



General Secretary's Report
GMB Congress 2022
12th to 16th June
Harrogate



GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTRODUCTION

GMB CONGRESS 2022

It is the honour of my life to be your GMB General Secretary. Every day, I'm conscious of the privilege I have of leading GMB, representing proud, decent working people who put their trust in our great union to make work better.

It has been an incredibly difficult couple of years, and I am delighted that we are back together again, meeting face to face, listening and sharing experiences, creating a spirit of solidarity and comradeship. It is a very special experience.

We reconvene at a time of challenge and hope for our union. Where we face the future with energy and commitment, underpinned by a new spirit of honesty.

We are honest about the task before us in securing GMB's future. Honest about the failings in our organisation, around the behaviour of the previous leadership, over sexual harassment, and unacceptable conduct in senior office. Honest about the failure to give all our people opportunity and be the genuinely inclusive union they deserve. Honest about our membership numbers, and the failure in the past to respect how we spend our member's money.

The process of rebuilding our union has begun. This week we will debate a new ground breaking policy on sexual harassment and by the time we meet we should have a new National Race Officer in place. We have new policies and procedures on declarations of interests, conflicts of interest, and credit card spending. Never again will this union tolerate abuse and mismanagement of our members' money.

Policies and procedures are important but even more so is the culture of the organisation. The Senior Management Team are participating in a comprehensive programme of training on how

we change the way we lead the union. Together we are building a better, stronger, more inclusive, and healthier union.

Honesty about our financial situation compels us to look at everything we do as an organisation and, where necessary, take tough decisions.

We have been cutting out waste, running tighter budgets, reducing the numbers employed by the union, and challenging our activity to ensure the jobs we do are focused on the industrial priorities of the membership. We have taken the historic decision to restructure our regions, with the resulting financial savings reinvested to build a better GMB, supporting organising, campaigning, and of course, keeping the cost of membership down.

I am so grateful to our CEC members and the current Senior Management Team. They challenge and support with honesty and insight, and there is a unity of purpose amongst the leadership of the union which is unprecedented.

Across GMB there are countless women and men who are similarly committed to restoring integrity in great our union. The changes we are making are allowing me to make good on the promises I gave to our members when I stood for election: to clean up the union, get us focused back on the priorities of our members in the workplace, reduce the cost of being a GMB member, and create a Women's Campaign Unit.

These are incredibly difficult times for our members, with the cost of living crisis rapidly becoming a catastrophe for many. It's more important than ever that we remain affordable for people who want justice at work and, with your continued support, we will keep membership costs frozen.

We're being honest about the distractions that have consumed our union and are getting back our focus on the issues that really matter to members, which is essential to our future success. For too long we've been obsessed with internal Labour Party politics rather than listening to members, building industrial campaigns around their priorities, and investing in the development of our Shop Stewards and branches.

We are honest about building a better relationship with our members too. We must offer hope and in this time of financial hardship, prove that we are a vehicle through which they can organise to transform their working lives. The fact is we have been suffering from the 'Netflix effect', as member's incomes are squeezed, and some cancel their membership. Where members see that the union is listening to their priorities, building campaigns, communicating effectively then we see our membership growing.

We have only just begun the process of getting our union back to where we should be, and I am so excited by many of the industrial campaigns that I see us leading across the length and breadth of the UK.

This proud, old union is stirring and getting back to what it does best – organising and campaigning in the workplace. That's what we did in the best of our past and this same calling inspires our future.

This week we will continue this journey to a better GMB, honestly addressing the challenges before us and building hope for a brighter future for our members.

We have already undertaken the biggest changes in our union in a century and we must continue so we are relentlessly campaigning, organising and winning again. We know what has to be done to build a thriving, healthy, truly diverse and representative union. With your continued support we're going to continue to transform the fortunes of the union so that we are again the beacon of light on the hill for ordinary working people.

We are GMB. We make work better.



Gary Smith
General Secretary & Treasurer

MAKE WORK BETTER

CONTENTS

DECISIONS OF CONGRESS 2021 AND PROGRESS ON 2021 MOTIONS	2
CAMPAIGNS & COMMUNICATIONS	3
EQUALITIES & INCLUSION	5
HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT	6
LEGAL	11
NATIONAL ORGANISING UNIT	12
POLITICAL	14
RESEARCH & POLICY	16
ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS – MAY 2021 – APRIL 2022	18
TUC AWARDS 2021	18
SECTION REPORTS	
COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION	19
MANUFACTURING SECTION	26
PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION	32
REGIONAL REPORTS	
BIRMINGHAM & WEST MIDLANDS	36
LONDON REGION	41
MIDLAND & EAST COAST	47
NORTHERN	53
NORTH WEST & IRISH	57
SCOTLAND	61
SOUTHERN	65
WALES & SOUTH WEST	72
YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE	75

DECISIONS OF CONGRESS 2021 AND PROGRESS ON 2021 MOTIONS

Decisions of Congress 2021, and action taken on those decisions, can be found on the GMB website www.gmb.org.uk/democracy/gmb/congress

In accordance with Motion 7 agreed by Congress 2015 a progress report on all carried motions from Congress 2021 is available to members in the members area of the GMB National website and this report will be kept updated.

If any GMB member or Branch would like further information on the progress of their motion or have any policy enquiries, please contact Laurence Turner and Anna Barnes directly on laurence.turner@gmb.org.uk and anna.barnes@gmb.org.uk.

CAMPAIGNS & COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The National Office Campaigns and Communications team supports GMB people to make work better. We assist with the design, delivery, and promotion of campaigns that advance our union's industrial objectives, using the power of communications to influence opinion and put GMB in the best possible place to win for our members.

Working in tandem with our GMB regions we use different ways to get our message across, including media relations, direct communications, political relations, events, social media, and member action. We also provide essential research and policy support and guidance that underpins so much GMB work.

Across the country, GMB refuse workers have been taking action and winning better pay. We've worked with officers and reps to secure widespread media attention on disputes everywhere.



The campaign for equal pay in Birmingham City Council has really taken off, and we've worked closely with the regional GMB team to generate strong coverage, including an exclusive launch on the BBC.

We've worked to ensure the General Secretary has secured a regular presence across the national media, with consistent contributions made on key policy issues.

A notable example was a full column in The Times, calling out the scandal of renewables work being sent overseas.

We were forceful in criticising the Governor of the Bank of England for his remarks on working people's pay rises and our invitation for him to spend a day with a care worker gained huge coverage.

Our landmark recognition agreement with Deliveroo was a big story and we ensured GMB was front and centre in the print, broadcast, and online media, promoting this significant moment and responding robustly to challenges by non-TUC organisations.

Campaign Training

There is some great campaigning being undertaken in workplaces across the country and we want to help spread this best practice and encourage activity in all parts of the union.

That's why we have started to deliver campaign training for GMB officers, staff, and representatives.

Developing a framework for a campaign and understanding the power of emotion in communications will help everyone who is working to win for our members.

Media Success

The last 12 months have seen GMB achieve high levels of media coverage to aid our industrial campaigns and boost the union's profile, including -

Print - we secured coverage in over 3,800 print articles, an average of more than 10 per day.

Online - GMB was in over 35,000 online articles, in publications that had an audience reach of a staggering 118 billion readers.

Broadcast - GMB appeared in more than 6,800 TV or radio broadcasts, with a total audience of 1.4 billion people.

Social Media

We continue to grow the union's voice in this important area. Our Facebook page reaches tens of thousands of users every week, with likes and views coming from users in working age demographics, showing that we are reaching the right people.

On Twitter, we regularly have impressions exceeding two million a month, with 48,100 following our national feed.

Website

Our website continues to work as the main platform for information on GMB, with an average of 4,800 visits per day.

Greater news activity helps to drive increases in the number of visitors with over 15,000 on the day when there was an incident in ASDA, an announcement on McVities, and political activity.

Two-thirds of visits to the website are made via a mobile phone, reflecting the more general

shift in how people are accessing the internet.

Over 50% of new members join GMB through the website.

We are in the process of revamping our online presence, and will launch a refreshed website in the autumn.

Mobile Phone Power

Over 9 in 10 of the UK population have a smartphone. This provides huge opportunities for our union to communicate with our members, especially if we use the right sort of format.

We're in the process of helping GMB people to develop our video messaging capability, so that communications can be conveyed in short videos that are attached to SMS texts.

This is already yielding great results, with Asda campaign messages achieving open rates of 90+%, a massive leap forward.

Another notable success was in British Gypsum, where this approach helped with a ballot turnout of 93%.



EQUALITIES & INCLUSION DEPARTMENT

National Equality Conference 2021

In November the department and the National Equality Forum delivered the first online National Equality Conference. The event was a logistical challenge delivered successfully with support from the Research and Policy team and Joe Abel from the Public Services section. Conference heard motions on topics from Long Covid as a Disability to Equality Training and the race and disability pay gaps. For the first time, the five National Equality Forum strand leads were elected only by members self-identifying with the relevant strand – an achievement and step forward for member self-determination and self-organisation in the union.

Summits

April 2022 saw the first ever online national summits for the four equality strands – LGBT+, Disabled Workers, Race and Women Workers – as well as Young Workers. The event programmes were developed by working groups of National Equality Forum members and regional strand leads, and all attendees identified with/belonged to the relevant strand – upholding our key aim to support self-organisation and safer spaces. The events had a strong focus on upskilling activists to recruit, organise and bargain in the workplace around equalities and inclusion issues.

The Women's summit focused on Equal Pay, supported by the Women's Campaign Unit, and women's health and safety. The LGBT+ summit heard from an LGBT+ person whose working life has been heavily impacted by their experience of devastating Long COVID symptoms. The Race summit looked at Black Workers getting a seat at the table, hearing from Sarah Owen MP, whilst the disabled workers summit looked at reasonable adjustments, risk assessments and mental health. The Young Workers' summit looked at workplace mapping, elected a new committee, and heard motions on the Living Wage and recruiting more young reps.

Feedback from the events acclaimed their high quality and interactive nature. For future events

we will aim to increase the number of delegates attending from every GMB region to ensure the widest range of activists possible benefit and take new skills back to their branches

Congratulations, and thanks, for their hard work and leadership go to the summit working groups as well as all the staff members who supported the events.

Strand Networks

The networks of LGBT+, Womens, Disabled Workers and Race regional strand leads continue to meet on a regular basis online – sharing regional knowledge, ideas and inspiration and planning for national events.

Trans and Non-Binary Toolkit

On Trans Day of Visibility 2022 the department launched the Trans and Non-binary Equality at Work toolkit. Developed by a group of trans and non-binary activists from across GMB, the toolkit is the most up-to-date, progressive and inclusive trans toolkit produced by a UK union. It includes a model workplace policy to be negotiated with employers and a factsheet and definitions document explaining more about workplace issues for trans and non-binary workers. The campaign will continue to be rolled out in later 2022 and will serve to highlight that GMB is the union for LGBT+ workers to join and organise with.

Menopause Campaign

The Menopause at Work: Smash the Stigma! campaign continues to be rolled out across GMB regions. In Autumn 2021 the department, alongside Regional Equality Officers and Birmingham region activist Sarah James, delivered campaign training and a two day train the trainer course, repeated in February 2022. Twenty officers and activists across GMB are fully trained in delivering the high equality Smash the Stigma! campaign training supported by a comprehensive suite of training materials.

The department joined colleagues in meetings

highlighting the toolkit with Hinkley Point C and Carolyn Harris MP. Accurate monitoring of take up of the policy, alongside other policies developed by the department and activists, by employers has been a challenge and this will be a focus in the latter half of 2022.

If you've not yet received campaign training, contact your Regional Equality Officer to get started on campaigning on this major topical issue in your branch.

TUC

GMB continues to have a high level of engagement with the TUC equality committees and conferences, as well as having taken part in the TUC's trade union Equality Audit 2022. GMB members were well represented by our activists on all four TUC equality committees and the Young Workers Forum in 2021-22 and will be again in 2022-23. TUC equality conferences returned this Spring to their usual delegate system and a total of 81 GMB delegates from every GMB region and nation contributed to policy debate on a vast range of topics. The make-up of all delegations has been intersectional within the relevant equality strand, representing the true, rich diversity of GMB membership. Engagement with the conferences immeasurably increases our officer and activist knowledge of equalities organising in the workplace, alongside developing activist confidence and leadership skills. Activists who are interested in attending in 2023 can contact their Regional Equality Officer.

Online Events

Post- Congress 2021, in LGBT+ Pride month the department took advantage of our new-found knowledge of Zoom events and coordinated and supported three events: LGBT+ at Work: Through the Decades; Pride is a Protest: Protesting for Global LGBT+ Rights and Just A Ball Game? Stronger Together Online. Further, the Race Strand Leads network hosted a moving discussion for Windrush Day 2021: Where do they stand now. All events used live subtitling to enhance accessibility for a range of members.

And More

London Region activists celebrated success this April in their campaign for Securitas to sign our Work to Stop Domestic Abuse workplace charter, making support and paid time off for those experiencing domestic abuse available for thousands more workers. Activists looking

to roll out a campaign in their region can find resources on the national equality department webpages, alongside resources for other ongoing national equality campaigns including Neurodiversity in the Workplace and the Reasonable Adjustments Passport.

HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT

Covid 19 Response

The period since Congress 2021 has been dominated by Covid-19. We have seen the emergence of the Delta and Omicron variants; dealt with Government changing and abandoning policy positions with alarming frequency; and challenged employers who took the first available opportunity to remove vital protective measures without pause to consider the impact on their workforce. The past year has been spent trying to create clarity from uncertainty. We have had to negotiate difficult and challenging issues surrounding vaccination, and covid status certification. We have had to manage and interpret mixed messaging and incoherent guidance from the Westminster Government, and this will continue to be our major challenge over the forthcoming months.

We have heard increasingly dangerous and populist rhetoric from government ministers on the removal of Covid secure measures in the workplace. Several 'Freedom Days' have come and gone. Covid cases have continued to climb; exposures in workplaces have continued unabated; and the removal of legal requirements for mitigations has unnecessarily made the situation far worse than it needed to be.

We have spent the past year engaging with the UK Health Security Agency and Department for Business (BEIS) on their Safer Workplaces guidance. We have repetitively criticised the poor quality and limited scope of this guidance, yet the Department are not interested in taking our constructive comments on board. The most recent set of meetings resulted in a further commitment to relook at sections on ventilation and risk assessment, but these still do not carry the necessary weight or legal standing,

especially when other Government Departments and devolved administrations are publishing guidance with differing and often contradictory recommendations. We strongly objected to the move from mandatory to voluntary guidance and continue to lobby for stronger legal protections.

Our task from this point forward is to ensure that GMB members, and their employers, fully understand that vaccines alone will not be enough to control the further spread of coronavirus. We will have to ensure that employers keep their assessments and measures in place, and we will have the argument where we need to. We will not be 'over' Covid for some years, and the work of the Department will adapt to reflect this new reality.

In Spring 2022, Dan was asked to join the TUC Working Group on the Public Inquiry in the Westminster Government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Inquiry was announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson on 15th December 2021, with Baroness Hallett appointed to lead it. The Inquiry is looking at all aspects of the Government's response to the pandemic, and Dan is providing expert input on the workplace and public health aspects. The initial role of the Working Group has been to contribute to the consultation on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, and Dan provided evidence at a meeting with the Cabinet Office Inquiry set-up team on 30th March 2022. This is likely to be an important area of work over the next few years, as the Inquiry will not start hearing evidence until 2023 and is expected to take a number of years to conclude its investigation.

Dan has played the leading role in the management of internal Covid health and safety risks. He has produced risk assessments for 'Covid Secure' GMB office working; GMB protests, demonstrations and pickets; and for the operation of GMB Congress 2021 and 2022. Dan also developed a process to allow GMB Organisers to resume workplace visits and ran a number of meetings and webinars to brief colleagues on the process. He also ran meetings for regional colleagues on the reopening of GMB offices, to ensure consistency of approach across the Union.

Schools

We have worked very closely with the National Schools Committee and National Officer Avril

Chambers on a range of issues on Covid safety in schools. We have been firm in our conviction that all UK Schools should have the maximum protections available – social distancing, ventilation, and the wearing of face coverings – supplemented by portable HEPA air filtration where needed. We know that in most schools, ventilation provision is substandard, and social distancing is largely unachievable. The evidence since schools reopened is that children are driving the infection rate in the UK, allowing transmission from individual homes into the wider community, and that the late announcement of vaccination programmes for 12–15-year-olds effectively resulted in millions of preventable infections.

The Department for Education finally conceded our points on risk assessment of ventilation in late 2021, and committed to providing CO2 monitors to schools, but even this was rolled out in such a way as to minimise usage, with only one monitor per two classrooms. We have worked with Avril, and sister unions more widely, to express our concerns at the poor-quality guidance and lack of provision. We subsequently contributed to joint TU guidance on Covid management standards in schools.

For a Government that has claimed to prioritise the education of children above almost all other considerations, the Department for Education has made a complete catastrophe of enacting Covid control measures in schools. We continue to work with Avril and the national schools committee to develop campaigns for higher standards and better protection.

Health & Social Care

In mid-June 2021, the Department for Health and Social Care announced that legislation would be enacted to mandate vaccination for all care home workers. Our position was clear throughout, vaccination status was not a control measure for employers, and that the position in England was untenable. It would not help to reduce Covid levels in care homes but would (and did) create a shortage of care workers in the most severe winters we are likely to see for many years.

With our colleagues Rachel Harrison and Kelly Andrews from the Public Services section, we met with Shadow Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth and Shadow Care Minister Liz Kendall to discuss mandatory vaccination of care home

workers. The GMB delegation made it clear in this meeting that the government was taking the path of least resistance, and that many other policy avenues could be pursued, such as allowing paid time off to attend vaccination appointments; providing full sick pay when workers suffered side effects from vaccination; providing vaccination services on a mobile basis to attend care homes directly; and providing comprehensible translated information in numerous languages to address the needs of the workforce directly. It was clear better practise has been achieved in Scotland and Wales, who have not needed to legislate to achieve high rates of vaccination in the care sector. Whilst we were not able to persuade the Government to drop mandatory care sector vaccination, we did provide support to the Public Services Section on responding to the UK government consultation on free PPE provision in healthcare settings – which has now been extended to April 2023.

Lynsey, Kelly Andrews and Gordon White (London Region) were sadly involved in investigating a death, from covid, of a GMB member who worked in an HC-One care home. This company previously ignored our calls for better risk assessment during the start of the pandemic. Lynsey is now trying to set up a National H&S Committee for Reps to attend to try to ensure better engagement and better protection of members who work for the company. This is taking some time, as the employer is currently not allowing a rep from each GMB region, even though this will allow for better representation and business to be conducted more simply.

ASDA

After Congress 2021, Lynsey and then National Officer Roger Jenkins were made aware of a large number of complaints being made about the New Home Shopping trolleys that had been rolled out across the company despite issues being raised during the trials. Working closely with Ben Cook (Midlands & East Coast Region) and Martin Hall (London Region) from the National Retail H&S Committee, site visits were conducted to observe them being used, speak to members about how they use them, study the training material, try using the trolleys in the way the training states and meet with Asda H&S team to try to get a solution to the issues. They also set up a mass meeting for all Asda Home Shopping Colleagues where issues were raised, members were informed of the work undertaken and information was shared about the

importance of accident and near miss reporting to ensure Asda take it seriously. A review of the training was carried out by Asda, but this did not address the inherent design flaws, and this is an ongoing problem at time of writing. Asda's own risk assessment relies on training as the main control measure, but this has still not been satisfactorily addressed. We met with National Organiser Martin Smith, and National Office colleagues Nadine Houghton, Rhea Wolfson, Roger Jenkins, and Andy Prendergast to discuss how this issue could be factored into wider campaigning, as female Asda Retail members are disproportionately affected by the poor design of the trolleys.

Beyond this, Lynsey and the National H&S Committee completed negotiations on the finalised vehicle safety checks document. The previous document was old, and no one seemed to have even seen it. Drivers were relying on common sense and previous experience to carry out vehicle checks. The new document should now provide a common standard for all Home Delivery drivers to work to.

Lynsey and the committee were also successful in stopping a policy proposal to allow increased numbers of pallets and roll cages on the shop floor, which could have made the shop floor more dangerous. Currently the main accidents according to Asda statistics are caused by roll cages, and it would have made no sense to allow more roll cages and pallets in areas where accidents are more likely to happen, both to members and customers. We have also worked with Asda to discuss ways to reduce growing numbers of slip and trip accidents and we were consulted with on the introduction of new net doors to reduce accidents caused by items falling from roll cages.

Lynsey is a regular attendee to the H&S reps weekly catch-up meeting; and is also still involved in bi-weekly H&S/Covid calls with Asda senior management where any possible changes are discussed as well as keeping on top of the stats.

Asbestos

The Work and Pensions Select Committee launched its inquiry into UK asbestos management on 9th July 2021. Our submission, a copy of which is available on request, covered 10 questions asked by the Select Committee, and ran to more than 4000 words. It subsequently formed the basis of a parliamentary briefing to

members of the committee. The Inquiry published its report on 21st April 2022, and fundamentally adopted the GMB position for almost all of its recommendations. The headline finding – that the UK government should remove asbestos from all public buildings by 2062 – was welcome in principle but we were disappointed by the unambitious timescale and will continue to lobby for faster progress.

We continue to play a leading role in the working group considering the presence of asbestos in public sector buildings in Wales. The Working Group developed a question set for use across the Welsh public sector, designed to analyse the presence and condition of asbestos in the public sector estate. This question set was distributed throughout Wales in late 2021, and the process of collating results is ongoing at time of writing.

We responded to HSE's consultation on the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012. This unfortunately was an automated online survey, so we are unable to circulate or share the response. However, we have fully supported the existing regulations and strongly appealed for further strengthening of the requirements to manage asbestos for dutyholders.

In early 2022, the case papers from the Concept 70 Limited v Cape Intermediate Holdings Limited (Cape) court case were finally released and published. These clearly established that Cape had deliberately downplayed the dangers of asbestos products in the 1960's and 1970's, and that exposure levels had been set using evidence that is now known to be suspect. We have briefed all GMB Regions on this important issue, as there may be scope to reopen cases for members (or their families) who developed ill-health due to exposure to in particular Asbestos Insulation Board, but who were not able to take a case as exposure thresholds had not been breached.

HSE Engagement

In the waste industry, Lynsey has continued her involvement in WISH (Waste Industry Safety and Health) forum, making sure that GMB members are represented, and their voices heard. She is leading on the planning of this year's WISH (Waste Industry Safety and Health) worker engagement conference, scheduled for late 2022. Full funding has been secured, which is a tremendous achievement in the current financial climate. Lynsey is also presenting on

the work of the WISH Worker Engagement Group at the RWM/Let's Recycle Live Conference in Birmingham in September.

In plastics manufacturing, we are involved in HSE projects on mental health, getting companies to look at themselves and what they can do to stop stress and mental health issues caused by work. Preliminary discussions have taken place, with a full proposal to be considered at the next full SIMPLC (Safety in Manufacturing Plastics and composites) Board meeting.

In food manufacturing, Lynsey has worked with HSE to develop tools to replicate the work carried out by the WISH worker engagement and leadership group to get better worker involvement in all areas of safety. The ongoing experience of food production workers during the Covid pandemic has identified the urgent need for better worker involvement in the sector, and Lynsey has done an excellent job in getting HSE to follow the example set in the Waste industry. The tools are presently being trialled, with formal rollout likely in either late 2022 or early 2023.

Logistics

We have provided advice and support on the issue of safety devices in HGVs in Yodel. The employer is investing in new vehicles but has not fitted them with driver airbags or adaptive cruise control. Whilst these features are not necessarily standard on all vehicles, there is a compelling case for them to be specified at purchase stage, especially as there have been several serious accidents to the Yodel fleet over the past few years.

We have had ongoing issues with BestFood over the past year regarding the removal of Covid measures, and the resumption of deliveries to point of storage at third-party sites. BestFood originally wished to resume 'normal' practice in summer 2021, and Lynsey and then National Officer Roger Jenkins were able to work with the National Reps to prevent this. In March 2022, the company again attempted to revert to pre-Covid practice, without adequately reassessing the risk using competent and knowledgeable assessors. We are working with the new National Officer, Nadine Houghton, to ensure members' concerns are addressed, and a national-level meeting with the employer has been arranged at time of writing.

We also worked with the National Research and Policy department to formulate a series of Freedom of Information requests on accidents in Amazon. There have been substantial problems with Local Authorities refusing to release information, and we were able to provide some insight into the reporting process and the implications for FOI.

Dan also spoke at a TUC Webinar on health and safety in logistics, focusing on fatigue, stress, and the health impacts of inadequate welfare facilities for drivers.

Communications Activity

In conjunction with Regional Education and Health & Safety Officers we have organised a series of national inspection week events to capitalise on this momentum. The first national inspection week was held on the week commencing 28th June 2021 and focused primarily on the twin topics of asbestos in the workplace, and a Covid secure return to work. The second national inspection week was held from 25th October 2021 and ran for two weeks to accommodate school half term. This focused primarily on mental health and was timed for both World Mental Health Day on 10th October, and European Week for Health and Safety (25th-29th October). Suggested activities for Safety Reps to perform included surveying colleagues; inspecting and reviewing workplace policies and procedure on mental health/stress; and running confidential drop-in sessions for colleagues to raise stress or mental health issues. The third and most recent Inspection week was held in February 2022, linking with HeartUnions week.

We continue to run regular webinars for GMB Safety Reps. These well attended events give the opportunity to update on Covid developments and allow safety reps to ask any questions that they have. The webinar is designed to allow Reps to use facility time to attend rather than having to do so in their own time. We average over 100 reps every webinar, and feedback to date has been incredibly positive. The sessions are well attended and as a result we intend to make them an ongoing project, broadening the scope to consider wider health and safety issues.

Melanie Bartlett of the National Organising Unit has developed a new Rep Resources Hub on the GMB Website and has worked closely with Lynsey to ensure our range of materials are up to date.

The Hub can be found at: gmb.org.uk/rep-resources/health-safety-guidance

Dan presented on Long Covid to the Wales and South West Region Equalities Forum on 21st August. The presentation gave an outline of Long Covid as a set of diverse symptoms, and most importantly provided advice for members on how to approach the issue when dealing with employers. We were able to answer a number of questions from the delegates, and the feedback received was highly positive. Dan also gave two presentations, on Covid risk assessment & reasonable adjustment; and mental health, to the inaugural GMB Disabled Members Conference on 2nd April 2022. Lynsey recorded a video presentation for the GMB Women's Conference, held on 30th April 2022, where much of the agenda was a discussion of women's health and safety issues.

Faculty of Occupational Medicine

As part of her role on the Board of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, Lynsey was elected as lay worker representative to work on the new SEQOHS (Safe, Effective, Quality Occupational Health Services) standards review. These are quality standards for Occupational Medicine providers to demonstrate they can provide high quality care for workers. This project is ongoing and is due to conclude at the end of 2022, with the new standards aiming to be published in early 2023.

Industrial Injuries Advisory Council

The Industrial injuries Advisory Council (IIAC), of which Dan is one of three Worker Representatives, has spent much of the past year looking at Covid-19. The Council has concluded that at this time there is insufficient evidence to meet the threshold necessary to prescribe Covid-19 as an industrial disease. However, the Council continues to review and increase the evidence base with a view to making further recommendations to ministers once a greater body of evidence has been amassed.

Dan also provided a short briefing for colleagues in GMB Scotland on the qualification of footballers for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit due to neurological injury caused by repetitive heading of footballs. This was ahead of a debate in the Scottish Parliament on 21st September 2021, and Dan was able to provide some useful insight through his membership of the IIAC.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Legal Services

UnionLine remains the only trade union owned and operated law firm in the country providing a one stop shop offering a broad range of legal services, largely free to members, and with some non-employment services being available to their families.

UnionLine is operated from a head office in Sheffield. They work with the nominated Regional Officers to ensure that we do everything we can to support our members within the union. A proportion of the work is dealt with in-house in Sheffield, whilst more complex work is sent out to a network of highly regulated panel firms across the country who act as agents for our law firm.

In 2021 UnionLine advised on almost 3,700 cases, and referred over 1,975 cases to panel firms.

UnionLine also continues to provide free legal advice on non-work-related matters, drafts free simple wills for our members, and offers a reduced cost conveyancing service.

Personal Injury

UnionLine and our panel firms continue to provide a comprehensive service on Personal Injury matters for our members, and in 2021 UnionLine recovered just shy of £14 million in damages for our members. Clearly, we would prefer our members not to be injured whilst going about their work but if that happens then UnionLine is there to ensure we recover maximum damages for them.

It is more important than ever that members realise that using GMBs legal service will ensure maximum damages are recovered.

Impact of the Pandemic

Much of our work has continued to be affected by the Coronavirus pandemic including advising Regions and Officers on:

- the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the implications of furlough for our members.
- the anticipated redundancies resulting from the economic consequences of the pandemic
- employer driven changes to terms and conditions,

- the employer tactic of fire and re-hire.
- the implication of unsafe workplaces under sections 44 and 100 of the Employment Rights Act 1996
- the implications of employer vaccine policies.

Collective Rights

We continue to brief and support Regions and Officers on collective rights such as industrial action, statutory recognition applications to the Central Arbitration Committee, and collective labour law matters. Much of our work focusses on industrial action issues, and have continued to brief Regions on developments such as the further restrictions on industrial action introduced by the Trade Union Act 2016. We have also advised Regions on section 145 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 on unlawful inducements cases in the light of the recent judgment of the Supreme Court on the subject.

Individual Rights

The onslaught on individual rights by the last Government has continued, and with the Tory Government having a majority in Parliament we have anticipated further attacks. We had expected that a new Employment Bill would be published in 2021 but this has not happened, and we will keep Regions advised of the position. The increasing use of the employer tactic of fire and re-hire has highlighted the need for reform of the law in this area to protect workers.

Litigation

We continue to manage large multi-party cases in all areas of the employment rights field in order to assist Regions. As a union GMB continues to be involved in complex litigation. In this way GMB is changing the law to establish new rights for workers.

Policy

We continue to contribute to union policy in all areas such as on individual and collective rights, including responding to public consultations on employment law. We have been expecting a new Employment Bill to be published by the Government at some point, but this has not happened to date.

Brexit and Employment Law

After the pandemic, the UK's leaving of the European Union raises profound questions for the future of collective and individual employment rights and is still an area of great uncertainty. In January 2021 we saw newspaper reports that the Government had been drawing up plans to remove certain EU rights under the EU Working Time Directive. These included the 48-hour working week, some rest breaks, and the inclusion of overtime and commission in the calculation of holiday pay. Following opposition to the plans they were shelved but may be a sign of things to come.

Training

The department undertakes training on collective labour issues including industrial action and statutory recognition.

Personnel

The National Office Legal Department comprises Barry Smith, National Legal Officer. He is also the Secretary to the Congress 2022 Standing Orders Committee.

NATIONAL ORGANISING UNIT

The union faces long term challenges to grow membership in the current world of work. The numbers joining GMB continue to grow month on month from a low point at the depth of the Covid crisis in early 2021 as we do better at listening to our members, forming campaigns around what they tell us about their priorities and identify and develop workplace leaders

A National Organising Unit has been set up at National Office headed by National Organiser Martin Smith. The NOU has the following key functions:

- Support capacity building across the union to identify members priorities;

- Build campaign and develop workplace leaders;
- Identify and drive innovation in organising and bargaining across the union;
- Support continually improving performance through the National Bargaining and Organising Calendar

The Unit is specifically responsible for co-ordinating and driving organisation and recruitment of nationally agreed projects. These currently include Schools and Academies, the platform economy and public sector contractors. The Unit is also coordinating activity around the recovery of members leaving GMB

The National Organising Team continues to meet to steer the NOU and coordinate activity around the national targets and industrial action campaigns between Regions

Schools and Academies

Due to the pandemic, access to schools for recruiting and organising purposes was high on impossible for most of 2021, thankfully that restriction has now been lifted and we have a number of national and local issues as initiatives for access.

The Right Pay for Right Job campaign has now been launched to tackle emerging concerns about gendered pay discrimination in schools where there are often two or three tier workforces. We will be using it as an organising tool alongside this year's national NJC pay claim when visiting all schools. In order to further expand the campaign, a number of Regions have now picked their target(s). As this campaign may highlight equal pay issues in LA's/Academies we are working closely with the Women's Campaign Unit.

The main purposes and objectives of the campaign is to enable GMB to:

- Grow and engage schools' membership in GMB
- Encourage GMB Reps to become more active & for school's contacts to become Reps.
- Identify LA's and MAT's where we can launch NJC part 4 JE Reviews
- Have the ability to assess if there are any possible outstanding Equal Pay claims that need to be taken.

The National Organising Unit is assisting a number of Regions in schools and academies using Local and National issues for access and we are using The Right Pay for Right Job campaign for recruiting and organising purposes during the school visits, alongside the long standing GMB Schools Organising Policy for classroom based staff.

Contractors

Driver, Cleaner and Caterer staff shortages within the economy have provided GMB throughout 2021/2022 with organising opportunities working with members and representatives in Local Government and NHS contractors, particularly within waste contracts and soft FM contractors.

GMB have submitted many local claims for these workers, and have organised workplaces and campaigns to securing better pay, terms and conditions of employment and working practices for GMB members.

GMB are building the capacity to organise around shared identities of occupation and geography to build unity between contracted out refuse workers and local government refuse workers, NHS contracted out workers and NHS staff.

A waste and refuse sector specific combine has been set up to build solidarity and offer support as disputes develop.

A dashboard of disputes lead by combine members has been set up and is continually maintained in order to identify opportunities to build practical solidarities and leapfrog claims.

An initial benchmarking meeting of GMB reps working for Serco has been arranged in May 2022 to identify local campaigns around differentials across Serco refuse and waste.

Digital Logistics

GMB NOU continue to develop our unions outreach to workers in the various Digital Logistics sectors, and who do not have a traditional workplace location.

We have put in place Key Organising objectives to enable our growth strategy initiatives in this area of the economy.

Ultimately GMB is becoming the leading union in the UK for workers in the GiG/ Platform economies.

We have recently made significant strides in achieving collective agreements with companies in the platform sector.

At the time of writing this report we were about to announce the signing of a new innovative collective agreement with a major household named company in the food delivery sector.

GMB is in confidential discussions with other companies that are operating in the Platform economy.

It is estimated that over 4.4m people from the UK Labour force now work in the Platform sector.

Within the last couple of years we have negotiated collective agreements which through collectivism gives workers a voice, bargaining power, representation, and rights to organise for around 200k plus workers in these sectors.

It is GMB intention to ensure that we assist workers in these sectors of the economy by building the collective union organisation that they want, which is flexible, fleet of foot, collective and puts the workers needs and demands at the heart of everything, including collective agreements.

There are those that continue to call for legislation protection.

Whilst those people wait for politicians to catch up, GMB will not sit idly by, we will continue to grow, organise and make collective agreements with employers that benefits workers.

Put simply, Trade Union collective agreements protect workers, they make work more secure, they bring better benefits, in essence a trade union collective agreement makes work better for working people.

POLITICAL

Political priorities this year have continued to focus on two things: the pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis that is growing as a result of the collapse of global supply chains and particularly around energy security.

You will recognise that it has continued to be a difficult year in terms of addressing big industrial issues through the political process, with a government that does not like to listen to what working people and their representatives have to say.

As always, we've worked with and built relations with some fantastic MPs and political representatives across the UK and at all levels to get our issues on the agenda.

In Parliament and across the country

It has been another busy year for the political department – we've led the way on major policy shifts, campaigns and changes to legislation that will directly benefit our members in and outside the workplace.

In Parliament, we've worked with MPs, Peers and parliamentary staff on incredibly diverse issues, from lobbying politicians on behalf of our care workers in Barchester and the Huntercombe Group, to launching a new Menopause toolkit, and arguing the case for new nuclear to improve energy security.

Notable highlights include:

Securing multiple advances around our political agenda on energy and have helped build a political consensus on a few of these matters particularly on nuclear.

We have been working hard to secure government policies that safeguards the long-term future of our members jobs in the energy sector and keeps the lights on.

In the government's recently announced Energy Security Strategy the plan included longstanding GMB demands on the need for new nuclear and on hydrogen production targets going much further than what Ministers had previously said.

MPs had raised GMB demands on hydrogen and new nuclear directly to the Prime Minister at

Prime Ministers Questions, as well as others.

MPs and Peers have also worked to try and change government Bills on nuclear funding around securing more on UK content.

These ultimately failed but we are hearing a growing array of diverse political voices supporting our calls, although we recognise, we still have a long way to go.

Being the union voice in Parliament for platform and gig economy workers.

GMB members at Uber have given senior politicians powerful testimony as well as demonstrating how the recognition agreement with Uber is working to deliver for drivers at a lobby session in Westminster on the first-year anniversary of it being signed.

Working to highlight the failure of the government to invest in or take action to support our defence members or communities as well as our ship yards.

GMB's longstanding calls around supporting defence manufacturing have been brought to the fore with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We've made the case at defence select committee hearings on the treatment of contracted staff in the MoD, we've also lobbied and secured parliamentary debates and interventions around the government's shipbuilding strategy.

The government continues to avoid committing to ensuring that large and complex shipbuilding projects stay in UK yards. We will continue to campaign to ensure this work is onshored so our members can maintain their high-quality jobs and we secure a future for our manufacturing base.

MPs have further been campaigning to raise the issue of low pay and poor terms and conditions for social care workers.

We are fighting for £15 per hour for our members in care.

MPs on the Treasury Select Committee on our behalf asked the Governor of the Bank of England direct if he would take up our invitation and spend a day shadowing a care worker.

The fact he didn't know the average pay, nor his own salary (he made £575,538 in 2020/21) made lots of column inches in the press!

We successfully watered-down attempts by the government to stop our members being able to campaign in general elections with efforts to tie unions up in more red tape and creating further barriers for us in being able to lobby politicians.

Working across the movement and with cross-party Peers we secured successful amendments to the government's Elections Bill.

It is vital that our political work is driven by industrial needs of our membership and with Covid we have been unable to get as many reps and activists down to Parliament as we would have liked.

We have, however, tried to secure a number of visits from politicians to workplaces, picket lines and reps committees so our membership can make the case directly to the politicians.

These have included the Leader of the Opposition, Keir Starmer MP, meeting gas workers in Easington, and Shadow Chancellor, Rachel Reeves MP, meeting reps at Union Electric Steel in Gateshead about the cost of energy and its impact on energy intensive industry.

We further continue to support GMB political activity across GMB Regions and Nations as they campaign with devolved, regional or local government and look to expand this work in the following year.

Political Organisation and Development

This year is going to be a big year in terms of internal Labour Party matters with the Labour Party starting to select candidates for the next general election in constituencies across Britain.

GMB are supporting a growing number of potential candidates that we hope will put GMB values into practise, if elected.

We have started putting in place support for those candidates we want to back - to make sure they have the best possible chance of winning.

This includes working alongside Labour Unions on a political school teaching potential candidates public speaking, and other skills as well as understanding the selection process.

This training will progress into the summer.

RESEARCH & POLICY DEPARTMENT

Since Congress 2021 the National Research and Policy Department has provided support to the industrial and democratic work of the union, alongside support for key national campaigns. The Department has a closer remit for supporting priority national campaigns following the restructure of National Office in 2021.

Industrial work during that time has included preparing major submissions relating to pay in local government, schools, and the NHS, in close co-operation with industrial officers. Employer mapping and profiling work has helped to secure a number of victories against a difficult industrial background, including the reopening of the pay agreement at British Gas, a pay ballot that led to a settlement acceptable to our members at G4S Cash Solutions, and the enhanced offer that secured an end to industrial action at Panasonic (Cardiff).

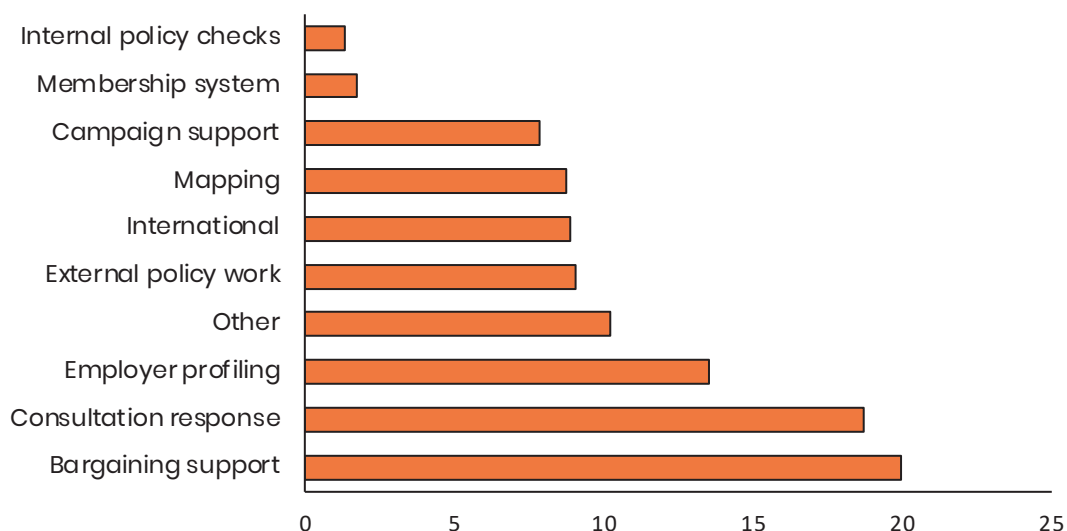
The Department provides ongoing bargaining support information, which includes production of a monthly inflation and wages report that is sent to all GMB employees. A major focus of the Department's work since last Congress has been to develop a range of digital tools to support employer mapping and profiling, which are currently in the process of being made available to reps and staff online.

Between June 2021 and the start of May 2022, the Department had responded to more than 100 requests for assistance from colleagues at National Office and in GMB Regions, totalling more than 335 hours of work. The most common type of request was for bargaining support, which accounted for a fifth of time spent answering colleagues' requests.

All members of the Department have delivered short briefing sessions on cost of living measures and employer research to Regional teams and the GMB Officer Apprenticeship course. The briefings include guidance on how to find information and use it for local pay campaigns.

In late 2021, the GMB published the results of the largest Amazon mapping and Freedom of Information exercise on that employer to date. Research has played a critical role in supporting other priority campaigns, including securing investment in new nuclear and hydrogen (and GMB research staff have helped to establish the Hydrogen Policy Commission). The Department has also taken on new international responsibilities following the retirement of colleagues, with Laurence Turner leading on international trade and Ross Holden leading on international solidarity and European Works Councils.

The Department also plays an extensive role in the delivery of Congress. Within the team, Anna Barnes has a particular responsibility in this area, and she has ensured the timely production of key advice and documents for Congress 2022.



Research and Policy Department, time on requests by type of task (%) between June 2021 and May 2022

Research and Policy staff also provided delegation support to a number of conferences, including TUC Congress, Labour Party Conference, GMB National Equality Conference, and TUC Young Workers' Conference. This work contributed to the establishment of key priorities (pay in social care and investment in new nuclear power) as TUC and Labour Party policy.

The Department has also provided verbal and written evidence on a range of subjects to bodies including the Low Pay Commission (which Ross Holden leads on), Government Departments, the Labour Party, select committees, the NHS Pay Review Body, the Hydrogen Policy Commission, external academics, TUC working groups (including recently on Universal Credit), and All-Party Parliamentary Groups. The team has also contributed to a number of submissions by GMB Regions and Departments.

The Department is staffed by Laurence Turner, Anna Barnes, and Ross Holden. More information relating to the work of the team, including copies of monthly bargaining support reports and evidence submissions, can be found at: <https://www.gmb.org.uk/research-policy>

ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS

1 MAY 2021 – 30 APRIL 2022

ELECTION OF GENERAL SECRETARY & TREASURER

Gary Smith

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

London Region

Lisa Bangs
Lola McEvoy

APPOINTMENT OF REGIONAL SECRETARY

North East, Yorkshire
& Humber Region

Hazel Nolan

APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISERS

North West & Irish Region

Kerry Nash

London Region

Ashley Foster
Marvin Hay
Holly Turner

APPOINTMENTS OF ACTING REGIONAL SECRETARY

Northern Region

Hazel Nolan

Midland & East Coast Region

Cameron Mitchell
Craig Thomson

GMB Scotland

Louise Gilmour

GMB Scotland

Maria Feeney
Dom Pritchard
Howard Wilkin

APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL SECRETARY

Commercial Services
Section

Andy Prendergast

Southern Region

Charlotte Gardner
Claire Turner

Wales & South West Region

Nathan Holman

APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL OFFICER

Manufacturing Section

Charlotte Childs

ELECTION OF ORGANISERS

Southern Region

Karen Davies
Helen O'Connor
Peter Roberts
Mary Stump

APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISER

Southern Region

Asia Allison

Wales & South West Region

Nicola Savage

TUC CONGRESS AWARDS 2021

James Barwise (Birmingham & West Midlands Region), **Krzysztof Kaczmarek** (Birmingham & West Midlands Region) and **Jake McLean** (Wales and South West Region) were all nominated for the **TUC 2021 Organising Award**. Congratulations to **Jake McLean** who received the award at TUC Congress 2021.

Remi Dele Akinfolarin (Known as Dele) (Southern Region) was nominated for the **TUC Health & Safety Rep Award 2021**. Unfortunately their nomination was not successful.

COMMERCIAL SERVICES SECTION

The Commercial Services Section membership stood at 197,561 in March 2022, representing 31.6% of the Union's membership, a net decrease of 11,655 members over a 12-month period. Although this decrease is significant, recent campaigns in a number of employers have meant that amongst the companies covered by national office, membership has stabilised over the four months until March 2022. Commercial Services continues to show a good level of recruitment, bringing in 39.6% of the Union's recruits over the year. The work of the section has been a joint effort with officers and reps working well together under the leadership of Commercial Services National Chair, Kevin Flannagan.

The industries and companies in the Section are covered by Andy Prendergast, National Secretary (British Gas, Morrisons Data Services, Loomis Thompsons and Swissport). Gary Carter (Gas Distribution, Nuclear, Magnox, Electricity and Water); Nadine Houghton (Asda, Wilkos, Best Food, Bidfood and BA), Eamon O'Hearn (Security and cash), and further support to the Section has been provided by Mick Rix (National Organising Team covering Amazon, Uber and DHL), Steve Garelick (London Region covering Hermes/Evri) and Gillian Ogilvie (Birmingham and West Midlands Region covering Yodel). Section Support is provided by Kerri Harding (Senior PA) and Tina Mouneimne (Section PA). Throughout the year Roger Jenkins covered Security, Bidfood and Best Food prior to his retirement after 24 years' service employed by the Union.

ASDA

The sale of Asda to private equity backed TDR capital and the Issa brothers is the largest debt leveraged buyout in UK history. The role of private equity in the UK's high street now raises serious concerns for the UK's, predominantly women, retail workers. TDR recently valued their stake in Asda at twenty times that which they paid for it only one year ago, raising serious questions about the use of asset stripping and debt leveraging of Asda.

ASDA Retail

GMB has worked hard in Asda over the past year to build our organisation within the company. A day of action over the cost of living on 8th April was well supported and bolstered with a significant press and political campaign, which contrasted the profitability and rising value of the business since its buy out with the position in which many of its staff find themselves as they struggle to make ends meet. On 25th April, ASDA announced they would increase pay to £10.10, a massive win for 120,000 workers who will see their pay increase £846 a year on average. This victory has been exceptionally well received by the reps and it is anticipated that this is something we are going to need to build on over the coming months, with a view of using it to increase activity as we look to secure full collective bargaining.

GMB have also been progressing with the equal pay claims and have been looking to speed up the process by putting pressure on the employer to settle these.

ASDA Distribution

GMB members in distribution recently rejected the largest pay offer in a decade following an interim pay claim during a time when they are experiencing increased bargaining power due to driver and warehouse worker shortages.

Membership in Asda distribution has increased, and our reps have been engaged in a sustained campaign to build member engagement and activity and to push Asda for a higher pay increase that truly reflects a cost-of-living increase and values the job they do, (particularly for drivers who have seen market forces increase driver wages). GMB members are currently voting in a postal, consultative ballot for strike action. The result of this will determine next steps in the campaign.

Bidfood

Following the successful pay round in 2021, we were able to negotiate a number of improvements following the rejection of the

original offer. In relation to the 2022 issue, we are in the final stages of agreeing an offer on pay simplification to put to the members in a ballot. At time of writing, the offer includes some significant pay increases for large groups of our members, although some stand to lose out and we are of course fighting to protect those.

Best Food

GMB secured an improved pay offer after the initial offer was rejected by the membership. Best Food drivers are experiencing health and safety issues around 'delivery to the point of storage' - we are meeting the company to address this.

Biffa I+C

Following a rejection of an initial pay offer, an improved pay deal was negotiated which was accepted by the membership.

British Airways

BA colleagues continue to feel the devastating impact of BA's fire and rehire campaign in 2020. BA's exploitation of the pandemic to meet their own financial benefit has left the airline in a dire situation, having to implement a 'firebreak' on flights for 6 weeks ahead of the Summer. There are real concerns that they will not recruit enough staff to allow flights to operate. Our members in the terminals have been subjected to appalling treatment by customers and management and are now considering a consultative ballot for strike action if the employer does not meet their demands for a pay increase to make up what they lost during the pandemic.

British Gas - Field Services

Following the shocking dismissal of 460 members of staff on 14th April 2021, as part of the fire and rehire process, it has been an extremely difficult year within the company which is struggling to adapt to current market conditions. Following the last day of strike action, GMB were able to negotiate an improved deal which ended the dispute. This deal included improvements to overtime and bank holiday rates amongst other items, as well as the reversal of the decision to close the pension scheme to new starters and agreements to upskill workers within the company. We also managed to significantly increase the amount of facility time afforded to GMB reps which had been decimated over the course of the dispute.

Following the dispute, GMB have been active in pushing the members' agenda and agreed a significant winter hours deal which led to staff in the service and repair area receiving payments of £1,000 for agreeing to undertake a set amount of overtime during the winter.

GMB have also been able to reopen pay talks with the company despite all members staying with the company agreeing to a three year pay freeze to maintain their jobs. These talks have led to pay offers or unconsolidated payments being offered to staff of 5% or over, as well as a deferment on increases to the members pensions contributions being delayed until the next financial year. This offer is going to ballot at the time of writing. One negative from the talks has been that the company are looking to close the defined benefit scheme to new starters. Although this is an extremely disappointing move, GMB has managed to maintain access to the pension scheme for far longer than any other private sector employer.

The fact that we have managed to improve union facilities and forced the company back to the negotiating table over pay shows that the company's attempt to break the union has failed. This was due to the unprecedented stand taken by our members, many of whom spent 43 days on strike.

British Gas - Staff

Although the members within the British Gas staff grades were not included in the strike action last year, a large number regularly came out in support of their striking colleagues and should be applauded for doing so. In terms of the staff group, the deal that ended the dispute in field services was also implemented in this area. This led to increases in overtime and Bank holiday working rates. At time of writing, we are also in talks with the company over implementing the field services pay deal which would mean with pay increases or unconsolidated payments of 5% being awarded.

Outside of pay, GMB have continued to push our members' agenda and managed to deliver a significant win by getting the company to re-evaluate a large group of staff within the P&D area which led to around 700 people getting pay rises of up to £2,000 per year.

Cadent Gas

The last twelve months have been dominated by pay discussions. When members in all three

bargaining units rejected a final offer one-year pay deal for 2021 in December, Cadent proposed a two-year deal. This 2% for 2021 and 4% for 2022 offer was accepted by staff members, but resoundingly rejected by both Legacy and Cadent G Contract Field Force members.

In March/April 2022, GMB carried out a full industrial action ballot of nearly 2,000 Cadent Field Force members. The vote was 86.9% for strike action and 90.6% for action short of strike. The turnout was 65%. This was a tremendous result and showed the strength of feeling amongst GMB Cadent Field Force members campaigning for a better pay rise. Dates for the first stages of industrial action have been served on the company.

Cadent announced plans to close their Hinkley offices. This will affect 1,200 office staff. Whilst there was no plan to reduce headcount, Cadent were seeking for staff to relocate to new offices in Ansty, work from home, or adopt hybrid working. In the past twelve months GMB membership has risen by 283 members across Cadent Field Force and Staff.

EDF

Pay Negotiations in the Customer and Field/Smart Metering parts of the business have started for 2022. The initial offer in Customer was 2%, more talks have been scheduled. In Field/Smart, the offer has increased to 2.5% consolidated for legacy employees and 6.5% consolidated for those on the newer contracts.

The background for both sets of negotiations will be the cost of living and energy crisis. EDF has taken on 800,000 plus new customers as part of the supplier of last resort process. It is taking on new Customer employees to meet the demand. The final part of the Generation three-year pay deal comes into effect from 1st April 2022. The increase is 3.5%.

EDF Generation announced that they believe the generation life span for Sizewell C nuclear reactor can be extended by 20 years to 2055. Hunterston in Scotland stopped generating in January this year and Hinkley B will cease generating in the summer. Dungeness stopped generating last year and is moving to defueling. The GMB called for certainty and security for Dungeness employees and the local community. The GMB and other unions agreed a defueling agreement with EDF which is ground-breaking and seeks to give certainty and puts

retaining, re-training and new skills at its heart.

The EDF AGR nuclear fleet will stop generating in the next ten years, the majority by 2024. EDF has reached an agreement with the Government to retain the reactors during de-fuelling and then they will transfer to Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Initial discussions on an operational collective agreement for Hinkley Point C have taken place. Early days, but we have assurances from EDF that GMB will be part of the HPC bargaining agreement.

Agreement was reached to increase customer new starter rates and in EDF Field Operations we agreed new pay rates for electric vehicle installation. There are limited voluntary redundancy programmes running in both Customer and Field.

GMB members voted by 74% to 26% to accept the company's pension proposals.

Energy

GMB have been punching well above our weight in the energy debate over the last year and have achieved significant press coverage as energy has become a national issue with households and businesses struggling with high prices. We have led the way in ensuring that both the Labour Party and TUC backed new nuclear and have been pleased to see that our approach has paid dividends with the Government's announcements on a number of new nuclear builds, including Sizewell C. We have also got good coverage over our calls to limit gas exports to preserve supplies and by highlighting the ongoing failure of Government to take the steps necessary to provide energy security to the UK, the effects of which are increasingly being felt by consumers.

In terms of energy policy, GMB continues to push the plan raised in the 2021 Congress Special Report. This highlights the need to reach Net Zero by 2050 in a way which both ensures that industry has the time necessary to make the changes whilst protecting jobs and communities in a way which is deliverable in a democracy. We have been extremely vocal in our demand that green levies on energy bills are relooked at on the basis that flat rate levies on all energy bills are regressive and that the funding should be made progressively via general taxation.

G4S

Allied Universal Services, who took over G4S, have not sought to make any wholesale changes in the past year, including no divestment plans for Care and Justice despite a reference to it in its offer document. We will continue to monitor this closely, including any change in 'culture'. They have however acquired other smaller competitors during the year, and we have registered our desire to secure access and recognition to those new workers, though at this stage we believe they may continue to be employed in their existing arrangements and not brought under the wider G4S umbrella just yet.

G4S Secure Solutions

Pay offers for both the IBM and DWP contracts have been accepted by GMB members. Following GMB pay surveys, pay claims have been issued for P+R and RBS. G4S have withdrawn from a number of P+R sites, redundancy consultations have been underway. The decision by G4S not to recognise a 30-day consultation has been put into the dispute procedure.

Gentings Casinos

As part of the 2022 pay agreement, the company have undertaken grade reviews to ensure there is clear water between the entry level grade and the minimum wage, and also a maintenance of the differentials, with a further check on equal pay. This has resulted in an increase in entry level pay and 84% of members will receive a further increase on top of the 2022 pay award.

Cash Industry

Cash usage is still below pre-Covid levels, however there are signs that it is picking up slowly. GMB have been lobbying and campaigning on access to cash, and we will look to review this as the year progresses as GMB believes that all consumers must have the choice of paying cash for all goods and services, as the move to a cashless society is ultimately to the detriment of the most vulnerable in our communities.

G4S Cash

G4S Cash members ran a successful campaign for a 7.5% pay increase that was achieved following an industrial action ballot.

This was a great result and was a testament to the joint work undertaken by the National officer and the reps who delivered it. Following this dispute, the company pushing for a new recognition agreement which includes binding arbitration which we are refusing to countenance. We are also continuing to raise issues about the replenishment of ATM's being a one-man job as we believe that this is a serious health and safety issue which needs to be relooked at.

G4S DWP Contract

We have received detailed information on the locations that are under threat as a result of the closure of some job centres, though the Company are yet to commence consultation, it is not clear how GMB members will be impacted yet. There is feedback of some tensions with PCS over a range of issues, so we are likely to make our own comments in respect of the proposals, particularly once we are clear of the impact.

Gas Distribution Networks

GMB membership in the four Gas Distribution Networks has increased to 6,573. This is an increase of 243 on twelve months ago. Both Wales & West Utilities, and Cadent Gas pay campaigns have put on members, NGN membership has remained stable and there has been recent membership growth in SGN.

Both Cadent Gas and NGN networks have been awarded Government funding for Hydrogen Village trial projects. The Cadent Gas project is in the North West and regular meetings have been organised with Cadent, reps and officers. The National Gas Distribution Forum has met quarterly, chaired by Carl Meader. The forum brings together senior GMB reps from the GDN's and has proved a valuable arena for discussion and exchanging information on pay, conditions and key sector issues. Membership communications went out on the future of gas and the GMB is at the forefront of pushing for action on Hydrogen investment and development. Tom Rigby also presented research on Cancer in the Gas Industry and the forum is looking to roll out the questionnaire and research across the networks.

Loomis

GMB have been fighting hard to protect our members working in Loomis. The union

undertook a term and conditions exercise where we managed to prevent the company making a number of detrimental changes, including cuts to sick pay and other terms. Although these changes were removed, other issues about enforced overtime led to the ballot being rejected and further discussions are currently ongoing with a view to improvements being negotiated prior to a further vote of the membership. GMB also successfully negotiated a pay increase of 6.34% (consisting of a 3% increase on 1st January followed by a further 3.25% on 1st July) which was accepted.

NDA

NDA recently announced that Dounreay, which was brought back in-house in April, will become part of NDA subsidiary Magnox. It will take approximately 18 months to get licenses and permits in place and to complete consultations with GMB and other unions. Over the next ten to fifteen years Magnox is going to double in scale, as the EDF nuclear AGR fleet move from generating, defueling and to decommissioning with NDA Magnox.

Key issues for GMB in the next twelve months across NDA will be pay, recruitment, retention, and skills.

In 2021, the joint nuclear energy unions, GMB, Prospect and Unite wrote to NDA about the Government pay pause which was applied to and by NDA in 2021. There is no pay pause this year and negotiations will start shortly. Talks with NDA started on future NDA / Trade Union engagement meetings. Our aim to increase senior reps' involvement in NDA corporate meetings. Initial discussions have taken place with NDA on the decommissioning aspect of the EDF and Government agreement on AGR nuclear fleet.

Morrisons Data Services

GMB continues to experience difficulties with Morrisons, on account of the company having aggressively targeted a number of union reps. Whilst this has led to several leaving the business, we have successfully managed to save several others which has been perceived as a good result. The Union have got agreement from the company to relook at the constitution and are in talks with Unison about creating a

new one which is fairer and which provides for more facilities for GMB reps. At the time of writing pay is being negotiated and the offer will be subject to a full members ballot as soon as we have a final position.

Serco Prisoner Transport

The GMB has won double time on overtime for our court-based members after the company offered this to vehicle-based staff only following a member campaign. Staffing shortages are hitting SERCO particularly hard. GMB members in Serco have rejected a complex pay offer that represented a rise of between 2%-15%, although with a number of strings attached in terms of the removing paid breaks. Although the offer has been rejected, the fact that the other union (Community) have accepted, coupled with the fact that the members are legally prevented from taking industrial action, leaves us in a difficult position. We have therefore invoked the ACAS conciliation clause in the new recognition agreement to further the talks.

SSE

Back in 2015, SSE brought in a profit related pay system (PRP). In 2018 this was abolished because of its unpopularity. Since then, the joint trade unions have been pushing for better pay progression system and one based on skills.

GMB members voted to accept a revised pay & pay progression offer from SSE. Two of the four unions (Prospect & Unison) accepted the original final offer, GMB and Unite rejected it. GMB members rejected the company's pay and pay progression final offer by 86% to 14%. This led to further talks and an improved offer to the 3-year pay deal and in the new pay progression and grading scheme. GMB members voted to accept the new offer.

Swissport

After a very difficult couple of years, GMB managed to secure an inflation busting pay rise of at least 8.54% for members working for the company. Since agreeing this increase, further pay rises have been negotiated on a number of stations where the company are struggling to recruit, giving members at those stations an additional £1200 per year.

Thames Water

2022 pay negotiations have been scheduled for June 2022. These are likely to be a tough set of negotiations as Thames is looking to couple pay with a complete overhaul of its pay and grading structure, which it wants to be cost neutral and done within two weeks. GMB reps across Thames Water have come together to organise and put together the pay campaign. In 2021, GMB members at Thames Water voted to accept the company's improved 2.25% pay offer, which Thames increased after GMB members rejected the previous offer of 1.75%. Expectations amongst members will be a lot greater for the 2022 pay round. Thames Water is bringing its infrastructure work, currently done by a variety of contractors, back in-house. Potentially 500 workers will be transferring into Thames and we will be running a programme to ensure that these are recruited into GMB.

Water Sector

GMB membership in the Water sector remains strong and well organised. The close working relationship between our reps in the water companies has been integral to the success of the Water Forum. GMB has been central to getting joint union meetings with HSE back up and running. Pay settlements in the sector currently running at between 4% & 5% up from an average of 2% in 2021 and reflects the rise in the cost of living.

The headline figures for April settlements are Bristol Water 4.6%, South Staffs 5%, Welsh Water 4.8%, Wessex Water 5.1%, Anglian Water 4.6%, United Utilities 4.5% + £500 cash, Northumbrian Water 3.5%, Yorkshire 3%, and Affinity 4.6%.

WILKO

Following rejection of the first offer in the 2021 pay deal, GMB managed to get the company to back down from the threat of removing the paid breaks to stores based members which would have had a significant impact on many stores based members. As a result of this, the pay deal, which moved members above the National Living wage for the first time in a number of years, was accepted. Since then, the Union have continued to engage with the business on a number of issues. This has been difficult, as the company are struggling to adapt to the changing conditions on the high street, changes which have led to the announcement

of a number of store closures over the last twelve months. Despite these difficult conditions, the union were able to secure a pay offer which raised the minimum rate at the company to 10p above the NLW. However, as this was balloted along with the request to change the pay cycle from weekly to four weekly or monthly, this was rejected by the membership. As a result, further negotiations are ongoing with a view to securing an improved offer which will be put out for ballot once these talks have been completed.

EVRI (Hermes)

Following rejection of an initial pay offer from the company and indicative ballot which returned an 85% vote in favour of action, GMB secured a significantly increased pay offer which was accepted by 77%.

Recently Hermes rebranded to Evri, this was intended to remove a tarnished image.

We have made it clear to members that whilst some of the negotiations we have had previously have been to the benefit all couriers, it is our intention to seek some improved terms that are unique to GMB members. These proposals will include life cover for members, a change of the Holiday entitlement to front load the benefit as three months are lost at present. We have also made the request for Carer and Grand Parental leave facilities.

Pay model negotiations are now underway and we hope to improve the fuel payment terms during these negotiations.

Uber

As reported, we have secured a recognition agreement with Uber. This comes about after 7 years of serious campaigning and various legal challenges, not only on employment rights but also on licensing. We have been consistent with our messaging throughout, and it was always our stated aim to ensure we had a collective agreement with Uber. There is a full access and rights to organise within the company. There are currently 70k Uber drivers using the platform, which will increase to 90k by the end of 2021. Membership has increased by over ten times since the deal was signed and there is still significant scope for further increases as we continue organising within the company. We have undertaken a number of joint activities to level up in the sector by urging the regulators/ law makers/ metro mayors to make it a condition of an operator license to include

worker rights. We are currently conducting a survey of members to see what their major issues are and what are the top industrial issues we should be campaigning on.

Thompsons Solicitors

Considering their position as a renowned trade union law firm, negotiations with Thompsons have been difficult, particularly in relation to facility time, pay and home working. At time of writing, there has been a change of officer for the company with Andy Prendergast taking over responsibilities from Nadine Houghton. The company offer of 2% on pay is in the process of being balloted. It goes without saying that in the current climate this is a disappointing pay offer in view of the current rate of inflation, but the company are claiming that it is the most that can be afforded. Attempts to improve the offer by supplementing this with an improved position on home working are still in discussion.

Yodel

GMB secured a significant pay rise for LGV drivers following a campaign launched off the back of the driver shortage last year. After putting in an interim pay claim and undertaking an industrial action ballot, the Union secured increases of around 17% for all LGV drivers. This led to significant media interest and showed that we can react quickly to market conditions to secure significant improvements for the membership.

In terms of 2022, Yodel agreed after negotiations to a substantial increase to wages and allowances above the minimum wage equating to 9.5%. LGV1,2& 3 to be offered 3%, removal of unpaid sickness leave, pay from day 1, bereavement leave improvements and agreement to continue talks on pay differentials to agree a formula going forward. We are now awaiting the final offer documents which will go to the reps at the end of April to ratify our position, with a workplace ballot to be conducted in May, if accepted then the pay offer will be implemented on the Pay anniversary of the 1st July.

MANUFACTURING SECTION

GMB's Manufacturing Section membership at the end of March 2022 stood at 93,470 which represents a loss of 4,566 members since March 2021.

In terms of membership, industrially over the past 12 months many Regions/Nations are reporting an increased level of balloting and industrial disputes. Unsurprisingly in this period Section membership grew in three separate months, for first the time for many years, with overall membership decline flattening.

It reinforces the basic principles of GMB@Work where our experience shows that we experience membership growth when we are balloting and engaging workers on workplace issues. The Section will continue to align with Regions/Nations using the National Bargaining Calendar to identify upcoming pay and bargaining opportunities, especially where consolidation is a source of membership growth.

The Section is also undergoing a review into whether the responsibility for certain companies and/or sectors is appropriate for the scope of members they cover, therefore in conjunction with relevant Regions/Nations some work has transferred from the Section, particularly where there is only a single GMB site where we bargain, in the process reframing the working relationship between Regions/National, to support rather than lead them.

In 2022 Ross Murdoch, National Officer retired, the Section wants to extend heartfelt thanks to Ross for his amazing contribution over the years. He is a staunch trade unionist, and he too will be sorely missed by GMB and Manufacturing Section.

Sadly, Deborah O'Callaghan, a Section Staffer, passed away from a long term illness. The Section wants to place on record it's sincere condolences to Deborah's family, she was a committed trade unionist and socialist and she will be fondly remembered and she too will be sorely missed by GMB and Manufacturing Section.

Construction and Engineering

GMB Construction and Engineering members continue to contribute a wealth of skills and experience to all major infrastructure projects

in the UK. From HS2 to Hinkley Point C, Carbon Capture projects to Energy from Waste sites our members have kept the UK building. There is a huge increase in work on the horizon as we move towards achieving net zero and GMB members are at the heart of delivering that. This year GMB's manufacturing section has been pivotal in securing legislation required to build the next fleet of nuclear power stations, as well as securing the backing of the TUC and the Labour Party for New Nuclear projects.

New Nuclear

The Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act received royal assent on 1st April 2022. This will introduce a new funding model, the Regulated Asset Base, in order to fund future nuclear power stations in the UK. The Act seeks contributions from consumers during the construction phase of nuclear projects. This differs from the scenario under the Contracts for Difference scheme, used for HPC, whereby developers are expected to finance the construction of new nuclear projects with revenue only being received once the station starts generating electricity. GMB have been heavily involved in lobbying for this RAB model and are pleased to see it get the green light at last. GMB have been at the heart of pushing this legislation forward including giving evidence to the public bill evidence committee, GMB is calling on the Government to secure the development of other stalled projects, such as Wylfa Newydd, and investment in Small Modular Reactors.



General Secretary Gary Smith on a visit to Hinkley Point C

Hinkley Point C (HPC)

GMB continues to go from strength to strength at HPC. Since last congress we have grown our membership in all sections of the workforce and have an increased number of reps and safety reps on site.

Following a visit from Gary Smith and Barbara Plant in early April there has been a revamp of the recruitment material which has resulted in even more positive results in recruitment sessions.

We are in the process of launching a Dignity at Work campaign focussing on protecting women and underrepresented minorities from harassment and discrimination at work. Colleagues in the WSW region are currently undertaking a survey to identify key issues to be campaigning around.

GMB have recently secured access to apprentices at the welding centre of excellence to explain the importance of trade union membership as well as their rights at work.

It is anticipated that the ramping up of the engineering construction workforce at HPC will take place towards the end of October.

Diversity in Construction

GMB is leading the way in championing diversity in construction. We continue to honour our commitment to making work better by ensuring that all pay claims submitted from National Office have included a clause committing the employer's side to discussing the gender pay gap, under representation of minority groups and improving workplace culture for under-represented groups.

GMB continues to lead the way for 'Women in Construction' at HPC. A women's network has now been set up to ensure that women's voices are centered in the discussion around the treatment of women on the project and our organisers have launched a dignity at work campaign for the people working in the canteen and site services, who are predominantly women, working to empower the workforce to fight for better treatment. We have also begun discussions for HPC to adopt the ground-breaking GMB "Smash The Stigma" menopause policy.

In 2021 GMB held our first INWED event. It was organised to bring together GMB women working in construction and engineering together to develop and drive GMB policy on the issue. The event was a great success has informed the prioritisation of work on this subject for the rest of the year.

National agreement for the Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI)

In 2021/22 there has been an influx of NAECI work in the Teeside area, regional colleagues are working to ensure that when these projects are getting underway we have senior stewards in place and are organising members off the back of this. There have been a number of years where the contractors in the area have refused to use NAECI in the area, specifically on the SABIC site and we are starting to turn the tide on this now which is great news. National office is continuing to support regional colleagues on construction projects related to the various freeports and has recently facilitated conversations across regions to share practices.

A major campaign is also underway in Yorkshire to secure the NAECI agreement on the Skelton Grange Energy from Waste project. Contractor HZI continue to insist that they will not build the EfW site under the national agreement. At a recent Shop Stewards Forum we organised a demonstration outside the project where groundwork has begun.

Scan the QR Code below to watch a video from the event.



CIJC

The 2021 pay claim was settled at 2.5%. Pay talks are currently ongoing, due to the rapid rise in the cost of living joint unions have submitted a pay claim for 2022 asking for 10% increase on all rates and allowances as well as improvements to sick pay and holiday entitlements.

HS2

Since last congress GMB have secured access agreement with 3 out of 5 Tier 1 contractors at HS2. We are in advanced stages of negotiation with the other two, which is likely to conclude with signing in the next couple of months. These agreements secure access for GMB officers/representatives to the whole supply chain for the purposes of recruitment and organising. It is a ground breaking approach to accessing a mainly civils workforce and we are working on it as a model for access to the wider workforces within public sector projects.

British Gypsum

After British Gypsum tried to renege on a pay deal signed in 2021 that gave a CPI + 0.5% uplift for 2022 we had a consultative ballot of members. 93% turnout and 97% yes vote for strike action. Within 2 days of sharing the result with management they got back round the table and agreed to honour the pay deal in full. Credit is due to our reps at British Gypsum, especially our convenor Adie Stables. They did a great job of engaging with members and turning out the result!

We used videos as a way to communicate quickly with members, this was integral to the great ballot results we got and will play an important role in future campaigns.

Forterra

Through a series of negotiations, officers and reps were able to secure a pay offer for Forterra Bricks JNC members of 5.4%.

Food and Drink Industry

Covid and Brexit have been significant influences on this industry over the past 12 months and the perfect storm we predicted last year has largely arrived in the form of staff shortages, high inflation and supply chain disruption.

However, staff shortages that developed

in many areas of the supply chain during Covid, and exacerbated by Brexit, have seen Companies introducing supplementary pay awards, outside of normal bargaining cycles in most instances. The challenge will be to ensure that pay bargaining arrangements are protected and not undermined in the next round of talks.

GMB members and Officers in a number of key companies have continued to meet regularly to build better coordination across the industry as pay and conditions negotiations are all held at site level. This has recently been reinforced in Bakkavor in particular with support of the National Organiser, Martin Smith.

Chemicals Industry

Many Companies are progressing more cautiously towards 'normal' working conditions given the sensitivity of their operations. Our concerns relating to REACH and the regulation of the industry are still present, and there is currently little transparency on where the Government is planning to go.

Furniture Industry

Following their decision to not participate in national talks for 2021, the BFM wrote to GMB earlier this year giving notice that it was leaving the National Agreement, effectively devolving all pay talks locally.

Pharmaceuticals

As part of the sectional review responsibility for AstraZeneca (AZ) and GSK has been transferred back to North West and Irish, and Northern Region, respectively.

Last year in April AZ members accepted a 3.4% increase in pay and allowances, along with nearly 3 years of holiday pay backpay.

Air Products

Members in Bay Operations have two outstanding industrial issues that have been subject to successful consultative ballots industrial action, and authority has been sought to commence a legal industrial action ballot.

Corrugated Packaging Sector

As Saica have left the CPI, responsibility for the single GMB site in Newport has transferred to Wales and South West.

Members in DS Smith are looking to hold direct national talks with DS Smith in 2022 and we are holding workplace meetings to discuss this with Reps and members.

Procurement incorporating TU Access

Since lobbying successfully for trade union access and inductions to be included in the HS2 Code of Practice, which forms part of the procurement process on HS2, we have sought to build on this with like-minded councils and groups, including Preston Council and CLES who are leading on many initiatives related to community wealth building, which Preston Council has since incorporated into their Social Value Procurement Strategy and our Social Value Procurement Framework.

We are looking to work more closely with supportive bodies about how we can transpose the access, induction etc elements of the HS2 Code of Practice into public procurement tenders, which could open opportunities for all GMB Sections, particularly in the private sector as procurement covers services not just regeneration.

Shipbuilding

The FSS procurement process remains ongoing. We still await an announcement anticipated on who has been successful for the contract to build the Government's Flagship. Also, still awaiting the refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy. GMB has again turned the spotlight on the UK Government on FSS, condemning the rhetoric of the UK Prime Minister boldly trumpeting that we are bringing shipbuilding home, but, despite repeated questions from GMB, they are still refusing to clarify how much of the Fleet Solid Support ship build, including integration, will be carried out in the UK. Despite now rightly classifying FSS as warships – thus allowing procurement to be restricted to the UK tender only.

This vital project is still open to potential offshoring and open to the vagaries of the market, therefore begging the question of the UK Govt, how is this bringing shipbuilding home.

AUKUS

A partnership agreement was struck between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS), with early reports suggesting Australia would purchase US-made nuclear submarines. However, there

have also been reports that the design will be based on the Astute Class subs and that there might be visits going both ways between the UK and AUS re the development of these. Potentially there could be spin offs for Rolls Royce here as well.

Colleagues will have noted the Labour party emergency motion carried opposing this partnership arrangement, despite GMB opposition. Through early contact with the Australian shipbuilding trade unions, mainly the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), it is their view that the only winners in this will be the US. However, the position on potential UK content remains unclear, as after further meetings with employers, it now appears there is the potential for opportunities for BAE and Rolls Royce and the supply chain. The GMB General Secretary has written to the UK PM calling for maximising UK work content from AUKUS.

Steel

A Global Arrangement on Sustainable Steel and Aluminium between the EU and the US was struck in October 2021, with the US stating that from 1 December 2021 that they will no longer apply the Section 232 tariffs to EU steel and aluminium exports to the US. In response, the EU will suspend its rebalancing measures against US imports which have been in place since 2018 and both sides have agreed to pause their respective WTO cases against the other. GMB has therefore called on the UK Government to strike a similar deal with the US. The UK Government has now engaged with the US; however, reports suggest there is not a significant level of confidence over a similar deal. Media reports still suggest the main reason there is reluctance from the US is because of the situation in Northern Ireland, with Brexit potentially undermining the Good Friday Agreement, particularly with the UK signaling their intention of looking to invoke Article 16 of the Brexit Agreement.

GMB remains in ongoing discussions with individual steel employers and with BEIS over the transition to decarbonise the steel industry. These discussions take in the increased use of hydrogen, electric arc furnace and carbon capture, all of which requires employer and Government investment, if we are to catch up with overseas competitors who are years ahead with their decarbonisation journeys.

► FINE MANUFACTURING SECTION

Membership for the Section at the end of March 2021 stood at 2,108 which is a net loss of 611 since reporting to Congress 2021.

The industry is still operating in a tough environment, especially now with high energy costs impacting.

Responsibility for the Fine Manufacturing Section has now passed to Birmingham Region.

**MAKE
WORK
BETTER**



PUBLIC SERVICES SECTION

The Public Services Section membership as of March 2022 stood at 247,854, remaining the largest section in the GMB. The Public Services Section membership accounts for 53.5% of the total GMB membership as of the end of March 2022 and has been responsible for 43% of recruits into the union in the past 12 months.

Access to some workplaces remained limited due to the pandemic restrictions which impacted on the ability to recruit and organise in the workplace. However, at the time of writing we are starting to see the lifting of restrictions in many workplaces.

GMB Public Services Section's work is arranged across five key priorities under the campaign title Go Public: campaigning for public services funding, challenging outsourcing and privatisation, winning pay justice, celebrating the role of public sector workers and building public services fit for the future. The Section continues to work to ensure that its campaigns are inclusive and relevant across public services in the devolved nations where public service arrangements vary. The section has started to explore how to best support regional colleagues in exploiting flexibilities within national bargaining structures for local organising, campaigning, cost of living and conditions claims.

The Public Services Section Officers and their responsibilities are currently Rehana Azam (National Secretary, Local Government); and Rachel Harrison (National Officer for NHS & Social Care). Additional support is provided by members of the National Organising Unit: Avril Chambers (National Officer, Schools & Academies, Higher & Further Education); Sharon Wilde (National Officer Contractors); and Kevin Brandstatter (National Ballot Ready Organiser, Civil Service, including Defence & Justice, Environment Agency and Legal Aid Agency). Additional support is also provided by George Georgiou from the Internal and Industrial Relations Department (National Pension Organiser supporting Justice, Probation, Police Staff & Pension Scheme Advisory Boards Member). The section is supported by Monica Julius Senior PA and Joe Abel GMB Support Worker. The GMB Public Services Section work is overseen by committees of lay members, led by the Public Services National Committee which is chaired by June Minnery Section President. The gender breakdown of the Committee currently is 17 Female and 10 Male. The ethnic composition is 25 White and 1 Black, 1 Asian.

The NJC pay claim was for 10% and included a separate conditions claim calling for a reduction in the working week, homeworking allowances, additional annual leave, better mental health support, a joint review of job descriptions, a joint review of family related provisions and completion of outstanding work on term time only working. The pay offer was 1.75% to the majority of staff covered by NJC. GMB regions ran their own disaggregated ballots and members rejected the offer. However, thresholds were not met to pursue an industrial action ballot. The pay award was implemented in April 2022 and back dated to 1st April 2021. In Scotland, the pay award saw an increase in the Scottish Local Government Living Wage increase to £9.78 per hour and various pay awards of 1%, 2% or £800 dependent on salary level. Work has now started on this year's joint union pay claims and surveys are being conducted across regions and devolved nations. It is recognised that national bargaining is not delivering for GMB members and work is being undertaken to support regions in pursuing local cost of living pay and conditions claims using the flexibilities provided within part three of the Green Book

Chief Officers were awarded 1.5%. Craft Workers were awarded 1.75% but this has not yet been implemented. Pay claims are currently being drafted ready for submission alongside the main NJC claim.

Schools & Academies

This section is covered in the National Organising Unit Report.

Higher Education

This section is covered in the National Organising Unit Report.

Further Education

This section is covered in the National Organising Unit Report.

National Health Service

Last year's pay award was delayed due to Government issuing the remit to the Pay Review Body (PRB) late. Unions requested pay negotiations, but this request was refused. GMB called for a 15% pay award to restore a decade of real terms pay cuts. Government announced a pay award of 3% on the last day of Parliament before summer recess which led to a summer of member ballots on the pay award run by regions. The ballot took place with a recommendation to reject which was secured. GMB was the only union to move to a ballot for industrial action in England and regions served 218 notices of ballots to local employers. Unfortunately, we did not secure mandates for action due to low turnouts. In Wales, a second consultative ballot was carried out following an improved offer which was accepted. In Scotland, despite GMB rejecting the pay offer, mandates were not secured to progress to a formal industrial action ballot and the pay award was imposed. Focus has now turned to this year's pay award, which is once again delayed due to the Government. England, Wales and Northern Ireland are currently awaiting recommendation reports from the PRB. In Scotland, unions have secured pay negotiations with the Government and a joint union pay claim is currently being worked on.

Campaigns are centered around building more organised workplaces and upskilling reps to run campaigns and ballots locally. National office is also supporting regions in exploring how to exploit local flexibilities within the Agenda for Change Handbook to win for members at a local level. There continues to be a staffing crisis in the NHS with staffing shortages returning to pre pandemic levels of over 100,000. Staff are exhausted and burnt out and still dealing with the impacts of covid on a daily basis and the impact of staffing shortages on the mental health and wellbeing of our members is their number one concern currently.

Proposed legislation to mandate Covid vaccinations for health care workers was revoked shortly before it was due to come into effect. GMB supported the vaccination programme but did not support mandatory vaccinations and lobbied government and employers to oppose it. However, the issue was a contentious one that divided our members and so public campaigning on the issue was limited.

Social Care

GMB continues to campaign for £15 per hour minimum for care workers and hope to roll out the campaign launched in Scotland to England later this year when the Women's Campaign Unit is established.

GMB is the only union recognised by HC One and density remains at 20%. A new pay and reward structure has been implemented that sees some of the workforce now sit above the living wage. The company invested £18 million into the pay structure in recognition that low wages were preventing them from recruiting and retaining staff. GMB will continue to push for higher wages and improvements to other terms i.e. sick pay. GMB is also due to start balloting in other national care providers on slightly above minimum wage pay offers.

Due to the sell-off of Four Seasons Healthcare Homes to other care providers the sector is hugely fragmented and difficult to organise. Several of the new care providers have now served termination notices on the recognition agreement and it is expected more will follow. We have been actively campaigning against these de-recognition notices and regions are looking to pursue individual CAC applications in care homes where we have larger densities.

Legislation to mandate social care staff working in adult residential care homes came into effect in November 2021 and resulted in lots of care workers leaving employment. GMB campaigned against its introduction but was unable to legally challenge the legislation. The proposed legislation to extend the mandate to the wider social care sector was due to come into effect in 2022 but as a result of health workers campaigning against it, the legislation was revoked entirely. GMB had called on Government and employers to proactively offer care workers their jobs back who left as a result.

Foster Carers

GMB continues to be involved with the work of Kinship Alliance – a group consisting of organisations representing the interests of all kinship carers. This is a campaigning group and cross-party taskforce working to secure financial, physical and emotional support for family and friends who step up to care for children and keep them out of the fostering system. Foster Carers, Kinship Carers and Special Guardians continue to be the forgotten part of

the social care workforce and GMB continues to represent members in several regions.

Police Staff

Employers in England and Wales have offered a pay award of: £250 consolidated pay increase on pay points 7 to 18 (inclusive) on the PSC pay spine with effect from 1 September 2021 (to be backdated); 2.1% consolidated increase on pay points 7 to 45 on the PSC pay spine with effect from 1 April 2022 until 31 August 2023 (to be backdated); increases on standby allowance and the minimum annual leave entitlements. Agreement that in the event that a PRRB annual award is agreed from 1 September 2022 in excess of a 3% award, as part of a single year settlement, the Employers' Side is prepared to re-open pay negotiations on the 17 month police staff pay award to ensure that police staff do not suffer any detriment to their police officer colleagues.

This represents a 17 month offer (brought forward by 5 months to compensate for the lack of an offer in the last pay round) and, the Police Staff Committee believe, although it is a relatively low offer, it is the best that can be achieved by negotiation. A ballot is currently underway at the time of writing.

Police Staff continue to feel under-resourced and under-appreciated and continually strive to raise their profile and increase their organisational effectiveness. To support this a dedicated populated website space and modern publicity materials have been developed. Resources are being sought to develop our own Post Incident Management Training to counter the recruitment threat from other Unions.

Civil Service

The Civil Service has continued to fare badly under the current Government, with the Chancellor restricting any increase in pay in 2021 to £250 for those earning less than £24000, with nothing for anyone else. There were some exceptions for longer term pay agreements. At the end of March 2022 Treasury stipulated that pay increases will be limited to 2% on average, but with a further 1% available to tackle urgent issues. In response to the cost-of-living crisis, GMB and sister unions are submitting pay claims at RPI plus.

The pandemic was the main joint focus of unions and employers. Most civil servants worked from home, but for those required to be in the workplace the aim was ensuring Covid security. However, in August the Head of the Civil Service told Departments that civil servants must return to the workplace. Union pressure prevented a mass return and this saved lives during the next wave. Unions raise issues such as Long Covid, sick pay, smarter working (working at home/office), and workplace health and safety. In parallel Government plans to move 22,000 jobs out of London, alongside a review of offices.

The GMB National Officer appeared before the Defence Select Committee which was looking at the role of outsourcing in 2021. He argued for outsourced contracts to be brought in house. A three-year investment in Defence was revealed in 2021, and this may benefit MoD staff and UK Manufacturing with plans to build a new generation of ships and armoured vehicles.

Unions have argued for better funding for the Environment Agency as did the Environment Agency, but it did not happen, and they cannot fill hundreds of vacancies.

In 2021, GMB and other unions negotiated a three year pay deal in the MoJ. GMB did not recommend it (effective from April 2020) because of flaws and the loss of some terms and conditions for many staff. Members voted to accept but issues emerged, with delayed back pay and errors.

Probation

GMB was at the forefront of bringing Probation Services back into public ownership following the disastrous and ridiculously expensive experiment of privatisation. We are now in the middle of bringing the staff of the private companies back into the umbrella of the national Probation Service. This is proving to be particularly difficult as the private companies have developed terms and conditions that are wildly different from those in the Probation Service. It is an ongoing intensive project that will take many more months to resolve but it is the right decision for the future of the Service.

Pay talks have been hampered by the public sector pay freeze. A new three year pay deal is being sought to bring fresh hope to an organisation that has seen virtually no pay

increase over the last decade. We expect these talks to produce a realistic increase in pay for members.

Overwhelmingly the biggest issue facing the service is the current crisis in staffing vacancies; some areas have been designated 'red' sites because of the severe shortage of qualified Probation Officers. Potential new entrants are reluctant to join this undervalued, under resourced and under staffed profession. We are engaged in continual talks with the director-general and, when possible, with ministers regarding these issues and continue to campaign for the resources the Service requires.

Contractors

This section is covered in the National Organising Unit Report.

Pensions

GMB continues to campaign hard to protect and improve members pensions. We successfully defeated the government's attempt to introduce a £95K Exit cap last year and this year we are awaiting a court hearing date to challenge their decision to utilise the surpluses generated by the public sector pension schemes to pay for the McCloud case that they lost.

In the interim, in order to resolve the issue of age discrimination, the government has decided (for benefit calculation purposes only) to return all members who have been transferred, back into the schemes that they were in prior to the reforms (the legacy schemes) with effect from 1st April 2015. Then, with effect from 1st April 2022, they will transfer everybody back into the reformed schemes. The period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2022 will be known as 'the remedy period'.

At the point of retirement, all members will be given a choice as to whether to have their remedy period benefits calculated on the basis of their legacy scheme or the reformed scheme. Preparations are currently being made to ensure systems are in place to expedite this and to make good the payments of those who are already affected. It is a necessarily complex task which is unlikely to be completed before October 2023 and the pensions department has issued bulletins and advice throughout the process as necessary.

The pensions department has recently recommenced its regional training and organising for members and officers and strives to offer expert advice to members and officers in all sectors where we organise.

European and International Affiliations

GMB Public Services Section is affiliated to: EPSU (European Federation of Public Service Unions) – bringing together unions across Europe and representing 8 million public service workers; and PSI (Public Services International) – a global union federation of 700+ unions in 154 countries.

The section also continues to work with Uni Global who are supporting our work within the section particularly within Care and Contractors. This year they also provided a free intensive organising training course for Regional Organisers focussed on Care.

BIRMINGHAM AND WEST MIDLANDS REGION

I am very pleased to be submitting my regional report for Congress 2022, knowing that it is a live in-person conference, as we have had to have virtual Congresses because of the pandemic that thankfully we now seem to be seeing the back of.

That being said, we have gone through a very difficult and traumatic time across the world and more specifically here in the UK.

I also submit this report with a tinge of sadness as it will be my final ever report to Congress, subject to my imminent retirement.

Regional Campaigns / Industrial Disputes

End Fire and Rehire

Following the end of the British Gas dispute, we worked with our activists (both those that have stayed in British Gas and those who have left) on a continuing campaign around an End Fire and Rehire awareness ribbon.

The campaign expanded with a link on the national website for people to contact Councillors and MPs and we then launched our End Fire and Rehire Workplace Charter.

This is a tool for doing what we do best, taking the issue back into workplaces and organising.

The Charter is an agreement that secures protection in individual workplaces for our members against threats of fire and rehire.

The agreement has been signed by local Labour MPs, including the late Jack Dromey.

We are working with several other employers on getting them to sign up to the Charter.

Birmingham City Council

After identifying continuing equal pay issues within the council, GMB have launched the Birmingham Pay Justice campaign.

Through workplace activities, a social media campaign, online and in-person events, phone banking and a large demonstration, the fight for equal pay has already brought forward over 3,000 members registering to have their claims assessed.

Membership has continued to grow and workplace leaders have been supported to help take the campaign forward.

The campaign is continuing and growing, but issues found in the council have helped to identify further equal pay claims across the Region.

These claims are forming the basis for further campaigns.

NJC Pay

With the help of the Region's Organising Team, workplace reps were asked to undertake a workplace ballot.

This activity was supported by a specific ballot WhatsApp group.

The ballot was undertaken by post, email and text, with regular updates going out through the ballot period.

Activity was highlighted through a social media campaign.

Unfortunately, GMB did not meet the statutory thresholds for industrial action.

However, activity through the campaign led to the Region's schools, academies and Local Government membership growing by 13 (growth of 1.28%).

This has enabled the Region to reverse the trend of declining membership in this area.





NHS Pay

To support the ballots, the Region built a team of activists and Organisers to create activity within workplaces.

Over both ballots, we undertook Facebook live events, a social media campaign, events with NHS campaign groups, a rally in Birmingham City Centre with national officers and postal ballot boxes in workplaces.

In the consultative ballot, the Region managed to get past the statutory thresholds. Unfortunately, GMB did not meet the statutory thresholds for industrial action however, activity through the campaign led to the Region's NHS membership growing by 1.42%.

Organising

As the team that has the sole job of organising, the lockdown years have been very challenging as it is much more difficult to organise without going into workplaces, so this last year has been a breath of fresh air.

During lockdown we have had the opportunity to take a breath and look at the way we were doing things and what we could change for the better, we have completely changed the way we approach our projects, focusing more on identifying the organic leaders and encouraging activity, this approach will help sustain us for the long term.

One of the other pluses from lockdown is using more technology to enhance the tasks we have been doing. We are using teams, zoom, surveys QR codes and much more to push the boundaries of what we do, some of the plans and ideas come from some of the new leadership techniques that we have bought in, using action learning sets and the coaching

grow model, this has enabled members of the team to take ownership of their projects and generate new techniques. The results of the changes has been growth across most of the areas we currently focus on.

Uber

The recognition was signed this year and a race to get contacts to start to arrange meetings with other drivers was on, we managed to pick up 60 members even before we got access to the hubs, the membership is now at 156 we have the second highest membership. We also have an active regional rep and contacts.

Hermes

Membership has gone from about 6 members to over 250 at last count, this has been a combination of organising around the pay claim and working with the regional rep to target the issues that the membership are angry about. The use of a survey using a QR code that we got couriers to scan when we visited the hubs, gave us an insight into what we needed to campaign on. Health and Safety and price for packets seemed to be what the members were most concerned about. The team are now working with Education to put a National Health and Safety course on, tailored to the sector.

Amazon

We are currently working with the membership to try to agitate around getting a retention bonus. We have again used the QR code at gate jobs, which has given us access to contact details for non-members. We are now working up to an off-site meeting.

CNC Speedwell

This is an engineering company that has a really bad safety record and is treating migrant workers less favourably than indigenous workers on the same site. We are working with a group of contacts to grow the membership. The contacts have been pivotal in bringing in the members and we are working with them and empowering them to sort issues around pay and faulty machinery.

Organising in general across the region has taken off with a renewed energy, where we have seen ballots, health and safety and disputes used as tools to engage membership and grow.

Serco Bin Dispute

Members took on Serco over failure to adhere to H&S issues, lack of PPE, bullying and unequal terms & conditions.

Membership was 32 at the start of the campaign but through hard work of the officer and reps, this is now at 136.

Members undertook several weeks of sustained industrial action and campaigning in which they achieved a resounding success, achieving their original objective as well as securing permanent employment for agency workers.



Somers Forge Dispute

Successful strike action was undertaken at Somers Forge when members refused to accept a pay offer when the employer refused to back date to the anniversary date.

This resulted in several weeks of strike action and recruiting new members and two new workplace reps.



Brize Norton Annual Brize Fest and TUPE

GMB were delighted to attend the annual Brize Fest event on the base last year which had been cancelled due to covid for the past 2 years.

We were the only union on site at the request of the committee and a great day meeting members and new members resulted from all over the country with visitors from as far as Paisley coming to spend time with relatives. This took place in advance of the contract being awarded to Serco from the MOD in which sole recognition is in place with the GMB for this contract.

Equality

We continue to advocate equality in the workplace with the signing of the GMB Domestic Abuse Charter for Telford and Wrekin Council and the Dying for Work Charter for Newcastle Borough Council. In 2022 we will be bringing the GMB Menopause Policy into the various Ceramic industries.

Due to budget cuts, Stoke-on-Trent's vital STAR teen pregnancy service (Sex, Teenagers and Relationships) was earmarked for closure but following a successful campaign and the intervention of the GMB we are pleased to announce this is no longer the case.

Industrial Action

Industrial action has taken place at GKN Telford regarding pay, terms and conditions which was brought to a successful conclusion for GMB members.



Industrial action has taken place at Doosan Babcocks regarding pay and terms and conditions which was brought to a successful conclusion on a 2-year pay deal which equates



JCB

JCB Group including Guidant Global continue to grow GMB membership with a net gain of new members in 2021 of 1,721. This is primarily due to excellent workplace organisers within the JCB Group. Various challenges have taken place which include a pensions dispute which was resolved through good negotiations and a consultative ballot for GMB members.

Ceramics

The ceramics industry is facing a challenging future due to the rising cost of energy which potentially will have an impact on employment within the sector and also the transitional period through to Net Zero by 2050.

The GMB continue to have consistent above average pay rises within the industry. This is due to good workplace organisers within the manufacturing sector. It must also be noted there are skill shortages within manufacturing in the Birmingham and West Midlands Region.

WMAS

The West Midlands Ambulance Service continue to recruit new members into the GMB with a more focused approach to industrial matters within the service. Simon Day, Branch Secretary has been a leading campaigner for better

Political

Jack Dromey MP

As I am sure you will have heard, we lost our good colleague and friend Jack Dromey Labour MP for Birmingham Erdington at the start of the year. Jack was a true trade unionist and was always the first to reach out with an offer of support for our campaigns, events, demos, members meetings, and everything else over the years. It is a huge loss to the movement and to us at GMB that Jack will no longer be here to continue to fight for working people. However, we will keep his memory alive by continuing to make the lives of people living and working in this country better.



Erdington By-Election

Following the loss of Jack Dromey, a selection process was held to find the Labour candidate to stand in Birmingham Erdington. Cllr. Paulette Hamilton (GMB member) was selected by the CLP and, after a short campaign, was successful in holding the seat for Labour. Turnout was low but it always is in Erdington and by-elections produce lower turnouts than regular elections. Despite this, Labour increased the vote share and Paulette is now the first Black MP in the city of Birmingham.

Labour Party Regional Director

The Regional Labour Party has now appointed a new full time RD; Charlotte Walker.

Local Elections 2022

May 2022 will see multiple Local Authority elections take place in the West Midlands. We will have all out elections in Birmingham, and we will need to do a lot of work to make sure that we regain control of the Council and keep as many GMB Councillors in their seats as possible. We will also have all out elections in Newcastle-under-Lyme, and there is a real possibility we can regain control of this Council, as well as multiple elections across the Region. All of these will require a lot of work, but hopefully we can increase the number of Labour Cllrs across the Region. On this note, we have multiple GMB members standing for Council seats for the first time, including a large number of our young member's network, which is fantastic news.

Education / Health & Safety

Since last Congress we have trained 216 reps including 94 new reps. 90% of this training has been in the classroom utilising our Covid 19 safety measures. We are particularly happy to report piloting two important new organising courses.

How to run a dispute involved reps from three successful disputes at SERCO Sandwell, Babcock's Tipton, and GKN Telford. It provides a framework for applying the principles of the GMB@Work course to every stage of leading a dispute. We aim to make this course widely available to as many reps as possible in the region.

Campaigning around your claim goes through the process of identifying a campaign, building momentum in the workplace, and preparing for action. We have trialled this with reps at Special Metals Wiggin Hereford and have recruited 25 new members as a result of the action plan developed on the course. This will be rolled out across the Region.

We have also run a very successful Menopause in the Workplace course which looks at how to raise the issue and campaign around it.

We have carried out a number of workplace Health and Safety inspections with the aim of supporting our reps, identifying issues, and challenging management. Our safety reps have been particularly pro-active at SERCO Sandwell where they put the issue of bullying at the heart of our recent successful strike action.

In concluding my report, I would like to take

this opportunity to thank all activists, staff and Officers within both the GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Region and the wider GMB for making my 31 years as a Full Time Officer and 20 years as Regional Secretary, so memorable.

Thank you to you all and solidarity.

LONDON REGION

This period has been a political, industrial and economic challenge and the Region must adapt in order to grow and survive especially as London Region has a very transient workforce. Our Staff, Officers and Recruitment Teams have been working hard on retention projects and contacting leavers as it has been difficult to get back into workplaces. The Omicron variant resulted in severe redundancies and job losses in major sectors across the Region. Following the Government's recovery plan, our staff have returned to our risk assessed Offices from 19 July 2021 and workplace visits and campaigning has been picking up. We have been working on the National Recruitment targets alongside Regional priority targets such as Uber, Yodel, Bakkavor, Waste, Mitie and Care.

Staffing

Sue Hackett, Gary Pearce, Maureen Logan and Alan Costello have all retired and Jill Harris, Jacky Hickey and Helen Purcell have left the Region. Officers Marvin Hay, Holly Turner, Ashley Foster and Peter Roberts and new staff John Weir, Danielle Gearing and Peter Hall joined the Region and Lola McEvoy and Lisa Bangs have been promoted to MDO.

Branches

A number of long serving Branch Secretaries have retired and presentations are being made to them at their Branches. The Region has consolidated branches, closed dormant branches, merged branches and created new branches. Following the CEC Decision in March 2022, London Region will be getting additional 8-10 Branches from Birmingham and Midland Regions to take in members in Peterborough and Oxfordshire and we will be consulting with relevant Branches.

Training

We tried to keep our education courses running for reps as our Education Department had to contend with lockdown after lockdown and run courses online. We will have seen a full return to office-based training after Easter 2022.

Political

Political activity has seen a slow return to normality. In May 2021 we faced 2 years of elections, with cancelled 2020 elections held alongside scheduled 2021 elections and elections for the Mayor and London Assembly. Sadiq Khan was re-elected and Labour held all its constituency seats.

Elsewhere regional elections were held for the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, where Labour took control for the first time but the Police and Crime Commissioner elections saw Labour failing to win any seat.

County Council elections were disappointing except in Cambridgeshire where Labour went into a joint administration with the LibDems to take control away from the Tories.

District Council elections were more positive but with most councils elected by thirds it was difficult for Labour to take control.

There was a parliamentary by-election in Chesham and Amersham in July 2021 with the Liberal Democrats taking the seat from the Tories.

At the time of writing, we are in the middle of the 5 May 2022 local elections campaign, our priority is to ensure that the Tories lose control of Barnet Council to Labour.

After these elections GMB has called on London Labour Executive to hold a review of the selection process for council candidates across London.

In Newham and Ealing Southall, where the CLPs are in special measures, selections were taken over by the NEC but elsewhere, we saw a record number of appeals against the decisions of local Labour Party Campaign Forums.

Normality returned in November 2021 when Labour East were able to hold an in-person annual conference which saw several GMB activists elected to the Regional Executive.

More recently trigger ballots have been held across the region and although this process is not yet complete, no sitting Labour MP has yet to be de-selected, however full selection processes will take place in seats such as Barking where the sitting MP is retiring.

Relationships with politicians continue to develop with a number of Labour MPs, Assembly Members and councillors providing support for the GMB's industrial strategy and campaigns across sectors including NHS and Social Care, local government, the aviation industry and energy.

Our network of Branch Political Officers has continued to meet online and we continue to remain active in both London and Eastern TULO.

Over the past year we have been working with the Jewish Labour Movement (JLM) on two initiatives: to provide anti-Semitism training for staff and activists and to establish a Faith Branch together with several London based Rabbis and JLM.

We would like to thank our Political Officer Vaughan West who will be retiring in July.

Equality

Equality Officer, Hilda Tavorara has been working with equality activists and Self Organised Groups to re-vitalise their structures and focus on organising and recruiting through Equality campaigns and Equality policies and implementing the Equality Bargaining Agenda within workplaces using GMB@Work principles.

The Branch Equality Officer toolkit has been updated and will be rolled out to Branches and postholders with Equality, Inclusion and Diversity training programmes.

We held a "Smash the Stigma – Menopause in the Workplace" course online and launched our first World Menopause Day on 18 October 2021. All who attended, took this campaign to their workplaces to improve working conditions and awareness of the barriers and discrimination experienced by those going through the menopause.

ABM Aviation Heathrow, Tate and Lyle and ASLEF have adopted our Model Policy and at Bakkavor Pizza, Harrow, this campaign has resulted in a significant influx of 60 new women members joining GMB. Our Domestic Abuse Charter

has been implemented in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and in Securitas and the LB of Redbridge has signed up to the Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport.

The London Regional Equality Conference took place online on 26 June 2021 with Sarah Owen MP and Sam Tarry MP as guest speakers and a new Regional Equality Forum was elected.

The Region was represented on the National Equality Conference (NEC) on 21 November 2021 and our London Region Equality Conference Motion "The Value of Equalities in GMB Structures" was selected to go to Congress.

Members of the National Equality Forum (NEF) 2021-2023 were nominated with Taranjit Chana (Race) and Brian Shaw elected to represent London Region on the NEF.

The TUC Young Workers Conference took place on 2-3 April 2022 and two members from the London Young Workers Committee attended as delegates. GMB Sisters Committee and the REF are organising the Regional Women's Conference taking place on 25 June 2022 where we hope to raise the participation of our Women members closer to the Union and to keep them engaged and active.

Strands

Our London Young Workers Network was relaunched in November 2021, and we saw young members' energy and enthusiasm leading the way on equality and recruitment. A new London Young Workers Committee was elected on 24 January 2022, and they are working on building industrial campaigns that matter to young workers such as Real Living Wage and Age Based Wage Discrimination campaigns.

GMB Shout! set a new Communication and Engagement Strategy & Plan for 2021-2022 to improve and develop member communications and focus campaigns on LGBT+ equality. They will deliver a Learning & Development Events Programme through webinars.

GMB Sisters has elected a new Committee and hold regular meetings. Sadly, one Committee member Mehri Jafari died tragically on 4 August 2021 while mountain climbing in Kyrgyzstan and a tribute took place to celebrate her life.

GMB Sisters supported the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25

November 2021 in solidarity with women victims or survivors and women fighting to eliminate gender-based violence against women and girls.

GMB Race elected a new committee in June 2021 and will be working to further the agenda for black workers.

In 2021, Taranjit Chana and Robbie Scott were on the panel for the first National Race Zoom Meeting. GMB Race held a successful event for Black History Month at London City Hall on 25 October 2021, hosted by Unmesh Desai, member of the London Assembly, and joined by David Lammy MP, Dawn Butler MP, London Regional President Penny Robinson and National President Barbara Plant.

The Committee is working on launching a campaign and survey to address the inequalities on ethnicity pay gaps.

GMB Ability faced challenges with online meetings but held an AGM on Zoom in June 2021 and relaunched their Committee in November 2021. A working party is liaising with the Regional Press Officer to establish communications guidelines for an Ability regional network.

Ability submitted a supportive statement on the Monaghan report but asked that GMB go further and fully engage with strand groups to improve inclusivity, diversity and equality for staff and members.

They have assisted Branches to launch the GMB Reasonable Adjustments Disability Passport and the GMB Neurodiversity Toolkit into workplaces and took part in the National Disability virtual event on 15 December 2021 for UK Disability History Month.

Manufacturing

Whilst many factories continue to practice safe working in response to Covid-19 still being around, some have asked us to ensure that we have tested negative for Covid-19 before entering sites. In general, there is a much more relaxed approach to visiting workplaces.

We have had some notable successes and growth in some of our food manufacturing sites namely, Noons and Spurway foods in Southall which has been due to local reps and officers visiting the sites to undertake workplace campaigns and recruitment of new members.

Within the food industry a number of factors have influenced pay and conditions, we have seen a reduction in HGV drivers and shortages across the UK which has led to in many places, an increase in competitive pay rates for HGV drivers.

Companies such as Noon Food Products which have now been taken over by Pilgrim Foods have had to increase pay from £15 an hour to £18.69 to help with staff retention.

Spurway Foods was also taken over by Pilgrim Food Masters buying out the share from Kerry Foods through a share sale provision.

In terms of pay claims these are being submitted across the region and whilst some have not been concluded yet, for example in Crown Artist Brushes, Noon and other food industries, there is an average of 2% to 3% increase in pay.

The construction industry is showing growth, in particular in housing within the City of London.

Construction is also starting in Sizewell C which is big project for the future.

In the furniture and bed industry, Hypnos Beds have changed the way they calculate the bonus, as a result of this there was a small increase in the hourly rate. There is also a slight increase in production which is good news for the industry, this is helped by the promotion in the brand names.

In VIP Huntingdon after many discussions, the company offered a significant uplift in pay rates rising by 5%, making the lowest pay to £9.50 and was linked to all other rates.

The recruitment levels within manufacturing are improving after good attendance at inductions and proper campaigns around pay and conditions.

Overall, in manufacturing if there are proper campaigns running there is no reason why manufacturing membership cannot improve.

Health & Safety

We have visited Sizewell B in relation to welfare facilities for security staff and also the aviation industry.

We continue to support and train our reps to inspect their workplaces and make sure our reps take the right approach. Throughout our industries inspections are taking place in Asda's,

Nestle Purina, Mizkan Bury St Edmunds, Local Authorities, and the food factories.

As part of the Workers Memorial Day, we have been invited by Barking TUC to the unveiling of the new memorial in memory of those who have died due to exposure to asbestos.

Our Health and Safety Forums are starting up again and we are moving away from virtual meetings.

Our recent survey on asbestos resulted in cases being forwarded to our solicitors for assessment.

Public Services

As workplaces began to open up the Region embarked on a programme of visits and direct engagement with members in public services.

Whilst previous lockdowns had impacted on the Region's ability to recruit in Local Government and Schools, membership has remained consistent and in Academies has grown.

This retention is largely because due to our Regional strategy to remain in contact and engaged with members, albeit remotely, via regular email updates and a social media presence.

Unlike other workplaces, the situation in Schools has continually changed with DfE guidance frequently being updated.

In July, members in schools and academies were surveyed to share their thoughts and experiences and over 800 members responded.

The results allowed us to ensure the issues that matter to members were being addressed and helped identify new/ emerging issues.

One such issue was on CO2 monitors, with over 80% of members stating they would feel safer if CO2 monitors were installed.

Although the national joint union checklist and letter to Headteachers had referenced CO2 monitors, this had not been taken any further forward, so the Region launched a campaign calling for Government funding for CO2 monitors, using the evidence from our Regional survey.

In addition, an open letter was sent to the Secretary of State signed by members and their families.

Ahead of the Region's planned protest, endorsed by numerous MPs and Assembly Members, the

DfE announced it would be supplying 350,000 CO2 monitors.

Whilst the protest had to be cancelled, Members recognised the campaign and voice the Region had taken on their behalf.

The Region updated its schools information pack ready for schools visits from September 2021.

In addition to 'The Right Pay for the Right Job', information on lone working and equality issues such as our menopause campaign were included.

This proved to be a useful tool to engage and encourage members to take on workplace campaigns.

Since the pandemic, schools members have felt undervalued and overlooked as teachers were not in schools as much as support staff.

These led to more workplace representatives coming forward in schools, as members were keen to have their voice heard, providing the Region with good organising opportunities.

Across the Region, schools have been undertaking restructures resulting in many redundancies.

Support Staff rather than Teachers have suffered reductions in income, and we are supporting our members throughout these difficult times.

The NJC Consultative ballot began at the end of August 2021 and in addition to the e-ballot, workplace ballots were held with a resounding 75% rejection of the 1.75% pay offer but despite this it was evident that members, especially in Schools, had no appetite for industrial action.

Despite this, the Region successfully managed to get the same level of engagement with the indicative industrial action ballot as the consultative ballot as well as exceed the overall national average turnout.

Our campaign of 'why one percent less' resonated with members and led to many interesting workplace discussions.

Although restrictions were lifted in July, many Local Authorities/ Councils are yet to fully return to their Offices with many staff still working from home.

Members working from home brings in new challenges for us as we need to find new ways to recruit and organise similar to our approach for the Gig Economy.

As part of the national strategy to campaign to improve pay for our members in outsourced waste services and Local Government Contractors, we collated pay data of all Councils' Refuse and Waste management contracts.

We then use this as a comparison within the sector to allow us to coordinate campaigns and submit local pay claims including the following Urbasser, Veolia and Serco.

In the NHS our members overwhelmingly rejected the 3% pay offer.

We held a consultative ballot in August & September 2021 and this resulted in a 94% rejection.

A full Industrial Action ballot was held to seek a mandate whether members would be willing to take strike action.

We balloted 27 NHS Trusts, along with a further 3 in partnership with Southern Region and a further 3 in partnership with Birmingham Region.

This was broken down into 2 Ambulance Trusts and 30 NHS Trusts and totalled 2,644 members – which was made up of 42% Ambulance members and 58% NHS members.

Throughout this ballot, we engaged fully with our NHS and Ambulance members through workplace visits and use of social media.

Our NHS reps, activists and officers sent a clear message to Government by demonstrating on an open top bus through the streets of central London just before Xmas.

We recruited 177 new members across both the NHS and Ambulance Services, and 15 new Workplace Representatives.

GMB London recognises that NHS Professionals, who have continued to work tirelessly and at great personal risk on the front lines during this continued pandemic, have once again chosen the public's needs over their own pay and reward.

Further work is now underway to strengthen and build our regional branch structures so that we may encourage more activists from the NHS to play an active role in the democracy and policy making of our Union.

Commercial Services

British Gas

We wish to acknowledge the incredible work carried out by all our reps and officers throughout the dispute with British Gas over the abhorrent practice of 'fire and re-hire'.

It was a long and bitter dispute, however our activists worked tirelessly to keep our members motivated to carry them through strike action.

Although regrettably the dispute did not go our way, they have stood firm and are already committed to building back some of what has been lost through the process.

Despite initially being a freeze on pay negotiations, we have already got the business back to the table to discuss pay due to the cost-of-living crisis and the inevitable struggles British Gas now have with recruitment and retention.

There is much work to be done, however with a high number of enthusiastic new reps coming forward recently, we are confident that we can come back stronger than ever.

Cadent

Despite an existing high membership density in Cadent, we have seen our membership steadily grow throughout our current pay campaign with around an extra 80 new members in London Region alone.

Our members have been offered a significant real terms pay cut by the business against a backdrop of profits last year of over £900m and a CEO enjoying a basic salary of £1.2m.

The membership is rightly outraged and have made the collective decision to take industrial action through our recent ballot, of which 85% of voting members opted in favour of strike action.

Workplace ballots across Cadent provided us with a fantastic opportunity to engage with our members and access those who were not currently members and to bring them on board to stand shoulder to shoulder with their colleagues through this dispute.

Airports

March 2022 recorded its best passenger numbers at Heathrow since March 2020 but despite this, the airport faced cancelled flights and staff shortages. It is our view that these

shortages were down to redundancies in the early part of lockdown, staff seeking alternative employment when the furlough scheme ended, and low wages within the indirect supply chain where staff have chosen to leave the Airport for better pay within the expanding job market.

GMB London Living Wage Campaign at Heathrow

GMB have been campaigning on behalf of low paid workers at the Airport and have continued to work with Heathrow on their living wage road map journey.

On 15 February 2022 we announced the long awaited and hard fought for implementation of London Living Wage within the Heathrow direct supply chain.

This has started in Apcoa and Mitie where some 1300 members will be lifted to a minimum of £11.05 per hour from April 2022.

This is a great start to achieving decent pay for the supply chain workforce and demonstrates that our tenacity and campaigning really does pay off!

GMB will carry on our campaign for low paid workers at the Airport and work with Heathrow and contractors who fall outside of the direct supply chain to follow suit.

Airlines who use contractors to secure and clean their planes must now step up to the mark to ensure those workers are paid the London Living Wage as a minimum.

MIDLAND AND EAST COAST REGION

Coronavirus marked a change in practices for almost everything we now do, evolving a much greater use of social media and virtual meetings. We became a fixture on the region's TV and radio news channels, updating the public on the disastrous failings in the residential care sector and organising multiple industrial actions including the waste sector, ensuring a huge uplift on pay and terms and conditions. We have also had multiple successes on market supplement pay awards for drivers in this sector.



Synergy Derby

The continuous project in Synergy Derby has taken a real turn of progress for our members who have suffered bullying, discrimination, unfair practices and the threat of 'Fire and Rehire'.

Rolls Royce

Gary Smith, General Secretary, and Barbara Plant, National President, attended a visit to Derby Rolls Royce as part of the drive to recognise British manufacturing and our nuclear Industries. Rolls Royce Staff are turning to the GMB as the TU of choice as we are pro nuclear.

Howmet

Another aero supply company, Howmet, has formed its own GMB Branch following good recruitment and organising project. Membership continues to grow at Nottingham Tram, with local reps and members being extremely well organised and have seen some great campaigns and results. Strike action was required to secure a pay offer that was acceptable to the GMB membership; after one days' action, the company tabled a 3 year offer of 3%, 4% and, 5% respectively.

Amazon

Throughout the pandemic, Amazon raked in billions as it capitalised on the unusual situation the country found itself in and continue to treat their workers and our members poorly. This did not stop the GMB campaigning for what is right for those workers and building on our growing numbers across various Amazon sites in the region. A cold, wet and windy Black Friday saw GMB campaigning on Amazon gates nationwide. Cyber Monday saw another organised gate job on a cold, snowy morning outside EMA 2 Amazon in Mansfield.

Schutz UK Ltd

The 2022/2023 annual pay talks at Schutz UK Ltd, Worktop, were very successful this year. After 2 months of negotiations and an ambitious pay claim, a 10% pay increase was offered and accepted by our members.

Cazoo

The GMB has begun to grow a healthy number of members at a recently developed Cazoo site in Long Bennington. On the back of this recruitment, the GMB raised a collective grievance with a large number of its members citing the lack of pay structure in the organisation locally and unequal pay for migrant and ethnic minority workers, which is ongoing. This, teamed with regular gate jobs, can put the GMB in a position where it can push for a local recognition agreement with this multibillion-pound business.

NHS

The past year has seen ample opportunity for GMB to restart campaigning and organising within NHS workplaces nationwide. Suboptimal pay offers by the government has led to the GMB campaigning in the NHS, with the focus on pay as well as other issues such as car parking fees and the cost-of-living crisis. Joint unions have submitted their oral evidence to the Pay Review Body and we are awaiting their recommendation to the government. It is hoped that our campaigns around pay, linked to job retention and the growing vacancies in the NHS will mean that the government will finally take NHS members seriously when it comes to pay.

Marshalls Works

In November 2021, Marshalls Works Pollington began a Fire and Rehire consultation with the GMB recognised site over harmonisation of terms and conditions. This would mean an overall loss for our members who had been on the old legacy contracts and a campaign 'Contract Change – ON OUR TERMS' was begun. A new rep came forward at the members meeting and an organising committee was established of active members around the site to feed in to consultation.

The membership established that the contractual change would only take place if the employer would put a significant pay increase on the table which would mitigate any future losses and after rejecting the companies low ball offers, organising themselves, gaining confidence and industrial strength and strength in their campaign, the members voted to accept a 6% pay increase with a bonus supplement and staved off the threat of Fire and Rehire.

Nottingham Trent University

A pay campaign has begun at Nottingham Trent University following the University opting out of the national terms and conditions for 2022. This is the first time the University has done this and will be a strong campaign for recruitment in the coming months.

Radius Systems

Following months of negotiations, the GMB members at Radius systems have secured the highest pay award seen in the last 15 years. Members overwhelmingly voted to accept the 6% pay offer after the GMB representatives successfully negotiated up from 1.5%.

Cadent Gas

Further to a consultative ballot on pay at Cadent Gas, the GMB conducted an industrial action ballot which showed the strength of rejection of the company's recent pay offer. Members in the Midland & East Coast region were telling us that they did not have the appetite for strike through the first ballot. However, organisational work from the representatives on the ground proved that through speaking with members, agitating on issues and encouraging them to return their ballot paper proved that through real activism and consultation, our members do think they deserve better than what is being offered and are willing to fight for it.

Western Power Distribution

A consultative ballot at Western Power Distribution resulted in an overwhelming rejection of the 4% offer on the table, there is now a recruitment and organising campaign taking place in WPD to build strength and pressure on the company to come back with an increased pay offer.



ASDA

In November 2021, the next step in the Equal Value Pay Claim for ASDA members was due to be heard in Manchester, however due to progress on the ASDA side, there was only a one-day hearing on 8 December where evidence was given by GMB women on their ASDA job roles. There will be another Equal Value Tribunal likely to be in 2022.

We also ran an ASDA Equal Pay Campaign Day in our ASDA Stores on 8 April 2022, highlighting the continuing campaign and court case with our ASDA members, alongside our Cost of Living Campaign and petition that we are asking our ASDA Members to sign, due to hearing how our retail members are struggling to pay for food, even with the help of discount cards.

GMB wrote to Hayley Tatum, the CEO of ASDA, to highlight our concerns, asking ASDA to bring forward their pay award for next year for all store employees to £10.06 per hour to try to offset the desperate financial situation of our members struggling for food v bills. We continue to visit stores and we have our rep, Ben Cook, permanently on full-time release, visiting stores to speak with our reps about their H&S issues and liaising with the GSM's to resolve these, with some fantastic results in Kingsthorpe store in Northampton and Sutton in Ashfield store in Nottingham.

At ASDA Boston Store, GMB members were being instructed to use a new ambient home shopping trolley however serious concerns soon became apparent that the trolley was not fit for purpose. ASDA's response was to move those who couldn't operate the trolley, who are predominantly female staff, to later shifts and would lose their early shift premiums in the process. GMB Reps Ben Cook and Wendy Green raised a grievance citing indirect sex discrimination on behalf of several of our GMB members. The internal procedure has been exhausted, so the next step is an application to an Employment Tribunal. We believe that this could end up a test case for the whole of the UK business.

At ASDA Scunthorpe Supercentre, Ben Cook has also been supporting shop stewards with their health and safety campaign. They are committed to making their workplace safe and eradicate unnecessary risks.

GMB Reps in ASDA Distribution Centres in Lutterworth and Brackmills have been working hard for months in preparation for a national dispute over pay. There is currently a national Ballot being run with the intention of moving to full industrial action ballot nationally, which is the first one in over ten years.

Ikea

GMB secured a pay increase for its members at Ikea Distribution Centre in Peterborough after the company made a unilateral decision to withdraw from the Living Wage Foundation, thus freezing a pending pay award. After some intensive lobbying by GMB, including rep Jimmy Golding, addressing IKEA sister unions across Europe, thankfully Ikea performed a U-turn and reinstated themselves as a Living Wage Foundation employer and implemented the pay rise. A campaign which was run in both Moy Park sites at Anwick and Grantham sought priority to equalise long standing inequalities between new and old contracts. Two pay awards were secured, which moved pay towards equality at Grantham and paid breaks at Anwick. Equality is not complete yet but both these results mark an important move in the right direction after many years of limited progress; kudos to the reps on both sites for delivering this positive outcome.



Biffa Leicester

GMB secured a win for its members at Biffa Leicester, a standalone refuse contract, resulting in a decent pay increase for HGV drivers, achieving a base rate more than the national Biffa minimum wage. Reps and the National Officer at British Gypsum ran a successful campaign to bring the company to its senses and pay a 6.2% uplift to wages, when the company tried to renege on the second part of the two-year pay deal in April 2022.

Charnwood Borough Council

Charnwood Borough Council signed up to the TUC Dying to Work charter, to protect all terminally ill workers at the Council. GMB achieved union recognition for our members working at XPO, Crown Bevcan site in Leicester

Serco

After what felt like forever regarding pay talks for 2021 pay increase, the Reps and members at Serco escalated the issue with a massive turn out and vote for industrial action of more than 90% in December 2021, with the region running a media campaign alongside the ballot result and interest from local press, radio and tv. We gained good traction with the campaign and put pressure on local Council, for which Serco runs their refuse service; even the local Organiser dressed as Santa one morning, complaining 'nothing for Serco workers come Xmas'. This all amounted to ACAS and then Serco coming back to the table with an improved offer of 8% and a two-year deal, which our members accepted.

Ambulance Service

Through Covid and the winter pressures, East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) have been under immense pressure and the GMB Reps have worked tirelessly, looking after members' interests by being actively involved with the Trust at all levels and regular discussions at National level.

Membership has grown at Thames Ambulance Service (TASL) as we have been given a free range on facilities to visit and attend inductions and after representations from GMB. We are the only Union they recognise. TASL have agreed to increase the hourly rate to £10.60 from £9.18 effective April 2022, plus overtime rate increased from 10% to 15% and sick pay extended to 6 weeks after 3 waiting days instead of 5 days. The company has honoured A4C.

Briggs Marine

GMB Membership at Briggs Marine is at its highest density for years (98%). This is due to a lot of good work by the reps and the GMB resistance to changes to working arrangements.

Vossloh Cogifer

Representatives Jason and Kev at Vossloh Cogifer are undertaking excellent work, organising, driving change and pressing their employer to act to ensure the health and safety and wellbeing members of members are improved. Jason has been nominated by his colleague for the John White Health & Safety and Wellbeing Representative of the Year 2022 TUC Award.

VolkerRail

Following successful discussions and a subsequent ballot, members at VolkerRail achieved a pay increase of up to 14.5%.

Tayto

Representatives from Tayto also received a substantial pay increase. Ted Staples, GMB Rep at Tayto, said "GMB has been organising and campaigning in our workplace and we're over the moon to have delivered this well-deserved pay rise for our members".

Ideal Boilers

Reps at Ideal boilers have also organised and forced a sick pay U-turn for members. Reps at

Ideal Heating have delivered a big win for GMB members, with sick pay policy now amended to protect our members when they're off work due to Covid-19.

Wienberger

Two new reps at Wienberger have been organising, supporting members and achieved an extraordinary and additional pay increase, outside of the annual pay cycle.

Following an event with a Scunthorpe Tec Branch to discuss decent pay and secure work, British Steel members said they wanted to be part of a campaign to secure decent pay at the Steelworks; the GMB are surveying members, developing a mandate and demanding an overdue pay increase.

DHL

DHL NISA Scunthorpe members received a pay award of between 5 – 7% and the DHL Collective Agreement has been successfully agreed for the benefit of our members.

Freeports

With carbon capture high on the political agenda and the setting up of Freeports, there is the potential for plenty of work in the near future in our area. Plans to build in Saltend in Hull and across the Humber at Immingham and Grimsby will create plenty of jobs. The Humber Freeport will tie in with the one on Teesside to put the carbon capture out to sea in old gas tanks. We have an active group of members who meet regularly at our Hull Office to discuss the industry and the need to make sure jobs are created using the National Agreement (Blue Book).

Construction

We have two claims pending at present for our members for the shambolic way they have been treated in the past on previous construction work. Construction members were out in force at the recent P&O dispute outside King George Dock in Hull on Saturday 26th March. Local MP Karl Turner started the speeches and then we marched on the main Hedon Road to block the traffic coming into the dockside and ferry terminal. A good turnout of Trade Unionists and Activists and a good day for demonstrating.

Hull Housing Officers

The opportunity to attend demonstrations gathered pace late last year with Hull No1 Branch Secretary Carl Burn and housing officers who were not happy with their contacts being

Ongo

Recently completed pay talks with Ongo have achieved a pay rise as well as bench marking every employee, so all lower paid employees are now in a better financial position.

Aggregate Industries

We have managed to secure average holiday pay and back pay for over 20 members over the last 2 years for members at Aggregate Industries.

Meggitt Polymers & Composites

GMB negotiated a 33% market supplement for our GMB members at Meggitt Polymers & Composites in Loughborough in the maintenance department, back dated to 1 January 2022 and have appointed 3 new reps.

Leicestershire Textiles

As well as the obvious devastation Covid-19 has brought, the pandemic highlighted the unethical working conditions that workers must endure in the Leicestershire textile industry. We have worked alongside the TUC and Unite to secure a ground-breaking agreement with major brands such as ASOS, River Island, Misguided, New Look and Quiz to name a few. The agreement will ensure that brands will not use suppliers who deny trade unions access on sites. This provides us with the opportunity to organise within these previously unwilling factories to tackle squalid working conditions and practices that the employees endure, with a view to educate the factory owners and employers to accept and work with trade unions to ensure better working conditions for all. GMB Leicestershire Branch Secretary, Steve Alexander, promoted the GMB at the launch of the Ethical Trading Initiative project in Leicester.



British Gas

After the mammoth 44 days of industrial action taken by British Gas GMB members in an attempt to halt the company's barbaric decision to fire and rehire their employees on worse terms and conditions, the GMB managed to bring management back around the negotiating table and soften the blow slightly by gaining slight improvements to the initial onslaught to their terms and conditions of employment. Nationally the Union is in negotiation for a further increase to the 2.5% that was brought in from the 1st April.

Jeldwen

Jeldwen is back to producing wooden doors, window frames and staircases to full capacity after the pandemic lockdowns and our members have accepted a pay increase of 5.1%



Tarmac

Our members at Tarmac accepted a 2.75% pay increase in August 2021 prior to the inflation hike.

Local Government

The last year has proven challenging for our membership in Local government. The offer of 1.75% increase to their pay was nothing short of an insult and was strongly rejected by our membership. However, there have been alternative opportunities to win better deals locally.

Mansfield District Council refuse drivers celebrate the implementation of a market supplement award, following months of negotiations and an industrial action ballot conducted by the GMB. This increase works out at up to £3500 a year, a 17% uplift in their annual salary.

GMB is part of a cross-union campaign in Nottingham City Council, building alliances

with the Labour councillors and other local community campaign groups to call on central government to appropriately fund local authorities, something which remains ongoing. GMB has continued to increase its visibility within the authority by hosting Zoom meetings with members, which has proven successful in increasing contact with our membership across the authority.

Other local authorities in the area have been awarding their drivers market supplement rates in line with the driver's shortage crisis.

However, the campaigns lie with the loaders, who are feeling disrespected and are regularly being told they are '10 a penny' and not worthy of a rate rise. 'Refuse to give in' campaigns are running in Newark DC and starting in Gedling BC.

Rushcliffe Borough Council are bringing Streetwise services back in house after TUPE transfer in 2016. A recruitment and organising campaign has begun on the harmonisation of these workers T&C's whose rates of pay have not kept up with LA rates since the TUPE took place.

The GMB in Peterborough City Council worked to manage the return to schools for staff and pupils after COVID. Weekly meetings and constant updating of information and feedback to and from our members helped keep people safe.

In November 2021 we started a 12-month campaign of recruitment in the schools and academies in Northamptonshire, speaking with our members and non-members about the pay rise and balloting them, but also discussing with them their H&S working with high covid cases and the protections that should be in place in Schools.

The GMB, along with other Trade Unions, took our findings to the authority's Covid H&S Meetings, and have spoken with Local and National Press, resulting in a much stronger message being sent out to schools and supporting covid measures above and beyond Government Guidelines in Northamptonshire.

It has now been just over a year since the West and North Northamptonshire Councils were created, and we have had some success in engaging with them.

GMB, as part of the wider Trade Union Group, campaigned for a one-off payment to thank carers as part of the pandemic response; the Council agreed to pay £600 to every carer

in Northamptonshire who qualified on the 31 March 2022.

This has also helped with retaining carers. In West Northamptonshire, we managed to negotiate a pay rise 0.25% above the National LA pay rise, along with reinstatement of incremental pay.

In North Northamptonshire, we negotiated a pay rise that put our members above the National Minimum Wage, achieving £10.00 per hour which has now been matched by West Northamptonshire.

At East Lindsey District Council, we successfully negotiated a retention increase for HGV drivers for 2022/23.

We have gained recognition with the Harbour Learning Trust, a group of schools that previously have not worked alongside unions.

Good news for both the GMB and the employees, as they will have more of a voice with issues happening in schools.

NORTHERN REGION

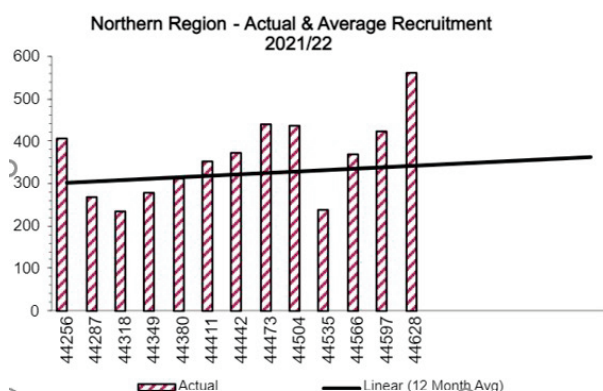
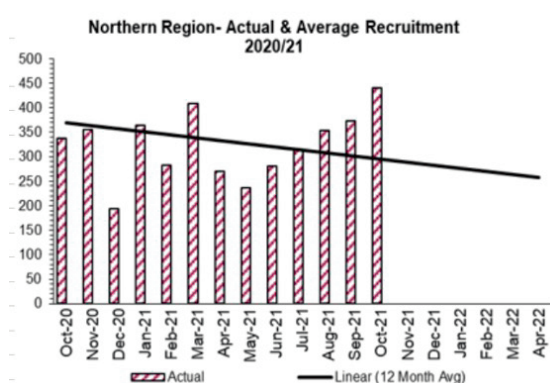
Foreword by Regional Secretary

Since September 2021 Northern Region has worked hard to change the regional culture which saw the decline of the region and move towards a campaigning and organising ethos.

Organisers have worked with lay members in branches on an effective branch review, and refocus resources on workplaces in changing the approach, and bringing GMB Northern Region back to the workplace. We have won recognition and built the membership in workplaces such as KASAI and run effective issue-based recruitment campaigns in Cumbria. As a result, our rolling trajectory as a region is for the first time in a long time, now pointing in a positive, upwards, direction.

As a region we are now much more outward focused with GMB Northern Region rebuilding our lost links with the TUC, & the Labour Party. We have both invested in our staff and ensuring we have a positive workplace culture through our new mentoring and coaching program, and industrially we are working with members to build workplace power and have run a record number of ballots this year for the region.

We will look to build on this for the year going forward in order to continue to make work better for GMB members.



North and South Tyne Team

There have been major disputes within Newcastle with the decision by Nestle to close the iconic plant in Fawdon, at the end of 2023.

A disgraceful decision based on dogma and wanting to remove products down the line. What is galling is the CEO of Nestle being on the UK Government's Investment Council, the aim of which is to bring jobs to the UK and level up. The decision in Newcastle removes 450 jobs and exports work offshore.

In terms of recognition, there has been success in Springvale EPS, North of Tyne.

In terms of disputes there has been a win in the successful industrial action outcomes in Kasai in Washington.

In relation to Local Government and NHS, the turnouts in Local Government were significant and a massive rejection of the pay offer but fell below the statutory threshold to take forward to Civica. Nevertheless, the use of digital, telephone and of course face to face workplace meetings meant that engagement with members was considerable and bodes well for local organising and campaigning going forward.

In relation to the NHS, the areas' targeted employers provided high returns at the Civica industrial action ballot but fell short of meeting the statutory thresholds for taking industrial action.



The Barchester de-recognition campaign was active across the region with engagement of MPs, Councillors and Council Officials. Responses showed that engaging people works and is the way to build local workplace organising.

Restructuring of teams, responsibilities, workplace organising and campaigning, has been enacted at pace, as part of a process, both strategic and operational, with the focus on GMB@Work consolidation and growth.

Durham & Tees Area Team

Over the past 12 months we have made a number of changes to the team which included making a number of branch changes. We have also moved office from Billingham to Hartlepool Marina which is a more high-profile area and easier for members to get to, we hope to hold an opening day in the near future.

Over the past six months we have held a branch review, all branches were scrutinised regarding their activity, campaigns, and recruitment. Due to this there have been a great number of branches which have been closed, a great number have merged, and we have also created a number of specialised branches i.e., a ladders branch, manufacturing branch and a health and social care branch.

We have been successful in negotiating recognition agreements for the following companies, Altrad @ Mitsubishi, Wood Group - Teesside Improvement Project (NAECI SPA agreed), Wood Group - Renew Project at Sabic (NAECI SPA agreed), Wood Group - Assurance Event at Sabic (NAECI SPA agreed), Paccor Ltd, Fablink and Nicholsons Sealing Technologies limited.

We believe there is going to be a great deal of activity within Teesside area especially with the Teesside Freeport, which will be the largest Freeport in the UK, and the construction of Teesside Offshore Wind Factory which should create 1,500 jobs in the supply chain and during construction, on that basis we have set up a specific team with a specific skill set to meet the challenges ahead.

Cumbria Team

Over the past 12 months our Officers, Reps and members have had a very difficult period with furlough, redundancies and closures, but I am pleased to say that through this period they still managed to come together to recruit and represent our members best interests.

I am pleased to say we seconded Claire Stevens, who is a very experienced rep in the NHS, to our team and not only has she assisted on the administration side of things she has also represented our members, I must also mention Claire Murphy who has taken an opportunity to become heavily involved in the schools campaign which has resulted in the recruitment of over 100 members within school support staff since the campaign started in early March, we have also seconded Andy Blunt to the team

whose experience within contractors and his work alongside the team in Sellafield has been invaluable.

We also arranged a GMB reps training day in Penrith where over 70 reps attended and it was massive success, the message on the day is that we are a member led movement and we asked what training our reps needed to improve our members terms and conditions and 2 aspects of training came out of the course one being how do we map a workplace and another being training on TUPE, and I am pleased to say Joe Hepworth our Education Officer has completed both of these for our reps.

Schools Campaign

Across the Cumbria team we have been visiting all the primary schools in the area on the back of the local government reform announcements to provide an update and gain reps /members.

We now have multiple points of contact across Cumbria and organic leaders that are now becoming active.

This campaign has brought us more members in 2 months that we recruited last year across the region, the membership has now been placed into a branch that can progress the level of organisation that has been started .

Sellafield Site

The operational development framework has been ongoing for the last five. This caused major unrest for GMB members on site. We are now in the final stages of getting our members paid out and this was done through a campaign stretching back 12 months, which empowered the members into standing together thus forcing the company back to the table. This is a huge win for the Sellafield branch. On the back of the traction gained throughout this campaign, we are currently remapping the workplace and have picked up lots of organic leaders along the way.

Civilian Guard force

A fresh set of reps have breathed new life into the workplace, this was a stagnant workplace with very little respect for the GMB. The guards were offered a 0.7% pay award. After a member-led campaign, we walked away from the negotiating table with a 7% increase for our members. The reps led a fraught battle with management spanning 5 industrial action ballots and numerous demonstrations.

The workplace now stands on its own two feet, the reps that are in place are now able to take on most eventualities.

Mitie Soft Services

This workplace has been under attack from a sister trade union for multiple years over a recognition dispute. We hold single recognition with the company, however this is not being respected by our sister trade union, with the challenge currently sitting with the TUC.

We have run multiple campaigns within the workplace that have gained back lots of the members that were lost to the sister union during a poaching campaign on the back of a disagreement between the members and the GMB. Our latest underwear allowance campaign is a prime example of a member-led campaign covering equality in the workplace. We have multiple campaigns lined up to carry on regrowing our strength and brand into the workplace.

Calder Foods

This workplace is not a good a news story, we lost one of our manufacturing companies to a relocation decision by the parent company. We led campaigns with the media to attempt to sway the company's decisions. However this was to no avail. Despite this we did manage to identify and secure employment for a large number of the employees.



NHS North West Ambulance Service

Following our campaign to save Alston ambulance we have secured the employment of the six EMT's who ran the ambulance. The employer may come back but we are committed to continue the fight for our members if needed.

Local Government Reform

Vesting Day for the 2 new unitary councils in Cumbria is 1st April 2023. We are seeing membership increase within local government and will continue to use this as an opportunity to recruit and organise our membership.

Cumbria County Council

We are currently putting in regrades for our carers in residential, reablement, domiciliary, dementia and mental health. During the pandemic GMB negotiated a market supplement uplift of £1.10 for carers, this is due to be removed shortly and we are therefore looking to job evaluation to secure better pay. This will also have implications for male comparators in highways and once the unitary authorities are in place, we believe this will also impact waste services. We have seen membership increase in this area due to the campaign we are running around this.

Mitie Dispute

We successfully won a dispute against Mitie at the Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle. The dispute was over unsocial hour payments which has meant our members secured enhanced pay up to 88% when they work evening and weekends and gave the pay parity with their NHS colleagues in the hospital.

FCC Environment – Barrow

Pay talks had been ongoing since April 2021, where the membership down in the Barrow in Furness site had submitted a pay claim for a 3% pay increase.

FCC proposed a 1% increase which was rejected by the membership, an alternative offer of 1.75% was proposed that was also rejected. The company came back with a third and final offer of 2.2% that was also rejected and a consultative ballot for industrial action took place where the membership voted 100% in favour of industrial action.

A further official Civic ballot was conducted where again the membership voted 100% in favour of taking industrial action.

On the 9th of March 2022 the membership took industrial action with a picket line and demonstration along with support from local residents and disgruntled ex-employees. The town council was contacted to ask for support and to put pressure on FCC.

Almost 30,000 bin collections were affected, with widespread media coverage on BBC North West, Radio Cumbria and Heart radio in the local area along with articles in the local paper the Mail.

During the industrial action HGV drivers from Scotland had been brought down to cover the striking workers and management would send the wagons to where the striking workers were holding their demonstration, antagonising the members and at one point almost running down the demonstrators. All traffic had been stopped on the main road in Barrow and due to the disruption the police turned up where they moved the wagons on to another depot. After two weeks of industrial action the members had to return to work due to loss of pay.

The members at the FCC site had drawn a line in the sand and explained that they would be prepared to take industrial action again.

Sodexo Limited

A recognition agreement has just been obtained from Sodexo Limited at the crown metal box site in Carlisle. Sodexo, who supply cleaning and catering for the crown site in Botcherby employ around a 100 strong workforce. We already have two individuals interested in becoming workplace representatives.

Before the agreement was signed Sodexo imposed a 4% pay increase to which the members were clearly unhappy about this pay award.

Now the agreement has been signed we will be balloting the membership on the 4% imposed offer which will be potentially rejected and ask for a further improved offer.

Eddie Stobart Carlisle

Pay talks had been ongoing for several months within Eddie Stobart where there had been no formal offer of pay for almost four months. We gave Eddie Stobart five working days to respond with a formal offer regarding pay or we would ballot the membership on a 0% pay rise then commence with a consultative ballot for industrial action.

Eddie Stobart came back with multiple offers that were all rejected, in the end the membership agreed to a 4% increase in pay backdated to April 2021.

Lappet Weaving – Carlisle

Membership at the Lappet weaving site in

Carlisle which makes head shawls to be sold in Saudi Arabia has settled the 2022 pay claim where they have accepted a 7% pay increase in pay.

Sealy Beds – Aspatia

This workplace has three long serving workplace representatives and continues to grow and we are currently balloting the membership on a 4.9% increase in pay for 2022.

Innovia Limited – Wigton

With high density membership within the Wigton site and supported by its own branch this site continues to grow from strength to strength. Working with the full-time officer and workplace representatives they are currently recruiting new members from DCS multi serve that provides cleaning services on the Innovia site and with petitions signed a letter has been sent out to the company regarding a voluntary recognition agreement.

Education Department

The specified GMB courses (see table - below) were completed in the Region. The partnership between the Region and Shrewsbury College remains strong and the college continues to fund the courses we run within the region, meaning all course are accredited.

Course	Male	Female	No. of courses
Induction	26	4	3
Employment Law (Reps Stage 2)	2	1	1
Health & Safety Stage 1	3	1	1
Health & Safety Stage 2	2	0	1
Collective Bargaining	5	2	2
Redundancy	5	1	1
Total Attendees	42	9	9

During the Covid-19 pandemic we successfully switched all our courses to online ensuring reps could still access the training they needed.

With the re-opening of GMB offices we have re-opened the classroom for our 10-day induction course and some H&S courses with the rest of our programme remaining online.

The current programme is due to end in July 2022, and we have commenced planning for our new programme due to start in September.

The new programme will see a wider range with our course being delivered in the classroom with a small number remaining online.

NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

The effects of Covid-19 alone have had massive detrimental effect, not only on the region but the GMB Union as a whole.

When you then add the effect of post Brexit, the war in Ukraine and an inept and untrustworthy Conservative Government, we are left with our members facing an uncontrolled rise in the cost of living and their jobs and livelihoods are becoming increasingly precarious.

The attack on our members standard of living, where the UK Government are making workers pay for the pandemic through increased National Insurance instead of income tax, ensuring that their rich friends are virtually unscathed but the lower paid pay more, is an absolute outrage. Allowing energy costs to skyrocket in price whilst other countries subsidise the cost to their citizens, is now forcing more people to use foodbanks than ever before. Foodbanks appear to be the only industry Governments policies allow to grow.

It would be fair to say that the present situation around increased inflation, outlined above, has seen an increased collective response by our members in manufacturing to stand together

and fight. We have seen numerous pay and conditions offers made by companies being rejected by our members by vastly increased turnouts. Some of these have resulted in revised settlements being accepted prior to an industrial action ballot but the trend of high turnout has been continuing right through to industrial action ballots, where members have been prepared to take the action necessary to achieve their aims.

A notable example of this was Polyflor in Greater Manchester. The membership had never taken industrial action before, yet during summer 2021, under the direction of a new Regional Organiser, the reps organised, recruited and the members stood firm during extremely hostile negotiations. This stance saw the bargaining group membership go to 100%, with no GMB members crossing the picket line on any of the numerous strike days. This stance remained until the company offered what was demanded in the pay claim, which was eventually accepted by majority vote. This new found confidence has seen the reps create their own workplace branch, nominate for congress for the first time and function as per GMB@Work.



The Tory promise of a Brexit that puts Britain first, is predictably failing to materialise. The Government orders for Navy Fleet Auxiliary Support Vessels has been put out to tender internationally, when surely a Brexit Britain can award its contracts to British firms. All this, leaves our shipyards, including our members in Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, left in limbo.

The region has seen the closure of a number of firms, with many going into administration but the one that made everyone sick to the stomach is the proposed closure of the Terumo site in Merseyside in 2023. This factory manufactured and supplied equipment for the NHS. During the pandemic our members were in work, working flat out for the benefit of humanity, only to find that as the pandemic eases, Terumo decide to close the plant and move operations to Costa Rica for cost saving reasons!!!

Clapped as heroes one week and unceremoniously dumped the next. We are still campaigning on this closure. We have met and received support from the Metro Mayor and Local MP, petitions have gone to Parliament,

Equal Pay claims lodged and an industrial action ballot is in process over the paltry redundancy and loyalty payments offered to see out remaining orders.

On a more positive note, in Northern Ireland we have successfully negotiated and signed a sole recognition agreement with Praxis Care covering our members in Northern Ireland, England and Isle of Man.

The organiser who led on these negotiations has successfully organised a strong branch support network in Northern Ireland where the majority of the members reside. We are now building the structures that will ensure every worker gets the opportunity to participate and influence developments in the workplace and our commitment to our members is that we will continue to put their interests to the forefront of everything we do.

Our reps have developed a programme of work and month by month grow the branch in numbers and in strength.





This year the Region was fighting two Public Service ballots in Local Government and the NHS. Formal industrial action was not held and only one workplace, Knowsley Borough Council, got over the threshold with a 60% turnout. This was regrettable but typical of turnout which the Region's Public Service members are determined to do better next year. To that end, we have met and are pulling together campaigns to take forward into 2022.

On the subject on training, the training and Health & Safety office has had to adapt dramatically over the last twelve months. It has resulted in the change to more of a team orientated approach, working with videos and online sessions to deliver much needed training to reduce the backlog created by the initial outbreak of Covid. It meant that some education for our reps was able to continue throughout the epidemic until we started returning to site visits for health, safety and classroom based face to face training.

We also took on two students from Liverpool University, who invaluable provided us with the latest research and case laws on a range of subjects for new course material.

As mentioned earlier, the new recognition agreement with care home employer Praxis, led to increased demand to train new reps. In June 2021 we ran a three-day course on-site in the Praxis training venue in Belfast, with some impressive new female reps coming on board.

In the same month we began three new day

release courses which lasted a total of six weeks. This included delivering specifically to a class of eleven Translink reps from across Northern Ireland.

In September 2021, a mix of normal induction classes and sessions for reps from specific companies were taking place back in the classroom for the first time since 2019. New reps from Suez recycling plants in Greater Manchester took up their education mantle with a customised course, also attending our normal curriculum based training.

The return to the classroom, using Covid-safe practices and a newly developed induction, which introduced additional, advanced, two day courses, offers up to 17 days potentially, proved a great success with enthusiasm to learn more brimming over and filling courses across the region in Holywood, Liverpool, Preston and Cheadle in Manchester.

Evolving the course material into practical health & safety support for reps and members was something that had an immediate impact. New material on the menopause, stress, bullying and representation skills is popular and still attracting new and experienced reps to join in with the education process.

Hosting a menopause training day, with a new video produced in-house, went down well with fifty mainly female reps attending the event on World Menopause Day in Liverpool and a Dealing with Hidden Disabilities course is a new one-day session being tested on GMB staff in the region during April.

We have commenced a series of advanced two-day courses which builds on the induction courses with Bullying & Harassment kicking things off and receiving rave reviews from those in attendance. Other courses include Employment Law and Representing Members; Stress and Mental Health; Gender Sensitive Health & Safety; Risk Assessments & Health and Safety Reps.

Demands are growing from reps for site visits and joint training for specific workplaces. Such events have been organised with British Gas and ASDA reps with more in the pipeline. Site visits have happened in Jacobs (United Biscuits), BIFFA, Knowsley Council yards and workplaces to back up written and verbal advice to reps working in a range of companies. This was particularly evident during Covid where managers were not following health and safety regulations and putting GMB members at risk.

Within our Equalities section, the priority for the REF has been looking for workplace equality issues that they can build a campaign around.

Our Regional Equality Conference motion to the National Equality Conference was around hidden disabilities, something that two delegates submitted motions on. As mentioned earlier, the region is now delivering training sessions on hidden disabilities which will help GMB staff and representatives to better support our members.

The Womens network held the annual Womens Conference and International Womens Day event online promoting the GMB Smash the Stigma menopause policy and have just launched a new poster campaign for workplaces on victim shaming. We continue to work in partnership with Just a Ball Game, talks are in progress with Wigan Council to have a Just a Ball Game stall present at the Womens Euros in July which will also be promoting GMB to spectators.

Staying on the football theme, we are midway through a sponsorship of a local LGBT+ football team, the sponsorship has helped to pay for kit and transport to away fixtures as well as helping with pitch hire. We are hoping to organise a match/ fun day between GMB staff/reps and the Mersey Marauders. Plans are being put in place to have branches supporting their local Pride events, Disability Action Day event and to continue our usual fund raising for Breast Cancer Now and Prostate Cancer UK.

Our Retired Members Association continue to be active, especially around NHS issues. During the last 12 months they have attended nearly all NHS rallies and campaign events across the Liverpool and Manchester parts of the region and will be attending the upcoming Pensioners Parliament March in Blackpool.



GMB SCOTLAND

After a wretched two years, and just when everyone was hoping for better days, the country is facing the biggest cost-of-living crisis in thirty years on the back of soaring inflation and energy prices, a crisis that could get worse still with a new war raging in Eastern Europe that will have profound economic, security and social consequences for years to come.

At the very moment an exhausted society was looking for some green shoots of recovery, the world changed again.

No exceptionalism politically or industrially, the challenges facing Scotland are the exact same as everywhere else across the regions and nations of our union.

How can we avoid this? The truth is that we can't. This is locked-in for the foreseeable, but we can start a process of recovery and we need to do so at great pace because the question facing any trade union is this: What is going to compel a member to keep paying £15 a month through a cost-of-living crisis?

It means we are going to have to give people hope to stick with us, and ultimately, real evidence that we can make work better for members.

At the very least, this means properly organised workplace and sectoral campaigns, planned and carried-out with our members, that create positive changes or outcomes demonstrating the value of a GMB membership. And we need to be priority focused to make the most of the resources we have available to us.

But we also have advantages. We know where we need to be campaigning and organising to make work better. It's the lowest-paid in our cuts-ravaged public services, chronically exploited social carers who need their industry transformed, and retail staff on less than £10 who (and let's be honest) have been failed by years of a partnership trade union model. And its nurturing connection between these workers and our members in our traditional sectors like energy and manufacturing, whose industries hold the key to industrial and economic recovery. It's building common cause and organising and campaigning to achieve it – re-building our union as tool for a better future.

In GMB Scotland, we are primed to play our part.

Commercial Services

ASDA Retail

Our reps meet regularly and have been campaigning on pay, equal pay, health and safety for our members. "Wear a Badge Day" was a big success across Scotland with members wearing their "roll back wages" badges with pride and sending in photos. With good support from the public too and prominent media coverage on the cost-of-living crisis impacting our members, ASDA have brought forward the 2023 pay increase, lifting the basic hourly rate for retail staff to £10.10 an hour from July 1.

The challenge now is to use that win to build on our campaigning and organising agenda across retail, to grow hourly pay for staff in 2023 and beyond, secure equal pay justice across ASDA, and show all workers what can be achieved if we run effective and planned workplace campaigns.

ASDA Distribution

Across the two Scottish sites we have been busy mapping the workplace, so we are ballot ready to fight for better pay. Our members have seen other employers' distribution sites receive better pay rises because of the cost of living while ASDA management have refused to engage or threaten to cut sick pay to pay for any increase.

Our reps have done a fantastic job to ensure we have reps on each shift and continue to engage with non-members about joining the campaign for better pay.

Energy

At the end of 2021 we moved all our energy members into one industrial remit with GMB Organiser Claire Greer responsible for the members across energy. This allows us to start to pull together workers across British Gas, SGN, EDF, Scottish Power and SSE.

We continue to be the sole voice for nuclear workers in Scotland as other trade unions and the Scottish Government focus on a nuclear free Scotland, but we have been clear. There is no net zero without nuclear and it is our members across the nuclear sites that face no future job prospects.

We have called the Scottish Government out

and will continue to do so while we organise nuclear workers. Hunterston B stopped producing electricity in January 2022 and our last remaining nuclear station at Torness is due for closure in 2028. The future for energy in Scotland is importing nuclear electricity from the rest of the UK and that's the fact SNP do not want to hear.

British Gas

April 2021 was a dark day in the company's history as they sacked thousands of engineers across the UK. Things have never been the same since as we support the members that are left and many of our engineers have left the business to set up their own companies.

We are now back into growth across British Gas after we were given access to their training academy, and we held a training session with the reps in Scotland earlier this year.

We have run a cost-of-living survey across the membership with some good engagement and data to use for the ongoing discussions around pay. British Gas are struggling to retain staff and employ new staff, so they also recognise the pay structure needs to be more attractive.

New structure to the Staff branch was agreed this year as we focus on growing the branch and supporting the reps better. BG have no intention of stopping home working, so we need to plan on how we organise call centre staff based at their home.

SGN

After management within one depot in central Scotland imposed a new rota that our members didn't agree with, we ended up in dispute. We ran a consultative ballot and got the result we needed to put pressure on the employer, but they wouldn't budge and after serving notice they agreed on Christmas Eve to withdraw the rota, sit with us, and agree a new rota going forward. This was a massive success and gave SGN management the fright that our members were at breaking point and were willing to move to industrial action.

Our pay claim resulted in SGN walking out of the pay talks initially, but we got an apology and talks restarted. We will be running pay ballots in the workplace and members will decide if it is good enough or not. We have been mapping

the data to ensure we are ballot ready across the workforce.

SGN have been keen to work with GMB on the future of Hydrogen and we submitted a response to the Scottish Government consultation on Hydrogen and what it means for our members across Gas sector.

Uber

We have established a base at Uber's Edinburgh & Glasgow Hubs. Growth has been slow, and the pandemic has stopped Uber drivers coming to the hubs but we are working on how we make work better for Uber drivers in Scotland. Uber drivers must be registered with the local authority and face extra checks which has been a challenge but gives us an opportunity to organise.

Yodel

A 19 per cent pay rise was finally agreed just before Christmas for all LGV drivers across Yodel. The challenge is now using that win to campaign for low paid staff in the warehouses and the couriers.

Yodel sacked our rep, Michael Hawthorne, and we have been campaigning to get him reinstated and thanks to all the GMB branches that have sent supporting messages.

Swissport

Some of the challenges everyone will see in the press with huge queues in airports is because the airports do not have enough staff, a point that GMB Organiser, Robert Deavy and the reps at Swissport said to the company before they paid people off during the lockdowns.

Now they are struggling to recruit people and get them trained up which is putting huge pressure on our members but is part of our campaign on safe working.

GXO

GMB Scotland met with GXO management in December to discuss the pay dispute after several workplace ballots and GXO were aware that GMB Scotland were ready to lodge formal notice of industrial action. As a result, GXO increased their original offer, and our members accepted the new offer after a workplace ballot

that also resulted in growth across the site and gets us ready for next year's talks.

The advantage regarding this offer is it eradicates the 2 tier contracts that GXO had introduced in 2019 without consultation with us. This is something we are particularly pleased about. This means all colleagues will be paid the same to do the same role.

Manufacturing

Babcock International

Rosyth Naval Base have successfully won the type 31E Frigates of which there are 5. There is positivity in the shipyard with investment in a new fabrication hall and we are actively organising large numbers of new employees and apprentices.

BAE Systems

The construction of the first type 26 Frigate has been completed and is now being outfitted with hulls 2 and 3 now under fabrication. This is an 8-ship order, which will keep the yard busy until 2032. This follows on the back of the successful delivery of the river class vessels.

Ferguson Marine

The union continues to fight for the long-term future of the workforce and community dependent on the embattled state-owned shipbuilding firm on the lower Clyde, amid bitter cross-party political debate over the controversial tender process and soaring costs for the manufacture of the first-in-class 801 and 802 ferries.

Future-proofing the jobs of the hundreds of shipbuilders is our priority, and while there must be accountability for the failures at both ministerial and senior management levels over this contract, we will press for the development of an industrial strategy from Ministers to secure commercial shipbuilding in Port Glasgow.

William Lockie

A campaign was run on pay in this Scottish Borders-based employer and secured pay rises between 10 per cent to 12 per cent, with a flow-through to all allowances and overtime. This was the first manufacturing employer in Scotland to agree a pay increase for 2022/23 of more than 10

per cent.

Engineering

Volvo

A good news story compared to two years ago after fear for the long-term future of the heavy truck builder, with large scale redundancies and a diminishing order book. This was compounded by the pandemic, where orders collapsed. The bounce-back has seen a remarkable recovery of orders, and we are now in an organising situation and have seen pay rises ranging from 4 per cent to 11 per cent. This is especially pleasing that the company are now actively recruiting apprentices for the first time in four years.

Dales Engineering Service

GMB ran a successful campaign in this heavy engineering company, which predominantly serves North Sea and gas. The company was not organised, the campaign gathered momentum around pay, we saw large membership growth and the company backing down and improving the pay offer, including allowances from 2 per cent to over 6 per cent.

Whisky & Spirits

We have seen the whisky and spirits industry expand with many new start-up distilleries, we see this as a real opportunity for organising workers and growing the union. These producers have done particularly well during the pandemic, with many posting record profits. Consequently, we have been able to get above inflation pay rises in many of our recognised workplaces.

Throughout 2022, we will be campaigning hard to secure recognition agreements in the non-organised distilleries and producers, introducing a "pledge scheme" for organising and growth of workers in island and rural workplace, as we strive to be the "go-to" union across the jewel in the crown of Scotland's lucrative food and drink sector.

Public Services

Local Government

An elongated pay campaign managed to deliver a flat rate increase for those earning under £25,000 a year, concentrating the highest percentage pay rise for the lowest paid.

For those earning under £25,000 this equated to a between 3 and 4.5 per cent pay rise, on top this an extra 3 months backpay was secured.

As part of the campaign GMB Scotland delivered successful industrial action mandates and successful industrial action in Glasgow during COP26.

The action during COP26 has helped to secure local investment and improvements into services in Glasgow as well as highlighting the endemic low pay in local government nationally and internationally.

This was the first industrial action taken in relation to national pay bargaining in either Scotland or the rest of the UK this century.

Integration of the Scottish Local Government Living Wage into the pay structures of every council across Scotland is almost complete and helps to remove the lowest pay bands.

Together with this further work is being undertaken with a view to professional fees being covered by Councils and feasibility of reducing the working week without loss of pay across Scottish Councils.

Currently we are edging towards further industrial action ballots to secure a reasonable pay rise for 2022/23.

Care

Pressure borne from our successful Fight For 15 campaign has started to deliver dividends for members across Care.

Scottish Government have introduced a minimum rate for Carers in private care across Scotland of £10.50 an hour as a response to Fight For 15.

The Social Care Support Fund has been extended yet again to help those who cannot work due to COVID 19.

Fight For 15 campaign held a successful rally

at Holyrood last year and we will continue to campaign as the measures above do not go far enough for our members.

With work already started on the introduction of a National Care Service it is more important than ever we organised and are ready to campaign for what our members need across care.

NHS and Scottish Ambulance Service

Our campaigning efforts across NHS and SAS is seeing our membership grow.

This year will be the first year of pay bargaining within NHS and SAS with negotiations set to take place with Scottish Government.

Our survey across the workforce has highlighted the numerous issues our members are facing from working practises to the cost-of-living crisis.

GMB has been at the forefront of trying to get longstanding issues resolved in SAS including unsafe breaks, rotas, and annual leave.

We have directly drawn in Scottish Government to get resolutions in these areas.

Equal Pay

GMB are running successful Equal Pay campaigns in both Dundee and Glasgow councils.

We are committed to finding and rooting out discriminatory pay practises.

After the threat of another industrial action in Glasgow our members have made progress towards securing a negotiated settlement for interim and new claims before October 2022.

Glasgow City Council's leadership also agree with GMB that the total cost for the city's discrimination against its employees past and present could surpass more than £1 billion.

Our industrial response will always be key to resolving discrimination in the workplace.

SOUTHERN REGION

Southern Region's performance since the last Congress can be divided between the period during the lockdowns and the period once restrictions began to lift in July last year. Like the rest of the union, Covid has hit us hard. Joiners were down, our ability to campaign, organise and grow restricted, leavers up. But there are longstanding structural problems too, necessitating a change in how we work.

After all the challenges the pandemic has thrown at us, the region has begun to adapt and change to a new mode of working, in which we constantly support relevant campaigns – chosen by the members – that make work better for them, and where we listen to, and act on, what the members say. There is a way to go yet, but the culture is changing. The simple model which puts campaigning at the core of how we seek to build and strengthen the union is paramount if we are to survive.

The Southern Region is divided into three geographical Areas, with a good spread of members in each from Commercial Services, Manufacturing and Public Services. Since Congress 2021, there have been numerous battles, campaigns and wins. This report focuses on them, with a few highlighted below.



Area 1

Slough Borough Council

A new rep recruited in Slough sought assistance for a campaign she wanted to run for Muslim staff in schools to receive both Eid festivals as paid holidays. With GMB support, she led a focused campaign over many months that put pressure on the entire OHCAT Trust (who had removed three paid days for religious holidays when they academised out of Slough Council some years ago). Victory saw paid leave for Eid across the whole of Slough in a big win for a predominantly female, religiously diverse workforce.

NHS Property Services

GMB issued notice to NHS Property Services (NHSPS) for industrial action in November at four Berkshire hospital sites where housekeeping, cleaning, catering and car parking services were recently privatised. The employer had proposed to change job titles, job specifications and bandings in a planned reorganisation of the entire workforce. The employer buckled at the last minute and agreed a deal that protected our members' original NHS contracts, bandings and ultimately pay.

Hills Waste Solutions

Hills is the contracted refuse collector for Wiltshire County Council. GMB members submitted a claim for 7% last October which was met by a derisory 2% offer from the employer. Following an industrial action ballot where 98% of members voted to strike, three sites withdrew their labour over the first 2 weeks of March. GMB announced a further set of strike dates, at which point the company offered 7% over a longer period, which was accepted by the workforce. The company tried its hardest to demoralise the workforce and arrange for refuse collections to take place, however the strength and solidarity of the members led to substantial media interest and the improved offer.

Avara

Our members in Avara deliver chickens to many big chain restaurants and supermarkets. Following a successful ballot for industrial action, the company buckled and offered a bumper consolidation package which led to pay increases of up to £13,000 per employee. Our activity sparked more growth opportunities in other sites across the region.

Wiltshire County Council

Members voted overwhelmingly to reject proposals by Wiltshire Council to reconfigure allowances and cut their pay by 10%. Despite a partial u-turn, the Council has refused to rule out completely any cuts. At the time of writing, members in Parking Services have voted to strike, with the first day of action set for 7th May.

Co-op Funeral Care

CO-OP Funeral Care (Southern, not the national CO-OP) signed a formal recognition agreement after many years with no formal structures in place.

Forterra

A final pay offer was rejected by members. Given the history of strikes at Forterra's Newbury site, the CEO requested a further meeting where a counter-offer was presented that met the majority of GMB members' demands for pay and backpay.

Lyons Seafood

Following pay negotiations last Autumn, we doubled the membership and gained three new Reps. GMB members were balloted in October on a final offer consisting of 2.1% of average earnings between 1st April and 30th September 2021 as a lump sum, plus a 5% increase on base pay effective 1st October 2021 for 12 months.

Nicholas and Harris

A 5% increase for a day shift, a 9% increase to night shift premium and a 12.5% increase to the overtime rates.



Area 2

As the area came out of the successive Covid lockdowns there were disputes brewing with refuse, recycling and street cleansing services across the area. Brighton and Hove was the first to go and became the catalyst for the whole region.

BHCC City Clean

Drivers went on strike on 5th October 2021 and the dispute ran for three weeks. The HGV drivers achieved a substantial settlement, winning a 20% pay rise. Following the success of the City Clean action, other refuse services were organised and balloted over pay and other matters. The outcome of these successful disputes are outlined below, with others live or in the pipeline.

South East Sussex Environmental Services (Eastbourne)

This dispute followed on from the BHCC dispute and ran through the New Year into January. On a relatively small contract, the membership increased from 17 to 46. The pay award across the board amounted to around 12% increase on the wages bill.

Biffa Hastings

The area went into another pay dispute at the Hastings refuse and recycling contract. The officer recruited a workplace organiser and both attended pay talks over a number of weeks as well as arranging workplace meetings with members and non-members alike. With a significant growth in membership from 32 up to 72, and a collective drive to improve terms and conditions, the positive industrial action ballot which followed was enough on its own to secure a substantial pay award – with a minimum of 11% and in some cases up to 19%.

Adur and Worthing Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleansing

Membership went up from single figures (2) and now stands at 62 members. The dispute centred around pay rates and extra duties being placed on the workforce. An industrial action ballot was organised which resulted in strike action being taken. The strike was solidly supported by the members throughout its three and half weeks. As a result, the local authority signed a recognition agreement with the GMB and members won increases in their pay rates ranging from 8.2% – 20% across all posts. The

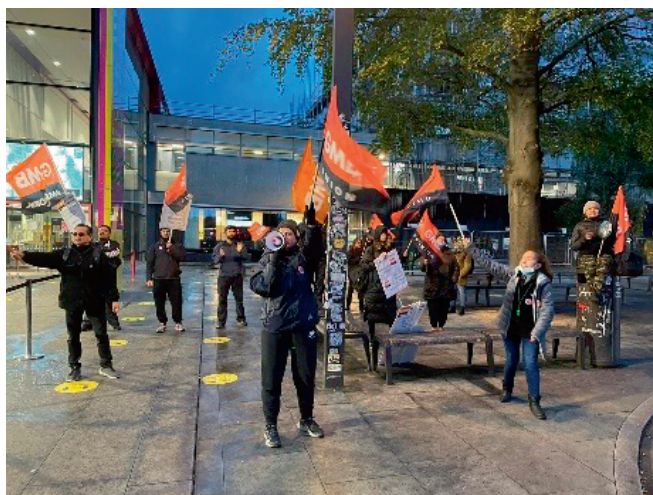
industrial action was suspended for 6 months to allow further negotiations on other workplace matters to continue under the stewardship of the three new workplace organisers.

Term Time Only (TTO) Payments

The current campaign in Medway schools and academies on the TTO underpayments this year has seen an extra 133 members recruited.

South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAMB)

Consistent with all their colleagues in the wider NHS, our SECAMB members worked all through the pandemic to help keep us safe and well and were vociferous and active all through the NHS pay dispute. Membership of the self-sufficient S69 Branch grew during Covid and showed what can be done with the right activity and support, whatever the challenges.



Area 3

Bouygues Cleaners at the University Arts London

The last year has seen a jointly run campaign by GMB and the Students Union to push for the cleaning staff to be brought back in house. There have been meetings, protests and banners displayed around the campus buildings and strike action by the members.

A full week was taken at the end of September, followed by two further days in November. The strike was well supported by our members who gained a new empowerment. The pickets and accompanying demonstrations were lively and often included displays of salsa dancing from our mostly South American membership (all the more impressive when you are soaked to the skin in November rain). During the strike period, Bouygues lost the contract and the new contract was amended to include enhanced

annual leave and sick leave, along with some guarantees on better industrial relations- all in direct response to the strike action.

G4S Cleaner and Porters Dispute Croydon Hospital

In March, cleaning and portering members won themselves a 24% pay rise at Croydon Hospital and a contractual sick pay scheme, following an industrial action ballot. Despite not being recognised for collective bargaining purposes, they achieved London Living Wage pay rates and 7 days full sick pay (from statutory minimum), without even having to take a day of action. Growth in membership continues.

Urbaser Ltd Dartford Council Contract

A campaign over recognising skills/retention of HGV drivers yielded a 19% pay award. A pay claim has been submitted already on similar issues for the upcoming 2022/23 pay round.

Yoox Net-a-Porter

A campaign to oppose proposed changes to sick leave and other terms and conditions has seen membership grow in YNAP. Prior to Christmas, the General Secretary visited the site in South London to meet our reps and members employed in this challenging retail environment.

Lewisham Term Time Only Holiday Pay Campaign

Following on from the successful term time holiday campaign in Lambeth, we secured 6 years back pay for our members in the London Borough of Lewisham for historical miscalculations in holiday pay. On the back of this, membership growth continues to be realised. Our members were assisted throughout an ACAS settlement process by the GMB Lewisham Branch and local officers.

Graham Care

In one of the largest care providers in Kent and Surrey, membership has grown from 90 members (and 1 Rep) to over 400 members (and 7 Reps) in just over 6 months following a rigorous campaign of workplace visits by the local officer and our Regional Organising Team.

Wimbledon Tennis Tournament and Parking Wardens – GMB Members make a 'Racquet'

We fought a campaign against Merton Council over their proposals to reduce the overtime rates of our parking warden members working

during the Wimbledon fortnight. This was largely seen as an 'obscene' proposal against the background of our members keeping the traffic flowing and the public safe during one of the world's richest and most prestigious sporting events.

Amey Refuse – Surrey

In 2021, we discovered that Amey were not paying average holiday pay to their refuse crews on the Elmbridge, Woking and Surrey Heath contracts. All members have now settled their backdated claims with Amey in full.

NSL Parking Attendants

The NSL pay dispute and strike ballot from March 2021 to December 2022, led to 76 joiners and members won themselves a £2,340 per year increase and £800 in backpay. Whilst we resolved the dispute, there is continual activity using H&S and workplace issues.

Asda Erith CDC

The Election of a new Branch Secretary and Committee is beginning to address the historically low membership levels and inactivity. At time of writing, a stress test ballot is underway to assess whether our members wish to go into dispute with the company over pay against the rising cost of living crisis.

Regional Recruitment Team

Over the 12 months, May 2021 – April 2022, 10,450 new Grade 1 and Grade 2 new members joined the Region and 11,927 left. A net loss of 1,477.

There are many reasons for these figures. Some are historical and have been brewing for years, some are more current – in particular the cost-of-living crisis that has been steadily worsening during that period, alongside an unusually high number of people changing jobs or retiring. During the various lockdowns and Covid restrictions, fewer workplace and face-to-face meetings took place, which also had a negative impact on recruitment and retention.

The Regional Recruitment Team has supported national campaigns such as Equal Pay in ASDA, the NJC and NHS Pay Ballots and proposals to slash terms and conditions in Wilkos. Regionally, we have assisted and/or led meetings on the Term Time Only miscalculation campaigns in Kent, Lambeth, Lewisham and Medway and pay ballots across all three areas.

Additionally, we have attended and recruited new members at formal inductions such as SERCO and G4S, as well as supporting members taking industrial action in the numerous disputes around the Region.

The top 25 employers for recruitment over the period were:

Asda Stores Limited	426
Graham Care Group	282
South East Coast Ambulance NHS Foundation Trust	270
Asda Distribution	269
Brighton & Hove City Council	257
Kent County Council	206
Biffa Waste Services Ltd.	199
Serco UK Limited	181
Wiltshire Council	150
Uber	149
London Borough of Wandsworth	135
G4S Secure Solutions Ltd	135
Mitie Facilities Services	133
Wilko Retail Limited	125
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	122
London Borough of Lewisham	118
EVRI (Formerly HERMES)	117
Royal Borough of Greenwich	99
London Borough of Southwark	97
British Gas Services – Centrica	95
Marston Holdings Ltd	91
Veolia Environmental Services Plc	87
G4s Forensic & Medical Services	86
Thames Water Utilities Ltd	83
London Borough of Lambeth	80
Aquila Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust	80
Hills Waste Solutions	77

During lockdowns we had to be inventive with our interactions with members and find ways to increase membership. Peter Roberts engineered a campaign around the large numbers of unemployed/retired members. 1,250 were surveyed, emailed and called, resulting in 125 members returning to paying the correct grade 1 and grade 2 subscription rates.

The team led a project to identify, develop and support reps identified by area teams as having good potential. We were assigned 3 – 4 reps per

area team, doing this via zoom meetings initially and progressing to meetings in the workplaces as soon as we were able, so they could shadow us. We had some good results from this initiative, leaving the reps feeling more confident about building membership in their workplaces.

The team has had some additional resources added recently, with 3 new members who are motivated and quickly getting up to speed. Workplace meetings have taken place at a higher frequency than before the pandemic – the result being that as the region pulls together as a team, we've achieved growth in several months and now need to achieve consistency.

We continue to face challenges, including inflation at a new 30 year high and the constant attacks on workers' rights, but we are confident we can reverse the decline and build GMB back up.

Everyday GMB fights and empowers workers to create better lives for themselves. That demand still exists.

GMB Southern Region will continue amplifying workers' voices and bargaining power, through member-led campaigns to rebuild strong trade union foundations in all workplaces, addressing inequalities at work and featuring a strong and inclusive approach to gender.

Equality

We held fresh elections at the end of 2021 for a new REF which will be in post for one year before new elections are held later this year.

35 delegates from branches across the region attended the Equality Conference online.

There were a number of sessions including on the national menopause toolkit, an update on the work of the national taskforce, 2 case study sessions on organising around equalities, covering dealing with racism in the workplace from reps at Net-A-Porter, and getting a reasonable adjustments passport policy passed in Dorset Council.

Our Regional Race Network also held its AGM and conducted new officer elections. The AGM was attended by Gary Smith and Justin Bowden, who both committed to supporting the Union in implementing the Henry Report and making progress on improving diversity and representation of black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the GMB.

The Region has played a key role in developing the new national resources on the Menopause as a Workplace issue and we have trained over 25 Reps in how to run a menopause campaign in their workplace. There have also been a number of shorter briefings for Branches and Reps.

Southern Region delegates have played a key role in the national work on the Trans and Non-Binary Toolkit which has been developed.

The Toolkit can be found here:

<https://www.gmb.org.uk/trans-non-binary-equality-work-toolkit>

Reasonable Adjustment Passport – Dorset Council

Equality activist Izzy Pochin in Dorset Council, negotiated a very progressive policy on reasonable adjustments. This is a great piece of work which will make a big difference to disabled workers in the council: <https://www.gmb-southern.org.uk/news/gmb-reaches-landmark-agreement-with-dorset-with-dorset-council-for-disabled-workers>

Political

London Mayor & London Assembly

Sadiq Khan was re-elected as Mayor of London in May and a number of GMB members were elected onto the London Assembly for the first time, including the Chair of GMB Southern Region's Race Network, Marina Ahmad.

We have now set up a GMB group on the London Assembly, in conjunction with GMB London Region.

The first action from Sadiq's manifesto we were involved in was the definition of "key workers for intermediate housing".

GMB had raised with Sadiq through the manifesto development process that much focus of this type of housing is on better paid public service jobs, e.g. teachers, police and firefighters.

GMB was keen to ensure lower paid workers were included. Through the consultation GMB managed to get a number of job roles added, including school cleaners, school catering staff, retail cleaners, EOC call handlers, radiographers, radiographer assistants.

Now it is important that local authorities adopt the City Hall list.

There are ongoing discussions with City Hall and TfL over issues in the private hire sector and we continue to work with the National Officer to apply pressure on the regulator to use the powers they have to improve conditions in the sector so as not to disadvantage those doing the right thing.

Long negotiations with City Hall around Sadiq Khan's plan for an On Demand Charter, shared our experiences of bad practice in the sector and won a commitment to expand and strengthen the Good Work Standard from a more trade union focussed approach.



London Borough of Croydon

We used our political influence to resolve a long-standing disagreement about GMB facilities in the Borough.

We are now back to 2 full time secondees which will help us develop and grow in the Borough, but there is work still to do.

Good support came from Croydon politicians for the campaign for increased pay and occupational sick pay for facilities staff at Croydon Hospital.

Steve Reed MP and Val Shawcross (Labour candidate to be Mayor of Croydon), as well as a large number of councillors and local party members, attended the demonstration outside the hospital.

Sarah Jones MP sent a solidarity video to the members.

The dispute resulted in a 24% pay rise and a new occupational sick pay scheme.

Wandsworth

The good relationship with the MPs in Wandsworth and some of the Labour Group

continues.

The Labour Group manifesto includes some useful commitments to GMB on the living wage for contractors.

GMB Judge Members

We have facilitated discussions between the GMB Judges and Steve Reed MP, Shadow Justice Minister, providing information about the impact precarious working conditions have on the Judiciary and the wider impact of this on the criminal justice system.

They are particularly relevant on several equality points such as diversity and representation in the system.

Lewisham Hospital

Good support from the Lewisham MPs for our campaign for better pay for the facilities workers at Lewisham Hospital.

Medway Term Time Only Campaign

Vince Maple, Leader of the Labour Group in Medway and his team have done an excellent job of embarrassing the Tories over their pitiful offer to compensate for systematic underpayment of holiday entitlement to low paid term time only workers.

Labour Party National Women's Committee

Sonya Davis from the Region was elected to represent the GMB on the National Women's Committee.

NHS Day of Action

Several regional politicians attended GMB demonstrations over NHS pay during this last round, including Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Florence Eshalomi MP, Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP, Rosie Duffield MP, Vince Maple (Leader of the Labour Group on Medway Council) and Dave Wilson (Leader of Labour Group on Canterbury City Council).

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, spoke at one of our online events for NHS Reps about her support for GMB's Fight for £15.

We ran a parliamentary briefing jointly with GMB London Region to ensure MPs understood GMB's approach to NHS pay and the campaign for £15.

We had over 20 MPs in the room throughout the briefing and there is enthusiasm for more regular briefings from us on GMB campaigns and policy issues.

Kent – Off-Shore Wind Farms

We wrote to all council and Labour Group leaders in Kent, calling on them to join our campaign for offshore windfarms off the Kent coast.

Crucially, we argued that the components for the farms should be manufactured in the local community. You can find out more here:

gmb-southern.org.uk/news/fair-share-of-wind-turbine-jobs-for-kent

Refuse Disputes

In a number of the refuse disputes across the Region, local Labour politicians have been publicly supportive, not least in Worthing and Adur.

There are local elections in Worthing and GMB members are very clear which politicians have backed them and which have not.

There has also been good support from Labour politicians in Brighton, Eastbourne, Wiltshire and Hastings.

Labour Regional Executive Committees

GMB Southern Region has increased representation on all Regional Executives over the last year and we have improved the diversity of our delegates and been well represented at regional conferences.

WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

Acknowledgement

May I take the opportunity in thanking all staff, the Regional Committee, Regional Council, CEC members and all of our activists throughout the region, they are the foundations and who have passionately given dedication to help re-build the union and support the leadership both regionally and nationally to make work better for our members.

South West Public Service

A number of local key campaigns have been identified following increased contact with members and key activists by a number of contact processes (workplace visits, Microsoft forms, SMS and virtual meetings). Regular monthly network teams meetings across the SW area combined with the branch development plans and quarterly reviews have allowed officers and branches to work more cohesively in identifying and delivering on local campaigns. Positive examples: Devon branch has increased membership density when campaigning on PPE in a local hospital. Sharing of information across regional boundaries have resulted in a 'template' re refuse services across some of our in-house and 'arm's length' employers. This campaign has both raised the prominence of the GMB and increased pay to reflect more accurately the current market supplements.

Schools and Academies

We are continuing to organise and campaign around the NJC 2022/23 pay claim in those employers who still follow the NJC pay and grading structure. Looking to explore equal pay claim and/or working to the correct JD/person specification campaigning opportunities across individual schools and multi academy trusts.

NHS & Welsh Ambulance Service

WAST has submitted a grievance regarding the bullying culture within the service, many paramedics are being forced to work alongside non-trained military service personnel who are unable to drive with blue lights and are not even trained in basic CPR, if our members refuse, they are facing disciplinary action/ referral to the HCPC. A third of our members have responded to our online survey. An outcome has been

received and we will be campaigning on this with the representatives.

Local Government

Many office staff are still working from home with the Council offices still closed across Wales. We have invited National officers into the region to assist with school campaigning.

All GMB members have received an NJC pay survey and we are awaiting feedback.

Social Care

Ongoing de-recognition visits with national care employers. Campaigning and organising across and surveying staff working for the Order of St John which cover Gloucestershire and is one of largest care employers in this and surrounding area. Welsh Government announced that they will be working towards a National Care Service. All care staff in Wales should now be receiving the RLW which includes Local Government from April. Wales has also made a retention and recruitment payment of £1425 gross payment to the registered workforce.

Manufacturing & Engineering

Hinkley Point C continues to be the largest employer in the region. A number of campaigns have been identified and are currently underway. We have a strong team ethos across branch, regional and national officers. Since the appointment of two Regional Organising Assistants in February 2022 they have been working as part of the team at HPC and across the SW. We have already started to see the benefit of having dedicated organising assistants working with branches and activists. Within 2022 we have gained a significant growth in membership. I praise the commitment and dedication from our reps and activists, their fight on industrial and well-being campaigns has been remarkable. My sincere thanks to all involved.

Commercial Services

Much of the Commercial Services sector is returning back to somewhere near normal operation after nearly 2 years of Covid disruption, but there are still many examples where members continue to work from home, particularly in customer call centres and admin/ support staff roles within the Utility sector. This has presented new challenges for workplace reps and regional organisers, as the face-to-face access we used to take for granted has

been replaced with WhatsApp, emails and online meetings.

This made the recruitment of new members much more challenging, but we must find new ways of reaching potential new members and communicate with existing members as a degree of home working is likely to become a permanent way of life within many workplaces.

Our members in the retail sector have worked tirelessly providing us with a vital service, yet many in this sector still only receive a few pennies above the minimum wage. We welcome the news that Asda have listened to the demands of GMB members to bring forward the 2023 pay award and to pay £10.10 from July this year, a great win for GMB campaigning, but much more needs to be done. We will have prominent organising campaigns in stores moving forward, with an all-staff involvement in activity, gaining development and experience for staff and enshrining better ways of working.

The distribution sector continues to be a vital target for the region, with two large Asda Distribution Centres who are organising for an Industrial Action ballot, a pay model campaign within Evri, pay consultation within Bidfood and pay negotiations within Yodel. Many employers are struggling to fill driver and warehouse operative roles, which gives us the opportunity to submit additional demands for pay and improvements to terms & conditions.

We are starting to see signs of recovery within the aviation sector which has been on its knees over the last two years. Many of our members particularly within airport security and baggage handling were furloughed, many not knowing whether they would have a job to go back to. As the sector recovers, these areas must be targeted, and we should seek to recover any ground that has been lost as pay has stagnated.

Training & Education

The region's training schedule has continued in earnest throughout the 2021/2022 Academic year! Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the focus has been on online delivery and the region has continued to provide an extensive range of courses across Wales and the Southwest of England.

Our online courses have been easily accessible, the take up has been positive allowing new representatives and members the opportunity to participate from their own homes or workplaces.

Flexibility within the course modules has enabled tasks and planning to be completed in a way to suit the availability of our Learners.

The following courses have been delivered across the region:

Wales Courses: Online -10 Day GMB @ Work Induction online, 5 Day Equality Course, 5 Day Employment Law, 2 Day Mental Health Awareness.

Southwest Courses: Online - 10 Day GMB @ Work Induction online, 10 Day Health & Safety Stage 1, 5 Day Employment Law.

As we entered the New Year, we are pleased to report that face-to-face tutoring has returned to the classroom, and we are now delivering courses throughout the offices of our region. The reintroduction of classroom teaching has been extremely popular, and our training facilities have been risk assessed to ensure we have all the necessary safety measures in place.

Wales Courses: Classroom - 10 Day GMB @ Work Induction, 10 Day Health & Safety Stage 1, 10 Day Health & Safety Stage 2, 5 Day Employment Law

Southwest Courses: Classroom - 10 Day GMB @ Work Induction, 5 Day Employment Law, 10 Day Health & Safety Stage.

298 WPO would have developed their skills through the above course to contribute in organising, promoting equality and looking after their members well-being within the workplace and homelife.

To compliment the representative training, the region has a wide selection of courses available through its Wales Union Learning Fund Project and, in the Southwest, we match this delivery through various providers and funding streams. The WULF delivery focuses on essential skills and the region is proud to secure another 3 years of funding in this regard, in addition to our representative training we have taken the opportunity to deliver on our Staff Employees Development, thus providing a varied range of courses such as Mental Health & Fitness Training, Coaching and Leadership, Team Working / Improving Ways of Working, Office 365 / SharePoint Training all of which have proved extremely popular.

Regional Equality

The REF continues to meet regularly with good attendance from activists. Shout The region submitted views on the LGBTQ+ action plan consultation with Welsh Government.

A joint TU response has been submitted by the WTUC.

Pride events have been scheduled for this year and will be supported and attended by members of the Shout network, branches and officers.

Race Network – The network attended the Cardiff Anti racism rally at the beginning of March with lead for the forum giving a short speech on behalf of the region.

The network has started their first campaign around the use of correct names and looking at getting it phonetically spelt on emails

Women Support Women – The Women's Forum are campaigning on safer streets/ drinking and getting legislation changed on searches at night clubs etc they have a fringe event at the upcoming WTUC Congress.

Imposter Syndrome training and confidence courses have been undertaken by the forum.

We are promoting our National Campaigns within workplaces starting with our regional offices.

Our key aims are to organise around these policies and embed them with employers to make workplaces more inclusive for all workers and to engage in a collective bargaining approach.

As a region we are identifying and targeting workplaces to ensure our equality aims and objectives relate to organising opportunities by protecting our members throughout our networks, workplaces, and communities building a stronger Union Training courses Confidence and influencing courses are being run in partnership with Jos Andrews and funded by WULF, over 15 of these courses have been run both online and in person.

They have been well attended by members and positive feedback has been received, with one of our members feeling brave enough to do a radio interview on BBC Two.

One of our members who undertook WULF funded training to learn sign language, has had

a thank you from a family whose son refused to speak with sign language and communicate with them in this manner until our member, who is a swimming instructor started to speak to the child using sign language during the lesson and has now encourage that child to learn sign language.

Equality will be the priority in everything that we do moving forward.

In addition to the work of the National Taskforce, the region is currently working on a robust equality strategy which should give us the confidence that in everything we do, is fair, transparent, and equal.

My thanks to Marie McDonald, Regional Equality Officer who will, I'm sure make us proud of what we can and will achieve both collectively as a union and as a region.

Our thanks to the National President Barbara Plant for her steadfast leadership and to the CEC and the Taskforce for their dedication in moving the union forward, being transparent in all that they do, and making the foundations to re-establish the union that we all love and can be proud of.

The year ahead will present fresh challenges and hopefully positive outcomes to those challenges.

The one constant that will remain is the presence of the GMB and the dedication and commitment of its staff upon which so many rely on.

I take the opportunity in thanking all staff, the Regional Committee, Regional Council, CEC members and all of our activists throughout the region.

They are the foundations and have passionately given dedication to help re-build the union and support the leadership, both regionally and nationally, to make work better for our members.

YORKSHIRE & NORTH DERBYSHIRE REGION

The past 12 months have been extremely challenging for all activists, staff and members as we have come out of the pandemic. As we have returned to office working and face to face meetings, we have focused on engaging with our membership and overcoming the barriers and difficulties that the Covid restrictions had created. Our staff and officers have engaged with members and potential members at every opportunity to begin to turn around the decline in membership. Our teams are focusing on moving from a servicing union to a campaigning organising union and engagement is higher than ever. As we move towards the merger of our region with Northern region and parts of Midlands & East Coast region, we are really proud of the buy-in and enthusiasm of our staff, activists and branches and all very much look forward to the next chapter in our proud GMB history as the new North East, Yorkshire & Humber region, where we know we will thrive under our new leadership.

Central Team

Wakefield Council

We now have three reps at the council, and we will be working to get them involved with consultations within their directorates and of course to build the union in their own workplaces. We now have over 1000 members so can now have paid release for one of the reps each week. They have also set up their own dedicated branch. The recent NJC consultative ballot saw a good rise in membership but also a great increase in activity and engagement with members. A high number of workplace visits were attended and lots of positive feedback was received. Other unions were notably absent which evidently angered their membership.

Leeds City Council

We have one new steward in Leeds Building Services (ex Mears) one new steward and health & safety rep in refuse, one new steward and health & safety rep in schools, one new steward in leisure (Active Leeds), one new steward, health & safety rep and ULR in parks and countryside and one new steward and health and safety rep in business admin. We have a new recognition agreement with an academy trust signed off

in the period too, this being with the Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust. They currently have 13 schools that we now have access to and an ability to grow the membership and recruit new reps.

Mears

We successfully signed a new recognition and collective bargaining agreement for Mears 'non-trade' staff and have a rep in place who has hit the ground running in terms of recruitment and member engagement. This now gives GMB a much stronger voice within Mears locally. Regarding the trade staff, Leeds City Council brought a big part of the service back in-house which meant a number of staff (TUPE) transferred into the council's employment. Mears' reps were involved throughout consultations and were an intricate part of the arrangements for the transfer.

New North Yorkshire Council

This is a new council to be formed by bringing together eight current councils to one, we are in early dialogue and our key ask/aim is to gain full recognition in the new council as we currently only have recognition in two of the eight. Also, the new council covers three of our regions Yorkshire, Northern and Midlands.

NHS & Contractors

It's been a very difficult 12 months with the continued pandemic putting huge pressure on NHS Staff. GMB members were left feeling undervalued, disenfranchised, and angry with the wall of silence they have received from the Government. Ninety-four percent of our members rejected the extremely inadequate and miserable 3%. The hypocrisy of the Government who joined millions of people in applauding NHS workers whilst unashamedly trying to cut their pay, you cannot treat NHS and ambulance workers like this.

GMB Nurses Stage Sheffield Banner Protest Over Real-Terms Pay Cut

GMB NHS staff gathered on a footbridge over Park Square roundabout with banners to protest the 3% pay award for NHS workers. The demonstration took place the day after the Government snuck out the pay award to avoid Parliamentary scrutiny, whilst MPs packed up for summer. It fails to match the 15% pay increase GMB has been calling for, to make up for a decade of real terms pay cuts for NHS key workers.

Getting Ballot Ready for NHS Workers as They Celebrate NHS Birthday

As birthday celebrations for the NHS took place up and down the country last July which we will be doing again this year, GMB reps at Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust also decided to join the celebrations by giving out slices of Birthday cake to NHS workers as they took time-out to have their break at Lynfield Mount Hospital.

Yorkshire Ambulance Services

Operational pressures, military support – following the implementation of a number of actions to maintain safe care for our patients and respond to current operational pressures and significant staff absence, additional support from the military had been requested and approved. The military personnel began training with YAS and received YAS academy training in driving ambulances, manual handling, kit familiarisation and basic life support. This military aid saw personnel working alongside YAS colleagues to transfer patients between hospitals and assist with our patient transport service, providing a low acuity transport service. Each member of the military paired up with a YAS colleague. From the start of the consultative ballot, 4th Aug to 17th Dec 2021, we have recruited 2063 new members (1157 NHS, 906 Ambulance). Fifty-one activists less than at the start of the ballot process, taking our total number of activists to 774 (422 NHS; 352 Ambulance). Regionally we finished 2021 with the second highest membership growth +63, 1.83%. Growth of the NHS and in particular the membership of Yorkshire Ambulance Service Branch which has now hit over 1000, increasing our facility time to a full week, additionally we have recruited six new reps in YAS.

Private Sector

DS Smith Packaging

Following a series of meetings between management and the GMB negotiating team, union members accepted the final company offer of 3.8% which included a one-off TESCO voucher for £150.

Allied Glass

I am pleased to report that 22 new members were recruited during our pay campaign. New stewards Claire Walsh and Robert Underwood have been elected at the Castleford site and both will shortly be commencing training.

The pay negotiations were successful with the company offer of 3% for 2021 and 3% for 2022 accepted by the membership. Follow up recruitment days are currently being planned for later in the month.

Chep UK

Organisers and GMB stewards met with Cllr Denise Jeffrey, the Leader of the Council and the CHEP senior management to discuss employee recruitment and local apprenticeships. This joined up working process was agreed in order to create well paid jobs in and around the local area. A tour of the site was then followed by a meeting with the GMB stewards regarding the successful way they are delivering GMB@Work. Further we had issue with a manager who was undermining the GMB, this was put through due process by engaging with our membership and raising a number of grievances, the manager no longer works at Chep.

Valeo York

We have had bad industrial relations with this company for several years, this has culminated with the company using fire and rehire tactics this year and moving to derecognise the GMB. We are currently in official dispute with on-going industrial action.

Southern Report

I am pleased to report a very brief overview of the amazing work done across the southside and Commercial Services Section over the last 12 months.

Delta Academy Trust

GMB, through lengthy negotiations on a harmonisation proposal, have won increased pay for term time workers and increased annual leave for support staff who are on a 52-week contract. Initial proposals some members may have been on average £200 per year better off, others were at risk of losing up to £5,000 per year. Deanne Ferguson, GMB Regional Organiser said "The GMB's position was clear from the start, if the Trust harmonised 'up' to the best pay, terms and conditions then the union wouldn't have a problem with the proposal. "This is a win, win for our members and thank Delta Academy Trust for their positive approach throughout negotiations".

Ardagh Glass

GMB Officers and reps met with Ed Miliband to

costs and has called on support from the local MP, as we lobby Government to urgently intervene in the energy crisis before it's too late. GMB members need to have their voices heard so we called an urgent meeting with Ed Miliband in his role as Shadow Secretary for Business to share our members concerns. GMB 'asks' are simple – we demand this Government acts now, before it's too late.

By reducing the VAT on energy prices for fuel intensive businesses, it could save thousands of jobs from going to the wall in a sector which is already under immense pressure to survive. If this Government does not intervene, we could see many businesses collapse or shut up shop here in the UK – potentially leaving thousands of highly skilled workers out of a job. This Government must act now. With the support of GMB Political Officers we are preparing to take this fight to the very top of Government to save our members' jobs and to prevent manufacturing businesses in red wall seats from collapse. Following extensive negotiations Ardagh Glass have submitted a pay offer of 5.7% and an increase in matched pension contributions of 2% taking their matched contributions up to 10%. Ballots are due to close on the 21st March 2022.

EVRI

During the year work began on forming a Hermes workplace branch, with GMB officers giving bespoke training on GDPR and branch auditing, the branch is still a work in progress, but with the enthusiasm of a number of key workplace contacts, we are confident this will happen in the coming months.

Sheffield Museums Trust

This was a target for us and two sole recognition agreements were secured.

Veolia Sheffield

The pay claim at Veolia went to formal ballot after our members rejected numerous offers tabled by the employer. This dispute was settled after one half days strike and our members accepted 3% + £ 200 year 1 & 3.5% year 2.

Ross & Ca therall

This is a well organised workplace that had the previously undergone a significant restructure making redundancies, but the company had remained in significant profits. The onsite reps were unable to obtain an offer from the

employer that represented a fair & reasonable offer and the negotiations fell into dispute. Through extensive negotiations ending in ACAS Collective conciliation a 3-year deal was achieved in October 2021 for a total of 9.5% with new negotiations being triggered if inflation exceeded 3%.

CBRE Mondolez

CBRE a subcontractor of Mondolez began consultation with site engineers to reduce their on-call shift premium from being a % of pay usually around £350 per week to a figure of £150 per week. The members have so far refused to accept this cut.

ASOS

Campaigning continues at ASOS to try and improve terms and conditions for members. Community Union attempted to stop us campaigning outside and for ASOS due to their recognition agreement however we reminded them of the TUC decision giving us permission to continue campaigning at ASOS due to Community's breach of TUC Rules.

Doncaster Sheffield Airport

Securitas have lost the security contract to Wilson James. We have been consulting with Wilson James and Securitas over the TUPE transfer to the new employer and engaging in the 2022 pay negotiations with them. There have been significant issues with Securitas with multiple grievances over bullying & racism and complaints over issues such as uniform and shift patterns. We are hopeful that we will be able to have a more constructive relationship with Wilson James to improve working conditions for our members.

Cepac

The 2022 pay negotiations are currently underway with members having refused an offer of 4.5%

Chapmans Agriculture

We met with Chapmans Agriculture workers and management to discuss the possibility of a local campaign regarding Steel Quotas and Tariffs. Chapmans highlighted that they agree there should be incentives for companies to buy steel and metals from the UK however they are facing difficulties in having to pay large tariffs for purchasing materials that are simply not available in the UK. We are looking into a

that tariffs and quotas do a significant part in protecting and promoting UK steel which is something the GMB support.

ASDA

The Equal Pay petition has given us the opportunity to engage with members and non-members better than previously. With the costs of living rising so quickly, everyone is feeling the pinch. The ask is for Asda to bring forward the hourly rate rise to £10.06 forward to this year to help with the cost of living. Picking up and campaigning on local issues in individual stores, such as Asda workers being expected to do work in their unpaid break has also brought new members in. We had good success contacting Asda leavers by phone and speaking to them in stores who had an equal pay claim lodged through GMB, with around 100 people re-joining us.

Cerealto

Since we signed the recognition agreement with Cerealto, membership is gradually growing and we are making regular visits in the factory. We have grown by 37 members in the past year. We also now have two new reps which is helping us to build membership. Engagement with workers has been positive and membership has grown by almost 22% in the past year.

Save The Spinney Campaign

We ran a campaign to save The Spinney care home from closure. We have designed and produced a credit card sized card with QR for people to join GMB and sign the petition. We have more than doubled our membership in the past year since the start of the campaign.

Wilko

We have been visiting Wilko stores to ballot members on this year's pay deal. There's been some success in recruiting new members on the back of it and it's been really good to speak to people in person about the pay offer. Wilko distribution ballot visits took place at various times of the day and night ensuring engagement with all workers.

British Gas

British Gas membership has declined in parts due to employees leaving the business, the impact of fire and rehire in 2021 has left British Gas with a poor image, which people feel they cannot work for anymore. Campaigns have

become more focused on collective issues and since the company removed collective agreements regions have become better aligned to working with reps. In Yorkshire three gas branches merged to bring all engineers together which has created a better sense of organising and installing GMB@Work effectively, this includes Gas distribution workers from Cadent and Northern Gas networks. Our reps are trained through our education program which already has seen better activity around health & safety and equality campaigns. Our national reps work in strong partnership with North west & Irish region to co-ordinate member issues and campaigns to build on.

G4S

The contract with the DWP was through 2021 into 2022 a challenge, changes were brought in seeing members work Saturdays and evenings to fill the appointment times to meet demands of Job Centre claimants. GMB reps have highlighted new opportunities to grow the union in this sector with new Job Centres opening around the region. The issue of safety in the workplace is still a major campaign and concern as our members facing the public are not paid in recognition of the service they provide.

RMBC/R62 Branch

The branch ran a recruitment initiative where new members and members that recruited them went into a raffle, the campaign was successful in both recruitment and engaging more activists/reps.

Taxis

S75 Branch

GMB elected representatives Nasar Raoof S75 Branch President/Chair, Tariq Nazir S75 Branch Exec member, Arshad Mahmood S75 Branch Exec member are providing GMB members with advice and representation at licensing hearings across South Yorkshire, which is a service that members here in this sector could not do without. Monthly meetings are being held in Sheffield with colleagues working for the Council in licensing. Alongside this we are meeting with the Labour Councillors of Sheffield to further strengthen relationships. GMB has submitted a taxi charter to Sheffield City Council, discussions will be taking place seeking to adopt the charter. Negotiations with East Midlands Trains for

permits has been resolved.

NAECI/TICA

Bob McNeill, GMB Organiser, said: "We want to ensure that jobs created on this project are covered by the NAECI agreement, workers are paid the right rate for the job, the local community can have the opportunity to apply for the jobs and quality apprenticeships are part of this project. "We won't tolerate the undercutting of pay or health and safety conditions. HZI needs to get round the table with GMB and Unite to bring this project under the agreement."

Political

In March-May 2021 we supported GMB colleague Summer Risebury in campaigning to become a Labour Local Authority Councillor in Barnsley. We are currently supporting GMB member Neil Wright in campaigning to hold his seat as a Labour Councillor in Barnsley.

Western Team

West Yorks local authorities

We have worked tirelessly to re-open our newly refurbished GMB office in Brighouse where all officers and staff are now back at work. We have also re-opened the Huddersfield office which is supported by Kirklees Council and our community activist centre in Cleckheaton which is a partnership with the local Labour Party. Kirklees Council membership continues to grow and we have re-started the West Yorkshire Core group meetings where Kirklees, Bradford and Calderdale activists come together to agree and share campaigns. Calderdale Council has always been a very small membership area for the GMB but we have seen lots of growth since launching our job evaluation and TU facilities disputes, led by our new reps.

Taxi Charter and Uber

Our main campaigns have focused on the need to stop the new region wide convictions and suitability criteria licensing policy which, we have, in the main, halted in most Councils. We have also revamped the branch and are hitting our new Uber hub space in Leeds where membership continues to grow. Wakefield became the 1st Council to adopt our new Taxi Licensing Charter.

NHS Airedale and Calderdale Hospitals Campaigns

We have won the Airedale dispute for outsourced services where we gained Agenda for Change pay for all AGS workers and we have started and continue with the same campaign for IIS outsourced workers at Calderdale hospital. Both campaigns have been financed 100% from our branches.

West Yorkshire Mayors Fair Work Charter

We have worked with the Mayor's office and the regional TUC to develop the new Fair Work Charter which has incorporated some of the key asks that are set out in our Care Charter and will be launched at this congress.

Rugby League

2020-22 was a difficult period but one that established the GMB as the main voice for professional players through our campaigns to help save the sport. We have now got our first full time released lead rep, Garreth Carvell, a former GB international who is now 100% dedicated to developing and growing our membership within the game and the communities where it thrives. We also have a GMB equality seat on the Board headed up by GMB's Lou Foster-Wilson.

Yorkshire Water

Yorkshire Water has also seen significant growth and we continue to respond to the challenges that the company pose through their continued desire to restructure and develop, terms and conditions being a red line the GMB will not cross.

Social Home Care

We have taken a leading role in supporting the GMB's National Ethical Home Care Commissioning Charter campaign again in 2021/22 and have gained formal endorsement of the charter from Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield and Kirklees. Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster and Calderdale will now follow suit.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing continues to feel the pressures of the Covid crisis on top of Brexit and we have seen the last cornerstone of the busted Philip Green empire, Arcadia distribution centre in Leeds, finally go to the wall. The region is bracing itself for further impacts post Covid now that furlough has ended.

Liberty Steel seems to have grasped another lifeline, but the industry faces huge challenges, more so than most Manufacturing due to the rise in energy prices. We are working with our national teams to take the 'We're Making It' campaign into its next stage and are hoping to launch something around that at the next regional Manufacturing forum along with the need to support our construction charter, something that local authorities seem to have let slip. We have on-going disputes at Valeo and more with other manufacturers planned as the need to address our members cost of living crisis grows.

Education

The education department has now returned to face to face to face, classroom training for reps and has a 12-month programme in operation which runs from January 2022 to December 2022. A new programme will be circulated in November 2022 for the whole of 2023, so the department continues to deliver reps training directly from Grove Hall. As part of the training the department can offer a blended learning approach of face-to-face attendees and individuals joining the training via teams/zoom, where this is required from the reps.

Health & Safety

The department continues to promote Health & Safety Issues through the region's Health & Safety Forum and the region has had good attendance at the National H&S sessions that are running via zoom. The region's calendar includes 4 Health & Safety inspection week, organising opportunities to enable reps to carry out their legal duties of workplace inspections, saving lives, preventing injuries, and organising around campaigning safety issues.

GMB Members' Learning

The region's Learning Committee continues to meet on a regular basis and a member of the Regional Learning Committee sits on and represents the region at the National Lifelong Learning Committee. The regional Jo Cox Learning Fund is now financially supported by donations from branches and continues to give regional learning to GMB members and promotes the universal GMB membership learning offer.

Equalities

The Regional Equalities Forum like everything else had to adapt in the last year to the constantly changing guidelines around Covid. This meant that although towards the end of the year we were becoming more able to enter workplaces, meetings of the REF remained virtual. We ran, for the second year running, a full week of evening events via zoom for Mental Health Awareness Week. These sessions were opened to members all over the country and we had positive feedback from all.

Following on from the calendar of events that had been decided on in the REF AGM 2021 we held sessions across the region raising awareness for suicide prevention day. Training for reps in the menopause and how to campaign on the issue in the workplace was rolled out nationally and Sarah Sheehan from our region attended the Train the Trainer sessions and then assisted Lou Foster-Wilson in running the regional training. Attendees were a mix of long-standing equality activists and newcomers who now wish to become more involved with our equality agenda moving forward. Each attendee developed a plan for use in their workplace and will work with their officers and Lou Foster-Wilson to develop these further. Making a real difference for our members in the workplace.

Emails were sent to all branches to find nominations for the elected strand seats on the Regional Council and although responses were low, we have not let that deter us and will now use this information in the New Year to find out which branches do not have an Equality Officer and work with them to ensure this changes.

The REF AGM was held in November and possible campaigns for 2022 were discussed and a calendar of events will be put together. As 2021 draws to a close the Government advice is to again work from home when possible, highlighting how Covid will continue to challenge us into 2022.

The REF will continue to adapt and looks forward to an exciting year promoting our equalities agenda.



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

Gary Smith, GMB General Secretary
GMB, Mary Turner House,
22 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD
020 7391 6700 info@gmb.org.uk

