIT AND PROPER CHECKS ON BUSINESS OWNERS MOTION 114

114. FIT AND PROPER CHECKS ON BUSINESS OWNERS

Congress notes that it is inherent feature of Capitalism that some businesses succeed whilst others fail.

Whilst there are many reasons why a business may fail, its unacceptable that Business should fail due to dubious business practices by the owner.

In too many cases like this, it's the employees who pay the price whilst owners prosper however we believe its time to stop rewarding those at the top who fail.

Just because something is legal, or at least not illegal, does not mean it is right and alongside any checks, failure to pass the checks should result in heavy punitive punishments.

We therefore call on Congress to support this motion to call on the Department for Business and Trade to introduce a stronger system of checks to ensure owners and directors are fit and proper. Such checks should take into account not only the legalities of business practices but also the morality and impact of how these people operate.

Z22 SOUTH YORKSHIRE AND NORTH DERBYS BLMKS North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

(Carried)

DANIEL HULL (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* Bear with me. It is the first time I have done anything like this before. I am very proud to be in the only sector where I have looked after 200 colleagues working on the bins. I move the Motion 114. I get involved in the union because when we stand side-by-side we can win for the workers and stand to be counted because I want to do my bit for the lads. I want them to be treated fairly and I would get them the best trade union action. I want to make sure that we get good quality service and run the bins properly but the job is made harder when the odds are stacked against us. That cannot be the right when companies and the bosses are responsible when they break the rules for profit at the expense of workers. My colleagues deserve a fair wage for a fair job and a fair service in jobs should be not just for profit. Congress, please support this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Daniel. Well done. Seconder, please?

JAMES TATE (North East, Yorkshire, & Humber): First time speaker, first time delegate. (*Applause*) Congress, only a few days ago if you had told me that I would be stood here speaking on a motion at a major trade union event I would not have believed you. I did not really know what a trade union was and I certainly did not come from a political family in this world a thousand miles from my own. That changed when I noticed that my local GMB was changing, changing in my workplace through active campaigning that started to change and things were happening for me and my colleagues at work for the better. Becoming active in the union has given me a new perspective and made me want to play my part in changing things for the better. That is why I am seconding this motion to call out all those businesses that take the Mick out of their workforce every day, talking about the individuals who are committed purely to profit without any social conscience or care for their communities, and will put everything second to profit causing suffering and hardship, sometimes failing, and using shady and dubious business practices and getting away with it as the employees suffer. With a new government looming we have a chance to make sure that these company owners and directors are subject to strong checks and balances. I have seen what we can do locally when we are member-led, active, and driven by issues that matter to our members we can make a real difference. I know that by using our collective strength we can do that nationally as well. Congress, I can honestly say that being a part of the union has changed my life and I now want to be part of changing many more lives. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, James. Anyone opposing those two motions? No? I will ask Brian Farr to give the CEC response, please.

BRIAN FARR (CEC): Responding on Motion 109 on behalf of the CEC. The CEC fully supports the aims of the motion. It is beyond belief that public money is being spent on employers that do not respect the fundamental workers' rights. GMB has seen union-busting and those spending millions to stop workers organising should not get public contracts. We have long campaigned on this issue and the GMB secured commitment through the National Policy Forum on social (*unclear*) including union access, recognition in contracts, and holding strategic government suppliers to account. Sir Keir Starmer responded to questions from Amazon workers in Congress in 2023 and said: "There is a framework for public procurement at the heart of which is dignity and respect, and we expect to see unionised

jobs and support unionised industries.” Our qualification is that the GMB has a formal role set in the Labour Manifesto under clause 5 of the Labour Party Rule Book during which we do not have the power to mandate the Labour Party and that our decision will need to be taken based on the overall balance of the comments in this document.

Before I close I will say, I don't know how many of you remember Paul Kenny but we fought for procurement then when Paul Kenny was in office, when they shut all the Remploy factories, but believe me this union will fight for procurement for as long as there is breath in Gary's body and as long as there is breath left in Barbara's body. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brian. Does Midlands accept the qualification on Motion 109? Yes. (*Agreed*) All those in favour of Motion 109 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 109 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: CEC is supporting 114. All those in favour of Motion 114 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 114 was CARRIED.

CEC STATEMENT ON THE FUTURE OF TRADE UNION EDUCATION

CEC STATEMENT on The Future of Trade Union Education

Education is, as often has been said, power. The GMB is committed to delivering effective, first-class training and education for both our workplace representatives and for our lay members.

In terms of training for our lay office holders, we will continue to combine direct delivery by REO's (Regional Education Officers) and other staff with the use of GMB trained and inducted tutors from partner education providers.

In order to pursue this option, we will campaign for the restoration of full funding for the training of all types of GMB workplace representatives and post-holders.

We will also campaign for the restoration of full funding for trade union and adult education courses at Level 3, across all our constituent nations.

We also wish to expand the scope and purpose of our lay activist training.

We recognise that the way to sustain the democracy of our union and root it effectively in the workplace is to develop a network of activists who are fully equipped with leadership, people,

and campaigning skills, and with a broad and deep understanding of the GMB's values, aims and purpose, rooted in political economy.

To that end we will be developing an accredited GMB trade union studies diploma that will equip our lay activists with a broader understanding of our union, our movement, and our ambitions for the future. An education programme that will develop critical thinking and study skills and place the GMB's fight to make work better in the wider political and economic context.

As agreed by the National Lifelong Learning Committee we will use the resources from our National Lifelong Learning Fund to support this initiative.

We welcome the continued commitment of the Welsh government to the Welsh Union Learning Fund and will continue to work with it for the benefit of our members.

Similarly, we understand that the Union Learning Fund had different impacts across our Regions and that it did provide gains for some individual members.

We support the idea of funding being provided directly to the trade union movement to deliver learning that benefits our members, in accordance with the principles outlined above.

However, we do not believe that the ULF (Union Learning Fund) as it functioned in England is the best model for this. The English ULF was an agency of the government working to delivering government targets. It did not provide funding for any courses for members. It only ever funded project workers, project managers and operational costs.

Though some £12 million was received by the GMB from 2009 onwards, £8 million went directly to administrators and managers. Course fees, disbursements to members, and the gaining of professional and academic qualifications were negligible and appeared so marginal to the purpose of the Fund that they were not separately accounted for. Moreover, a substantial part of ULF funding was devoted to supporting roles at the TUC connected with monitoring and managing the delivery of government directed targets.

In effect, the GMB was being treated as an arm of the state, subordinated to its priorities as opposed to our own. It is notable that the TUC, itself, is now distancing itself from this model and is unlikely to push for the restoration of the ULF, as it previously functioned.

The GMB, certainly, does not believe that such a model fits with the basic principles of the union or represents a responsible way to spend our members money. We need to think clearly and purposefully about what trade union education and our reps training looks like, restoring our industrial focus, pride in the history and values of the Labour Movement, and raising levels of political consciousness among activist base, folding questions of the ongoing fight for equality and social justice into all that we do. Within this context, we note the groundbreaking success of the GRASP programme in all of these areas and seek to extend its principles throughout the union.

'Educate – Agitate – and Organise' have been the watch words of the Movement at its points of maximum influence and success. They need to be restated, today, as part of a well-financed,

disciplined, intellectually rigorous and exciting developmental journey for all of our members. As ever, the way is forward.

THE PRESIDENT: We are now debating our first CEC Statement of the week on the Future of Trade Union Education. A delegate from each region will be invited to speak on the report and I will call the regions in alphabetical order once the statement has been moved. The two motions, Motion 45 and Motion 46, have both been withdrawn. Can I ask Kevin Buchanan and Kevin Jones to move and second the statement on behalf of the CEC and then a speaker from each region come down to be ready at the front? Thank you.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (CEC): Thank you, President, Congress. Knowledge is democratic and priceless yet it is hard won. Wealth, privilege, and capital are never going to provide us with the tools we need to restructure the existing order in favour of the working class. We need to build afresh and to do so in our own image with our members' interests at heart. The CEC statement sets out a roadmap for doing precisely this. Building on the successes of the past, acknowledging the gains made in Wales, the devolved government is delivering opportunities for our members and seeing our lay activists as our most valuable asset. We acknowledge and appreciate all those who have already progressed to our training programmes and who have helped in poor subjects with competency through our structures and government funded schemes.

Most pressingly in the here and now our members need to be trained and educated in order to equip them to fight in a challenging and constantly changing terrain. This means supplementing core functional skills and thinking afresh about the provision of language courses for those members new to these shores and so many diverse global majority backgrounds for whom English is not a first language. This means looking again at the ways in which we can equip each and every member with a thorough understanding of our own union, our history, our democracy, and governance, and within the context of the workplace enabling them to represent members when and whatever circumstance confronts them.

It also means arming them with a grounding in political economy that allows them to see both the how and the why that underpin the world of work and how we change it collectively. This requires doing the work for ourselves and not relying upon governments of any complexion to shape our thoughts and responses. This will not be an overnight process but one

of which re-examines the nature of reps training which enables the potential to flourish and which matches training and personal development with trade union education and an appreciation of the collective.

We looked at expanding roles for the lay member Lifelong Learning Committee recognising the wonderful work already undertaken day in, day out, by our regional education officers and envisage the establishment of our Level 3 trade union studies diploma run through the Northern College alongside all our current divisions. Pilot programmes will in time grow into larger courses rolled out across all regions and all levels of the union but for now this is a good place to be in through our recognition that knowledge is power. Increasing our skills base is a sure way to grow in our union and there should never be barriers set upon our ideas, our dreams, or our aspirations. We lose when we are self-centred, when we disparage learning and intellect, when we consider the battlefield of ideas and ideals is for others and not for us.

We win when we consider the power of words and when we are in power and fuelled by visions of a better, more egalitarian, future. As a consequence I would urge Congress to back the CEC Statement on education as a practical, powerful, and a means of fashioning and housing and strengthening trade union education. The absence of reason all too often produces monsters in the darkness of the night who have denied human rights and trade union liberties, who have silenced voices and squandered ability, knowing the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Our role as trade unionists is to distil the clouds that have choked the breath in our movement since 1979 and to ensure that true democracy of ideas flourishes for everybody, raising standards across the board, shedding light into the darkest corners of the land and making our union and our movement once again a shining beacon that cannot be ignored and which is uniquely valued by our members, their families, and their workmates. Congress, I move the Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Can I ask the other Kevin to the rostrum, please?

KEVIN JONES (CEC): President, Congress, sometimes it is best to do exactly what it says on the tin. As a union we need to be clear in differentiating

between education and training. The programmes complement one another with necessary different approaches and lead through to a different result. The CEC Statement recognises this reality and seeks to refocus the union's policies towards delivering what the activists need to grow with skill sets. The GMB is a campaigning union, and all other unions, and this requires a fundamental shift in our thinking and we need to see a serious funding commitment. We need full investment in our own people and an approach that will carry us through to a position with a deep and lasting agreement, with history, culture, and development of the labour movement.

The Statement particularly gives our members a deep understanding of the issues, the level of this union and of the wider labour movement. We need to recognise the government funding from Westminster is unlikely to restore Union Learning projects. It was never designed to reflect the outcome that we as trade unionists passionately needed and desired. The CEC statement provides an analysis of past practice and current thinking. It seeks to track a roadmap to a future with a complete skill base with better, higher, and meaningful training in an educating process, working with the experiences, possibilities, and the aims of the labour movement. We acknowledge that with the continuing development and vibrancy of our region's Learning Fund we welcome the game changing initiative of these education officers and involving the role of lay members led by committees.

Congress, we have set out our very best that we think they want, and the CEC Statement matches theory with practice and commits the union to address education as a priority. It offers the prospect of adding one more link in the chain of (*unclear*) and I urge you to back it. I second the CEC Statement. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Can I have speaker from London Region, please?

NICOLA WARR (London): London Region broadly welcomes the CEC Statement. In the London Region we have a strong and varied core of programmes for workplace representatives hampered only by the swingeing cuts to the funding for adult education imposed year on year by the Conservative government. The call for the restoration of full funding for training of reps and post-holders is central to ensuring that we continue to have the ability to train and educate them. It should, however, come with

real consideration as to how this funding would be administered and distributed. The CEC is correct that the old model of the Union Learning Fund would not be and never was fit for purpose. It is staggering to see the level of funding, £12m, that was received by the GMB produced so little in real benefit for our activists and the wider membership. Much of that money was spent on achieving and enforcing government-set outcomes which often did not reflect the needs of our movement. The TUC may well be distancing themselves from the old model but it must now stand front and centre and come up with a sustainable and visionary approach to the education funding. The loss of nearly all the trade union study centres once the focal point of collaborative learning and activist development is something that should be reversed at the soonest opportunity. Only full funding will see their return. The TUC needs to establish itself as the leading proponent of the training and education in an organised labour movement and ensuring that all funding is directed for the benefit of TU members and not wasted on bureaucracy and government box ticking initiatives. In addition to funding we also have many of the answers and solutions right here in our own union, developing our own programme, training resources, and people without an over-reliance on funding from external sources. The GMB has and is running some great programmes, as mentioned in the CEC statement. Leadership training and some regional initiatives back up the vision of restoring pride in the value of the labour movement. What is needed are more resources to develop these further. Let's not repeat mistakes of the past, campaign for a full return of funding for TU education but this time let's ensure the benefits go directly to our activists and our members. The CEC statement looks to take us exactly to that point.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nicola. A speaker from Midlands Region?

DAVID WALLACE (Midlands): Congress, President, for me it is good to see that the union is starting to develop courses that are going to train our activists who want to develop their careers to go on to become officers of the union, councillors, or MPs as the Level 3 qualification will then give them access to university, but to get to this level some of our members will need help at Level 2 so they can access Level 3 but there is nothing in place to help them achieve this and it is important Level 3 to these members. Educating our members is not all about what they can do in the GMB but it may also help them developing their work role if they move up to supervisory roles and, hopefully, they will be more sympathetic to our union members. It says in the report that the academic and professional

qualifications from the Lifelong Learning Fund were negligible. Is there any wonder. There were only three out of eight regions who had budgets and if the members of the regions who did not have budgets did not know where to look on the website they would not know about the courses that were on there for them free. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. A speaker for North East, Yorkshire, & Humber?

DAVID GRAY (North West & Irish): President, Congress, as we are aware the GMB already supply excellent training for our reps through the regional education officers. However, throughout the history of the labour movement there have been people who have gained an education in order to advance the aims of the working class. With this objective in mind the CEC Statement refers to lay activist training and is asking the GMB to campaign for full funding for trade union and adult education at Level 3 across the whole of the UK. To that end we are of the opinion that the proposed GMB trade union studies diploma will increase the confidence and ability of our lay reps and benefit working people generally. We support the continued commitment by the Welsh government to the Welsh Union Learning Fund and will campaign to have this extended to all countries across the UK. However, it is GMB's contention that the previous Union Learning Fund in England was not fit for purpose in that it was controlled by a government agency and not by the trade unions, and there is a caveat indeed of the £12m received since 2009 by the GMB £8m went to administrators and managers, and therefore not to the benefit of working people and eventually producing a low level of positive outcomes. The old model did not fit the principles of the GMB. We need to construct a GMB model for fairer education that reflects the aspirations of our members and the general working class movement. Therefore, to use the old battle cry, educate, advocate, and organise. We need to get support for our people in order to get them into positions where they can influence how power is used to the benefit of the workers. That means giving our members the education, ability, and confidence, to control the leaders of power whether that be in local councils, Westminster, or the Cabinet, and the aim of improving conditions for working people. Who knows, perhaps we can emulate the giants of the labour movement in the past, people such as Nye Bevan who through education rose to the benefit of working people in this country with the National Health Service. So, colleagues, let's put the slogan, *Power to the People*, into practice and I believe this is a first step to achieving this aim. Congress, please support the report. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. A speaker from Scotland?

ELIZABETH AIRNS (GMB Scotland): Congress, reps have a crucial right between the union officers and the wider membership. Without reps the whole workplace and union structure falls apart. The more investment in the development of our reps giving them the skills and knowledge they need the more the union will grow and the stronger it will be. It has to be the right kind of education that meets the needs of our members, not the needs of the state. It must give power between workers and the workplace so that it can be applied beyond, it must educate members not just in the labour movement in the past but also in the future. This is how the union becomes modern and relevant to workers on the shop floor. This is how our union thrives. Congress, vote for the Statement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elizabeth. Southern?

KIM MARSHALL (Southern): Congress, President, first time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, I have benefited from some of the excellent training delivered by Southern Region, training to assist me in my role, giving me more in depth knowledge of the legal Acts, standards, and policies, helping me to provide the support members deserve. Whilst we welcome the statement we believe it should go further to address the basic skills that many of our members may lack through no fault of their own. Our members have the right to opportunities that education can bring. This starts with good skills, quality training, and access to development opportunities. The Tory government destroyed the Union Learning Fund in England and it is important that we do not lose sight of the longer-term solutions to plug the gaps that are left. Education is the starting point and a core component of the entire trade union Movement. We no longer have any labour education institute colleges which delivered excellent education for the working class, not one. This needs to change. We need to bring back colleges to continue educating, upskilling, and supporting the working class to strive for a better life. There are no trade union education colleges and that will be ending the partnership agreement with TUC at the end of July. Congress, this needs to stop. Funding must not be cut and we need to continue to fight for this funding because the future of our current union reps deserve to receive first-class training and education. As is often said, *Education is Power*. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kim. Wales & South West? I have missed a region out, haven't I? I know I have. Go on, then. I knew I had done something wrong.

MICHAEL WILSON (GMB Wales & South West): First, I would like to thank the CEC for its continued support of what we are doing in Wales with the Wales Learning Fund. It is all about giving our members an opportunity they may have missed out in school. We work as a team very, very hard in making sure it is what our members want, not what the employer wants. As a team we work constantly and tirelessly on this. We supported members at Wilco, Everest Windows, and many other organisations, when they have been treated disgustingly by their employer. As I say, in Wales we like to think we are there or thereabouts but there is always room for improvement. We have many case studies in which people have been made redundant and we have been there for them, given them new skills, CV writing, confidence building, and many of our members who have been made redundant in Wilco have found new jobs thanks partly to the support that we have been giving them. It is not just about the high level stuff, it is at the level of the learning needs, often that can be essential skills, but then that is the foundation to go on and build education, get that confidence, apply for that promotion that our members have not had the confidence to apply for before, they have all the skills but they do not have that little bit of confidence, so we employ specialist teachers to come in and give them all the skills that they need and confidence building to make that change in our members' lives. I would also like to thank our senior management team in the region. They give me all the support. I know when I talk to my opposite number in Unite in Wales they do not get anything like the amount of support I do. We manage it locally. It is a fantastic team. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Is there a region left? I have lost one. Everyone has spoken? Yes? Thank you, everybody. We will now take a vote on the CEC Statement, all those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

The CEC Statement: The Future of Trade Union Education was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: That does bring us to the end of Congress today. Thank you everyone for making the first day such a success. Hold on before you leave! Thank you to everybody for keeping to time. Please be in the hall in good time tomorrow because it does start at 9 a.m.

Tonight there is the President's and Vice President's do in the Bournemouth Pavilion, Westover Road. The entrance, apparently, is opposite the Premier Inn. Doors will open at 8.45 for a 9 p.m. start. There will not be food so we have enough time to go and have something to eat but there will be lots of dancing. I will see you there. Thank you, delegates. That concludes this afternoon's Congress.

Congress adjourned.