

**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 FOUR
(Monday, 12th June 2024)

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FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY, 12TH JUNE 2024
(Congress assembled at 9.00 a.m.)

FOURTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
WEDNESDAY 12TH JUNE 2024
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.00 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, can I call Congress to order? Thank you. I hope you all had a good evening last night. Malcolm and I enjoyed going round to delegation meetings. Thank you very much. Can I now call Karen Dudley to move SOC Report No.6, please?

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT NO.6

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress – excuse my voice, I did have a good night last night. (*Applause/Cheers*)

Withdrawn motions: Congress, this is to confirm that Composite Motion 18, Support Special Education Needs, Teaching Assistants and Support Staff Working with SEN Children, from Southern Region, was withdrawn yesterday.

The SOC has also been informed that Motion 225 Air Today Gone Tomorrow, from North East, Yorkshire, & Humber Region, has been withdrawn.

Bucket collection: The amount collected yesterday by London Region for BLISS – Babies' Life Support Systems – was £583.60. (*Applause*) Plus two euros!

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No.6.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. I do not expect any opposition to that, so can I put SOC Report No.6 to the vote, please. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, Karen.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6 was ADOPTED.

THE PRESIDENT: Again with the bucket collection regions will be informed of the charity and the amount and it will be for the regional committees to add and decide how much they want to contribute to top up that amount, and I am sure they will.

CAMPAIGNING ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: I have an announcement about today's campaigning. As today's bulletin – this is not my bulletin – email, please check it. It says, please join us on the beach by the pier at 1.45 p.m. following the fringes, for a campaign rally and then a march to demand a new deal for Asda workers. There will be some campaigning but, hopefully, your regional secretaries have told their delegations what they can get involved in. Thank you.

REGIONAL VIDEOS FOR GMB SCOTLAND AND WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

THE PRESIDENT: We will now play the regional campaign videos for GMB Scotland and Wales & South West Region, and can I ask the speakers for Motions 56, 57, 60, and 62, to come down, the ones that were transferred from yesterday to today. Thank you.

Videos played to Congress.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE PRESIDENT: Another two brilliant and rousing videos to start the day with and there is so much going on across GMB led by our members. Thank you for those videos. We move on and start this morning's debate with the motions carried over from yesterday under Employment Policy so can I ask the mover of Motion 56 to come to the rostrum, please?

MANDATORY MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY TRAINING MOTION 56

56. MANDATORY MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITY TRAINING

Congress notes an increase in cases of mental health disability discrimination and the detrimental and devastating effect this can have on our members. When examining the reasons why the increase is happening, many, many examples point to managers not being trained in, or do not have experience of dealing with mental health disability including neurodiversity.

Employers, in both the public and private sector will point to the fact they have robust policies in place to ensure our disabled members are not discriminated against but, as we know, having a policy in place that is not either fit for purpose, or is simply a tick-box exercise, is unacceptable and will not provide the protections our members are entitled to.

To this end Congress calls upon our local and national negotiators, where GMB is a recognised trade union, to review all relevant policies and robustly argue for mental health disability training to become mandatory for all managers. Congress also calls upon the next Labour government to bring forth legislation that compels employers to implement mandatory mental health disability training for all managers.

B46 BUCKS COUNTY BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

NICOLA WARR (London): The CEC acknowledges that mental health training is often of poor quality and encourages all negotiators to ensure what is provided by employers is of high quality. However, my branch has seen all too frequently employers that do not offer any mental health disability training and they certainly do not understand how our members are being discriminated against because of their lack of training and understanding in this area. All too frequently they are falling foul of the Equality Act 2010. I would like to share some examples of cases that I have represented in the last

three months. All have been diagnosed with neurodivergent conditions, such as ADHD, Dyspraxia, and BDT. One member was disciplined and issued with a written warning because they failed to phone and speak to the manager when they suffered a mental health crisis whilst working from home, despite the fact that they sent an email to the manager as they could not speak due to hyperventilating. When challenged it was clear to me the employer did not understand the finer policies that put a disabled person at a disadvantage. It was a clear case of indirect discrimination. The employer had also failed to put in any reasonable adjustments and made this a conduct issue.

Another member declared to their manager their mental health disability. Within weeks of doing so she was made redundant. The managers involved in the so-called consultation admitted when challenged they did not know what the litigation is or indeed why it should have incorporated the reasonable adjustments requested in the consultation. The member was then terminated with immediate effect.

My final example has left a very bad taste in my mouth. It is, unfortunately, a reflection of what many employers are doing to their employees. I have described this company on many occasions as having the gold standard of delivering mental health training in the workplace. I was gobsmacked to discover just how appallingly they had treated one of our members with a mental health disability. After enduring 18 months of discrimination from her managers she was put on a performance increasing plan for her conduct to manage her out of her job. I cannot say too much more as this is an ongoing case which is likely end up in the employment tribunal. What hope do we have, Congress, when a mental health training provider can get things go wrong. Enough is enough. No more employers' excuses trying to worm their way out of their responsibility with lies, putting the onus on the employee to tell them what reasonable adjustments they need, basically passing the buck rather than sit down with the employee and have a discussion that is beneficial, not detrimental, and even when occupational health ahs advised what reasonable adjustments would be beneficial failing to implement them, stating, "We have a policy that covers that."

I am sick of employers discriminating against our members because of their lack of understanding of their own policies and the law, saying, "We have never discriminated against you," does not mean you are not doing it, and saying, "We didn't know." It is just not justification. The only Latin I know is *ignorantia legis nulla excusatio est*, ignorance of the law is no excuse. This is why mandatory mental health disability training for managers is very important together with legislation that compels employers to implement it. Congress, please support. I move. (Applause)

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

CORAL FINEMAN (London): First time delegate. (Applause) We are all aware the negative effect that poor management can have on our members. This is often amplified for people with a mental health condition. It is not acceptable then that managers seldom have the right skills to support people when they are experiencing problems with their mental health. This is why we need to insist on mandatory mental health training for managers. Managers need to understand the law on mental health

and how to provide ongoing support to those who need it. Sometimes people will disclose that they have a mental health diagnosed condition but managers also need to be able to spot the possible signs of a mental health problem. More companies are investing in mental health initiatives and implementing employer wellbeing programmes but this needs to be extended to include mandatory manager training too. Managers are at the front line dealing with our members so it is here that the work needs to be focused. This is so important to improve our members' experiences in work and to reduce incidents of discrimination. Congress, please support this motion. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Coral. Thank you. Mover of Motion 57, please?

EQUALITY TRAINING FOR NEW REPS MOTION 57

57. EQUALITY TRAINING FOR NEW REPS

This Congress agrees that it is important that all new workplace reps are taught every aspect of our union. Of what we do within our union around Equality. This was asked at an equality conference to the panel and we were told this would be happening, but it hasn't. We were the first union to do a Trans & Non-Binary toolkit, how many of the people in this room know that?

Some regions do their own form of training but it's not across the board.

1. At least one day of the training to be around equality training.
2. Members of the REF to talk about their stories.
3. The same training to happen across all the regions.

Branches do a lot around equality in the workplace but if new Reps don't know, how are they supposed to represent our members, especially in a hearing around an equality issue.

Our union has a mass of different people from different lifestyles who we could all learn from.

B02 BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH Midlands Region

(Referred)

ANGELA GILRAINE (Midlands): Good morning, President. Good morning, panel. Good morning, delegates. I hope you are all okay this morning and not too hung over after last night. Sorry. Behave! I am also a workplace rep for BA2 Birmingham. Can I just ask you a question: how many delegates when they first did their training had any form of equality training? Can you put your hands up? *(Show of hands)* You were lucky. You are the only person. I think we need to be more proud of our union and the equalities team are amazing that we have, and this is no knock for them. I just feel that I want you reps, I would like you reps to be able, kind of like, to learn the history of our union and learn what everybody has gone through within their life as a workplace rep. For me – I do not have it in the speech – we could use, and we do not have to bring the people in but if people from our reps are comfortable enough to speak to our new reps, even if it is one

day, then what I am talking about is that we are status quo across the whole of the union, so for every new rep across every region it is status quo, that they are all singing from the same song sheet, and it is universal. That, for me, is to show our life experiences, me as a gay woman, all the “isms”, you know, and how people can be discriminated against in the workplace. That is why I brought this motion forward but we need to do it universally, so if we are in a room like this and somebody from one region meets somebody from another region, they go, “Oh, I got this booklet on my reps training and stuff. Isn’t it good?” That may, hopefully, increase more people to become reps so that we can support our members. That is why I put this in. That is why I forwarded it. Please support and let it be universal and maybe people from maybe this delegation can actually sit down and we can all work on a booklet for our new reps, especially telling them about the history of this wonderful union. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angela. Seconder?

ARSHAD HUSSAIN (Midlands): Good morning, President, Congress. First time delegate, second time speaker. *(Applause)* Today I wholeheartedly second the motion. Our GMB representatives serve as the backbone of our organisation, tirelessly advocating for our members. They are the foot soldiers of activism and unwavering support for members. Let us not be mistaken, we are engaged in a war against employers who persistently erode the rights of our members. In this crucial moment we must equip our representatives with the tools they need, quality education, development, and unwavering support, with our goal to transform these foot soldiers into a formidable special forces unit. At the outset of their journey we must emphasis equality, diversity, and inclusion. Let us ensure that these principles are ingrained from day one. Together let’s push employers beyond mere tick boxes and create lasting change. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Arshad. The mover of Motion 60?

BREASTFEEDING/EXPRESSING MILK WITH FLEXIBLE TIME AT WORKPLACES MOTION 60

60. BREASTFEEDING /EXPRESSING MILK WITH FLEXIBLE TIME AT WORKPLACES

Breastfeeding after the first few months is still important to babies’ health because mothers milk contains important antibodies and special factors which are there to help their body develop – these are absent from formula milk.

The longer they breastfeed, the greater the health benefits for mothers and babies.

If mothers wishes to continue breastfeeding, on their return to work after maternity leave, they need to inform the employer in writing that they intend to continue breastfeeding and will require privacy and a little extra time at breaks to express milk and storage or, if possible, allow feeding of babies, if the baby is within a reasonable distance of the workplace.

Therefore, in line with health and safety guidance, a GMB recognised employer has a duty to assess and manage any risk to mother health or their baby's health and provide adequate facilities for breastfeeding

or allow mothers to go out if mother's arranged childcare is close to work so they can breastfeed during breaks, and before / after work.

To do all that, we ask that we ensure that GMB recognised employers allocate flexible working hours that are arranged around a mother's breastfeeding needs and provide adequate private and clean facilities for breastfeeding mothers to express milk and somewhere for it to be stored. We also ask that our reps ensure that risk assessments relating to pregnant women, new mothers and women who are breastfeeding are carried out properly and in good time.

According to doctors or midwives' recommendations, recognised employers should allow mothers the time that they request to fulfil any required breastfeeding according to the needs of the child.

Additionally, negotiating this for GMB recognised companies would be good because:

- More mothers will return to work, which reduces the need to take on new staff and train them.
- Children who are or were breastfed are healthier. So, this will mean fewer visits to the doctor and less time off to care for sick children.
- Women who breastfeed are healthier and are less likely to suffer certain serious illnesses, such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer or osteoporosis.
- Better support for workers will increase morale and loyalty, and the business or organisation will become more attractive to future employees.

P17 PLAISTOW BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

ELIZABETH BOOKER (London): I do not intend to go through the benefits of breastfeeding, the motion mentions some of them. Ultimately, the choice to breastfeed, bottle feed, or a combination of the two, is for the mother to make. This choice is not as simple as a decision on whether to send your child to school with a packed lunch or dinner money. It involves the fundamentally intimate bodily requirement for women and the decision to continue breastfeeding after returning to work must be motivated by the needs of mother and child, not by employers' profits or productivity measures. Protection for breastfeeding mothers are already provided in law and should be incorporated into the risk assessment carried out for returning mothers after maternity leave. As we know, where employment law requirements are unclear, some employers will exploit the uncertainty to provide only the bare minimum. Although guidance in the Health & Safety Executive recommends providing a suitable place to rest where mothers can breastfeed in a clean, private room, with access to a fridge, employers are not legally obliged to do more than just provide a place to rest. The Health & Safety Executive has explicitly stated in their guidance that a toilet is not a suitably hygienic place for mothers to breastfeed or express milk, just shows you the lack of respect that has so often been given to workers who choose to continue to feed their babies after returning to work. Employers may be obliged to conduct a risk assessment for new mothers but as long as the HSE guidance remains just that, guidance, and the law allows the minimum rather than adequate provision, women will continue to receive the minimum. Let's make sure that our members get more than the

bare minimum. We want to see employees with GMB recognition agreements following Health & Safety Executive guidance in force, providing flexible hours allowing breastfeeding rooms, and providing a private, clean facility for breastfeeding mothers to express and store their milk. Congress, I move this motion. (*Applause*)

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

SARAH MILLER (London): First time delegate, my third time speaking. (*Applause*) Under the Fair Labour Standards Act most nursing employees have the right to reasonable break time and a place other than a bathroom that is shielded from view to express breast milk while at work. This is available for up to only one year after the child's birth. The UK government recommends exclusively breastfeeding for the first six months of life and to continue alongside the introduction of food. The WHO, the NHS, recommends continuing for up to two years, or beyond. So when returning to work after 52 weeks of allowed time we are not protected. In many other European countries breastfeeding mothers have a statutory right to paid breastfeeding breaks or a shorter working day if they have a baby under 12 months. The UK has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the entire world. This is down to a lack of awareness and lack of consistent support. This lack is detrimental as all employers must carry out that risk assessment. It is subjective to the employers having awareness, knowledge of the risks associated with new mothers of breastfeeding and the flexible time required. I cannot explain to you how difficult it was for me to try and explain to two male managers what mastitis and engorgement is. It should not fall on me, a new mother. It should be clear in the policy. I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sarah. The mover of Motion 63, please?

PAID MENSTRUAL LEAVE MOTION 63

63. PAID MENSTRUAL LEAVE

Congress we are advocating for the implementation of paid menstrual leave for women in the United Kingdom. Menstruation is a natural and unavoidable biological process that affects approximately half of the population. Despite this, the stigma surrounding menstruation persists, and many women feel ashamed or embarrassed to discuss their menstrual health needs with their employers. This can lead to absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased stress and discomfort for women in the workplace.

Paid menstrual leave would help to address these issues by acknowledging menstruation as a legitimate health concern and allowing women to take time off work without fear of financial penalty. This would enable women to manage their menstrual symptoms more effectively and reduce the impact of menstruation on their work and personal lives. Moreover, it would promote gender equality and empower women to take control of their reproductive health and well-being.

Several countries, including Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia, have already implemented paid menstrual leave policies, and the UK should follow suit. By taking this step, the UK would be a leader in the fight for gender equality and women's health rights.

Please support this motion to consider the implementation of paid menstrual leave in the UK to support women in the workplace and promote gender equality.

L26 RICHMOND AND WANDSWORTH
Southern Region

(Carried)

CHARMAINE WESTON-PORTER (Southern): First time delegate, second time speaking. *(Applause)* This motion is very dear to my heart as I am also afflicted. I cannot begin to explain to you the stress and anxiety I face every month trying to make sure that my menstrual cycle does not impact my work. This sort of category has equality and workplace wellbeing and is finally receiving the seriousness it deserves. Menstrual health is an integral part of a woman's health. It remains shrouded in stigma and misunderstanding. Many women experience physical symptoms during the menstrual cycle, this includes severe cramp, migraine, fatigue and emotional distress. Despite this the vital expectation often pressures women to maintain the regular productivity levels at work leading to undue stress, reduced efficiencies, but paid menstrual leave acknowledges the reality of these experiences. It is not about giving women special treatment but recognising a biological process that significantly impacts the ability to work effectively. By having paid leave we demonstrate respect for the health and wellbeing promoting a more understanding workplace culture. Several countries and companies have already adopted the policy with positive results. For instance, Japan have had menstrual leave since 1947, and more recently companies in countries like South Korea, Indonesia, and Zambia, have policies.

These examples show that menstrual leave is both suitable and beneficial. It reduces absenteeism and increases overall productivity by allowing women to take the necessary rest without the fear of economic loss of job security. Moreover, implementing paid menstrual leave can have a broader social implication. It can help normalise conversation about menstrual health, breaking down the stigma, and encouraging a more informed and supportive society. It can also contribute to gender equality, creates an environment where women's health issues are addressed with the same seriousness as other health concerns.

In conclusion, paid menstrual leave is not just a progressive policy but a necessary step towards a fairer and more inclusive workplace. It respects the unique challenges faced by women, promotes a healthy working environment, and paves the way for greater gender equality. Congress, let us move forward with empathy, understanding, and commitment to creating a workplace where everyone can thrive. Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charmaine. Just before I call the seconder I should have called Motion 62 as well in this group. It was put back on the agenda. If the speakers, mover and seconder, are ready for this motion, please come down the front. If you are not, don't worry we will get it back on the agenda at some point later. If you are ready come down. If you are not, could I have the seconder for Motion 63. please?

ALLISON SIMON (Southern): Madam President, Congress, first time delegate, first time speaking. *(Applause)* Congress, live and living experience is one of the best ways to try and understand what it is like in someone else's shoes.

Ali is aged 21. Having to work when I am experiencing my period symptoms is extremely difficult. My energy is often low. I am working while having painful cramps and headaches that affect the quality and efficiency of my work. It can also be uncomfortable sharing these troubles with my line manager.

Shapi, aged 47: in the first couple of days I suffer from pain in my hip and lower back, my inner thighs ache, a throbbing pain spreads down my leg. I also have painful cramp in both knees. During my lunchtime duties I must be on my feet for over an hour. The pain is often severe and affects my duties, and sometimes I must sit down. Due to heavy periods I feel light-headed and sick. Sometimes the pain is so unbearable I have to go home early and not completing my shift.

Congress, about 80% of women experience period pains at some point in their lifetime. You can suffer from period pain from as early as your teens, if not before, right up to the menopause. Menstrual leave would allow members to take time off without feeling guilty when period symptoms like cramp, nausea, dizziness, become debilitating. For many workers menstrual symptoms make carrying out simple daily tasks difficult. Congress, most women try to push through and go to work anyway. This is often because they feel the reluctant to disclose menstrual related symptoms to their superiors for fear of being perceived as weak or incapable of doing their jobs. This policy will allow members to recover in their own time without forcing them to deplete their annual leave. It will also help break social stigmas in workplaces. Congress, by supporting this motion you empower women who want to be at work to put their best foot forward. Please support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Allison. Do I have a mover for Motion 62? No? Yes? Good. Please come to the rostrum, Taranjit.

MANDATORY DISABILITY PAY GAP REPORTING MOTION 62

62. MANDATORY DISABILITY PAY GAP REPORTING

Congress notes that people with a disability continue to be disproportionately at high risk of being in poverty and on a low income, with more than three million workers with a disability earning less than £15 an hour. They are also more likely to be on zero-hours contracts and are twice as likely as non-disabled workers to be unemployed.

An analysis by the TUC in November 2023 showed the pay gap between non-disabled and workers with a disability is now 14.6% higher than a decade ago. Women with a disability face even bigger pay penalty of 30%- £3.73 an hour.

Congress notes that people with a disability effectively work for free for the last 47 days of the year.

Congress is asked to:

1. Continue to highlight and campaign to end the discrimination faced by workers with a disability in the jobs market.
2. Continue to highlight, raise awareness and campaign on mandatory disability pay gap reporting.

E10 EALING BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

TARANJIT CHANA (London): President, Congress, a report by the TUC in November 2023 said that the pay gap between non-disabled and workers with a disability is now 14.6% higher than 10 years ago. People with a disability effectively work for free for the last 47 days of the year. From September 2023 a report by the EHRC in the United Nations said that people with a disability continue to be at a high rate of poverty and income. If disability pay gap reporting was a mandatory legal requirement we would then know who bosses employ and how much they pay them. Congress, workers with a disability should not be employed on a lower wage or worse terms and conditions or excluded from the job market. Workers with a disability earn less than £15 an hour and likely to be on a zero hours contract. So, Congress, please support this motion to ensure that employers produce statistics on this crucial and much needed gap for those with a disability. I move. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Is there a seconder? Formally. Is that from the region? You cannot second your own motion. Is that formally for the region? *(Agreed)* Thank you very much. Okay, I do not see anybody in opposition so I will ask Viv Smart to give a response from the CEC and can I ask movers and seconders of Motions 21, 22, 31, 33, 35 and 38, to come to the front, please.

VIV SMART (CEC): Responding to Motions 56, 57, and 60. The CEC is asking that Motion 57 be referred and Motion 56 and 60 be supported with qualifications.

On Motion 56, although neurodivergent conditions are not the same as mental health conditions, workplace problems can be similar. They encourage negotiators to ensure that training provided by employers is high quality, co-designed, or delivered by people with personal experiences and promotes the social model of disability. It should also emphasise the employer's duties under reasonable adjustments and how they can make work better for people with mental health conditions. Our qualification is that it is not Congress's role to determine the content of individual collective bargaining claims which must be in the hands of members affected. The CEC is asking that Motion 57 be referred to the National Equality Department to correspond with the Regional Education Officers Network and confirm the current equalities content in new rep training. Rep training is always evolving and under constant review. All regions do provide equality training to reps. It would not be appropriate for training content to be dictated nationally. Sometimes content varies across regions and nations to reflect different legal contexts. Training has been developed and provided by the National Equality

Department, including omnitrans and non-binary campaign choices. This can be provided when requested by branches and regions. It is then delivered by trans and non-binary members some of whom sit on regional equality forums. The National Officer of Women's Campaign Units, joint work on race and gender equality within a progressive organising and campaigning framework and will be available to all officers and reps. The National Race Officer is also developing a GMB anti-racism training package for all GMB lay members and employees in accordance with the Dr Elizabeth Henry recommendations.

The CEC is supporting Motion 60 with qualifications. The qualifications are, first of all, that whilst it is commonly accepted that breastfeeding is a benefit to birth parents and children not all of the claims in the motion are agreed by all researchers. We must ensure those who can breastfeed are not prevented from doing by their employer whilst being sure not to stigmatise those for whom breastfeeding is not an option. The motion contains a mixture of calls some of which are on top of what is required by law. Through campaigning regions and branches should be sure that employers meet their legal obligations and are decent employers for new and prospective parents. Regions and branches can also run campaigns for increased rights, with facilities and time off for breastfeeding workers. In doing so they are welcome to contact the National Equality Department and Women's Campaign Unit for support.

To sum up, the CEC is asking that Motion 57 be referred and Motions 56 and 60 be supported with qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. I will take the two motions first that the CEC are advising to support, Motion 63 and Motion 62. All those in favour please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

Motion 62 was CARRIED.

Motion 63 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Midlands, do you accept refer back of Motion 57? (*Agreed*) Thank you. There is no vote needed on that.

Motion 57 was REFERRED.

THE PRESIDENT: London, do you accept the qualifications on Motion 56 and Motion 60? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I will put those two to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 56 and Motion 60 please show. Thank you. Anyone against? They are both carried.

Motion 56 was CARRIED.

Motion 60 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

UNION ORGANISATION: FINANCES & CONTRIBUTIONS

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to the first motions for debate this morning under Union Organisation: Finances and Contributions. Could I have the mover of Motion 21, please, come to the rostrum.

MOTION TO ENSURE THAT ANYONE REPRESENTING GMB MEMBERS IS PAID AT LEAST THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE WHILST DOING SO, BE THAT FROM THEIR EMPLOYER RELEASE, BRANCH OR REGION **MOTION 21**

21. MOTION TO ENSURE THAT ANYONE REPRESENTING GMB MEMBERS IS PAID AT LEAST THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE WHILST DOING SO. BE THAT FROM THEIR EMPLOYER RELEASE, BRANCH OR REGION.

This Congress recognises that members at some point will need support from their Workplace Officers. This can be at times when members are facing disciplinary action, when a member needs support returning to the workplace, through to making the workplace a safer place to work.

Congress notes that not all members work at fully recognised workplaces where they do receive paid release. This causes pressure on Workplace Officers to decide how much time they can give to members before, during and after meetings. A WPO needs to be able to keep up with their training to keep them at the forefront of the fight for members.

This Congress will be aware that the National Minimum Wage (2023-2024) was £10.42 per hour rising to £11.44 (2024-2025). Whereas we support this increase to the NMW when WPOs are representing members at another location from their workplace or branch office this can involve protracted periods of unpaid time. Whereas we support the GMB's National Office to cover loss of earnings up to £60 a day this equates to on average less than 6 hours a day. Once a person goes over this they are eating into their own money and an 8-hour day at the current NMW is losing £23.36 of their money this can be a big chunk of a low-paid member's income and if a WPO is away from the workplace for longer to attend training or meetings this will add up significant.

Congress notes that Unemployed Representatives and Branch secretaries can not even claim this. So are left subsidising the membership support themselves or being forced to give up their roles and responsibilities, at the detriment of the membership and the Union.

We ask this CEC to consider scrapping the £60 maximum a person can claim for loss of earnings and increase the payments to the minimum of the NMW for the hours that a person is away from their workplace or job role conducting Union business, and to look at how those representing members whilst not employed can also be funded to sustain their expertise for the benefit of our membership

E35 EXETER AND NORTH DEVON BRANCH **Wales & South West Region**

(Referred)

REBECCA JONES-WESTCOTT (GMB Wales & South West): Colleagues, we recognise that this motion has an error in the amount that representatives can claim by representing members in the workplace other than their own. We accept and take note

of the £80 per day that can be claimed but still affirm that the motion has content and points that we need to move forward to sustain our knowledge and dedicated representatives, and ensure our members have the support they well deserve. Congress, day after day we have committed representatives travelling from workplace to workplace supporting members and representing them to the best of their ability. We need to ensure they are not rewarded but fairly reimbursed for their time and services given to our members.

GMB members often feel a profound sense of empowerment and security when they are effectively represented and supported by workplace organisers. Members feel empowered knowing that their representatives are at their side and often portray a positive message to non-members and use their power to organise.

Congress, we have many representatives out there who give their dedication to hours of work outside their normal working day, as many of their employers prevent them representing members outside their workplace. They are not asking to be paid for their services just to be given a fair reimbursement for the hours they dedicate to our members. Colleagues, we want to campaign and organise and officers will be given the opportunity to do this more effectively if we were to give a little more to our representatives who devote their time to members.

Given the referral of this motion we appreciate that the CEC will have an opportunity to review the amounts payable under the current arrangement and will consider and take advice on how any payment to those not employed can be made. Congress, we have amazing representatives who give hours and hours of their time by representing members and supporting our officers. Let's embrace this motion and support the CEC in devising a process and platform where many of us are recognised for what we do and not out of pocket for doing what we love. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rebecca. Seconder?

JONATHAN STRACHAN-TAYLOR (GMB Wales & South West): Colleagues, as the motion states we recognise that members at some point will need the valued expertise and support from their workplace organisers. We also recognise that not all members will be at fully recognised workplaces where access to support and advice are not at hand. With strong representation our members feel more secure in their jobs. They trust the union, which are their representatives, workplace and branch reps dedicate valuable time to our members. They do this because they care and they do it because they have a passion for what they do. Many times our reps put the union first before themselves and this leads to jeopardising the chance of promotion and wider job opportunities because they are trade union advocates.

We should recognise that our representatives are skilled and knowledgeable individuals and we need to sustain their talents by looking at measures to ensure they are not out of pocket and they are paid what they deserve. Colleagues, we acknowledge the referral stance from the CEC and how the CEC set payment scales for expenses and subsistence and now have an opportunity to review the amounts payable under the

current arrangement and to consider and take on how any payments to those reps who are employed, or not, can be made to them. We welcome the position and, hopefully, look at future allowances regarding company reps where we can build a fantastic core of representatives to allow our officers the time to campaign and organise. Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jonathan. Thank you. The mover of Motion 22?

FAIR PAYMENT FOR ACCOMPANYING REPS MOTION 22

22. FAIR PAYMENT FOR ACCOMPANYING REPS

This Congress recognises and applauds the vital role played by accompanying reps in delivering high quality representation for our members.

This Congress also supports the principle that anyone receiving financial remuneration from the union for delivering services for the union, should not be doing so at a rate below that of the real living wage as defined by The Living Wage Foundation.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH Midlands Region

(*Referred*)

ALAN HICKMAN (Midlands): Good morning, President, Congress. First time delegate, first time speaker. (*Applause*) We all know that reps are the lifeblood of the union, fighting tirelessly in workplaces for our members. What about workplaces that do not have union recognition? What about workplaces that do not have union reps? That is where company reps come in. Accompanying reps are the reps that give up much of their free time to represent members in these workplaces without union recognition or union reps, and usually with little or no members to support them. As you can imagine managers in these workplaces can be aggressive and anti-union or just frighteningly ignorant of their employees' rights. Accompanying reps fight for those GMB members most vulnerable to unfair working conditions and I am sure they inspire those members and make a spark to light a fire in many workplaces to fight for union recognition.

Congress, how are these amazing reps compensated, many of which are some of our most trusted and experienced reps – £40 for the morning, or £80 for the whole day, paid once every three months if the union is willing to pay them. So, if you turn up at 8 o'clock in the morning, spend four hours fighting hard for one of our members, you get, well, £10 an hour before tax. So, Congress, I ask you, how can we call out employers for poor wages if our own union cannot pay the people fighting on the front lines as union activists a fair wage. Support Motion 22 and give the accompanying reps what they deserve. Thank you. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Alan. Seconder?

ROSEMARY COOPER (Midlands): Good morning, President. Good morning, Congress. Second year delegate, second year speaker. *(Applause)* Today I call Congress in support of the motion on accompanying representatives to invest in the excellent work and guidance our accompanying reps do, with their compassion and commitment for making everything simple to enable them to support us, so can we as Congress support them in taking time and effort to be amazed at what excellent work these accompanying reps do for us in GMB. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rosemary. Thank you. The mover of Motion 31, please?

INTRODUCTORY RATE FOR NEW MEMBERS MOTION 31

31. INTRODUCTORY RATE FOR NEW MEMBERS

This congress supports an introductory rate of contributions for new members for 12 months, subject to salary threshold, matter of details to be resolved by the CEC decision.

C21

Wales & South West Region

(Referred)

REBECCA JONES-WESTCOTT (GMB Wales & South West): Colleagues, it is with great enthusiasm that I stand here today and move this important motion that we believe will shape the future of our union and our members. In today's rapidly changing economic landscape the importance of union membership cannot be overstated. Our union exists to protect the rights of workers, ensure fair wages, and provide a supportive measure for all new members, and potential new members. We understand that the decision to join a union is not always easy, especially for those just starting their careers, low paid workers, and potential members experiencing financial difficulty. This is why we need to support this motion to introduce an introductory contribution rate for new members. By lowering the initial cost of membership we remove a significant barrier that may prevent potential members from joining. This reduced rate will make it easier for the individual, particularly those new to work, young members, all those in precarious employment situations, to experience the numerous benefits the GMB offers. A low initial cost makes the union more acceptable, inviting more workers to become part of our union.

Colleagues, we are all aware that a large membership strengthens our collective voice. Each member brings unique perspectives and energy, and empowers our union. As our members grow so does our influence enabling us to negotiate for members' rights with more voices united under our GMB banner. We can achieve more brilliant victories for GMB members everywhere. The introductory contribution rate is not just a financial strategy, it is a commitment to inclusivity, growth, and the future of our union that represents the GMB dedication to making GMB union membership accessible to all workers regardless of their financial situation.

Colleagues, this motion is an opportunity that stands for solidarity, support and collective action. Let's embrace this initiative with hope, knowing that it will pave the way for a stronger, more inclusive union. Together we can ensure that every worker can benefit from the protection, support, and empowerment that our union provides. Please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rebecca. Secunder?

SUZANNE WILLIAMS (GMB Wales & South West): Congress, we welcome the CEC stance to refer this motion to give the CEC the opportunity to assess the effect of a 12-month introductory rate for new members albeit subject to a salary threshold and to plan how this could be applied. Congress, by joining the GMB at an introductory rate new members immediately access a wide range of services and benefits from professional development opportunities and legal assistance. A positive experience can lead to long-term loyalty and when new members see the value the union provides at an affordable cost they are more likely to continue their membership at a standard rate. We would, of course, need to ensure a robust system is in place to ensure the members are moved over onto the standard rate once the 12 months have expired.

We believe by supporting this motion there is massive potential for membership growth and by offering the lower rates the GMB will stand out among others. This is particularly effective in sectors where union membership density is lower allowing us to expand our reach and support even more lower paid workers. We can continue to fight for them as we have been over the past years, significantly more since we have adopted the campaigning and organising strategy. This motion will place the GMB as an innovative and inclusive union committed to adapting our union to the needs of all workers. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Suzanne. The mover of Motion 33?

REDUCED GMB CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS MOTION 33

33. REDUCED GMB CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS

Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) work and are paid for working 9 months annually, but currently pay GMB contributions for 12 months a year. That does not seem to be very fair or equitable.

We ask the GMB to review this situation and consider reducing the membership payments for LSAs to 9 monthly payments a year, or alternatively reduce their 12 monthly contributions by 25%.

R27 REDBRIDGE BRANCH London Region

(*Referred*)

STEPHEN JONES (London): Good morning, President, Congress. We appreciate the fact that the CEC has acknowledged the fact that the LSA members (learning support assistants) in schools having to pay 12 months' contributions when they only get paid

for nine months. It is unfair and inequitable, especially so as apparently this is not something that applies across the country. There are different arrangements in different parts of the country. For many of our LSA members having to pay a full year's contribution for nine months pay is too much and some of them will decide to leave the GMB. Also potential new members may not join or may look to join other unions with more flexible or accommodating rules. By reducing contributions for LSAs to reflect their earnings may attract more new members thereby cancelling out any shortfall in the income to the GMB due to a reduction in the membership contributions.

We appreciate that the CEC wants to look further into these issues and trust they will refer and report back to us once they have concluded their investigations. I recommend this motion to Congress. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stephen. Secunder?

TRUDI TEW (London): President, Congress, two years ago I spoke at Congress about the price of school support staff, very close to my heart. I am talking all support staff, not just TAs, love TAs, but they are all a crucial of the school jigsaw to educate your children and your grandchildren, and the future of this country. Sadly, still, many have several jobs and are using food banks to make ends meet. At the start of 2024 GMB had 100,000 school support staff members. Fantastic, but there are more for us to recruit. My school visits tell me that many cancel their membership or do not join due to cost. That is not because I do not convince them they need to. Some of you may find that hard to believe but it is true. So, if you can support this motion and we can find a way to enable more school support staff to afford membership we can recruit and organise with greater strength and make a difference to more of these unpaid, undervalued staff, who make such a difference to the education of the future of this country. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Trudi. Thank you. the mover of Motion 35?

RETIRED MEMBERS MOTION 35

35. RETIRED MEMBERS

This Congress is requested to review the position of our retired members and act accordingly.

We are calling for subscriptions to be paid at one pound per week as this would ensure that retired members of this union become paying members and would then be able to hold a seat in their own right, on Councils, Committees and the CEC. There are seats for Race, Disability, LGBT+ and Young Members.

Our union is an industrial union, it is vital that retired members have a seat to ensure their commitment and experience is included in our great organisation.

One pound per week would boost the union's financial position. A seat for a retired member would comply with equality that each and every one of us is committed to.

**A17 ASDA BRANCH
Midlands Region**

(Referred)

ANGELA GILRAINE (Midlands): Madam President, panel, Congress, I will keep to my notes. Where would we be without our retired members? They are valuable for campaigns and never have to rely on facility time and have so much to give to our union. Their knowledge and experience that has accumulated over the years is priceless and we can always go to a retired member to ask advice. It is important that we recognise this. It has been said that some have read the rule book from start to finish. Congress, if you believe it and if you need more information on this, please ask Dave Kempson or Brian Adams from the Midlands Region, what a class act.

Brothers and sisters, please do not leave our retired members out of it. Unity is strength. Let us use the talent as our young members and retired members can gain so much knowledge from each other. Let us use their skills in every way possible. Congress, we need to have a retired members' seat. The retired members do not mind paying £1 a week, which will also increase money coming into the union. It makes sense being inclusive. We are calling for a much needed review, nothing else, a review. They are an ageing workforce and, remember, most of us hopefully will reach retirement age one day. That is why I am moving this motion. Please support. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Secunder?

DAVID WALLACE (Midlands): Good morning, President, Congress. My comrade has covered most of the points in this motion and I agree with the comments made and I am asking Congress to please consider these important implications. As previously said, we are calling for a review only. Then this will be disclosed and debated. The finances of our organisation are vitally important, always and more so in these uncertain times and equality is at the forefront of our union. The time is here for change. This is what this motion is calling for, a seat for our retired members in their own right. The structure of our union has changed from seven regions and not nine, and the dynamics have also changed in the public and private sector. It is now time to change and improve our retired members' association. We are calling for a pound a week subs so all retired members are paying members of this great union. Congress, I second this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. The mover for Motion 38, please?

**SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING FOR REPRESENTATIVES
MOTION 38**

38. SUPPORT FOR WELLBEING FOR REPRESENTATIVES

We are proud that GMB nationally grew as a Union in 2023 however we need to be prepared to support those representatives doing the ground work, supporting and representing our members.

Nationally, we no longer utilise Unionline to support us with legal advice when supporting our members,

GMB needs to ensure our workplace representatives are supported fully to retain that growth. Some of the casework and campaigns can impact our representatives whereby they need additional resource to support their wellbeing.

GMB presently do not have anything in place for these representatives as a go to place. The workplace Employee Assistance Programme is not always suitable for Union Representatives.

Branch Secretaries, Senior Representatives & Regional Officers are not therapists, and they cannot be expected to fulfil this role. We are calling on GMB to agree to putting in place a Wellbeing Organisation to support those representatives who need the support. We voice these concerns for our members in the workplace, let's also have the same in place for GMB Representatives.

L26 RICHMOND AND WANDSWORTH Southern Region

(Referred)

ZEPHYRINE BENNETT (Southern): Good morning, Congress. Good morning, Madam President. First time delegate, first time speaker. *(Applause)* What do GMB members do when experiencing problems at work? They approach us, their reps, to help. Reps are the foot soldiers doing the ground work of the union. Reps provide first aid for their members' problems. If problems are complex or emotional reps can turn to their branch secretaries for support and advice. Branch secretaries may in their turn reach out to regional officers. All these people harbour a goldmine of wisdom and help for members but they are not trained therapists. What happens when they get overwhelmed themselves, where do they turn. Nationally, dedicated GMB reps, branches and officers, regularly receive upwards of five calls in an evening without knowing who is calling, or what emotional state they might be in. One branch secretary told me, "A good branch secretary phone is never switched off." She has 40 reps in her branch many of whom she knows are struggling to cope and frequently call her to offload. She knows of other officers doing good stuff but suddenly going absent long-term. They have not been able to deal with the stress and can no longer cope with what has become a very heavy burden.

GMB regions have excellent mental health training in place for reps but this can only provide basic understanding and skills. We are not trained counsellors. Our roles are not about taking on responsibility for other people, and their mental or physical health. We can only listen, support, and signpost our members to getting professional help from GPs or from an employers' employee assistance programme should there be one. Many employers have an EAP and everyone is entitled to X number of sessions. However, although companies stress this service is entirely confidential and usually provided by an independent body, reps feel uncomfortable taking GMB issues into these sessions. They are designed to help individuals find ways of managing their stress and are generally based around CBT. This is a great service for a one-off course of sessions and adopting such a service would definitely benefit GMB members but it cannot provide ongoing support for busy GMB officers. If qualified career counsellors are

required to have regular supervision sessions from senior independent therapists helping them reflect on cases and gain insight, advice, and support on their handling, then surely regular sessions with trained counsellors would help GMB reps and officers avoid burnout, support their role and encourage their abilities.

Congress, we call upon the GMB to set up a company employee assistance programme as a good place for reps to find initial help, to set up a system to supply regular independent counselling therapy support to reps and officers, and to explore the potential for this therapy to be provided by GMB members, thus developing our own activists to become counsellors and building GMB nationwide basic support.
Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

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

CHARMAINE HYMAN (Southern): Good morning, Congress, President, Vice President. Who provides support for the mental health and wellbeing of GMB workplace representatives and lay members, particularly when their GMB activities adversely affect them? The current support system which relies on branch secretaries and regional officers is insufficient as these post-holders are not equipped to handle the sensitive nature of these issues. There is a need for a duty of care that mirrors the expectations representatives have from employers towards their members. Lay members and workplace reps have cases that can be stressful, time consuming, problematic, challenging, awkward, ugly, grim, distressing, testing, combative, and trying. These various stresses and emotional challenges affect their psychological state and exacerbate neurodivergence. The establishment of an independent service within the GMB to offer specialised support and guidance to these individuals, especially when they face normal union stresses or interpersonal conflicts that leave them isolated due to confidentiality constraints. An independent service is not appropriate with the individual employee assistance programme provided by the employers as the independent service will take us specifically to the needs of the GMB representatives. The provision of such support is expected to not only assist in current wellbeing challenges but also equip the representatives with tools to manage future issues thereby fostering trust in GMB processes and demonstrating that their wellbeing is valued. This motion calls for the GMB to protect and support its representatives. The wellbeing of representatives is as crucial as that of the members they serve. Congress, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Charmaine. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition?

JAN SMITH (London): Morning, Congress, President, General Secretary. I am also secretary of the National RMA. Congress, I am opposing Motion 35. There are two fundamental points. The first one is that it requires a rule change and this is not a rule change year. Secondly, it is asking for £1 a week contribution. Again, colleagues, it would need a rule change. It is saying that we need a seat on the CEC. We cannot have a seat on the CEC until such time as we are recognised within our own right. Colleagues, I am asking you in your conscience, please, to oppose this motion. I will bring to your attention on page 3 of today's *Morning Star* where it is quoting the Tories'

are taxing the state pension. Now, a lot of our pensioners or a lot of our retired members, even some of you who are working, a £1 a week is essential and it can stop a lot of these things, and they are applying to the food banks. The food banks have never ever been so busy as they are this year. Colleague, please oppose this motion until such time as there is a rule change. Next year is the rule change and that is when it should be brought in. If you recall last year's rule change a motion was withdrawn in favour to allow talks to continue with Gary, our General Secretary, and I can tell you up to now those talks have not taken place but I will assure you we will start talking about them so please oppose. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jan. Angela, you have right of reply.

ANGELA GILRAINE (Midlands): Good morning. Thank you for your contribution, London. We are actually not asking for a rule change but a review, that the retired members are treated the same in all equality matters. It is not a rule change we are asking for, it is a review. Please support the motion. I understand being passionate but it is not a rule change we are asking for, it is a review. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angie. I now ask Gary Smith to respond on behalf of the CEC.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY (CEC): President, Congress, Gary Smith, General Secretary, Treasurer, responding to Motion 21, 22, 31, 33, 35 and 38, all of which the CEC is asking to be referred. We thank all the branches in submitting these motions, we really do, and genuinely we mean this, the offer of guidance on how we can better compensate our reps, and there are some great ideas about our assured aspiration for keeping the union affordable for members. It is not lost on anybody on the CEC that the union ultimately is funded by the members and it cannot exist without our members.

Becky, Alan, on both Motions 21 and 22, on compensation for reps, we do ask that this is referred. You both made a powerful contribution, we are listening, and the CEC would like the time to look at and fully review the current systems for compensating and rewarding our reps. I do need to make the point that every CEC has the ultimate authority on setting the rates of compensation.

On Motion 31, Becky, we are willing to undertake the work modeling different membership rates and the referral will give the CEC the opportunity to assess the effect of a 12-month introductory rate for new members subject to a salary threshold. It will give us a chance, really, to look at how this could be applied.

Stephen, on Motion 33, thank you for moving that. Again, the CEC would like a space and an opportunity to consult across the union and a referral would help us do that. The truth is in terms of rates for school support staff and actually working practices for school support staff they do vary across the regions and nations of the union and that does have implications in terms of the amounts of money paid. So we would like the opportunity to review practices throughout the regions and nations and see if we can get to a common agreed position.

On Motion 35, Jan, we hear you in terms of the contributions debate. I know that will go to a vote. Again we have asked for a referral because we want to look at that in more detail and have a fuller consultation across the union.

On Motion 38, Zephyrene and Charmaine, thank you very much I think it was a really, really powerful contribution and a really, really important issue. We understand both the responsibilities that are on our lay representatives, the increasing pressures that that brings with it, and we would like the opportunity to explore this more fully to see what we can appropriately put in place, what is affordable, and how we can better support people who are ultimately the backbone of the union. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. I did not hear this in speeches. Does Wales & South West agree to refer Motion 21 and 31? Can you confirm that is agreed? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does London agree to refer back Motion 33? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Does Southern agree to it and refer back Motion 38? *(Agreed)* Okay. Thank you. On Motion 22, does Midlands agree to refer back? *(Agreed)* Thank you. All those we do not need to vote on because there is no opposition and reference back has been agreed. Midlands, do you accept the reference back on Motion 35? *(Agreed)* Thank you. Because there was opposition, though, I will have to put that to the vote, therefore I am asking you to accept the decision to refer. All those in favour please show. All those against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 21 was REFERRED.

Motion 22 was REFERRED.

Motion 31 was REFERRED.

Motion 33 was REFERRED.

Motion 35 was REFERRED.

Motion 38 was REFERRED.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL PROPOSALS

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call on the General Secretary and Treasurer, Gary Smith, to move the Annual Statement and Financial Proposals. Thank you.

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: Congress, Gary Smith, General Secretary and Treasurer, moving the Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2023. As no questions have been submitted on the Financial Statement I will move their adoption. I also would like to use this opportunity to welcome Alison Turtle, our new Head of Finance. Alison is on the stage there today. Alison took over from the long serving and long suffering Graham Dow, who retired earlier this year after a fantastic lifetime in service to the union. We also have Michael Moran in the hall, who is our new Deputy Head of Finance. Michael, thank you for all your hard work and thank you for your contribution in stepping up. I know Alison and Michael will be putting together or a new finance team is coming together with new auditors, you both and the whole team at the NAU, what a fantastic job you have done over the past number of months and thank you

for that. We really appreciate you hosting the fringe meeting on Sunday on the Financial Statements as well.

Congress, it has been an incredibly busy year. I spoke a bit of this earlier this week. Most importantly, you have heard from our representatives and activists from across the country. We have been building these fantastic industrial campaigns, it is truly inspiring, and the work that we are undertaking and the approach to campaigning, listening to the members, it is working. On every month, on average, we are putting on something like 8,000 new members. Across 2023 we grew the membership, the financial membership, grade 1 and grade 2 members, we grew it by 10,000. That is up to members' performance and credit to each and every one of you.

My caution is this, and we just have to be honest about it, we have spoken about this, year in year out in the run-up to Covid for a whole number of years we were losing financial members and they were hiding that fact in the overall membership numbers. Then Covid hit and we lost 40,000 members. Now, we are still living with that legacy. That being said the work that we have done over the past period, the growth that we have seen in the membership is heartening and welcome, and it is testimony not only to the work but the strategy that we have adopted around campaigning and organizing.

Now the growth in membership has meant that contribution income has increased by £1.4m last year and that is an incredible sum. Remember, we heard from Carol at Wilco's and we know the pain and suffering that the collapse of Wilco's caused for individuals, that is where we start as a union, it is about our people. The truth is that it has a financial consequence for the union in terms of the loss of thousands of members as well. So, in terms of that financial performance and the income performance it really was a terrible year for us last year.

The activities that went on last year, you just take a moment sometimes, you are coming to this debate to reflect on some of the numbers, you ran over 1,800 separate ballots last year. I think that must be a record. It is absolutely incredible and well done to each and every one of you for doing that. *(Applause)* This was no problem for Michael and Alison but we spent £2.8m supporting our members financially in struggle last year as well. *(Applause)*

Now, we have talked about equal pay a lot this week. I am so proud of the fact that we are talking about equal pay, and working class women getting robbed of their wages, not just talking about it but doing something about it. I will always say to you we know from experience that what wins ultimately on equal pay campaigns is organizing and the preparedness to keep demonstrative and strike action, but equal pay does have to be backed up by legal support. We have a game plan about how we are going to deal with some of those costs going forward but last year the truth is in supporting our members on strike on equal pay we spent £700,000 on our legal bill.

In terms of UnionLine we have had this business with sending papers to the Finance & General Purposes Committee, we will be talking about this with the new CEC, we have a viable business in UnionLine, we have had it independently looked at, but the truth is we

are dealing with a lot of historical and legacy issues. We have spent £1.8m covering debts to a service provider to UnionLine and to deal with some historical underfunding of the business.

In terms of the general election, we do have the prospect of a Labour Government and we agreed we would not move as we have been doing for a number of years move money from the political fund into the general fund. We want to have as much money as possible in the political fund going into this general election and our members, I am delighted to say, voted decisively in favour of having a political voice through the political fund ballot earlier this year. *(Applause)*

The overall financial position of the union, we are in pretty good health. The value of the union has grown to £110m, that is up a million pounds on the year previously, and our investment funds, I wanted to pick this out for you, we did lose value in the global downturn in 2022 but by 2023 the value of our savings fund started to recover, and they are up £12m on the value of our original investments. Overall, diversified funds are worth something like £46m at the moment and on top of that we have cash reserves of £21m. All that money ultimately is there to support members and to support the campaigns and support our people in struggle.

Our pension fund, very important to us as employees of the union,, we have moved further into surplus this year but so much so that due to accountancy standards it is not reflected in the Financial Statement but I do think I speak on behalf of all the staff when I say a huge thank you for the financial support that you as lay members have given to our pension scheme turning what was a very significant deficit into a very, very healthy surplus. None of us will ever take that for granted and thank you so much for your support. *(Applause)*

Congress, when I stood for election I did say I want to make it cheaper for people, more affordable for people to be union members. We froze subs, froze them for the past number of years, and by not doing what we have been doing year in year out, putting up 5p and 10p we have put £9m back into members' pockets and I think that has been hugely important. That has been hugely important that we as a leadership to the union in this Congress recognise how difficult it has been for our membership over the past year. We also have to recognise, however, that the organization itself is not immune to the inflationary pressures that we have seen in the economy. The key to finances of the union and if we want to keep subs pegged, if we want to reduce in real terms the cost of being in the union, I have to be level with you, we just have to keep building the organization. The key to the finances of the union is membership growth and we will be talking about that in the months ahead. We did fantastic last year, average about 2% growth but I think we can get to 3% and more and that really helps with the finances of the union and takes the pressure off. The truth is we have to understand, and again we have to be straight with each other, running all the campaigns that we have been doing does mean that we have to commit finances and resources, and if we keep doing more of that, of course we are going to keep winning and hopefully we will keep building.

To ensure that we can continue investing in all the good work that we are doing the CEC is proposing a small increase in our membership sub this year, and we do not do this lightly. I go to workplaces in the country and on the one hand I see the fantastic wins that we have been having above inflationary pay rises but I am under no illusions about the pressure our people are under the length and breadth of the country. We are asking this year for 7p a week on full-time rates, which is 2% increase, and for grade 2 members 2p a week or 1%. We think those sums balance affordability with ensuring that we have the financial resilience and good health in the organisation.

Finally, as I said we have new auditors which you agreed to appoint last year. They are Crowe UK. We will review that process every five years but we did say that we would seek a commitment from Congress to reappoint our auditors every year and I am asking you to do that.

So, Congress, please adopt the Financial Statements, the reappointment of our auditors, and please also support and adopt the related rule amendments CECRA2 and CECRA3. Thank you, President. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Can I ask someone from the CEC to formally second, please? *Formally seconded*. Thank you, Kevin. I can take speakers, one speaker per region, so if any region wishes to speak in the debate on those financial proposals please come down the front.

ANNETTE DRYLIE (GMB Scotland): Congress, the proposals to increase subscriptions is never an easy one. However, an increase of £3.64 for a Grade 1 member per year and £1 and £4 for a Grade 2 member per year, it is still below inflation and keeps our members' rate affordable and competitive. It is never an easy decision to increase subscriptions for members, especially when they have been hammered by 14 years of austerity, the pandemic, and of course the cost-of-living crisis. However, in order to win for those members they have to have the resources to support them. In Scotland we have been fighting and winning equal pay campaigns in local authorities across the country. These are not cheap campaigns but they are vital for those members in some of the most important roles in our public services. Congress, we must tell the politicians on equal pay they have to learn the lessons of the past and agree to settle with our members. We must also learn our lessons and that means ensuring our union is financially fit and able to give full backing to our members to fight for pay justice. Congress, please support the financial proposals. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Southern?

JOHN INOKOBA (Southern): The Southern Region engaged in a robust debate regarding this proposal, to include the sub at this time, considering the impact of the rising cost of living that affects everybody, especially our low paid workers. This debate was also represented by our members, our representatives, who reflect the low paid workers, their view, in that debate. It was not an easy one. It was a mixed reaction but we have to consider the decision, which is very challenging to do what we have gone through. It is unclear whether alternative measures were put before in order to explore all avenues to

see if the proposal to increase the subs is necessary. For such revenue what they considered they have not reflected in the report, which would have provided better content for the debate and explanation to the members. Nevertheless, I am pleased to announce that just by the lack of information the debate was narrowly passed in favour of supporting the increase. Therefore, Southern Region is fully in support of the financial proposal. Congress, please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John.

BILLY GOULDING (North West & Irish): The North West & Irish Region has read through the statement, and we also understand the reason for the increase and subscription rates by 7p and 2p and the region fully supports the adoption of the CEC proposal. *(Applause)*

IAN BURKETT (Midlands): Our region has spoken about it and argued about it and if we want to support our members in these campaigns we have to make sure the financial security of the union is maintained and to do that we have to support the increases. Thank you. *(Applause)*

HANNAH BUTLER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): We are opposing the increase in members' subs. Look, we get it. The costs continue to rise in campaigning and supporting the upcoming election. However, the vast majority of members we support are dependent upon subsidized wages and living payments, be it Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit, or PIP, to name but a few. To have this proposal announced so late on – the members I represent are frequently concerned with current costs of subs so to increase without honest and open discussion does not seem right. So, why not ask the members? If the delegates were made aware earlier they could take this back to branches and give them the opportunity to survey it and identify directly with our members what an affordable and realistic increase actually looks like. The key to leadership, after all, is listening, so this is not a hard No, it is a sugar-coated one. Congress, please support our lowest paid members and please oppose this. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hannah. I will now take a vote on the Annual Statement and the financial proposals. All those in favour please show. Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

The Annual Statement and Financial Proposals were CARRIED.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SECTION

THE PRESIDENT: We are now on Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Section, and can I have the movers and seconders of 169, Composite 19, Motion 172, and Composite 9, please, and then if we could have the mover of 169 to the rostrum.

STOP THE ERADICATION OF TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME MOTION 169

169. STOP THE ERADICATION OF TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME

Congress, This Branch notes that Trade union rights are being eradicated by this Tory government but some local authorities including Labour run councils are trying to remove Trade union facilities time. Congress we cannot allow this to happen. This is an attack on workers' rights to representation and fair and safe working environments.

We cannot and must not allow for this to happen and fight it all the way!

L16 LB GREENWICH BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

EMMA FAIR (Southern): Picture it, January 2024, I am very excited to start my new seconded role as Assistant Branch Secretary for GMB. A few days later I am told that my Labour-run council wants to eradicate my role all before I have got to work on my first case or even figured out how to log on to the office computer. It became clear that my employer did not understand the role of a trade union rep. They did not know we take time to prepare for cases or negotiations. They did not know we take phone calls from distressed members. They did not know how much time we spend in our meetings. We decided to educate our employer on what a working day looks like for us. They did not want to keep listening once they realized how much unpaid overtime we do across each week. Less facility time will mean less support for our members and the issues they face every day. We are currently dealing with high numbers of restructuring and redundancies. Our work is vital in fighting against these cuts but we can only do this if we have a fair facility agreement in place and one which will be adhered to by our employers. As a union we have over half a million members and whenever one of them decides to call or email we need to make sure someone is available to listen, guide, and fight with them all the way. We want to be there for our members during those stressful and scary situations they find themselves in. We want to sit side-by-side with our members during workplace meetings. We want to help keep our workplaces safe for our roles as health and safety reps. We want to represent our members individually and collectively in negotiations. We want to empower our members to fight for what is right. This can only happen if we commit ourselves to campaign to improve facility time for our reps and lay officials across all sectors, including our Labour-run councils. We need to call on our incoming Labour government to strengthen our rights for facility time in the New Deal for Working People. Our reps and lay officials need to have their role secured and protected moving forward. GMB must ensure that the New Deal for Working People is not watered down and let trade unions come out stronger for it. So, Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Emma. Seconder?

MARGUERITE PINNOCK (Southern): I stand before you as a passionate supporter of trade union rights and defend a fair representation and safe working environment for all

workers. The recent action taken by the Tory Government to erode the trade union rights and to remove trade union facility time are deeply concerning and must not be allowed to stay. We must also unite to resist minimum service levels. Trade unionists must be able to lead strikes and workplace disputes to drive up terms and conditions for workers. The trade union Movement plays a vital role in our society by advocating for the rights of workers. By attacking trade union rights and attempting to restrict our ability to effectively represent workers the government and local authorities are not just undermining the fabric of the labour force but they are jeopardizing the very essence of democracy in the workplace. We cannot sit idle and allow these attacks on workers' rights to go unchallenged. We must stand together, united in our commitment to defend the principles of representation, fairness, and safety in the workplace. It is our duty to fight against an attempt to strip away the rights that generations have worked hard to fight and hard to secure.

Congress, we must send a clear message to the Government and local authorities that we will not tolerate the erosion of trade union rights. We must mobilize our collective strength, push back against such aggressive measures and do what we do best, stand together and fight for support on trade union rights. Congress, I second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Marguerite. Composite 19.

PROTECT POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER STAFF ROLE COMPOSITE MOTION 19

(Covering Motions 170 and 171)

170 – POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER ROLE – WALES AND SOUTH WEST REGION

171 – PROTECT POLICE STAFF JOBS – WALES AND SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

PROTECT POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER STAFF ROLE

This congress notes that last year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the role of the Police Community Support Officer being established in England and Wales. This role is the well-established link between communities and the Police Forces and are unsung heroes of the Police Service who rarely get the recognition they deserve.

In Wales, despite Policing not being devolved, we have seen the Welsh Labour Government invest in 500 extra PCSOs across the 4 Welsh Forces as they recognise the value this role brings to communities.

PCSOs are instrumental in reducing Anti-Social Behaviour amongst other things via a problem-solving approach rather than the old-style Policing method that just dealt with the act but not the causes The public values them and so should we.

Since austerity was introduced more than a decade ago, we have seen some forces get rid of all their PCSOs and there is evidence to suggest that as a result of further budget cuts there has been an overall reduction in PCSO numbers in many other forces.

Furthermore, this congress notes that:

Prior to the austerity measures brought in by the Tory/LibDem coalition and continued by the current Tory administration the two questions asked when a Police Staff vacancy was identified were

1. Do we need this role? And
2. Does this role require a warrant card to be effectively undertaken

Boris Johnson's uplift program which saw Westminster government invest in 20K new Police Officers and was not matched with a similar government investment in Police Staff. Further cuts to Policing budgets nationwide have resulted in Police Forces adopting a new approach to Police Staff vacancy management with the questions now asked being:

1. Do we need this role? and
2. Can this role be undertaken by a Police Officer

Not only does this mean that Police Staff including PCSO numbers are dwindling but also that there are less Police Officers on the street preventing crime and investigating criminality.

We ask the GMB to

- 1) Engage with the Labour party to reestablish funding for Police Staff nationwide
- 2) Undertake research across Police forces nationwide to understand their intentions towards the PCSO role and to engage with the next Westminster and Welsh Labour government to protect and enhance funding for this role.

Moving Region – Wales and South West Region

Seconding Region – Wales and South West Region

KATE HOOD (GMB Wales & South West): Previously we have had police officers working in the IG department answering 999 calls and many other behind-the-scenes roles. Most police forces then undertook projects to transform these police staff roles; many of these are now our members. This saw large numbers of police officers returning to operational duties as a warrant card was not necessary to do that role. The ongoing savage budget cuts resulting from Tory austerity measures have seen a shift in how forces are filling police staff vacancies which has meant an increase in the number of officers now moving back into police staff roles. Not only does this mean that police staff members are dwindling, but also there are less police officers on the street preventing crime and investigating criminality.

That brings us to the specific police staff role of the police community support officer, PCSOs, introduced by the last Labour government in a very forward thinking and

somewhat controversial move, uniformed front line police staff dealing with antisocial behaviour, low level crime, and other issues affecting our communities and impacting everyone's quality of life. Despite initially treated with curiosity and suspicion by both the public and by their police officer colleagues, who thought that this was policing on the cheap, they are now a valued link between the communities and police officers. Austerity has seen most forces reduce their numbers as some get rid of their PCSOs altogether. We need the next Labour government to enhance funding for all police staff roles. We should value them as much as the public do. Please support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

DEBORAH HARVEY (GMB Wales & South West): Vice President, Congress, now in the 21st year PCSOs have become a valued and essential part of the modern police service. PCSOs are problem solvers working in the heart of our communities. They have improved the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of people. PCSOs intelligence submissions have led to identifying human traffickers, drug dealers, county line gangs, cannabis factories, terrorist groups, doorstep crime, cyber crime, their victims, and so much more. PCSOs have changed lives and PCSOs have saved lives. They also work with the younger generation, particularly those that may be diverted from criminal activities and gangs. In 2010, PCSO numbers peaked at nearly 17,000 but by 2023 these numbers had more than halved and continue to decline. Make no mistake, the role done by the PCSOs will not be taken up by their police officer colleagues. We need to protect all police staff roles. Please support this motion that I second. If not, you are getting ASBOS. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Deborah.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 172.

FUJITSU CONTRACT: ENVIRONMENT AGENCY MOTION 172

172. FUJITSU CONTRACT: ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

This Congress is appalled that after the debacle of the Post Office Horizon System, on 8 Jan 2024, the Environment Agency confirmed that they would be extending signing a third contract with Fujitsu Services to manage their Flood warning system taking the total value of the contract to £19.5 million until September 2025.

We note that flood forecasting systems provide vital early flood warning information to national and international civil protection authorities and flood alleviation specialists including engineers, who use the information to make decisions on how to prepare for upcoming floods.

This deal would add more fuel to the controversy over Fujitsu Services winning business with the public sector, after the Horizon IT system delivered to the Post Office has been blamed for leading to wrongful convictions of sub-postmasters for fraud.

We note that the Environment Agency has defended this decision to continue its flood warning contract with Fujitsu.

We note that at the end of 2023 and beginning of 2024, many homes were devastated with floods from various storms.

We call on Congress to highlight this continued use of Fujitsu and register this as a “kick in the teeth” for all postmasters and the fact that the Government has not learned any lessons.

We call on Congress to vigorously campaign to reverse this decision pending the current Post Office Enquiry.

E15 THAMES GENERAL BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

CLIFF RONEY (London): Good morning, President and Congress, Brothers and Sisters. I am moving Motion 172: Fujitsu Contract: Environment Agency.

The GMB stands in solidarity with the postmasters over the Post Office scandal caused by the Fujitsu Horizon System. Those of you who can stand, please stand in solidarity and join me in a round of applause to the postmasters who have been treated appallingly by successive governments. Please stand! *(A standing ovation)* Thank you very much. I know it means a great deal to those members.

This Congress is appalled that after the debacle of the Post Office Horizon System, on 8 January 2024, the Environment Agency confirmed that they would be extending signing a third contract with Fujitsu Services to manage their Flood warning system taking the total value of the contract to £19.5 million until September 2025.

We note that flood forecasting systems provide vital early flood warning information to the national and international civil protection authorities and flood alleviation specialists, including engineers, those with the information to make the decisions on how to prepare for upcoming floods.

This deal would add more fuel to the controversy over Fujitsu Services winning business with the public sector, after the Horizon IT system delivered to the Post Office has been blamed for leading to wrongful convictions of our sub-postmasters for fraud. We note that the Environment Agency has defended this decision to continue its flood warning contract with Fujitsu.

We note that at the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024 many homes were devastated with floods from various storms. The EA faced criticism from relying on the auto-pilot system during storm Babet, which in 2023 saw hundreds of thousands of people receiving flood alerts when they were not necessary and some receiving some when they were necessary. The auto-pilot system removes the human element of checking accuracy. This has resulted in a massive reduction in staff levels at the NRA so human checks are often not carried out. Yet another cost-cutting exercise affecting the British public.

Just as an example and adding a bit of humour to this, a colleague of mine received over 15 text messages about a flood warning, the last one saying, “Please move your livestock to higher ground”. He lives in a normal terraced house so he put his cat and dog on the roof. *(Laughter)*

We call upon Congress to highlight this continued use of Fujitsu and register this as a “kick in the teeth” for all the postmasters and the fact that the Government has not yet learned any lessons. We call upon Congress to vigorously campaign to reverse this decision pending the current Postmasters’ Inquiry. Please get behind this motion. Do not allow this Tory Government to squander any more of the British taxpayers’ money whilst filling the pockets of Fujitsu as they have been doing for over 20 years. Please, when you leave this hall, tell the members, tell the people you live with and tell people who you live in the street with, what they are really doing. This has been kept quiet. It is absolutely disgusting. We must stop them doing it and, please God, when we get a new Labour Government they will be able to tear the contracts up and burn the bloody things. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cliff. Secunder?

STEVE DAVIES (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 172, Fujitsu Contract: Environment Agency. In October and November 2023 heavy, persistent and widespread rain affected much of England when storms Babet and Chiron struck. During Storm Babet over 150 rivers recorded above normal water levels and 2,200 homes were flooded. Can we as a country rely on Fujitsu to warn the British public of future flooding when it has been proven that their systems are faulty and have already damaged a historic British industry in the form of the Post Office?

In April 2021 Boris Johnson called the Fujitsu Horizon scandal an “appalling miscarriage of justice” and said that lessons should be learnt to ensure that this could never happen again. More Tory lies! This country not only wants but demands a reliable early-warning system for floods that are managed and controlled by the right people, not Fujitsu. Some of you in this audience today may have had friends or family who have suffered the terrible trauma of being flooded. Congress, please get behind this motion and prevent Fujitsu from creating another scandal, lying and trying to walk away. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. I call the mover of Composite 9.

LOCAL COUNCILS IN CRISIS – GMB CAMPAIGNING TO SUPPORT SWIFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING RESTORATION AND PRIORITISING INSOURCING FOR FAIR WAGES IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES
COMPOSITE 9

(Covering Motions:

163. *Local Councils in Crisis – London Region*

164. *GMB Campaigning Government to support Local Authorities from Going Bankrupt -- North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region*

165. Motion for Local Government Funding Restoration: Urging Swift Restoration of Pre-2010 Local Government Funding and Prioritising Insourcing for Fair Wages in Essential Services! -- North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region).

LOCAL COUNCILS IN CRISIS – GMB CAMPAIGNING TO SUPPORT SWIFT LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING RESTORATION AND PRIORITISING INSOURCING FOR FAIR WAGES IN ESSENTIAL SERVICES!

Congress notes that more English councils have been declared bankrupt in the last 18 months than over the past 30 years with more to be announced.

This Congress recognises the Central Government have cut local authorities budgets by hundreds of millions of pounds.

This Congress, the GMB Union recognises the critical importance of adequately funding local governments for the prosperity and well-being of communities; But we have seen the erosion of local government funding since 2010 has negatively impacted essential services and disproportionately affected low-paid, predominantly women employees in crucial roles such as cleaning, catering, and adult social care;

The GMB Union advocates for the rights and fair treatment of all workers, particularly those in roles that are traditionally undervalued and underpaid;

We know all have faced financial difficulties as they have faced 40% real terms cut in central funding between 2010 and 2020.

This has left our members without jobs, residential homes being closed, lack of investment in Children Services, Adult Social Care, Youth Services, Housing, and many more of our public services closing.

Whilst Council Tax goes up to help pay for some service, this hasn't stopped councils struggling to put their heads above water.

Birmingham and others declared themselves bankrupt in 2023. Many others have Section 188 notices and have fought to stop a Section 114 notice. Our local authorities are struggling to keep on top of things and staff, which includes our members, are frightened their jobs are at risk. Over the years due to staff reduction GMB have lost numerous members.

As a result, many will be looking to slashing jobs or selling buildings or other assets.

The Local Government Association estimates councils in England face a £1.6bn funding gap in 2024-25, and the government's latest £600m funding boost may be too little and too late.

The restoration of local government funding is essential to ensuring the delivery of quality public services and protecting the rights of workers in traditionally undervalued roles. Insourcing low-paid jobs in cleaning, catering, and adult social care is a crucial step towards fair employment practices and gender equality.

We ask Congress and GMB

- to work with Public Sector Unions to protect all jobs especially front-line services and call on the Government for increased emergency funding to stave off the financial collapse of our local councils.

- to lobby Central Government to stop cutting local authorities budget and invest money back into them to keep the services going that service the public at large.
- calls upon the Labour Party and the Government to prioritise the restoration of local government funding to pre-2010 levels within the first term of office.
- urges all local councils to recognise the significance of insourcing and prioritise the transition of low-paid, predominantly women employee roles, specifically in cleaning, catering, and adult social care.

Local councils are encouraged to expedite the insourcing process, ensuring fair wages and improved working conditions, within the first term of a Labour Government or upon the receipt of increased funding, whichever is the quickest.

By adopting this motion, the GMB Union seeks to address the challenges faced by workers in these vital roles and contribute to the overall improvement of working conditions and economic fairness within our communities.

Moving region: North East, Yorkshire and Humber
 Seconding region: London

(Carried)

ATU HASHIM EQUIANO (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Good morning, President and Vice President. I am moving Composite 9. Congress, imagine a situation where you own a block of flats or houses. As the landlord, it is your duty and obligation to maintain every single property so that they do not fall apart and end up having to close each and every one down.

Congress, this is what is happening with our Tory Government. Central government is there to invest in local authorities so that our core services are maintained and operate in a correct and safe manner. The Tory Government in the past 10 years have cut hundreds of millions of pounds from our local authorities' budgets, leaving local authorities having to issue section 108 notices where thousands of staff have lost their jobs.

Under the MSR policy – managing staff reductions – the GMB has fought to keep our members in post, but with the budget cuts local governments are making it harder and harder for unions to fight a battle for us to keep jobs.

Since 2018 eight local authorities have issued section 108 notices of bankruptcy and we may see many more to come. Our local authorities are struggling to keep on top of things and staff are frightened of losing their jobs. Over the years, due to staff reductions, GMB has lost numerous members. Residential homes have been closed, there has been a lack of investment in children's services, adult social care, youth services, housing and many more of our public services have shut down.

Congress, how can we allow this to go on? It is inhumane and, furthermore, what are we paying our taxes for? We should not sit back and let this situation continue. Congress, should we refuse to maintain and keep and uplift on the flats or houses you

own? Or should we stop investing in them until they fall apart? I believe the answer to that questions is no.

We ask Congress and GMB to work with public sector unions to protect all jobs especially front-line staff and call on the Government for increased emergency funding to stave off the financial collapse of our local councils; to lobby central government to stop cutting local authority budgets and invest money back into them to keep the services going that service the public at large; calls upon the Labour Party and the Government to prioritise the restoration of local government funding to pre-2010 levels within the first term of office, and urge all local councils to recognise the significance of insourcing and prioritise the transition of low-paid, predominantly women employee roles, specially in cleaning, catering and adult social care.

By adopting this motion, the GMB Union seeks to address the challenges faced by workers in these vital roles and contribute to the overall improvement of working conditions and economic fairness within our communities. I ask you to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Atu. Seconder?

BRENDAN DUFFIELD (London): President and Congress, I am seconding Composite 9 on the collapse of local councils. I come from Barking & Dagenham in east London, a council that is often touted as the London council that is more likely to go bankrupt next. We haven't yet but to try and save the council we have been going through a series of brutal restructures. Entire departments along with their managements and heads of service have gone. The barest of proper procedures have been followed. Morale has been destroyed for those who remain. We are only one council across London. Our local councils are facing an unprecedented crisis. Many like my council are coming close to declaring bankruptcy. The dire situation is a result of budget cuts imposed by central Government, slashing our funds by millions of pounds. Our essential services, such as children's services, adult social care and housing are being stripped away as councils struggle. Good jobs are being lost and public assets have been sold off to keep authorities above water, and it is always the low-paid workers, predominantly women, serving on the frontline in crucial roles like cleaning, catering and caring are at risk. We must restore local government funding to pre-2010 levels. Fair wages through insourcing must be prioritised for those vital workers. Then we can safeguard the public services that our communities rely on and uphold decent employment standards.

I call on all of you to join this call to support public sector unions in their demands for emergency funding from central Government before other councils become like Barking & Dagenham. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brendan. Congress, all these motions are being supported by the CEC so I will take them all in one vote. All those in favour of 169, Composite 19, Motion 172 and Composite 9, please show? Any against? They have all been carried.

Motion 169 was CARRIED.
Composite 19 was CARRIED.
Motion 172 was CARRIED.
Composite 9 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: We now move onto motions under Social Policy: Transport. I call Motion 239.

PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES GO...WHERE BUS AND TAXI GO MOTION 239

239. PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES GO...WHERE BUS AND TAXI GO

This Congress present this motion to address the accessibility of private hire vehicles (PHVs) on public transportation routes, the goal is to enhance transportation options for the public and promote a more seamlessly integrated urban mobility system that ensures fairness.

Background: Currently, private hire vehicles face restrictions in accessing certain routes designated for buses and taxis. This motion seeks to reevaluate these limitations and advocate for a more inclusive approach to urban transportation.

Objective: The primary objective of this motion is to strongly champion the expansion of route access for private hire vehicles, ensuring their equal rights and privileges closely mirror those granted to buses and taxis.

Benefits: By allowing private hire vehicles to share routes with buses and taxis, we anticipate some the following benefits:

- **Diversified Service Competition:** Encouraging healthy competition among transportation services, leading to improved service quality and affordability.
- **Mitigation of Traffic Congestion:** Distributing the demand for transportation services across various modes, thereby reducing congestion and enhancing overall traffic management.
- **Empowered Consumer Choice:** Offering passengers, a broader spectrum of transportation options, empowering them to choose services that best meet their needs.

S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): Vice President and Congress, I move Motion 239: Private Hire Vehicles Go...Where Bus and Taxi Go. This motion seeks to build on last year's motion: Private Hire Vehicles be Allowed to use Bus Lanes and Bus Gates, enjoying the same journey as taxis.

For too long private hire drivers are seen as second class citizens in this key transport industry, facing many restrictions, limiting their ability to serve the public effectively. Despite their vital role in our cities they are often treated unfairly and their contributions go unrecognised. At times their basic rights are denied by key decision makers.

Private hire drivers offer an essential door-to-door service, especially for the elderly, people with disabilities and those without other transportation options. By granting them access to bus lanes and gates we can ensure that these services are more efficient and reliable. Improving traffic flow and health, such as smoother and shorter journeys, which will help reduce congestion on our roads, benefits all road users. This change would also reduce emissions, contributing to a cleaner environment and good health for all.

As to financial benefits, it would lead to cost savings for both drivers and passengers through reduced travel times and fuel consumption. It would also help our members to complete more trips in less time leading to higher earnings.

In summary, letting private hire drivers use the bus lanes and bus gates will create a fairer and more efficient transportation system, benefiting drivers and the public. I urge you to support this motion for the good of our community and our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ali. Secunder?

JOSE GOMEZ (Southern): Congress, welcome to my town, Bournemouth. I am seconding Motion 239: Private Hire Vehicles Go....Where Bus and Taxi Go.

I am standing before you to support this important motion which aims to allow private hire vehicles to use the same routes as buses and taxis. This change will benefit everyone, especially our GMB members. Firstly, Congress, it will create more competition, such as better choices and more affordable rides for all. Secondly, this motion will help to reduce traffic congestion. This will make our daily commute better and less stressful. Thirdly, allowing private hire vehicles to share these routes gives us more transportational options. We will have the freedom to choose the best service for our needs, whether we are looking for cost or convenience. Finally, Congress, supporting this motion will lead to a better service, less traffic, lower emissions and more choices for everyone. Let's make our cities' transportation system great again. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jose. I call Motion 240.

ADDRESSING THE EXCESSIVE COST OF TAXIS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE MOTION 240

240. ADDRESSING THE EXCESSIVE COST OF TAXIS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORKFORCE

This Congress is shocked by the escalating costs in the price of Wheelchair Accessible taxis, which is posing significant barriers for individuals aspiring to undertake Taxi Driving as a career. The exorbitant expenses associated with taxi prices not only deter potential candidates from embarking on the Knowledge of London in London, and Hackney Carriage Drivers around the country.

We demand that Licencing Authorities around the country, aided by GMB backed MPs councillors and London Assembly members, encourage alternative vehicles that fit the local licencing criteria.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

TRUDI TEW (London): Congress, I move Motion 240: Addressing the Excessive Cost of Taxis and its Impact on the Workforce. So why is the woman who is always talking about school support staff talking about taxis? Well, I speak on this in the memory of my Great Uncle Stan, a London cabbie all his life RIP, and he would be mortified at the current situation.

In the last 10 years the overall cost of buying a taxi has gone up £60,000 inclusive of finance costs. We all know that technological advances add costs to most things, but a taxi in 2014 cost £36,000, and now it costs £77,000 without the finance. Add that in and you're looking at £104,000. Drivers say that the increases in the costs to buy, convert, insure and maintain vehicles means that many professional drivers steer clear of driving accessible cabs. This is where I come in again.

Also in London the cost of used vehicles which are ULEZ compliant has gone up, creating a huge entry barrier for new drivers. It has become so bad that there are not enough accessible cabs on the road to meet the needs of our cities. Drivers also need training to operate the accessible cabs. We need to catch up. Once again, disabled persons are being negatively affected. People who use wheelchairs are missing medical appointments and flights because often there are not enough taxis and they don't have an alternative. We need to boost the number of accessible cabs to help all disabled people who rely on this service. Many have no alternative. If we don't, I might not be able to represent GMB on the TC meetings in London.

In many regions, taxi drivers are forced to buy wheelchair accessible vehicles as part of strict licensing guidelines. We need to help our driver members underwrite the cost of buying and converting vehicles for accessible service. A cheaper alternative that fits local authority licensing criteria must be sorted out to secure a future for our driver members and ensure that the number of accessible cabs on the road does not reduce more. Licensing authorities must be urged to find a solution to this issue. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Trudi. Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* I call Motion 241.

CREDIT CARD SCAMS MOTION 241

241. CREDIT CARD SCAM

This Congress acknowledges that no Taxi or Private Hire Driver across the country would have an issue with accepting credit cards, however what happens when the regulated system installed in your vehicle fails?

Taxis and Private Hire Drivers across the country are generally self-employed, sole traders, but of late overzealous regulators have put in place draconian rules and regulations.

These rules and regulations prevent drivers on pain of their license being revoked from collecting monies owed to them through a secondary device, a device that would be linked to their own bank account.

WE demand, with the help of our GMB Assembly Members, Councillors and MPs that local authorities allow, secondary devices to be used in our Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles across the country.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

MICHAEL TINNION (London): Good morning. I am moving Motion 241: Credit Card Scam. As we drive ourselves through the 21st century the use of mandatory credit card acceptance in taxis and private hire vehicles is becoming more widespread. London taxis must have a credit card system permanently fitted into the back of their vehicles. No working credit card: no work. Drivers pay a small percentage of their fare to the credit card provider.

But what happens when the system fails to work? Transport for London will tell you that drivers must stop work immediately and get the system fixed. You can have your licence suspended if you work without a working credit card system. I can almost guarantee that the breakdown will occur on a Friday night. Under Transport for London's policies drivers would not be able to work until Monday morning as credit card machine providers don't work at weekends. Congress, using a hand-held credit card device, which is not permanently fixed to your vehicle, will get your licence suspended, putting the driver out of work for something that is out of their control. For not providing a service that doesn't work is fundamentally wrong.

Licensing authorities who listen to credit card companies and not their own drivers should be ashamed of the service they provide. One example of this is that, once upon a time, TfL had one of the UK's largest credit card companies sitting on their taxi board listening to them instead of us. We must seek the support of our London Assembly Members, councillors and MPs to put pressure on all local authorities to allow drivers to use a secondary hand-held device keeping them at work. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)*
Thank you. I now call on the CEC speaker, Colin Gunter.

COLIN GUNTER (CEC): Vice President, I am responding to Motions 239, 240 and 241 on behalf of the CEC. We are supporting all of these motions with qualifications. On Motion 239 the CEC qualification is that route capacity will vary area by area, and that the re-evaluation that the motion calls for will be best carried out on a local basis in order to avoid the risk of slowing down bus timetables.

On Motion 240, we support action to bring down the cost of taxis for drivers. The qualification is that politicians should not simply encourage a low-cost approach which would lead to dependence on imported vehicles produced under poor labour conditions.

On Motion 241 permitting the use of secondary systems seems like a sensible approach as long as those alternative payment systems are regulated and subject to a quality assurance scheme. Our qualification is that ultimately this could, possibly, be incorporated into a Labour Party commitment ensuring that there are minimum national licensing standards across local authorities in taxi and private hire vehicles, including the safety of passengers to address the abuse of cross-border hiring.

We would also seek to include the issues raised in Motion 240 in this Labour Party commitment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Does Southern accept the qualification on Motion 239? *(Agreed)* Does London accept the qualification on Motion 240? *(Agreed)* Does London accept the qualification on Motion 241? *(Agreed)* Colleagues, all of these motions have been supported by the CEC so I will take them in one vote. All those in favour of 239, 240 and 241, please show? Any against? They have carried.

Motion 239 was CARRIED.

Motion 240 was CARRIED.

Motion 241 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: TRANSPORT

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Continuing with the motions under Social Policy: Transport, I call the mover of Composite 13.

GLOBAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY – GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING GRANTS FOR ACTIVE TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSED DRIVERS COMPOSITE 13

(Covering Motions:

223. Global Climate Emergency – London Region

224. Government to Provide Electric Vehicle Charging Grants for Active Taxi and Private Hire Licensed Drivers – Southern Region)

(Carried)

GLOBAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY – GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING GRANTS FOR ACTIVE TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSED DRIVERS

UN are continually raising issues around global catastrophic issues which concern our nation. There has been an over 2.7 degree rise in global temperature, created by humans.

The main causes of climate change are unnecessary pollution from factories and big industries; invalid use of transportation, plastic packaging from food and overrun, needless powering of buildings.

We as a nation need to act now and do our part by working together to cut down greenhouse gas emissions. This has to be done rapidly in order to make a change whilst we still can. By doing this we will be saving many future generations and possibly our planet. If we continue to work the way we are, we will see intense drought, storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, melting glaciers and warming oceans.

This has continued effect on animals and humankind which places lives in danger. How can we stop global warming? We cannot entirely stop it but slow down the process. Ways of doing this are driving less, driving electric cars, recycling more, using less hot water, avoiding products with a lot of packaging and many more ways.

An enormous reason for global warming is the form of transport being used, 72 percent of this being cars. In order to lower this, public transport is a greater option as it carries multiple loads of people for roughly the same amount of fuel.

An alternative is choosing electric powered cars which have been encouraged by the government and the local council. Unfortunately, due to the time we are living in and the cost-of-living crisis not many people are able to purchase electric cars.

Therefore, we believe grants and schemes should be supplied by the government and local council which would make eco-friendly cars more accessible to those who are in need. Specific schemes need to be generated targeting small businesses such as private hire and hackney carriage taxi drivers.

This Congress is asking the government for funding to support active taxi and private hire drivers in setting up electric vehicle charging stations. Going electric can be expensive. These grants would help our members cover the costs of installing electric vehicle charging points, making it more affordable for them to make the switch.

This funding is crucial for strengthening the industry and ensuring the livelihoods of those in these professions in the long run. Going electric can be expensive. These grants would help our members cover the costs of installing electric vehicle charging points, making it more affordable for them to make the switch.

Moving region: London

Seconding region: Southern

ELIZABETH GARELICK (London): Congress, I am moving Composite 13 on behalf of London Region. Climate change might seem like an overwhelming issue but we have the power to make a difference. One effective avenue is by reducing our carbon footprint. This can be achieved by embracing practices like using more public transport, driving less, conserving energy at home and consciously opting for sustainable products in our purchases. Emissions from car, trucks and other modes of

transportation play a substantial role in driving global warming which leads to a range of interconnected consequences, including a rise in temperatures, extreme weather events and rising sea levels.

Climate change is a global challenge which we simply have to meet head on. It cannot be ignored. It is everyone's business and anyone who is serious about tackling this challenge must also be serious about reducing the environmental impact of motor vehicles. Surface transport is the UK's highest emitting sector with passenger cars responsible for over half of the sector's emissions. Addressing emissions for sustainable transportation solutions is crucial in mitigating the impacts of climate change and working towards a more resilient future. Electric vehicles can provide dramatic reductions in emissions and improved air quality. Electric cars are still more expensive than petrol and diesel and not affordable to many people.

We believe that our Government, besides setting ambitious targets for phasing out internal combustion engines and promoting zero-emission vehicles, should offer grants, subsidies and tax breaks to individuals purchasing electric vehicles. This financial incentive would help to reduce the up-front costs of buying EV, making it more affordable. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elizabeth. Seconder?

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): I second Composite 13: Government to provide electric vehicle charging grants for active taxi and private hire licensed drivers.

Congress, going green is important and we must. Protecting jobs in our industry is also important and a must. I stand before you to address a crucial need for our taxi and private hire members. Switching to electric vehicles is important for the environment and for the future of our industry, but it is very expensive. That is why we are asking the Government to provide funding to help our members set up electric vehicle charging stations. These grants will make it more affordable for drivers to instal charging points and make the switch to electric vehicles easier. This support is essential for reducing pollution and ensuring that our members can continue to earn a living in the long run. By investing in this we can strengthen our industry, support our members as they move towards a greener future. Let's work together to get this necessary funding for our members. Please support this composite. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 245.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES CHARGING POINT PRICES MOTION 245

245. ELECTRIC VEHICLES CHARGING POINT PRICES

This Congress recognises the need for Local Authorities to regulate prices for electric car charging at public chargers.

When the idea was floated for electric cars, cost was top of the list attraction especially for PHV (Private Hire Vehicles) as Uber committed to go full green in line with Government vision. Since the Ukraine-

Russia war the cost to charge at public chargers has doubled and it is as equal as filling a fuel tank, in some cases even more.

Where Local Authorities like TFL keep coming up with the ideas to regulate our taxes etc, they need to come up with a scheme to get PCO (Public Carriage Office) drivers 50% discount on public chargers as most of them do not have home chargers. It should be easy to monitor as they will monitor our taxes via TFL inspections, or a card scheme you could apply with your tax number.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

ADAM WADE (London): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 245 on Electric Charging Points. This motion comes from our Professional Drivers Branch, where the majority of members are either Uber or private hire drivers. Our drivers use their own vehicles and many drive hybrid cars. However, with the introduction of ULEZ charges and a push for cleaner air, Transport for London has been asking drivers to switch to electric vehicles. As this is our drivers' livelihoods, they would expect to pay thousands in trading their cars for electric vehicles which, as you can imagine, members cannot afford to do as Uber drivers may be using this as their second job.

After we put our motion in, Uber is now offering £5,000 grants to assist our members, which of course is welcome and is a positive move, but this is only part of the problem. If our driver can now afford an electric car, they cannot afford to charge these. As our driving members drive for a living, charging may need to be done daily but there are not enough charging points. Members cannot charge from home and our members are asking for help with the cost of this development. As all of our drivers need a Public Carriage Office licence to operate, we are also asking the PCO to help with the cost of charging. If you support this motion, we can lobby the PCO for help. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adam. Secunder?

BEVERLEY GUNNING (London): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* Slightly off the cuff, it was seven years ago that my father, Iver Gunning, passed away who was an activist in local government, education, health and sickle cell. I hope he is looking down on me and saying "I did watch you and I did listen to you" and look at me now. I'm now not an angry black woman who fought in the streets to protect my family, but now I am a voice to support my members and guide them all the way. I am now the London Borough of Barnet's first black branch secretary. *(Applause)*

Let's go back to the script now. Electric charge points. I have four cards and six apps but I give way to the charge points that are on the road to my neighbour who is a taxi driver. Sometimes it doesn't work because they are not marked off. In a nutshell, when Labour comes to power on 5th July and their British Energy strategy comes into force, it

will take away the fat cats like Shell, who sponsor the charge points on the road. So I second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Beverley. Composite 15.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES SAFETY AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES SUSTAINABILITY COMPOSITE 15

(Covering Motions:

246. Electric Vehicles Safety – North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

247. Electric Vehicles Sustainability – North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region)

ELECTRIC VEHICLES SAFETY AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES SUSTAINABILITY

This Congress we ask that we put pressure on the government to ensure extensive health and safety checks take place on electric vehicles before sanctioning them to drive on our roads.

It has been brought to our attention that several cars and buses have self-combust while being parked.

Surely this is a good enough reason to stop the sales of these very dangerous vehicles until proven safe and we should be looking elsewhere for cuts to a greener vehicle future and not pushing people to buy these loaded guns. The government have the figures why are they risking our lives and livelihoods on these products just to win the race on the Green agenda.

I move that the government should be looking at the sustainability of electric cars which rely on lithium batteries to fuel them.

It is well known that lithium is not plentiful enough to fuel the numbers of vehicles we need it to supply, and it is not stable. We need to be looking for an alternative.

We need to be able to sustain whatever we put in place and this we can't and therefore call on

Congress to support putting pressure on the government around this issue.

Moving region: North East, Yorkshire & Humber

Seconding region: North East, Yorkshire & Humber

(Carried)

JULIE SHAW (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Congress, I am speaking on and moving Composite 15: Electric Vehicles Safety and Electric Vehicles Sustainability.

First, colleagues, let's talk about the safety. The biggest problem is the overheating and the phenomenon known as "Thermal runaway". In this process, the excess heat promotes a chemical reaction which makes the battery wear. This creates even more heat and also more of the chemical reaction in a spiral. The lithium battery fires are extremely hard to extinguish and the fires continue to reignite hours or even days later. Lithium batteries can also release high toxic gas. When they fail, an excessive heat can also cause them to explode. Lithium is plentiful and will be able to sustain electric cars but 25% of lithium is not economical and viable. This means a shortfall.

As we all know, if it doesn't make money, it doesn't happen! So we should be looking at alternatives. I think that this Government has ignored safety to win the green race. We ask the Government to ensure a full and extensive health and safety risk check on these vehicles and to stop pressuring the public to use these death traps until we can be assured that they are safe. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Julia. Secunder?

PETA ELLINGER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Congress, I am seconding Composite 15: Electric Vehicles Safety and Electric Vehicles Sustainability. It has come to our attention that several electric cars and buses have self-combusted while being parked. Surely, this is a good enough reason to stop the sales of electric cars while they do a full health and safety check. We are asking this Congress to put pressure on the Government to make their vehicles safe before allowing them on our roads. Please support. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Peta. I now ask John Dolan to give the qualifications.

JOHN DOLAN (CEC): Vice President and Congress, responding to Composite 13, Motion 245 and Composite 15 on behalf of the CEC, all of which are being supported with qualifications.

On Composite 13 the qualification is that any grants or subsidies that benefit electric car sales should be linked to trade union recognition, as the Biden administration proposed in the original draft of the Inflation Reduction Act. It is existing GMB policy that electric vehicle grants, including the charging infrastructure, should be linked to trade union recognition and access.

On Motion 245 the qualification is that the electricity price regulation is normally a matter for central Government rather than local government. A change in the law maybe required before this motion can be implemented. This motion should be consistent with our existing policy for an integrated transport policy, including aviation, and for the roll-out of electric charging networks to be tied to trade union access and good employment rights.

Finally, on Composite 15, we recognise the concerns that the new types of vehicles have had due to the nature of the faults. We also note that electric vehicles are not the solution to climate change, and that there are legitimate questions as to the ethics of the supply chain of some of the materials it takes to produce EV, such as lithium.

Severe environmental damage has been caused in Chile through extracting, by mining, the lithium. One of our qualifications is that all cars and buses have the potential to be involved in lethal accidents. Dangerous models should be taken off the roads and the manufacturers should be accountable. Should our members be employed in the small EV sector, we would not wish to affect the work they do. Any action would need consultation with our members who might work in the industry. We note that other there are other materials involved besides lithium.

Finally, workers' rights in the mining industries of such materials should be of paramount concern to us. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Does London accept the qualification on Composite 13? *(Agreed)* Does Southern accept the qualification on Composite 13? *(Agreed)* Does London accept the qualification on Motion 245? *(Agreed)* Does North East, Yorkshire & Humber accept the qualification on Composite 15? Thank you. They are all being supported by the CEC so I will take these in one vote. All those in favour of Composite 13, Motion 245 and Composite 15, please show? Any against? They are carried.

Composite 13 was CARRIED.

Motion 245 was CARRIED.

Composite 15 was CARRIED.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 228.

SOCIAL POLICY: HOUSING

HOUSING MOTION 228

228. HOUSING

This Congress calls for an immediate implementation of M4(Category 2) (as defined by the 2010 Building Regulations) as the new national regulatory baseline.

The consultation on raising accessibility standards for new homes set a clear expectation at Government Department level and the planning inspectorate that each Local Planning Authority must set out a policy for an adequate proportion of M4(3) wheelchair accessible properties to be built within each iteration of their local plans.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH London Region

(Carried)

STEVE DAVIES (London): Congress, I move Motion 228. Way back in 1997 Approved Document M, or more generally known as Part M of the Building Regulations, was introduced to provide information and guidance on how to create easy access into new build properties and making areas accessible to all users. Since then the Part M has been reviewed and amended in 2010 and 2015 to set further building regulation standards for minimum requirements to ensure that a broad range of people were able to comfortably access and use facilities within the home.

Category 1 sets the basic standards for ordinary buildings. Category 2, which was introduced in 2015, sets a higher standard for accessible homes, which is broadly

equivalent to the Lifetime Homes Standard. Category 3 sets a standard for wheelchair accessible homes. But categories 2 and 3 were optional requirements, which local authorities can apply for planning when they have identified a local need. Importantly, category 2 allows for level access to the principal entrance and wider approach route: doorways, corridor widths, sizes of bedrooms, bathrooms and other matters throughout the property.

In 2022 the Government held a public consultation on raising accessibility standards for new homes. It highlighted the fact that as we have an ageing population, the numbers of people with difficulties or disabilities will continue to rise. The Government sought views on five options, one of which was to mandate the current category 2 requirement in building regulations as the new minimum standard for all new homes, with category 1 only applying by exception where category 2 is impractical or unachievable. The majority of those who responded to the consultation agreed that category 2, being the new baseline and raising accessibility standards, would future proof new homes, saving costs associated with adapting homes and would recognise that housing provision is not a barrier for those with a disability or simply just getting old.

This way forward was welcomed as it would boost the numbers of accessible homes being delivered in every local authority. Following the consultation, the Government proposed that the most appropriate way to forward this was to mandate the current category 2 as a minimum standard for new homes, but it has yet to be implemented. Although we understand that the Government has need, possibly, to consult further, the motion asks for this new category Minimum 2 standard of building regulations to be implemented as soon as possible and without further delay.

Congress, we need quicker action to deliver high-quality, accessible homes for all and push the Government to act now. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 229.

LOCAL AUTHORITY 2030 NET ZERO TARGET COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEMS MOTION 229

229. LOCAL AUTHORITY 2030 NET ZERO TARGET COUNCIL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATION DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEMS

Congress is concerned that members of the union living in social housing estates are facing huge unaffordable charges arising from London Councils setting decarbonisation targets of 2030 to their district heating systems, currently the most efficient of fossil fuel systems.

The race to decarbonisation by 2030 on these systems are hurried and will impose social housing residents with prototype and failing technology.

Congress calls upon Local Authorities to delay the 2030 target on their district heating systems, to ensure that social housing residents are not saddled with out of date, untested technology, and extortionate

costs. Industry experts have advised to hold off as the technology post 2030 will be of greater capacity and efficiency.

The impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), leaseholders' major works charges will be disproportionate as figures of £80,000 plus per dwelling have been floated. The impact on private tenants' rents who live in buy-to-let properties on social housing estates will be unsustainable as buy-to-let landlords pass the costs to their tenants. The additional inequitable costs to social housing residents are not "just" and will mean leaseholders are yet again financially penalised by their freeholder, on this occasion their local authority. The key to a "Just" transition means that one group of people are not financially discriminated against simply by the nature of where they live.

Congress calls for all Labour councils to work with national and devolved governments to work towards achieving the net zero carbon emissions targets by 2050 and to support development of all the technologies required to meet net zero on home heating and hot water.

Congress further calls on the CEC to press TUC and Labour Party for a fair system to pay for the transition from fossil fuels to carbon free energy systems. It has to be recognised that the costs facing members living in social housing are totally unaffordable.

Congress calls for the CEC and Regional Committees to oppose Councils adopting these arbitrary net zero carbon emissions targets and to pledge full support for members and residents on estates opposing such huge bills to meet these arbitrary targets.

Congress calls on Councils to ensure that the labour force engaged in retrofitting to ensure adequate insulation for the efficient operation of heat pumps are unionised and there are provisions in place for adequate levels of skilled apprenticeships.

B10 BARKING BRANCH

London Region

(Carried)

STEVE DAVIES (London): Congress, I move Motion 229: Local Authority 2030 Net Zero Target Council and Housing Association District Heating Systems.

GMB members in London are being confronted with the consequences from commitments made in 2019 by some local government councillors to prematurely achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030, with the cost of this being picked up by the residents.

We are all too familiar with the climate crisis that the world is facing and something, obviously, needs to be done, but to implement the removal of gas-fired boiler systems prematurely and set in targets to achieve net zero for housing stock by 2030 and pushing on at this time is virtually doing so on an industrial scale to the expense of the public.

Pushing forward too soon is also against the advice of the independent energy experts who advise delay of any schemes and await cheaper technologies or systems to be developed, but in some areas Labour councillors are pressing on with these schemes

that are projected to be incredibly expensive to achieve, to which the cost would invariably be passed on to the poorest and hardest hit by matters such as the cost-of-living crisis, and suggest therefore that they are not placing their constituents at the heart of what they are there to do, which is to serve and support the public who elected them.

The 2030 target is 20 years earlier than the legal target set by Parliament in 2019. Not waiting or exploring to see what technologies are developed or become more financially viable and effective is a rash, kneejerk reaction by councillors that need to be thought through more efficiently rather than negatively impacting the people they represent. Five years on these unrealistic targets and schemes are soon to becoming home to roost. This means disposing of and ditching perfectly good gas-fired boilers and retrofitting properties as well as scrapping existing pipes and radiators and installing upgraded fittings.

It would also mean decanting residents in these properties from up to four to six weeks while the work is completed in their homes, with some residents facing costs per household of between £80,000 and £100,000 to meet this target.

As previously mentioned and as the independent energy experts have advised, it is perfectly possible that as new technologies become available these currently approved schemes will become obsolete and have to be replaced again. Everything says "Wait". Rents and service charges to council tenant and leaseholders have gone up to raise funds for the local authorities' Housing Revenue Account to offset pressures of dwindling funds brought about by Tory cutbacks. These have cut councils' funding by a quarter in real terms since 2016 alone. It leaves one-in-five councils in England now believing that it is likely they will become insolvent in the next 18 months, which will be exacerbated by the pressures of these net-zero target commitments. Let us also not forget that leaseholders will have to fund the whole amount themselves.

Labour councillors consider that they are being very generous in offering loans of up to £100,000 over 20 years to meet these costs. To push forward with these schemes now and to proceed without taking into account the long-term effect on the community, particularly come the 4th July, a date that is synonymous with breaking away, will only prove long term to taint and sour the breakaway from the much overdue Tory rule. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Steve. Thank you. Seconder for Motion 229.

BEVERLEY GUNNING (London): Congress, I am seconding Motion 229. I am a first-time delegate and a second-time speaker. (*Applause*) Following on from the mover, GMB Congress has warned that the technologies we need to achieve net zero for our home heating are not yet developed at the scale and affordable prices to replace gas. We welcome the qualification by the CEC that, as of now, there is no realistic alternative to gas. Congress has warned that there is as yet no nationally-agreed policy about how the huge costs of meeting net zero should be financed. What should be common ground around the Labour movement is that families on workers' wages cannot be

expected to meet bills of between £80,000 and £100,000 to change their heating systems to meet an arbitrary target for 2050.

Can we ask regions and branches to support members in resisting Labour councillors pushing such unrealistic arbitrary targets? Congress, please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Beverley. Thank you. I call the mover of Motion 230.

HEAT PUMPS MOTION 230

230. HEAT PUMPS

This Congress we call upon the Government to further subsidise the cost of Heat Pumps which will make them more attractive to homeowners throughout the country.

H62 HULL HEATING WORKS North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region

(Carried)

CLAIRE BUTLIN (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Congress, I am standing in the proud tradition of many great members of this union before me as a British Gas worker. I am attending as part of the North East, Yorkshire & Humber delegation. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 230 on Heat Pumps.

I have worked at British Gas for almost 30 years and I have seen many changes in the industry during that time. My own career has taken a lot of twists and turns and, today, I find myself working in the gas industry focused on renewables and net zero. So today, and possibly controversially, I want to talk about the benefits of heat pumps.

Let me be clear, I am passionate about the future of my gas industry, and I am equally passionate about delivering a fair transition to net zero. I spend my days walking this line and I couldn't be prouder doing it as a GMB rep. I truly do believe that heat pumps are part of the solution. With the right support in place, such as green and eco incentives, heat pumps can be made more affordable and accessible to far more people. Such support would provide opportunities for great new skills, industry and a solid long-term future in manufacturing insulation and maintenance.

Furthermore, heat pumps are very efficient. This process uses a lot less energy, making heat pumps one of the most effective heating and cooling systems available today. Additionally, over time, customers really do save money. Heat pumps use natural heat instead of burning fossil fuels so they significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and this makes heat pumps a sustainable, eco-friendly solution for both heating and cooling in one appliance.

Yes, heat pumps come at a much greater initial expense but we must reach net zero. At the current pace, it would take around two hundred years before this is a mainstream

form of heating and much, much more could be done if the government funded it properly. I joined GMB because I wanted to be part of a campaigning union, a union cared not only just for its members but for the wider community. Today that means taking the proud tradition of the boilermakers and future proofing our industry. So I urge Congress to support this motion to promote a sustainable future, to ensure that our industry jobs evolve and change in a way that matters to the planet and our workers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

PETA ELLINGER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): I am speaking in support of Motion 230: Heat Pumps. The path to net zero offers us all and future generations to come a solution to secure and provide our heating means when looking after our planet. This is why the new Government must back heat pumps with better consumer incentives to enable this transition to this eco-friendly option. We are watching the carbon footprint. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Peta. I call Motion 232.

RENT CONTROL/CAPS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR MOTION 232

232. RENT CONTROL / CAPS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

This Congress recognises the high rent costs across Dorset and nationally.

With 20% of Dorset residents privately renting, this is a subject many members employees and residents can relate to.

Rent prices have increased by 19% in the past few years and people can expect to pay up to 40% of their income towards rent. The rising cost of living essentials has further contributed to this crisis. Affordable housing and social housing is in short supply, demand is great and interest rates have all contributed to rising rents. This is an unregulated market and many landlords may exploit this situation. Dorset is particularly hard hit due to the holiday home industry and wealthy second home owners buying up available rentals.

Congress resolves to adopt and back rent control methods with Union members advocating and acknowledging this housing crisis.

D30 DORSET CC BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

JENNY HOWARD (Southern): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and speaker at Congress. *(Cheers)* I am moving a motion for rent control methods to be introduced to tackle the high rent costs. Our branch is really passionate about this because it affects many members, families, friends and residents within Dorset. For those of you who don't know the Dorset local authority area, we have a population of 380,000 residents.

Nearly 30% are over 65 years old and our population continues to grow, the biggest growth being pensioners.

Research shows that our young people are moving away from the area and a contributing factor is the high housing costs. Rent prices in Dorset over the past few years have increased by 19%, and people can expect to pay up to 40% of their income towards their rent. Dorset has rural deprivation and wages fall slightly below the national average. Social housing is in short supply.

With the introduction of the right to buy by the Conservative Government in 1980 we saw a huge decline in stock, and since 1991 alone there has been an average net loss of 24,000 social homes. Presently, social house building in England is at its lowest rate in decades, and with Government funding cuts to new homes this hinders construction further.

In Dorset up to 500 people apply to join the housing register each month. People can expect to wait years for an offer of social housing. With the decrease in social house and an increasing amount of people who cannot afford to buy a home comes reliance on the private-rented sector. The demand for private rented properties is high and, therefore, there are rent rises. With no rent regulation in place landlords can charge whatever rent they like over the market value and evict people to hike rent prices up for the next tenant.

Interest rates are higher than they have been for 20 years and although this has affected some landlords, research suggests that this only accounts for 12% of rental increases. High rent costs cause a huge financial strain on families, families having to choose between paying their rent or feeding their kids. It has linked to an increase in mental health conditions, which in turn affects physical health as well. High rent costs contribute to a higher number of homeless families not being eligible or meeting affordability criteria when applying for the private-rented properties. This puts extra burdens on local authorities and the number of people stuck in temporary accommodation.

As the current government is opposed to any kind of rent control and not nearly enough new homes have been built, this motion proposes that a new Labour Government seeks to reform and regulate the housing market and introduce legal measures that work towards achieving fairer rent options. With this in mind, any method must be implemented properly so that landlords are not unfairly hit or discouraged because of the reliance on this sector. It must be in conjunction with the building of many more social homes.

Furthermore, we propose that the union adopts a campaign to educate members about the housing crisis and support research into rent control methods. Thank you for listening. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jenny. Seconder?

RACHEL WEBBER (Southern): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a fourth-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am supporting this motion on behalf of the Southern Region. Renters on low incomes face the biggest challenges to find affordable housing. With rent increases in Dorset up by almost 20%, more and more people are being pushed out of their homes. Last year, research by the charity Shelter suggested that more than 700 people were homeless during Christmas last year, with almost 300 of them being children. Granted, these are not typically people we see sleeping rough but are in temporary accommodation, sofa surfing and relying on the kindness of friends and family. Many find themselves in this situation due to a variety of reasons. A few examples would be relationship breakdown, job loss, ill health or retirement. Due to a change in their circumstances, they have now been caught in the trap of unaffordable housing. Imagine being in your rented home and year on year your landlord notifies you of yet another rent increase, an increase not because of the cost-of-living crisis but because they can. This is a classic case of the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Granted, this is not all landlords but increasingly, especially groups like the young are being priced out of Dorset. We are not saying that rents should not go up or that landlords shouldn't be able to make a profit on their investment, but to support this motion is to make sure that rules and guidance ensure that the increases are fair and reasonable. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rachel. Does anyone wish to oppose those motions? *(No response)* No. Then I ask Lorraine Winson from the CEC to speak.

LORRAINE WINSON (CEC): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC responding to Motions 229, 230 and 232. We are supporting all three motions with qualifications. On Motion 229 it is already GMB policy to support a 2050 target for the transition to net zero UK territorial carbon emissions secured as part of a balanced energy mix.

The decarbonisation of home heating must not be borne by low-income households. GMB believes that hydrogen should play a critical role in home heating and the immediate decarbonisation of the grid through blending. The workers retrofitting homes and installing heat pumps should be unionised with provisions for supporting adequate levels of skilled apprenticeships. However, the CEC's qualification is that the best and most just solution for bill payers and skilled jobs when it comes to home heating remains gas based.

On Motion 230, GMB recognises that heat pumps will play an important role in the transition to lower carbon heating. Our qualification is that much greater support is also needed for research and development into hydrogen for home heating. 85% of homes are connected to the gas grid and hydrogen should play a critical role in the immediate decarbonisation of the grid through blending and in the long-term future of our members in the gas industry.

Finally, on Motion 232, GMB supports the introduction of rent controls as part of a wider regulation of the private rented sector. Our qualification is that legislation should be introduced to require local authorities to regulate private landlords. This would include

rules requiring a minimum quality of premises, protecting tenants from arbitrary rent increases and evictions with reserve powers to regulate rents.

To sum-up, Congress, please support Motions 229, 230 and 232 with the qualifications set out.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lorraine. Does London accept the qualification on Motion 229? (*Agreed*) Does North East, Yorkshire & Humber accept the qualification on Motion 230? (*Agreed*) Does Southern accept the qualification on Motion 232? (*Agreed*) Just to remind you that the CEC is supporting Motion 228. So I will take all of those as one. All those in favour of Motions 228, 229, 230 and 232, please show? Thank you. Anyone against? They are all carried.

Motion 228 was CARRIED.

Motion 229 was CARRIED.

Motion 230 was CARRIED.

Motion 232 was CARRIED.

SOCIAL POLICY: WELFARE RIGHTS & SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: We now move onto motions under Social Policy: Welfare Rights & Services. I call the mover of Motion 254.

TWO CHILD BENEFIT CAP MOTION 254

254. TWO CHILD BENEFIT CAP

The Congress notes that In 2015 the former Conservative Chancellor, George Osborne, introduced the shameful policy which capped child tax credits, and universal credit, at up to two children, and not paid for any third or subsequent children.

This Congress believes that this has had a devastating effect on the many working families who have to rely on these benefits because of the poverty pay, and insecure contracts that are all too common, as well as families where there are no members are currently in work.

This Congress notes that at the time many Labour politicians were rightfully outraged, with Angela Rayner describing it as "obscene and inhumane", and Jonathan Ashworth saying the Labour Party was "very, very aware that this is one of the single most heinous elements of the system which is pushing children and families into poverty today".

This Congress further notes that unbelievably, last year Sir Keir Starmer decided that scrapping the two child benefit cap would no longer be Labour Party policy, despite the estimations that this would lift around 270,000 household with children out of poverty.

This Congress believes that relieving child poverty should not only be Labour Party policy, but should be a priority.

This Congress resolves that GMB will continue to remind Labour MPs that this union will never allow our members with more than two children to be thrown under a bus, just so that Labour can position itself to appeal to affluent blue wall voters in leafy suburbs.

W15 THREE SHIRES BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

MARTHA DE BRUXELLES (Southern): I move Motion 254: Two Child Benefit Cap. Congress, the two child policy was introduced in 2015 by the austerity architect, George Osborne, was at the time openly condemned by back benchers, those in the opposition, and sparked a backlash in the Shadow Cabinet at the time and it is still today very unpopular. The two-child limited policy is a cruel policy that was inflicted on parents. Punishing the parents as a means of encouragement is not only cruel but totally misunderstands the roots and causes of poverty. This policy introduced a cap and restricted child credit and Universal Credit to the first two children in the family with only a few exceptions. Because of that, families are at least £3,000 worse off. Large families and minority family groups are disproportionately affected by this policy.

It was designed to force parents of large families to find a job or work more hours. However, academic studies have shown that its main result has been to leave families in poverty rather than increase employment. Abolishing the two-child benefit policy will cost around £1.3 billion, which Rachael Reeves says is economical and affordable in this present climate. However, removing it will lift 2,500 children out of poverty and put a further 850,000 into deep poverty. This is, in the end, the most cost-effective way to reduce child poverty.

From social campaigners to charities, to the Fabian Society and anti-poverty campaigners, Labour is under great pressure to reverse this policy. I urge and encourage those who are part of the Labour movement to be reminded of what this is all about. They must be reminded that they are a party because they came from the trade union movement. The trade union movement was created by people in greater need.

In an article in the *Daily Telegraph* on 13th May 2024 Suella Braverman wrote: "Let's abolish the child limit, eradicate poverty for good and make us feel proud". When a long-time Labour campaigner like myself is caught in this evil rumour, and Suella Braverman who is known for her right-wing views, we know that the Labour Party needs to do better.

Furthermore, the Liberal Democrat manifesto promises to scrap the two-child benefit payments. This will certainly alienate some of our voters. I have been campaigning in my constituency of Melksham & Devizes and canvassing voters. Still we have a huge amount of undecided voters. Believe this news will certainly push certain voters to go for the Liberal Democrats.

I urge Congress to remind Labour voters and to remind our candidates – in fact, to remind everyone – that this is a policy which is inhumane, offensive and it is pushing thousands of children across the UK into deeper poverty. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martha. Secunder?

JENNY HOWARD (Southern): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 254: Two Child Benefit Cap. The Two Child Benefit Cap has hit the poorest and vulnerable communities the most. The benefit cap has impoverished families rather than encouraging employment. Let me tell you that the benefit cap is directly linked to child poverty. One in three children in the UK live in poverty. One-third of these children, living in poverty, fall behind with their education.

Child poverty is linked to delayed cognitive developments. Child poverty means that our children are going without food and a warm home. This is shameful. We are reverting back to Victorian England. The benefit cap needs to be lifted and we have to work towards a more equitable society for all children. Instead of capping benefits, the Government should be offering more training programmes, work experience and careers services. We should be choosing empowerment over impoverishment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jenny. I call the mover of Motion 256.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND BACKPAY MOTION 256

256. UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND BACKPAY

This Congress acknowledges that our members on Universal Credit suffer detriment as a result of delayed pay settlements. Universal Credit is a means tested benefit for people of working age. It supports those out of work but also many of those on low income including many of our members.

However, when we get our cost of living increases backdated Universal Credit adjusts and removes the same sum from the benefit. This means that for many of our members their back pay is effectively stolen from them. In 2023 Teaching Assistants on Universal Credit effectively lost six months of pay increase, half of the annual pay rise.

Congress calls on the GMB to campaign politically for legal change to prevent this unfairness by amending the rules around Universal Credit. If one of lump sums of less than £2500 are counted separately from the monthly salary and excluded from the amount used to calculate Universal Credit, this issue would be resolved.

Congress also calls on pay negotiators to continue their excellent work in seeking to increase the pay of our members but to be mindful of the negative impact of any unnecessary delay in reaching settlement.

L09 LB LAMBETH BRANCH Southern Region

(Carried)

BLANKA VUOLO (Southern) *moved Motion 256. She said:* Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I work as a teaching assistant at a

primary school in London. The issue of backpay and Universal Credit affects many of my colleagues. There are probably many of you here who know exactly the problem that I am talking about. It is a travesty of social justice that so many workers and so many of our members rely on Universal Credit to top up their low incomes just to make ends meet. Scandalously, this reliance on Universal Credit is a sanction for our members to simply put food on the table, pay their utility bills and meet the rising cost of subsistence living.

I am standing here to represent teaching assistants who, shockingly, like so many of us are dependent on monthly Universal Credit payments. The majority of us are women, mothers and carers. A substantial proportion of us are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds.

As you all know, we are still on ridiculously low salaries, doing jobs that demand so much but pay so little. Under the current system our backpay is added to our December pay packet and, as a consequence, we lose our Universal Credit in January. As if it was not frustrating enough to have to wait nine months for a small pay rise in this Tory Government's cost-of-living crisis, after all the negotiations, we finally got our much deserved backpay included with our December salaries. That little extra bit of money which makes our seasonal festivities actually happen means that Universal Credit in January is cut and a substantial part of our income is lost. So for many members our backpay is, effectively, stolen from us.

To add insult to injury, the way that Universal Credit was calculated in 2023 meant that teaching assistants on Universal Credit effectively lost six months of their pay increase, half of their annual pay rise. What can we do to prevent our members on Universal Credit from suffering the detriment of delayed pay settlements? We call on pay negotiators to continue their excellent work in seeking to increase the pay of our members but to be mindful of any unnecessary delay in reach a settlement.

We call upon the GMB to campaign politically for legal changes to how Universal Credit is calculated in relation to backpay to end this injustice. We suggest that if one-off lump sums of less than £2,500 were to be counted separately from the monthly salary and excluded from the amount used to calculate Universal Credit, this issue would be resolved.

I became a rep to help and support my colleagues. The members from my school are relying on me to deliver this motion. Congress, I rely on you to support it. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder, please?

ADRIAN GAVRILITA (Southern): President, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I second this motion which is a critical issue which affects our members on Universal Credit. The impact of delayed pay settlements on our hardworking members cannot be overlooked and it is imperative that we take action to rectify this injustice.

Universal Credit is a vital benefit for people of working age serves as a lifeline for those out of work and many individuals on low income, including a portion of our members. However, the flaw in the system becomes apparent when the cost-of-living increases are backdated leading to corresponding adjustments in Universal Credit that effectively strip away the hard-earned backpay of our members. This situation is nothing short of theft of our earnings and must be addressed with urgency.

Last year the harsh reality of this situation became clear as teaching assistants receiving Universal Credit saw significant cuts to their pay rises amounting to half-a-year's worth of their annual increases. This loss goes beyond mere finances. It signifies a betrayal of trust and fairness that is unacceptable. We must insist that such unfair treatment does not happen again. By promoting and advocating for legislative changes we can guarantee that our members obtain their deserved income without unjust deductions.

In conclusion, I urge each and everyone of you to stand in solidarity with our members on Universal Credit to support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Adrian. I call the mover of Motion 257.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT MOTION 257

257. UNIVERSAL CREDIT

This Congress is concerned that a tenant gets full benefit support from day 1 for everything, especially around rent. But the mortgage owner needs to show 9 months of unemployment or zero earnings before the Council decides to support them for their mortgage payment and it is only for interest only payments, so your capital is still accumulating.

Not earning for 9 months means that the bank will occupy the home way before the council comes to help the mortgage owner. This needs to be in line with tenant support or even higher as a tenant can find a new place comparatively easier than a homeowner to save their house.

G56 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS BRANCH London Region

(Referred)

ELIZABETH GARELICK (London): Madam President and Congress, I am moving Motion 257 on Universal Credit. We are deeply concerned about the disparity in support provided to tenants versus homeowners facing financial hardship. As it currently stands, a tenant is eligible to receive full benefit support from day one, which includes crucial assistance with rent payments. This immediate support ensures that tenants can maintain their housing stability during challenging times. However, the situation is markedly different for mortgage owners. A home owner must demonstrate nine months of unemployment or zero earnings before they qualify for support from their local council. Furthermore, this support is limited to interest-only payments, meaning that

the principal of their mortgage continues to accumulate. This extended period of financial insecurity – nine months without earnings – is untenable for many home owners. By the time the council steps in to offer support the bank may already have taken action to recover the home.

This stark contrast between the treatment of tenants and home owners is not justifiable, especially considering the significant upheaval and difficulties that the home owner faces in finding new accommodation compared with a tenant. Our policies should reflect fairness and support for all individuals, regardless of whether they rent or own their home.

Current GMB Congress policy is for a comprehensive overhaul of the Universal Credit system. The Government has already made some improvements to the support for the mortgage interest scheme by reducing the waiting period from nine months to three months. While it is a step in the right direction, it is not sufficient. We are happy for our motion to be referred so that there can be a thorough investigation into further possible improvements to system. This investigation should consider the relevance of assets and asset owners, ensuring that support is provided equitably. It is crucial to recognise that those in rented accommodation are not the direct recipients of financial assistance. Rather it is the landlords who receive payments to ensure that renters can remain in their homes.

Our goal is to bring the support of mortgage owners in line with or even exceed the support provided to tenants. The ability to keep one's home should not be a privilege but a right, and our support systems must reflect this principle. We must ensure that home owners are not left at the mercy of financial ruin while trying to navigate through periods of unemployment or reduced earnings.

In conclusion, let us commit to create a thorough, more equitable system that supports all individuals in maintaining their homes, whether they rent or own. By doing so, we will strengthen the fabric of our communities and provide a safety net that truly serves everyone in need. Please support our motion. *(Applause)*

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

ELIZABETH HUGHES (London): President and Congress, I am seconding Motion 257: Universal Credit. Congress, this motion addresses an equitable position for mortgage payers when claiming Universal Credit, now known as Support for Mortgage Interest or SMI. Although the Tory Government has recently dropped the qualification period from nine to three months, the inequity remains. It still leaves a three-month gap which will have made a serious dent in most people's finances.

By June 2023 90,700 mortgages were in arrears and repossessions, believe you me, are very slowly creeping up again. I can say that 11,787 households claimed an SMI loan in 2023. In short the Tory ideology behind these policies protects landlords. It discriminates against people who worked to own their own homes. It is, in effect, socio-economic discrimination. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elizabeth. I ask Gordon Richardson to respond on behalf of the CEC.

GORDON RICHARDSON (CEC): President and Congress, I want to thank those who have spoken on this subject, but I will be speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 254 and 257. On Motion 254 the CEC supports the removal of the Two Child Cap on Child Tax Credits. It remains a cruel element of the failed austerity doctrine of the Cameron/Osborne years. The CEC also agrees that relieving child poverty should be a priority for the next Labour Government, and the GMB supports calls for this in the party's National Policy Forums. We will be watching them. We will continue to remind Labour to make this a priority should, or when, it wins the next election.

Our small qualification is that we should also continue to raise the Conservatives' shameful record on child poverty while they continue to be in government, even if it is only for a short time. This is including their decision to cap child tax credits to begin with.

On Motion 257 the Congress policy that we seek to overhaul the Universal Credit system. However, the CEC is asking that this motion is referred. The Government has made improvements to the Support for Mortgage Interest Scheme where the waiting list period is now, as has just been said, three rather than nine months.

We wish to investigate further what possible improvements can be made to this system whilst taking into account the relevance of assets and asset holders. Those in rented accommodation are not receiving financial assistance. Rather it is their landlords who are being paid so renters can keep their accommodation.

Congress, please support Motion 254 with the qualification and agree to refer Motion 257. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gordon. Does London agree to refer Motion 257? (*Agreed*) So no vote is needed on that. Does Southern agree the qualification on Motion 254? (*Agreed*) So I will take Motions 254 and 256. All those in favour, please show? Anyone against? They are both carried.

Motion 254 was CARRIED.

Motion 256 was CARRIED.

Motion 257 was REFERRED.

SOCIAL POLICY: CLIMATE CHANGE

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to our motions under Social Policy: Climate Change. I ask the mover of Motion 224 to come to the stage. Let me do a quick plug again for this book: *Uprising*. Apparently, it is the last day you can buy it, but if you want to learn something of the struggles, achievements of global majority workers in the trade unions of their hopes and dreams, gains and losses, then *Uprising* is the book for you.

FREE SOLAR ENERGY FOR ALL MOTION 224

224. FREE SOLAR ENERGY FOR ALL

Congress recognises that we are severely suffering with the cost of living and the rising costs of greedy fuel suppliers. These unprecedented rising costs are making it hard to heat our homes during winter and we see families wearing their coats in their homes to stay warm because their salaries do not stretch enough to pay for energy bills.

Although pensioners receive fuel payments, they still need to be careful and heat as little as two rooms to stay warm.

Congress, we must take the opportunity of solar energy and ensure every house can meet the carbon footprint targets by supplying homes with minimum number of solar panels.

This government needs to protect our sick and vulnerable and stop profiteering from them, the incentive is just not enough to support the taxpayers of this country and we are fed up with paying these made-up taxes so the rich keeps getting rich at our expense.

We call for the free installation of solar panels for the public. Whatever surplus energy is generated should go back into the public domain to generate profit. This would generate capital to business and can be sold to offset the costing of installing these panels into every home.

B22 BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH London Region

ADRIAN LOUKASIEWICZ (London): Congress, I am the branch secretary of P35 Peterborough branch. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*
I am moving Motion 224 on Solar Energy.

We all know only too well that our members are suffering severely with the increasing cost of living and with the rising prices charged by the greedy fuel suppliers. This unprecedented rise in costs are making it hard to heat our homes during winter. We see families wearing their coats in doors to stay warm because their salaries are not enough to pay for energy bills. Although pensioners receive fuel payments, they still need to be careful as they heat as little as two rooms to stay warm. We must take the opportunity afforded by solar energy to ensure that every house can meet the carbon footprint targets. This could be achieved by supplying homes with a minimum number of solar panels.

This Government needs to protect our sick and vulnerable and stop the energy companies from profiteering from them. The current incentive is just not enough to win support from the taxpayers of this country. We are fed up with paying these made-up taxes so that the rich keep getting richer at our expense.

We call for the GMB to support the free supply and installation of solar panels for the public. This would generate capital for businesses and create jobs. Some councils, such as Milton Keynes, have started to secure grants to offer solar panels and installation to low-income families. Whatever surplus energy is generated should go

back into the public domain to generate profit which could be used to offset the cost of installing these panels into every home. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Adrian. Secunder?

BASMILLA MAHOMED (London): Congress, I second Motion 224. How often have you had a knock on the door or a random cold call with someone trying to tell you that you qualify for a grant for cavity and loft insulation or solar panels, etc? Then when you look deeper into it, you find that you don't qualify because it is for home owners and you live in rented property or vice-versa. Wouldn't it be a lot easier and less confusing if we could cut through all the red tape and offer this energy saving upgrade for free for everyone? Solar panels seem to be a good starting point not only because of the environmental implications but because installation would be less intrusive as the installers would only need to work outside of the home. Also it wouldn't be a wasted endeavour like some of the things the Government have done in the past, like dodgy PPE etc, because everyone, no matter what their circumstances uses electricity, don't they? No one is going to pass up an opportunity to get some for free. I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Bismilla. I call the mover of Motion 226.

LEWISHAM AIR POLLUTION MOTION 226

226. LEWISHAM AIR POLLUTION

This Congress recognises and acknowledges the need to improve air quality, and Government policies don't take into account the full health and environmental impacts of poor air quality. A healthy population is the finest form of natural wealth and this depends on public health services securing a sound environment. The Environment Agency have failed to regulate the harmful PM2.5 emissions from incinerators when they are supposed to protect public health, so failing in their duty of care.

Locally Lewisham's asthma death rate rose above the London average after the SELCHP incinerator started in 1993, so perhaps the London Mayor, an asthma sufferer who's determined to tackle pollution, has overlooked the impact of the incinerator emissions.

ONS data also shows that Lewisham's infant mortality rate and the percentage of low birth weight babies, suddenly rose after SELCHP started. Improving air quality requires less conversation and more action. All schools keep a register of asthma inhalers brought into school, so accurate data is available to the Mayor who could map the rates across all of London schools and take appropriate action. This situation is likely to be replicated across many towns and cities in the UK.

K19 SOUTH LONDON GENERAL Southern Region

(Referred)

ALLISON SIMON (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a second-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am moving Motion 226. This Congress recognises and

acknowledges the need to improve air quality, and that Government policies don't take into account the full health and environmental impacts of poor air quality.

As a Lewisham resident, the congestion and pollution is rife. I would like to remind you about the story of a nine year-old, Alah Adu Kissi Debra, who lived just 25 metres from the South Circular Road in Lewisham, one of London's busiest roads. She, tragically, died nearly 10 years ago as a result of air pollution. She was the first person in London to have 'air pollution' registered as a cause of death. Between eight and 12 children with asthma continue to die in London every year, and between 22 and 24 across the UK. All schools keep a register of asthma inhalers brought into school in addition to GPs, so accurate data is available to the Mayor who could map these rates across all London schools and take appropriate action.

Congress, air pollution is a very large public health issue in London. It shortens lives for Londoners, leading up to 9,400 extra deaths per year. We don't want our members, we don't want our children, the elderly or anyone else in Lewisham to suffer from such a tragic fate. This situation is likely to be replicated nationally across many towns and cities in the UK. Improving air quality requires less conversation and more action. Please support my motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Allison. Well done. A seconder for Motion 226?

DONNA JENNINGS (Southern): Congress, I am second Motion 226: Lewisham Air Pollution. I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

In 2021 the World Health Organisation set a recommended air pollution emissions target. The Government's low ambition to reach this target by 2040 is unacceptable. Generated by road transport, manufacturing and construction, these harmful emissions can increase asthma attacks and even stunt lung growth in children. Air pollution has been referred as the 'new tobacco' as it causes a similar level of disease as to smoking. The major difference with that comparison is that smoking tobacco is a personal choice whilst breathing clean air is a basic human right.

This Congress is aware that the harmful pollutants released by the incinerator in Lewisham exacerbates the same health problems caused by traffic pollution. The Air Quality Action Plan set out by Lewisham Council states that to meet these air pollution targets they will upgrade older and more high-polluting vehicles and install more electric vehicle charging points. The plan also states that they will increase the number of cycle hangers and play streets outside schools and encourage children to walk and cycle more.

Whilst the plan set out by Lewisham Council is commendable it is unlikely that adults, let alone children, will want to cycle or walk anywhere until the levels of air pollution are dramatically reduced. Congress, it is vital for the GMB to lobby the Government into making more ambitious air-quality targets. This will ensure that we are not only protecting our members but the entire population of Lewisham and the affected surrounding areas. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Donna. I call the mover of Motion 227.

PERMANENT DISBANDING OF EXPANDED ULEZ ZONES IN GREATER LONDON MOTION 227

227. PERMANENT DISBANDING OF EXPANDED ULEZ ZONES IN GREATER LONDON

This Congress notes:

- The expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) zones in Greater London were established with the aim of reducing air pollution and fostering cleaner air in the city.
- The financial burden placed on individuals residing within the expanded ULEZ zones is considerable and disproportionately impacts citizens, while the primary contributors to environmental degradation are profit-making corporations.
- The current structure of the ULEZ zones unfairly burdens individuals without effectively addressing the main sources of air pollution.
- The permanent disbanding of these expanded ULEZ zones is essential to relieve the financial strain on citizens and to encourage greater corporate responsibility for environmental conservation efforts.

We call on GMB to support the permanent disbanding of the expanded ULEZ zones within Greater London and:

1. Call for a comprehensive reassessment of current policies to establish a more equitable system that holds corporations accountable for their contributions to environmental degradation, aiming for a fair and balanced approach in tackling air pollution issues.
2. Seek to collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, environmental agencies, and community representatives, to develop sustainable initiatives that enhance air quality without unduly burdening citizens.

H37 HILLINGDON BRANCH London Region

(Referred)

LUKE SIMCOCK (London): I am moving Motion 227: Permanent Disbanding of Expanded ULEZ Zones in Greater London. Today I address a matter of significant concern. While the expanded Ultra Low Emission Zones in Greater London were established for a noble reason in reducing air pollution and fostering cleaner air in the city – I completely agree with the last speaker, by the way, as it does need to happen – it has become increasingly apparent that the current structure of the ULEZ zone is unfairly burdened on individuals without effectively addressing the main source of air pollution.

We note that the considerable financial burden placed on individuals living within or commuting into the expanded zones, which disproportionately impacts citizens, while the primary contributors to environmental damage remain the profit-making corporations. Therefore, we believe that the permanent disbanding of the expanded

ULEZ zones is essential to relieve the financial strain on citizens and to encourage greater corporate responsibility for the environmental conservation efforts. Do you remember when they told us to buy diesel engines because they were better for the environment and then we all went and bought them? Now we've had to get rid of them because of the ULEZ charge. They are not paying for that yet they made all of that profit from those sales.

In the light of this, we call upon the GMB to support the permanent disbanding of the expanded ULEZ zones within Greater London and take the following actions: Call for a comprehensive reassessment of current policies to establish a more equitable system that holds corporations accountable for their contributions to the environmental damage, aiming for a fair and balanced approach in tackling air pollution issues, and ensuring that the burden is shared more equally among all stakeholders. We seek to collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including government bodies, environmental agencies and community representatives to develop sustainable initiatives that enhance air quality without unduly burdening citizens. By working together we can identify innovative solutions that address the root causes of air pollution while minimising impacts on the individuals.

The companies that make record profits should pay. They are making crazy money and they are not even paying proper tax on it. This should not be left as a burden on the common, struggling citizen. Let us unite in the pursuit of a cleaner, healthier and fairer future for all. Please support. *(Applause)*

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

MATTHEW WRIGHT (London): President and Congress, I am from the Essex General Branch. This motion does not just speak to the punitive measures implemented by ULEZ which, by default, disproportionately places the burden and hits the pockets of members and workers the hardest. But to the wider issue of ensuring any green transition, it is both fair and just. It should not cost our members jobs or, indeed, represent an even further reduction in living standards.

Congress, I ask you to consider this. How is it right that if you need to travel to care for a loved one and own a modest car you should be forced to pay a charge? Yet those who own a brand new Range Rover, a Porche or a Tesla are exempt? How is it fair that paramedics on nights should have to pay an extra £25 a shift just to go to work? How is it also just that teaching assistants, who are only paid for 39 weeks of the year, should have to lose another £62.50 a week to help our children achieve their dreams?

Congress, I ask you to vote in support of this motion to ensure that these pernicious policies and the burden of the green transition is placed upon those with the broadest shoulders to ensure policies that inherently harm workers and members are not rolled out across the regions and vote in solidarity with our members who cannot afford to be punished further for the crime of simply being working class. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Matthew. I ask Kevan Hensby from the CEC to give the CEC response.

KEVAN HENSBY (CEC): President and Congress, I am responding to Motions 224, 226 and to 227 on behalf of the CEC.

On Motion 224 our qualification is that this motion can only be enacted in good conscience once forced labour has been eliminated from the supply chain for solar panels, which can only be traced in almost all solar panel modules sold in Europe.

On Motion 226 the CEC recognises and acknowledges the need to improve air quality, all the more so taking into consideration the number of children and those with disabilities are now being affected by poor quality air pollution. This will be in line with the GMB's existing policies. We do sincerely appreciate the branch bringing this matter to our attention.

As regards air pollution in the Lewisham local area and a workplace for our GMB members, we are asking that the motion be referred to the Southern Region who will be best placed to further investigate and take action upon these matters as appropriate.

Finally, on Motion 227, this motion would take us beyond existing policy of appropriate exemptions and policies like ULEZ and that the expanded ULEZ zones are to be disbanded permanently. This would have implications exclusively for our members of the London and Southern Regions, which are both campaigning on this issue. Therefore, we are asking that the motion be referred to those regions and then they can consider the course of the motion in more detail.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC asks that you support Motion 224 with the qualification and that Motions 226 and 227 be referred. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevan. Does Southern Region accept to refer on Motion 226? *(Agreed)* Does London Region accept to refer on Motion 227? *(Agreed)* I am doing the referrals first, so we don't need to take a vote on those. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 224? *(Agreed)* In that case, I will put that motion to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 224, please show? Anyone against. That is carried.

Motion 224 was CARRIED.

Motion 226 was REFERRED.

Motion 227 was REFERRED.

EMERGENCY MOTION 2

THE PRESIDENT: We now come to the last motion of the day which is Emergency Motion 2. I call the mover of Emergency Motion 2.

NO MORE PILGRIM FOOD MASTERS LOSSES EMERGENCY MOTION 2

NO MORE PILGRIM FOOD MASTERS LOSSES

Pilgrim's Food Masters is the UK's largest producer of delicious meats, chilled & frozen ready meals for every major UK & Ireland supermarket. They employ well over 1500 staff across 4 sites in Southall employing primarily Asian local workers.

Most of the staff are Noons food legacy with whole communities dependent on these jobs, which was the original vision of Lord Noon himself.

They announced on 18 March 2024 that there was no option but to close the Dean Way site in December 2024 which will see job losses in excess of 450 staff.

Despite GMB struggles and campaigns the company announced on 5 June 2024 that the Spurway site would close. This will see total job losses reaching record levels.

We need to save these jobs in the community, we need to stop supply chains moving out of London due to costs.

We are asking Congress to support our Region's fight and put real pressure on the customers such as Marks and Spencer's and Morisons to name but a few to stop the destruction of Food Manufacturing in London.

C22 CENTRAL WEMBLEY BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

MELLY NDLOVO (London): Congress, I'm a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Because of the nature of the emergency motion, with your permission, President, I would like everybody to raise their fist and should "Amanda". I will explain what that means. Allow me to ask the Congress delegates to raise their fist, and then when I say "Shout" you say "Amanda" and you pump your first. Right. "1,2,3: Amanda!" That is a slogan of defiance that we use in Southern Africa when we are faced with persecution. When we pump our fist, "Amanda" generates power. But when we are pumping that fist, we are saying as a collective that we are putting our power together and we will become stronger than those who are persecuting us because when you pump you are releasing. I will be calling upon the Congress to release the power that it has.

Now to the motion. *(Applause)* Pilgrim Food Masters inherited the four sites in September 2021, and then in November 2022 they gave a notice to close one site, which was closed on 24th February 2023 with the loss of 320 jobs. This week you will have seen our fire and rehire campaign which GMB London Region fought against the closures to end fire and rehire. We took our fight and the delegation to Parliament and our campaign to the London Labour Party. After this closure the company gave us assurances that this would be the last lot of cuts, and it would make sure that our members had protections to retain their jobs. We should have learnt our lesson.

We are shocked to hear that two more sites are said to close. The Dean Way site closure was announced on 18th March 2024 and is to shut in December, losing 450 jobs, of which 135 have already gone.

Just last week they announced the closure of the third site at Spareway, with another loss of at least 270 jobs. The company is making the excuse that it is because of market pressures but the picture is that they are still making a profit. Now only one site is left. The problem is that 99% of these workers come from the surrounding area called Southall. It is not just that but it is generations of families. We have the father, the mother, the son and the daughter. There are friendships through working there. So when this happens, it demeans the whole households. All families concerned have no income coming in. So you can see that these job cuts will have a huge impact on these families. We want the jobs to stay within the communities, not to be moved to Norfolk or to the Midlands, which will leave Southall as a ghost town. Our members have nowhere to go. Their skill level is low. Some of them have worked for this company for more than 30 years. We are asking for loud Congress support to save our community and to stop food supply chains moving out of London due to cost. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Melly. I call the seconder for Emergency Motion 2.

DAKSA PAREKH (London): Congress, I'm a second-time delegate and a third-time speaker, seconding this emergency motion. Firstly, I would like to thank London Region for giving me this opportunity to speak to you. I work at a milling factory and in our factory the workers are mostly Asian and women. As with Pilgrim Foods, many of our workers are long serving and have dedicated their lives to our company. If Pilgrims can close down, sites like this, and many other manufacturing companies, can do the same. So we are asking for a large Congress support to save our community, to save these jobs in the community and to stop food-supply chains moving out of London due to cost. Please support the emergency motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. The CEC is supporting Emergency Motion 2 so I will put it straight to the vote. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is overwhelmingly carried.

Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE PRESIDENT: Before we close, I ask Nadine Houghton, National Officer for Asda, to come to the stage to explain the Asda demo that will take place this afternoon.

NADINE HOUGHTON (National Officer): President, I have some volunteers with me. *(Applause)* Colleagues, you heard yesterday about the historic walkouts that are taking place across Asda stores. Asda members in GMB truly are making history. But these walkouts haven't just come about by mistake. They have come about because business

decisions that are being made by *this gentleman here (Picture shown)* means that our members are feeling the full force of asset stripping from private equity fund managers. But what do we mean by that? Eight million hours have been cut from the shopfloor, making our members' jobs harder and less safe; increased attacks on shopfloor workers; declining health and safety standards; a refusal to negotiate with the GMB on pay and conditions and a refusal to acknowledge our women workers' equal pay claim. It's an historic equal pay claim that is going to deliver pay justice not just for Asda workers but for retail workers up and down the country. *This gentleman here* is Manjit Dale. He's the managing partner of TDR Capital. He doesn't want you to know his name. He doesn't want you to know what he is doing to Asda workers, to Asda customers and to the Asda business. He wants to stay below the radar. Well, we are going to make him famous. The reason why we are going to make him famous is because he needs to be held accountable for the decisions that are impacting on the lives of GMB members. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, we need your help this afternoon. We need you to show some solidarity with Asda workers. We are going to march from Bournemouth Pier to the Bournemouth Asda store. We are going to take Manjit on a little walk with us and we are going to get some photographs so that everybody else knows who Manjit is as well. So come along at a quarter-to-2 at Bournemouth Pier, after your fringes, join us for a photo-call and then come on the march to the Bournemouth Asda with us. We will have some photographs when we get there and you will be free to go on your way. If you don't want to come on the march, that is absolutely fine. It is your choice. There is the option of going campaigning for the Labour Party locally as well. We will brief you when we get to the pier. For anybody who doesn't want to come on the march, please come and knock on doors for the Labour Party. However, come and support Asda workers. They need your solidarity. Let's make Manjit famous. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nadine. Thank you to all those Asda workers. As Nadine said, please come and show your solidarity at Bournemouth Pier and then on the march. Congress, that concludes the business of this morning. Thank you.

Congress concluded for the day.

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