



**GMB**

UNION

**GMB Congress**

**Bournemouth 2024**

**General Secretary's Report**



# GENERAL SECRETARY'S INTRODUCTION

## GMB CONGRESS 2024

### **Our members are the reason GMB exists.**

The daily struggles in the workplace, the battles to fight injustice, the aspirations for a better future. For 135 years, this proud, powerful organisation has been a collective expression of millions of individual lives and experiences. The battles we've fought have won great victories and shaped our world of work and the wider country, but perhaps our greatest achievement is to build a home where working people can come together to get their voice heard and join with comrades to make work better.

It is the advance of our members' hopes and dreams that continues to drive us on today and the story of the last year, for our union, is further proof that we are turning these aspirations into concrete achievements. We have refocused on listening to our members and building industrial campaigns on the issues that matter to you. We have undertaken and supported disputes that have changed lives and are changing the world of work for others too. We have made substantial financial commitments to support member struggles. We have invested in and delivered programmes that are beginning to help our union realise the wonderful diversity of our membership.

Across all parts of our union, GMB members are campaigning and winning. There is a constant, resounding drumbeat of activity in workplaces of all shapes and sizes, with our union at the forefront of the big issues that matter. We are back to doing what we have always done best, and it is making a big difference.

We are the constant thorn in the side of employers who still believe they can live and operate in the past. Nowhere is this more evident than in the fights GMB members are having on equal pay. It should be a source of national shame that in 2024 women are still not receiving equal pay for their work. In both public and private sectors, GMB members are leading the charge to win back the money stolen

from wages through the failure to pay women properly for the work they do. These landmark battles are supported by our groundbreaking Women's Campaign Unit, who are coordinating action throughout the country and helping to deliver landmark wins.

In Asda, GMB members have taken historic industrial action in multiple locations. For many workers in this retailer, it is the first time they have ever voted for or been on strike. This unprecedented step is a reflection of the unhappiness at the way this major UK business is being run, but it also reflects the confidence of GMB members, particularly low paid workers, to stand up and give voice to their frustrations. Their courage inspires us all.

The energy and desire of our members to organise and fight for basic rights at work drove GMB's founders to bring our great union to life. We can see this same incredible spirit in the heroic efforts of our members in Amazon, where we are engaged in a titanic struggle for union recognition. We are under no illusions about the capabilities of the global giant we are facing, but our members and wider campaign team are on the march, and we could be on the cusp of something truly amazing.

Members everywhere are setting shining examples of what can be achieved when we listen to what matters in the workplace, build campaigns to deliver on these priorities and harness the collective strength of all parts of our great union. Such activity and success doesn't come cost free, and supporting GMB members as they stand together requires a financial commitment. I'm proud that our union is there to give this backing, with £2.8m spent in the last year on this.

The cost of living crisis has stretched the finances of so many people and we've tried to do our bit to help. When elected to lead GMB in 2021, I committed to reducing the cost of membership and the consistent freeze in union subs, in the face



of high inflation, has delivered on this promise. Over £9m has been put back into members' pockets, a significant achievement that can only happen if we have a healthy and sustainable financial position. Members of the GMB CEC have been instrumental in bringing stability to our finances and they deserve great thanks for this and their unstinting work on delivering good governance for the union.

The biggest driver affecting our financial position is the size of our membership. It is a pleasure to report that our union continues to grow, with significant numbers of people joining us. New members like what they see with our industrial campaigns and successes, and we are also retaining more people, which is having the positive impact of increasing our contribution income.

We have also made significant investments in much needed learning and development initiatives. In autumn 2023, we launched the GMB Race Achievement Scholarship Programme (GRASP), a first for our union and a strong sign of commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Henry Report. The attendees on the programme, our GRASPers, are truly inspirational people and we look forward to seeing the great things they are going to achieve in changing workplaces everywhere.

Our members' working lives are largely defined by what takes place in the workplace. The issues that matter to them, the good and bad practices and cultures, the reward they get for their efforts. I'm pleased to report that this is where our union is now focused. We listen more and better to members' concerns and have improved our ability to turn these issues into campaigns that can transform lives.

It's clear that with every campaign and success, we are strengthening the bond between our members' ambitions and the union's operations. Of course, there is more to do, but we are on the right path. Let's keep going.



**Gary Smith**  
GMB General Secretary





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## DECISIONS OF CONGRESS 2023 AND PROGRESS ON 2023 MOTIONS

Decisions of Congress 2023, and action taken on those decisions, can be found on the GMB website ([www.gmb.org.uk/democracy/gmb/congress](http://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 2023 is available to members in the members area of the GMB National website and this report will be kept updated.

In accordance with Motion 3 carried with a qualification by Congress 2023, a progress report on Congress 2023 motions was added to the members area of the GMB website by 31st January 2024.

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](mailto:laurence.turner@gmb.org.uk) and [anna.barnes@gmb.org.uk](mailto:anna.barnes@gmb.org.uk)



## CAMPAIGNS & COMMUNICATIONS

GMB members are fighting and winning campaigns to make work better, with the last year being a story of continued achievement. Members, activists, and GMB staff have come together at regional and national levels to create powerful teams and campaigns of excellence. Cultures and practices that focus on listening to the issues that matter to members and undertaking campaigning activity to get success are delivering results. There is a dynamism and positivity in what the union is doing, and our members are its heart.

The GMB National Office Campaigns and Communications team guides and supports campaigning activity across the union. On national campaigns, it works with officers and representatives to devise strategies and construct programmes of communications in pursuit of clearly defined objectives. The team provides expertise and hands-on support with media work, political relations, campaign activity, and member engagement.

The team also assists GMB regions with locally based campaigns, providing support across a full range of activities. Alongside this, a nationally-led programme of campaign training is being delivered to help those who are heading up activity, with recipients including GMB staff and representatives who are identified as 'lay leaders' in the union.

The vibrancy and power of campaigning activity is seen in the variety of landmark disputes undertaken by GMB members in 2023/24. In local authorities across the country, GMB is fighting for equal pay through emotionally compelling campaigns. Birmingham, Coventry, Sunderland, Sheffield, Falkirk, Renfrewshire, Fife, Leeds, Bristol, Swansea, Southampton, Cumberland. In all of these councils and many more, GMB is battling to retrieve the stolen wages of women who deliver some of our most vital public services.



GMB continues to battle Amazon and its mighty corporate machine. The GMB campaign team at

Coventry is doing amazing things and has secured a ballot of the workforce for union recognition. At the time of writing, the result is unknown but the campaigning effort being put in by all concerned is truly inspiring.

And, in employers of all shapes and sizes, GMB members are campaigning on the issues that matter to them, and our team is working hard with colleagues across the union to support this.

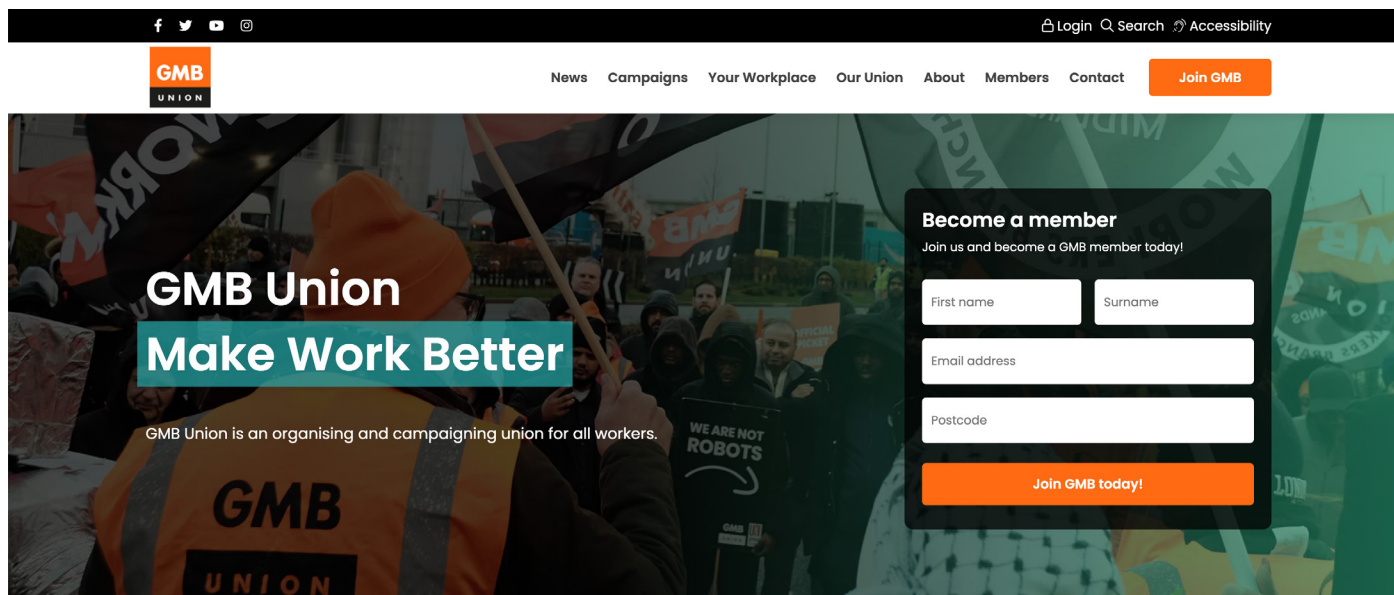
### Media Activity

Our union continues to secure high levels of media coverage for GMB campaigns and initiatives. We are a regular presence in all formats and, following the decision to target 'picture-led' channels, we are reaching bigger audiences.

The dominance of smartphones as communication devices means that video driven output is the increasingly desired option for people to consume their news. GMB campaign activity has responded to this change and we regularly produce output that finds its way into TV coverage. We are also a significant presence on radio and this combination has helped ensure GMB performs exceedingly well in broadcast coverage. In the last year, our union appeared on the broadcast media nearly 13,000 times, a presence that delivered an audience reach of 2.7 billion people. Achieving such coverage does not cost the union any money, and it is important to understand that if we did pay to connect with this size of audience, for example through advertising, it is estimated that the bill would be approximately £25m.



The print media remains an important platform for promoting GMB campaigns and activity, either through straightforward news reporting or opinion and commentary pieces. GMB appeared in over 4,000 print articles in the last 12 months, accessing a readership of 409 million people. And, we have also maintained a strong online presence, an essential element in ensuring our union can reach the widest possible audiences. It is noteworthy that over the previous year we achieved nearly 77,000 online hits, which delivered an audience of 2.3 billion people.



## Social Media

The almost universal use of smartphones by people in the UK demands that organisations with a public profile must have a substantial social media presence. GMB uses a variety of social media platforms to communicate our campaigns and messages and deploys different approaches depending on the outlet used. This matters because the effectiveness of different platforms, in terms of the coverage achieved, profile of audience addressed, and type of engagement undertaken, can vary. So, whilst our union has a national presence on Facebook, X, and Instagram, what we say and how we say it varies appropriately.

## Website

We have launched a new GMB national website, with the focus being on the display of campaigning activity and news. There is a more energetic feel to the website, and this helps gain and retain the attention of viewers for the issues that matter to our members. Such a move is also a response to changing methods of accessing our national website, with visitors now predominantly using smart phones to do this. The new website has also provided an improved journey for people joining the union online. The majority of new joiners now choose to become GMB members using our online form, and this method has also been modernised and improved to capture equalities information.

## Video messaging

It is clear that across the union people are increasingly using video messages to communicate, including campaign information. Again, this is a reflection of the predominance of smart phones as a tool for receiving information and we are adapting to this development.

This step change in our output is making a big difference for engaging audiences, and we are seeing good results in its power to connect members with relevant communications.





## EQUALITY

### Women's Campaign Unit

Since the conclusion of Congress 2023, the Women's Campaign Unit (WCU) has experienced a year of remarkable growth in campaign activity across all regions of the union with the direct support of the Regional Women's Campaign Unit leads. This increase in engagement underscores the unwavering commitment from GMB to addressing discrimination and promoting equality in the workplace.

### Equal Pay Campaigns

The union's commitment to achieving equal pay for all members remains steadfast, with campaigns gaining momentum across the whole of the union. In Birmingham, members have been organising and building momentum around equal pay issues by voting for strike action in schools after the council publicly admitted liabilities in the hundreds of millions. Coventry, Dundee, and Fife, campaigns are progressing and challenging the entrenched inequalities, particularly focusing on job evaluation and advocating for the implementation of fair pay structures.

In Bristol, members are organising in the care sector and fighting for an uplift to match the better terms and conditions male dominated jobs receive. In Swansea, members are rallying together with the support of the region and branch to secure improved pay after years of discriminatory practices by their employer. Across Scotland in Falkirk, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire and Moray Councils, care workers are taking a stand against the undervaluation of their roles, challenging their employers to properly value their work and organising rallies, demonstrations and strikes that will change the landscape of social care across the country.

Recent developments in Leeds, Sunderland, Sheffield, and Cumbria (now Westmoreland and Furness and Cumberland Councils) exemplify the tireless efforts of the activists, organisers and Regional WCU's to challenge discriminatory practices and secure fair outcomes for our women members.

These initiatives are not limited to the public sector; the ongoing Asda Equal Pay campaign signifies the union's dedication to challenging wage discrimination in the private sector as well. The expertise and resource the WCU provide includes campaign planning and strategy, legal advice and support in conjunction with the legal department, equal pay claims management database training and management as well as developing campaign leaders across GMB structures.

Plans for new campaigns are currently in motion, with further launches anticipated in the upcoming year, demonstrating the union's proactive stance in addressing systemic inequalities.



## Equal Pay Summit

The WCU hosted a first of its kind event, the GMB Equal Pay Summit, at National Office in April 2024. The event brought together workplace leaders, activists, organisers and staff to develop ideas, share best practice and build a GMB coalition to deliver and defend equal pay justice for working women. The sessions included in depth discussions on campaigning planning, organising, building union structures, telling the story of equal pay, press and media strategies, collectivising and winning for women in GMB. The hugely successful day received positive feedback from activists and organisers as they came together from across the whole of the union to support the work each other are doing in the fight for pay justice.

## Equal Pay Legal Support

Although our intention is always to win for members through building the union and through industrial relations, where appropriate our equal pay campaigns are supported by legal paths that help protect members legally, ensuring we can fight for the maximum amount of compensation where discriminatory practice is found. For instance, Sunderland Care and Support, Cumbria, Sheffield, Bristol and others have taken proactive measures by initiating legal claims following the dismissal of grievances by the councils. As we continue to grow this work at a rapid pace, we are also upskilling internally to provide the best support and chances of success for members. These legal interventions highlight the comprehensive approach adopted by the Women's Campaign Unit to protect the rights and interests of members and ensure that all avenues for compensation are explored thoroughly.

## Equalities Data Monitoring Project

Efforts to collect and utilise equality data have been continuing in recent months. Over the past year we've supported the successful implementation of updated online joiner forms and paper joining forms as well as changes to the membership system to reflect the fields needed for capturing equality data, for monitoring purposes and ensuring the union reflects the diversity of its membership throughout its structures.

## Equal Pay Legislative Changes

GMB Union's Women's Campaign Unit is at the forefront of the fight for pay justice, pushing for legislative changes to address systemic discrimination against women in the workplace. As women across the UK rally against pay discrimination, the union is amplifying their voices through political channels with the aim of making equal pay more accessible for all women.

Although current laws, provide some pathway for

pay justice, it is almost always a long and costly court battle which ultimately leads to significant delays in our members being compensated for the discrimination they've faced, often for years. GMB is advocating for a new legislation which proposes pioneering solutions like the establishment of an Equal Pay Executive with powers to enforce legislation without a lengthy court battle.

A huge win in this area recently includes successfully ensuring that Single Source legislation from EU law is enshrined in the UK, something that would not have happened without GMB's work on equal pay.

These political and legislative initiatives highlight the union's commitment to effecting positive change at both the union's grassroots level and at national policy levels, in so doing ensuring that the voices of its members are heard and respected at all levels.

## National Race and Organising and WCU Joint Working

Throughout 2023 and continuing in 2024, the National Race and Organising and Women's Campaign Unit have come together to offer and deliver training sessions and support on these two areas of work. This collaborative initiative has been a rewarding and engaging project which has provided a safe environment for activists, organisers and staff to learn, support and discuss not only racism and the undervaluation of women's work but importantly the intersectionality of discrimination and how we can better campaign and organise for our members from diverse backgrounds.

The WCU has had the absolute privilege of working with the participants of the GRASP Programme for 2023/2024 which has hugely impacted on the work and focus on the intersectionality of our campaigns and improving practices across the union.

The joint work of these two areas focuses on addressing workplace inequality, with the aim of providing practical tools and perspectives to ensure and work towards a reality where all of our work has an equalities focus and embeds good practice into our industrial relations by creating campaigns that are more inclusive and win for all members.

## Pregnancy Loss Consultation and Charter

As part of the WCU's work jointly with the Equalities Department and outlined further in that section, we are committed to promoting dignity and support for individuals affected by pregnancy loss and support the broader commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity and compassion within the workplace. This joint work has led to the



consultation and publication of the Pregnancy Loss Charter as a resource for activists across the union.

## Conclusion

As we look forward into the next year, the Women's Campaign Unit remains resolute in its commitment to challenging discriminatory pay practices and advancing equality agendas across all regions of the union. Through a comprehensive approach that includes a focus on collectivising and building the union through developing leaders, improving legal support, providing practical campaign and claim support, and high-level legislative changes, the union is in a positive position to create tangible change and secure fairer outcomes for our members.

## National Race and Organising

### Main Projects

Work on implementing the Elizabeth Henry recommendations continues through the development of five main projects that crucially target every key aspect of our union, members, activists, staff, organising and campaigning!



### GRASP

#### (Elizabeth Henry Recommendation 6)

The GMB Race Achievement Scholarship Programme (GRASP) commenced in October 2023 and has been a tremendous success. Over the period of six months the GRASP Team (Kerry Smith, Farzana Jumma, Anita Davies and latterly Keno Katsuda) have sought to positively develop 10 remarkable members from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds in a programmed specifically designed to enhance their natural skills and ability as workplace leaders, organizers and campaigners.

We could never have dreamt to have had such a talented and tight knit group that have truly grasped every opportunity to learn and progress. The cohort have had the benefit of 3 months of classroom-based learning followed by workplace focused fieldwork placements in their region.



Each participant exhibited an exceptional blend of experience, expertise, and profound eagerness for personal development throughout the programme. The natural bond that was quickly established within the group meant that each individual served as a source of inspiration and motivation for the others making the group even stronger. By harnessing the natural talents and exemplary learning ethic of each participant, we were able to enhance their abilities and also instill a sense of confidence in their capacity to drive positive change in promoting race equity and justice within the workplace.

Over the six months secondment period, we were greatly assisted by the expertise of colleagues from national office and external facilitators and were able to ensure the cohort completed modules covering a diverse range of topics, including:

- The Roots of Race and Racism
- Race and Law, Employment Rights, and Discrimination
- Recognising and Challenging Racism in the Workplace
- Migrant Workers: Fact, Fiction, and Making a Difference
- Women and Inequality in the Workplace
- Sexism, Racism, and Intersectionality
- Introduction to Pensions
- National and Local Government
- Race and Politics
- GMB Equality Toolkits, Charters, and Policies
- Health and Safety Regulations and Applications
- Health and Safety and Race

In addition to these modules, the programme facilitated visits to the Westminster and the Welsh Parliaments, featuring guest sessions delivered by Dawn Butler MP and former Prime Minister Gordon Brown. The cohort also received insightful sessions on organisational awareness from teams providing national services for the GMB focusing on research and policy, communications and campaigning, and GMB Congress.



The overarching objective of GRASP is to empower participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to foster inclusive and equitable workplaces where all individuals can thrive. The participants having completed the programme now need the support and the right opportunities, to realise their potential as significant contributors in furthering GMB's commitment to advancing race equity, fostering dignity at work, and promoting equality for all.

To facilitate the cohort's transition into the role of GMB Race Ambassadors within regions, branches and workplace, we have developed some guidelines on how you can best support their expertise and perspective to enact positive

change. Furthermore, as part of our commitment to lifelong learning and continuous development, we will continue to offer coaching, mentoring, and other developmental opportunities to support GMB Race Ambassadors in their roles. To ensure ongoing support is maintained, all GMB Race Ambassadors will have the chance to participate in monthly Ambassador meetings via Teams and quarterly in-person Ambassador meetings.

The applications for GRASP will be available from the second week in May 2024 with the new cohort commencing the programme the 1st of October 2024.

### Joint National Race & Organising and Women's Campaign Unit Roadshows

The joint roadshow presentations have been successfully delivered at least once in most regions but there is much more to do before every region has had an adequate opportunity to benefit from this essential work. Where we have been involved there has been a unique opportunity for staff and lay activists to learn and safely engage whilst we examine the negative impact of the two crucial issues of Race inequality and Women's inequality in the workplace. We have then taken a serious look at how we tackle systemic racism, sexism and intersectionality through organising our members and issue-based campaigning. The issue of intersectionality is also a main focus and through the work we have now been able to develop with the women on GRASP we are currently refining the presentations to incorporate their experiences. We will be in touch with regions again and the roadshows will continue throughout the year.





**GMB centric Anti Racism Training for All.****(Elizabeth Henry Recommendation 5)**

The work to deliver a comprehensive GMB centric Anti Racism Training for All continues. In addition to the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic activists that completed the Training the Trainers course last year the GRASP cohort have also completed the course as part of the programme. This means that in line with our objective for the anti-racism training to be delivered by those with lived and living experience of racism and predominantly from within the GMB we are definitely on course. Work is currently being undertaken with Dr Elizabeth Henry on finalizing the framework and content of the course which will be completed later this year.

**Coaching, Mentoring and Support Scheme for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff.****(Elizabeth Henry Recommendation 6)**

This bespoke support scheme developed with Kerry Smith is yet another potentially ground-breaking scheme that will be open to our Black Asian and Minority Ethnic employees. The support comprises of a 3-tier support system which staff can access voluntarily after the initial sessions at the first tier that focus on belonging, wellbeing, organisational awareness, confidence building and achievement. The comms for the engagement and support framework was developed and we completed an initial survey of all staff in 2023 to identify those eligible for the scheme. In order to focus on the launch of GRASP we delayed the roll out of the scheme and since that time more staff have been employed and therefore, we intend to survey them to ensure we have a comprehensive list. We aim to launch the scheme by contacting the relevant staff in July 2024.

**Chronicling the GMB's historical presence of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic activists, race-based campaigns, and disputes.****(Elizabeth Henry Recommendation 4,5,6)**

John Callow has worked tirelessly with me on this amazing piece of work, and we are on target to launch the book at Congress 2024.

**Equality & Inclusion****Supporting self-organisation**

This year, we've continued to facilitate activists in their pursuit of equality and inclusion in the workplace across the five equality strands GMB organises around: LGBT+ workers, disabled workers, young (30 and under) workers – and, with the WCU and Race Organiser, women and Black, Asian and minority ethnic workers.

Self-organisation is essential for building diverse activist confidence and leadership and we continue to support strand networks made up of representatives from every GMB region. All of our equality work is run by and for members and organisers who identify with or belong to each strand, meaning the work is truly led from lived workplace experience.

The members of the Women's, LGBT+, Young and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers strands this year delivered online national summits open to members nominated by their regions, between October and February. Topics covered for each strand included organising workers, highlighting structural workplace inequality, looking at the history of equality activism, and identifying and developing diverse GMB activist leaders. The disabled workers strand will run their summit later in 2024.

**Equality structures and culture change**

In October, the CEC agreed with recommendations from a working group reviewing the culture of GMB's national equality structures. The CEC agreed that the existing structures had let down both individual staff and activists and the necessary campaigning work on equality concerns across the union, and that a change was needed to enhance this work. Specific recommendations include reaffirming our Code of Conduct and providing better training to leaders in the structures. This CEC decision prompts a process of positive review, listening and consultation with activists and organisers who are leading on collective work by and for workers belonging to our five equality strands. Members at every level of the union who are undertaking equality campaigning to improve work for LGBT+, Disabled, Young, Women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers who would like to share ideas for the future of our national equality structures are encouraged to email [equalityinclusion@gmb.org.uk](mailto:equalityinclusion@gmb.org.uk).

Alongside this working group, a parallel group considered actions needed to strengthen the strategy for the work of the national self-organised equality structures, and the conclusions of this group will be built into the above review.

As part of these changes, a new process was designed and delivered to fill the reserved GMB equality seats each to TUC Congress and Labour Party Conference. Eligible members and electors were those who attended national GMB equality events (summits and TUC conferences) this year. These seats top up our delegations to each of these external labour movement events, complementing regional efforts to ensure that our delegations represent the diversity of GMB membership. This year's process successfully and democratically engaged a larger number of equality activists than in recent years, resulting in



the majority of the seats being filled by members attending for GMB for the first time. We will ask that these members reflect on and share their experience back within their GMB branches and equality strand structures after the events.

### **Trans and non-binary workers**

This year has seen the escalation of unacceptable right-wing media and government assaults on our trans and non-binary siblings. Time and time again, GMB members have asserted our absolute solidarity with our gender diverse siblings. We have exerted pressure where our expertise and influence are strongest – in the workplaces where we are organised. Bristol City Council and the Government People Group/Cabinet Office are two examples of employers where there have been threats to water down protection against harassment and bullying in workplace policies. We responded robustly in both cases. We ask branches to highlight to us any proposed changes to workplace policies which may include a weakening of protections and provisions for trans and non-binary workers so that we can provide expert input.

In early 2024 the government produced draft guidance on working with “gender questioning” children and ran a consultation. The draft guidance, which will not be legally binding, was described by experts as “not fit for purpose”, “legally unworkable” and “contrary to the Equality Act”. We were pleased to note that despite the failings of the EHRC in recent years in standing up for trans and non-binary people, their response to the consultation was critical on most points. We contributed to the TUC consultation response on the draft guidance, highlighting both that the guidance will have a negative impact on our LGBT+ members in schools and that our members will require clear guidance that does not leave them in doubt about the best thing to do to support children and young people they work with. We spoke to the GMB National Schools Committee to highlight and explain the issue. We will be awaiting the final guidance and are prepared to respond and advise and support members where needed.

The equality data project highlighted in the WCU section of this report means that we have an increasing knowledge of where GMB's trans and non-binary (and all LGBT+) members work, which will enable us to better contact them to organise and understand what is needed in their workplaces.

### **Disabled workers and flexible working**

At Congress 2023 disabled and non-disabled activists came together to focus on the workplace barriers faced by people with unseen disability. We highlighted that people's disabilities – or impairments, conditions and differences – are not what makes work inaccessible to many disabled people. It's the inflexibility of employment that

keeps disabled people out of work, or in poor quality, lower paid work. In line with Congress motions we set out an ambitious plan of work for a toolkit focused on campaigning for workers with unseen disability and the changes GMB reps can make to improve work. We met with the national communications department and the national Disabled Workers strand lead to discuss and finesse messaging for this campaign. We arranged for three members from two regions to attend a Train the Trainer course put on by Midlands, in order to enhance their skills in co-designing and delivering campaign training. We secured contributions to the toolkit from the health and safety department; spoke to regional education officers about a training offer; and produced the first draft of a 35-page toolkit full of ideas for reps to kick off campaigns to secure workplace improvements to make work easier for workers with unseen disability. Staff absence and capacity forced a pause to this work, which the department is fully committed to rolling out this summer.

In April 2024, employment law changes included enhanced rights for employees to request flexible working.

We know that flexible working can be revolutionary for people's work-life balance – and particularly for enabling disabled people, and carers, to access and stay in good quality work. Our activists and organisers need proper knowledge of these changes in order to influence industrially to truly make work more flexible for disabled people. With the WCU we ran a webinar open to all activists and organisers explaining the changes and highlighting the campaigning opportunities they bring.

A fantastic 100 people joined with a further 287 registering or requesting they receive the webinar materials.

The webinar recording, presentation and a flexible working FAQ and campaigning tips document are available to all activists. Please get in touch to receive these so you know the rights that your disabled and non-disabled branch and region's members have to adapt their working patterns.

### **Pregnancy Loss Consultation and Charter**

Working with the WCU we are actioning a 2023 GMB Congress motion from London region on the impact of pregnancy loss in the workplace. The motion highlighted the stark difference in legal rights for parents who lose a pregnancy before 24 weeks and those whose loss is after 24 weeks, who are entitled to full statutory and contractual parental rights and leave. Our workplace charter, to be launched on our exhibition stand at Congress in Bournemouth, provides a best practice model for activists to take through branches to their employers. The aim is to secure a compassionate and informed response in the

workplace to those who lose an earlier pregnancy, including a commitment to paid time off which will not contribute to sickness absence triggers. We are grateful to the 66 members who took their time and emotional labour to respond to the WCU survey sharing ideas and their own experience of this area, meaning our resource will represent experiences from every areas where GMB members work. We are now looking for the first branches to take the model charter to their employer for successful implementation – please email [equalityinclusion@gmb.org.uk](mailto:equalityinclusion@gmb.org.uk) if this could be you.

### **Policy guidance, legal changes and workplace campaign toolkits**

Throughout each year we provide workplace policy development expertise to public and private section organisers and officers, both regionally and nationally-based. Whilst employers often draft policies that set out their basic legal responsibilities dressed up with inclusive language, we utilise expert, up-to-date knowledge of contemporary workplace issues and emerging practice across industries to push for better terms and conditions for workers in relation to all equality strands. This year our input has improved general and specific equality policies in all GMB industrial areas, from academy school chains, through the public sector, food manufacturing, G4S, waste management and more.

We engage too with external equality-centric organisations, including inputting into the EHRC's new menopause workplace guidance project.

The range of national equality toolkits continue to be used throughout GMB regions.

Successes include Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust implementing the GMB Domestic Abuse policy, Wales and South West region utilising the Smash the Stigma: Menopause in the Workplace toolkit as part of a menopause event, discussions with Yodel around the neurodiversity toolkit, as well as a request from a US university for our menopause resources to be used in doctoral research.

### **Eleanor Marx Award**

The Eleanor Marx Award 2024 – recognising our outstanding women activists who build the union and lead collective action – is coordinated by the department. At the time of writing, 29 excellent nominations from every corner of the union have been received and we will have an opportunity to hear about some inspirational work together at Congress.

### **Influencing the wider labour movement: TUC Equality Conferences and Committees**

Our delegates across the five TUC equality conferences total 77 this year from all seven GMB regions and every industrial area. Each delegation includes first time delegates, and each represents the wonderful intersectional diversity of our membership. Our sizeable delegations to Black Workers and Women Workers Conferences 2024 include particularly strong numbers of members who are for the first time taking part in the opportunity to take GMB's influence more widely.

Further to the conferences, in 2024-25 we will maintain GMB's influence on the five national TUC equality committees with 11 GMB members nominated to join these. We thank them for their work on behalf of all GMB members.

At Women's Conference we used the opportunity to amend a motion on 'Working with men and boys to end Violence Against Women and Girls'. Our amendment highlighted the need for statutory funding of Rape Crisis Centres and better pay, terms and conditions for our members working in the sector.

At Young Workers' Conference our young activists' motion on Artificial Intelligence was composited with that from another union. We called on the TUC to campaign on the impacts of AI, surveillance and automated decision-making on the working lives of young workers – including on our members in the gig economy.

Black Workers' Conference heard a GMB motion on the risk of a disproportionate effect of the Minimum Service Levels legislation on Black workers.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to Disabled Workers' and LGBT+ Workers' Conferences. Our motion at the former will ask for work to be carried out to support those who continue to experience Long COVID, and to work to increase their access to workplace support. We have submitted an emergency motion on the recent unacceptable and dehumanising government attacks on disabled people in and out of work. We will call for reminders to politicians of all stripes that the PIP benefit is not an out of work benefit and is often used by our members who are working disabled people to access what they need in order to work.

Our conference delegation will also be advocating on retaining investment in the specialist schools where our members work.

At LGBT+ Workers' conference our delegation will put forward a motion asking the TUC to coordinate an audit of employers attempting to roll back access to safe, inclusive and harassment-free workplaces for trans and non-binary workers,



and to support unions with the knowledge and resources needed to successfully challenge these unacceptable actions.

If you know a GMB member who'd benefit from attending one of the TUC equality conferences for the first time in 2025, please contact your Regional Equality Officer.

### **Conclusion**

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank every activist and organiser who has engaged with equality and inclusion work at a national level this year. Our work together is always rewarding.

Your stories of struggles in your branches and workplaces are an inspiration – and essential to us knowing how to advocate nationally for workers belonging to our five equality strands and how to build resources to support your work. We're looking forward to more conversations on our Congress exhibition stand in Bournemouth.



## HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

This has been a challenging year for the National HS&E Department. We have responded to increased demands for health and safety campaigning; met the challenge of resourcing GMB's involvement with the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, and led from the front in fighting the erosion of health and safety standards in some of our largest employers.

We have also been lucky enough to spend time with activity and Safety Representatives across the whole of GMB, and were delighted that Simon Wilde was the well-deserved recipient of the TUC Safety Representative of the Year Award for 2023.

As ever, we welcome the opportunity to discuss this report, and our wider work, at our stand at GMB Congress.

### Asda Retail

We have challenged Asda senior management over a number of H&S issues in stores, including the 10-tote home shopping picking trollies, fire safety issues, workplace violence and back of house standards. A campaign was launched to encourage members to report injuries and near-misses. Lynsey recorded a short video for members, explaining the importance of reporting accidents and near misses. We also raised the issue of pallets leaving Asda depots over height, and often with heavy and breakable items loose, presenting high risk of injury. We launched a survey to get data on how many accidents and injuries were not being reported in the accident book. The results were shocking. We are now working with Unionline to help members to get some compensation for accidents and injuries caused by unsafe working practices in ASDA. Over £1 million has been recovered for members in the last year, since we started working with Unionline on this. However, ideally we'd like to see ASDA take H&S more seriously so that these claims are not necessary and our members are not injured at work. We continue to raise any issues that we find, to try to make work safer for our members. Poor working conditions and lack of health and safety standards forced members in Asda Gosport Store to take historic strike action in February, and this was followed by strike action at stores in Wisbech, Lowestoft and Brighton.

### G4S

In late May last year, we both met with G4S in Bristol to inspect and assess their proposed vehicle for Foreign Currency Exchange single-person collection. Suggestions made by Lynsey have resulted in substantial ergonomic improvements

to the vehicle interior, which has moved to trial phase as a result. The trial has been ongoing throughout the year, and we have been consulted with consistently. Now we come to the summer holiday period, we will see how well it is working. We have also been consulted on body armour and are awaiting samples and a trial.

We have also provided support on the ongoing industrial dispute regarding G4S members in Jobcentre Plus. Whilst this is primarily a dispute about pay, it is strongly compounded by the high risk of violence in the workplace, compounded by difficulties in effectively managing the hazards in the workplace. At time of writing a strong mandate for strike action has been secured, and we are providing briefing and analysis for National Officer Eamon O'Hearn who is leading the dispute.

### RAAC Concrete in Schools/Public Sector

We are campaigning for the urgent removal of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) from all schools and public buildings where it is identified. RAAC is a concrete that is structurally like 'Aero' chocolate, meaning it can dangerously deteriorate from the inside with no visible issues until it breaks. We are now part of a joint union team meeting monthly with DFE to closely monitor development and ensure RAAC is removed where identified. We have met with Education Secretary Gillian Keegan and DFE Civil servants on numerous occasions to demand greater transparency on the number and state of schools with RAAC. 234 schools have been identified as having RAAC present, and these schools are now being assessed for remediation or removal.

We have also engaged with DFE regarding recent ceiling collapses in Tyneside and Bedfordshire. Concerns have been raised that these incidents may have been caused by the presence of life expired High Alumina Cement (HAC), though DFE have suggested that the common link is a type of roof construction known as 'Pot and Beam'. At time of writing we are awaiting the results of local structural surveys, which should help to identify whether these are unconnected local incidents, or a genuine national issue.

### Uber

In November 2023, Dan was part of a team who met with Uber senior management to discuss the proposals to trial cash payment from Uber customers in the Midlands. The team of Uber National Reps had raised severe concerns over the potential for increased violence towards Uber drivers. Along with National Officer Eamon O'Hearn, and Midlands Regional Organiser Kate Gorton, we helped the national rep team to challenge Uber management on provision of risk assessments and the management and communications around work-related violence risks. Whilst the trial did go

ahead, we were able to significantly influence the approach that Uber took, and were able to maintain a constructive but critical relationship with the employer.

### Securitas

We have recently been re-added to the invite list for the National H&S meetings and welcome the chance to be more involved in the H&S forum's work. The National Rep's have been doing some great work and we are happy to be involved in trials of body worn cameras and investigations into RIDDOR-reportable incidents.

### BestFood

Lynsey has been advising National Reps throughout the year and has recently been asked to attend meetings on changes to polar curtains in delivery vehicles and manual handling training discrepancies which will take place in early May.

### Energy Sector

Cadent have relaunched their 'Unified in Safety' strategy, which details their safety management system. Dan gave the keynote speech at the launch conference, which saw a commitment from the company to reinstitute consultation structures at local level, to feed into a revitalised national

committee. Commitments were also made on involving GMB Safety Reps in incident investigations.

Dan also attends the National Gas SHE Forum, and has agreed to attend and potentially present at the inaugural NG SHE Conference to be held later in 2024.

### Call Centres and Call Handling

Working in conjunction with colleagues in the Private Section and Public Services Section, we produced an online survey questionnaire on call handling practice and health & safety management. At time of writing, the survey has received more than 200 responses, which we will use to develop both new guidance and our wider campaigning approach on the issue.

### TUC Safety Representative of the Year 2023 Award

London Region member Simon Wilde, who won the Mary MacArthur GMB Safety Representative of the Year Award at Congress 2023, was awarded the TUC National Safety Representative of the Year at TUC Congress in Liverpool in September. Simon, who works for Best Food Logistics, was recognised for his efforts in transforming the culture towards risk assessments and getting his employer to take safety concerns seriously.





## LEGAL

### 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. This is our commitment to providing a quality legal service to our members.

UnionLine is operated from a head office in Sheffield. Staff 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. UnionLine also monitors and controls the quality of service provided by these law firms to ensure that we have the best, most effective legal service for our members across the entire country. UnionLine is constantly adding services and making improvements. In 2023 UnionLine advised on over 2,690 cases, and referred over 544 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 2023 UnionLine recovered £7.6 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 GMB's legal service will ensure maximum damages are recovered.

### 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, which in 2023 continued to the highest level for many years as the cost-of-living crisis hit members. We have been supporting officers in the private and the public sectors across the union. We continue to work with Regions on briefings around industrial action. Anti-Union measures on the part of the

Government are continuing. The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 is now in force. The Government has passed regulations affecting passenger train operation services, ambulance services, and border security. GMB supported the TUC special conference in December 2023 to campaign against these measures. The government has changed its position in that going forwards it will be for individual employers to decide whether to achieve the relevant minimum service level by issuing work notices or voluntary agreements.

GMB was one of the 14 unions involved in the successful judicial review challenge of the repeal of the ban on the use of agency workers in strikes. The High Court quashed the repeal in 2023 and the ban is back in place. However, the government is proposing to reintroduce repeal for a second time and at the time of writing there was a consultation in which GMB, and other unions opposed repeal. GMB is involved in securing a commitment from a future Labour Government to repeal the minimum services levels legislation, to maintain the ban on the use of agency workers, and to repeal and simplify the anti-union law around industrial action generally.

A recent Supreme Court case has held that UK law requires the introduction of statutory protection for workers who suffer detriment for taking industrial action. There is already some limited protection against dismissal.

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 2021 judgment of the Supreme Court on the subject.

### Equal Pay

The union is supporting thousands of members in a number of large equal pay claims throughout the UK. In these claims members are represented by external union Solicitors given the specialist nature of them. We have a number of important hearings coming up in the second half of 2024 and we expect this to continue into 2025.

### Individual Rights

The onslaught on individual rights by the Government has continued, and with the Tory Government still having a majority in Parliament we have anticipated further attacks. The 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. The government is proposing to reintroduce fees for employment tribunal claims, nearly seven years after the Supreme Court quashed the previous charging regime as unlawful. The proposal is for a £55 issue fee to be introduced which would be payable on bringing a claim to the

tribunal. This would remain at £55 where a claim is brought by multiple claimants. Each judgment or other order appealed to the Employment Appeal Tribunal will attract a £55 fee. GMB is opposing the reintroduction of fees and responded to the public consultation.

### Litigation

We continue to advise and 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, including the further repeal of the ban on the use of agency workers in strikes and employment tribunal fees.

### Brexit and Employment Law

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 ended the special status of EU law and allows the government to amend, revoke, and replace legislation.

The "sunset clause" that would have repealed all EU derived legislation in one go at the end of 2023 was abandoned by the government at the last minute. The only legislation selected for repeal related to workers posted in the EU and driving rules.

The government has made changes to the Working Time Regulations and TUPE. In relation to working time to remove the requirement for employers to keep records for the purpose of working time and to consolidate all holiday entitlement into one "pot" so that EU and UK holiday (the 4 weeks and 1.6 weeks).

In relation to TUPE the change is to remove the requirement to elect new representatives where none currently exist in employers with fewer than 50 employees and transfers affecting less than 10 employees, so that consultation takes place in those cases directly with the affected employees.

### Training

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

### Personnel

The National Office Legal Department comprises Jamie Hanley, Legal Director and General Counsel, Barry Smith, National Legal Officer, and Lauren

Strain, Legal Officer (Industrial Relations and Equal Pay). We welcomed Jamie who joined us in 2023. Barry is Secretary to the Congress 2023 Standing Orders Committee.



## ORGANISING

I was asked to chair the NOT as Martin Smith was retiring, we discussed and identified that the NOT and moved away from the primary purpose. It had been set up back in 2005. The NOT had been set up to orchestrate a culture change at that time and had been successful in doing that, going from a heavy servicing model to an organising model.

The union had changed since 2005 and organising practices though not perfect was now in place and a lot more of the organising responsibility had been adopted by Regional Secretaries and their management structures. So we felt the NOT needed to evaluate how it was working and if this was adding value to building the campaigning and organising union that is needed.

It was identified that:

- It had grown beyond recognition and had so many people on each meeting that the purpose was lost and it became a talking shop
- It wasn't viewed positively by anyone outside of the committee.
- A lot of the members were now new and working under a new culture where contact with other regions becoming more accessible.

It was felt that it would still be useful to have some central committee like the NOT as there were some positives we needed to preserve.

- Sharing best practices
- A point of contact in the region to signpost on things like ballots that span certain regions
- Sharing of companies that have been organised and then have workplaces in other regions.
- Looking at how campaigning and organising is working in different regions i.e. do they have an organising team, what is the format and does it work.

A decision was made to downsize the NOT to one SO from each region plus the two national secretaries so that we could keep a close connection with industrial and organising. Tom Rigby who has some national education responsibilities was also invited on, to link in training for reps and officers to deliver our commitments. The smaller size meetings could be more practical and productive.

### **This new committee then decided what the purpose of the new NOT should be;**

Promoting Organising and Campaigning Excellence.

Working towards making campaigning and organising the natural behaviour across the union by:

- a. Identifying and sharing examples of excellent campaigning and organising. We will seek to inspire people across the union to excel by ensuring that people see what's good and what works.
- b. Supports regions in developing and embedding their campaigning and organising expertise.
- c. Helps to co-ordinate strategic national/cross region campaigns across the union. And to help ensure that these campaigns are delivered and implemented consistently. To do this we will provide tools and guidance.
- d. Providing a space for reflection on what works and what doesn't.
- e. Providing guidance and recommendations to the SMT around campaigning priorities, strategies, and opportunities.

In addition, the NOT would look to draw in the talent and expertise from ROs, REO's, activists and others who are delivering for members to help formulate the strategies and tools.

### **NOT activities**

Through out the year we have had sessions on Care, Evri, Amazon and Apple.

We have had a presentation on equal pay, we have discussed the pro's and con's of campaigns running in our areas and shared tips and support for campaigns to be started around equal pay in most regions. We also had the Women's Campaign unit to come and support a session on how we start campaigns, how we support and resource them. Expelling some of the concerns. We have discussed Southern's success in schools and how that could be replicated.

National secretaries have provided updates on ballots and campaigns that we have been able to support from our Regions.

We have shared a new way of delivering ISM's which cuts out the bureaucracy and puts the emphasis on testing the potential reps credibility in the workplace, hence finding the reps we need.

We reviewed the induction materials and the new disputes course, which has now been run in a few

different regions.

The NOT have also shared written and verbal reports on successes in their regions, around disputes, campaigns and recognition campaigns, to inspire and encourage each other to try new ideas and ways of working across regions.

The next year will be spent delivering on the above proposal and working with the SLT to deliver Organising and Campaigning excellence.

**Amanda Gearing**  
**National Organising Team Chair**

## POLITICAL

Political priorities this year have focused on three things: securing our members rights and conditions at work through political pressure, ensuring a strong political voice in the union through getting strong support from members in the ballot for the union's political fund, and getting ready for the general election when that occurs.

The next year will be crucial, at some point before our next Congress in 2025 the UK will have gone through a general election, a landmark one, where there is a real possibility that the Conservative Westminster Government may lose an election after 14 years of austerity, failure, corruption and attacks on working people and trade unions. We must be ready to seize the moment.

### Political Fund Ballot 2024

The Political Fund is our union's campaign fund as it allows us to fight for our members not just in the workplace, but also wherever power lies.

It is a legal requirement for unions that "political objects" or work carried out by the union is paid for separately out of a separate fund called a Political Fund which members joining have to agree to contribute towards or opt-in. Every ten years we have to ballot all members on whether we should retain a fund.

In Autumn 2023 we ran our latest ballot of members for retaining the fund. The campaign however had started much earlier in the year with a fringe at last year's Congress about the campaign and the importance of the fringe with activists from across the union including NHS ambulance service worker and GMB rep, Richard Harlington on how the political fund supported the NHS pay campaign and Martha de Bruxelles who talked about on how the fund helped her make relationships on behalf of the union with political decision makers.

The ballot ran in October 2023 with all eligible members receiving their ballots by the 12th October and voting ending on the 1st November. Ahead of the ballot we provided activist resources and briefings to be used across the union, as well as materials and content.

The ballot result was 96.52% in support of retaining the fund with an improved turnout which gave us a good mandate to continue the political and campaigning work the union is carrying out.

The Political Department would like to thank all those that gave endorsements, spoke to members, campaigned and voted to retain the fund. The result would no have been what it was without your support.

## In Westminster and across the country

It has been another busy year for the Political Department - we've led the way on major policy shifts, campaigns 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 members in ASDA, to campaigning for justice for steelworkers.

Notable highlights include:

### Asda

It's been a big year for our Asda members, who have taken industrial action in stores for the first time ever. On the political side, we have been working closely with Labour MPs on the Business and Trade select committee to hold Asda to account. After a pretty disastrous committee appearance last summer, we worked to get Asda recalled before Christmas to answer questions on gaps in its accounts and the impact of cost-cutting and profit maximisation on staff in store. It was important to get Asda bosses, including owner Mohsin Issa, in front of MPs to answer these questions. But TDR Capital, the private equity co-owners, managed to dodge scrutiny. As a result, we kept working with the committee to put pressure on TDR to give evidence, and eventually in January this year they did.



The world of private equity is often secretive with business happening behind closed doors, so it was a big win to get the TDR bosses to answer questions on the record, including on their offshore ownership structures, health and safety problems in stores and levels of access given to GMB to get information about the business. The answers given by both Asda and TDR have been used to build and grow the industrial campaign.



### Steel

In September, Tata Steel agreed a deal with the Government resulting in the closure of blast furnaces at Port Talbot, to be replaced with an electric arc furnace, costing nearly 3,000 jobs. GMB worked with other unions to put political pressure on Tata Steel, including through promoting the Multi-Union Plan that would avoid job losses while still transitioning to green steel. We worked with the Labour Party on an Opposition Day debate on steel, in which Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Jonathan Reynolds MP, reaffirmed the Party's commitment to the Multi-Union Plan and also to their plans to invest £3bn in the steel industry. We brought members to Parliament to watch the debate. We also worked with the Welsh Affairs select committee to give evidence on the impact of Tata's plans. The fight at Port Talbot is ongoing, and we will continue to work with our GMB sponsored MPs to put pressure on the company to protect jobs.

### Wilko

Our members in Wilko told us they felt that Wilko bosses had never been held to account for collapsing the business and failing to save tens of thousands of jobs. We worked with the Business and Trade select committee to hold a special evidence session on Wilko, including evidence from both GMB and from Lisa Wilkinson. We took Wilko reps along to Parliament to sit in the front row and watch Wilko bosses answer questions about what went wrong and how they failed to prevent it. As part of this, Lisa Wilkinson finally apologised to the workforce and took some responsibility for their job losses.

Nothing can bring back members' jobs or the family that Wilko gave them, but getting the closure of having bosses take responsibility for their actions was important in making sure they didn't just get away with it, and that warnings that this could happen again to another retailer are hopefully listened to.

The loss of Wilko was also a key theme at Labour Party conference, with GMB's motion on protecting the retail industry passing unanimously.

### Labour Conference 2023

Last year's Labour Annual Conference was potentially the last before a General Election.

Annual Conference passed motions drafted by GMB on three critical areas: industrial strategy, retail and equal pay. We would like to thank GMB delegates who spoke on these motions. In addition, the key vote of the week was on adopting the National Policy Forum (NPF) final-stage report, which includes many important GMB priorities secured by our delegation on the NPF.

We also had a significant presence across the conference, with GMB speakers appearing on fringes on topics including securing good jobs, defence manufacturing and improving democracy.

### Getting ready for the general election

It is vital that our political work is driven by the industrial needs of our membership and, apart from the above, we further continue to support GMB political activity across GMB Sections, Regions and Nations as they campaign with devolved, regional or local government and look to expand this work in the following year.

This year is also going to be big ahead of the General Election which will have happened by the time GMB Congress meets in 2025. Preparedness for when that election is called has been a key part of our work be that through the Labour Party on policy and the manifesto work, supporting GMB candidates, or our own GMB campaign.

### Manifesto

The Labour Party NPF final-stage meeting happened in July 2023 this is a key milestone in Labour's path to having a manifesto for the next election. This was the culmination of the Party's formal policy development process during the Parliamentary cycle. The July meeting agreed the final NPF report which went to Labour Annual Conference following which it becomes the "Party programme" from which the manifesto is broadly based around.

Our representatives worked hard over the weekend to deliver on GMB key policy priorities, including around strengthening workers and trade union rights with a new deal for workers, strengthening equal pay laws, securing GB Energy, as well as supporting UK industry and manufacturing through better procurement and subsidies. GMB played a crucial role in securing these key commitments as well as the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB), trade union right to access and organise in workplaces, a pipeline of shipbuilding and defence manufacturing work and cross employer comparators for equal pay claims.

GMB's Political Department is now in ongoing negotiations with the Labour Party about the content of the manifesto, to be agreed at the traditional Clause V meeting ahead of the general election.

### Candidates

In terms of internal Labour Party matters, with a general election happening at some point in 2024, the Labour Party have pretty much finished selecting Westminster Parliamentary 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. GMB Regions are using their own processes to ensure we endorse candidates that will deliver this.

### **Defending Labour's New Deal for Working People**

Crucial to our members in the event of a Labour Government, the Party is ready to bring forward its New Deal for Working People which is its entire package on workers' rights and related policies including repeal and modernisation of anti-trade union laws including a right to organise and access workplaces, banning zero hours and fire and rehire, a new enforcement body and collective bargaining structures starting in social care and also for school support staff. The Leader of the Labour Party has said they will do this in 100 days of a new government.

The Political Team is working hard to defend the package as you will see that unrepresentative voices in business and the Conservative Party are attacking it although the policies remain popular with the voters. It is important we build a broad coalition willing to defend it and we are working with sister unions, politicians, think-tanks and others to ensure the package is delivered in full by a potential Labour government.

We need our members to put themselves forward to endorse policies in the package, be that speak on platforms, write or record media, or go out and campaign on it. Get in touch with the team to find out what you can do to support or visit [www.gmb.org.uk/NewDeal](http://www.gmb.org.uk/NewDeal)

## RESEARCH & POLICY DEPARTMENT

In the immediate period after the last Congress, a major piece of work was undertaken jointly with the political department to influence the outcomes of the Labour Party's National Policy Forum process (including support for the GMB delegation). We secured a large number of key commitments which reflected longstanding Congress and campaigning priorities, including restoration of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body, day one rights at work, new collective rights (including on statutory recognition and the right to access workplaces), and justice for the striking Cammell Laird workers. The final NPF report is expected to form the basis for the next Labour manifesto, and significant follow-on work has been undertaken to develop these commitments.

Training and development work has continued on digital bargaining and organising tools – GMB Reps' Tools. A number of training sessions have been delivered across GMB Regions to a mix of staff and reps' groups. Usage has increased steadily since last year, while existing users continued to draw on the tools. There were just under 300 unique users, and almost 2,500 actions performed using the tools since Congress 2023 (broken down below):

### GMB online Reps' Tools – usage breakdown (June 2023 to April 2024)

Company Reporter	1,200
School Support Staff Lookup	597
Labour market dashboard	247
Real-terms price calculator	218
GMB Benchmarker	159

If any reps want an introduction to these tools, please contact [laurence.turner@gmb.org.uk](mailto:laurence.turner@gmb.org.uk).

The Department continues to provide bargaining support information, including production of a monthly inflation and wages report that is sent to all GMB employees. Factual support has been provided to a large number of National and Regional pay claims and organising projects. This has included providing research reports and statistical summaries to a number of internal committees.

The Department also supports the internal democracy of the union. This primarily involves administration of various processes relating to GMB Congress, including production of policy documents, and the provision of advice to the Central Executive Council (CEC) and the Standing

Orders Committee (SOC). The Department also assists with the administration of the CEC's Political, European, and International sub-Committee (PEI).

Research and Policy staff also provided delegation support to a number of external conferences, including TUC Congress and Labour Party Conference, and advice on delegation voting positions at other external conferences. This work contributed to the securing of GMB Congress policies (including on support for the high street, steel, solidarity with Ukraine, and the future of the RPI inflation rate) as TUC and Labour Party policy. Work is ongoing to ensure that these motions are actioned.

The Department also drafted GMB's Low Pay Commission submission and GMB contributions to the National Joint Council (NJC) 'green book' local government and Chief Officers' pay claims. There was a notable success this year when the Low Pay Commission accepted a longstanding GMB demand and officially recognised that school support staff roles have become 'low paying' occupations.

The Department's international work has included establishing fundraising efforts (including working with other parts of the union) for Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) and the Ukrainian trade unions. Solidarity messages were also arranged for Colombian trade unions across GMB Regions, and a small solidarity delegation was arranged to Kyiv in April 2024.

The Department has also provided verbal and written evidence on a range of subjects to bodies including the Low Pay Commission, TUC working groups, external academics, Government departments, the Labour Party, and select committees. Through working closely with national officers and political officers, research staff drafted briefings and other materials that were used when former-Wilko management, Asda, and Asda's part-owner TDR Capital were called before Parliament's Business and Trade select committee.

The Department is staffed by Laurence Turner, Anna Barnes, Ross Holden, and Cassie Farmer (on secondment from Midlands Region). More information relating to the work of the team can be found at: <https://www.gmb.org.uk/research-policy>



# ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICIALS

1 MAY 2023 – 30 APRIL 2024

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## APPOINTMENT OF NATIONAL OFFICER

Public Section	Stacey Booth
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## APPOINTMENT OF SENIOR ORGANISERS

North West & Irish Region	Michael Evans Dan Gow Kerry Nash Alan Parry
Southern Region	Lib Whitfield
Wales & South West Region	Rosemary Broad

## APPOINTMENT OF ORGANISERS

London Region	Daniel Adilypour Eseosa Akojie Rachel Bayliss Mary Goodson Martin Hall Andrew Harden Tony Tanushi Donna Thomas
North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region	Victoria Austin Summer Risebury
GMB Scotland	Lesley-Ann MacAskill Sean Robertson
Southern Region	Alex Etches
Wales & South West Region	Arron Bevan-John

## ELECTION OF ORGANISERS

Wales & South West Region	Peter Hill Marie McDonald
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## TUC CONGRESS AWARDS 2023

**Maddy Wilkinson** (North West & Irish Region) was nominated for the TUC Women's Gold Badge Award 2023. Unfortunately the nomination was unsuccessful.

**Simon Wilde** (London Region) was nominated for the TUC Health & Safety Rep Award 2023. Simon's nomination was successful and he was presented with his Award at TUC Congress 2023 in Liverpool.

## PRIVATE SECTION

The Private Section Grades 1 and 2 membership stood at 219,913 in March 2024, representing an increase of 3,023 over a 12 month period. In terms of the companies covered by National Officers in the Section, membership rose by 3,628 to 92,577 and increased 4.46% during the past 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 President, Kevin Flanagan and the Manufacturing Section National President, Bob Gunn, the Commercial Services and Manufacturing Sections CEC Sub – National Committees and Andy Prendergast, National Secretary.

9 Commercial Services National Committee members responded to our Equality Monitoring Survey. They classified themselves as 6 Women and 3 Men. 1 was Black British–Caribbean, 7 were White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Ireland or British and 1 was White Irish.

5 Manufacturing Section National Committee members responded to the Equality Monitoring Survey. They classified themselves as 5 men. 1 was Black/Black British– Caribbean and 4 were White – English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British.

The industries and companies in the Section are covered by Andy Prendergast, National Secretary (British Gas and Energy), Gary Carter (Gas Distribution, Nuclear, Magnox, Electricity and Water), Nadine Houghton (Asda, Wilkos, Best Food and Bidfood), Eamon O'Hearn (Food & Drink, Security and cash, Private Hire & Taxi, including Uber); Charlotte Brumpton-Childs (Engineering Construction, Civil Engineering, Steel, TICA, Nestle, Forterra, Glass & Building Materials), Matthew Roberts (Aviation including British Airways and Swissport, Aerospace, Defence & Shipbuilding, Paper & Packaging), Gillian Ogilvie (Evri and Yodel), Kevin Brandstatter (Morrisons Data Services, Legal Services, Air Products and BOC). Further support to the Section has been provided by Tom Warnett, Midlands Region (Deliveroo and Uber Eats). Section Support is supplied by Kerri Harding and Pat Gannon (Senior PAs) and Annie Lawson-Foley and Lacey Smith (Support Workers).

### Aviation Industry

Our members at British Airways and Swissport have continued to build back organisation – and improve their pay and conditions – from the trauma of the past few years. We continue to steadily grow our membership base in the sector through being a campaigning union on issues ranging from dignity at work to welfare facilities, from zero tolerance on abuse to rostering, and

many others. Member-led campaigns winning for members.

### Chemicals/Pharmaceuticals

Regions continue to successfully lead on our local arrangements and negotiations, with no disputes being escalated to national throughout the year. We continue to support GMB members and Officers coordinate their work in key companies where pay and conditions negotiations are almost all held at site level.

### Energy

GMB continued to occupy a major space in the world of energy and have worked hard to fight for members jobs and secure opportunities for growth in the future. The National Secretary has sat on a number of panels at both the Labour Party and Liberal Democrat Conferences in order to get support for a balanced energy policy in line with GMB policy. GMB occupy seats on DESNZ committees looking at the skills needed for the development of hydrogen and CCUS technology and have regularly spoken at events and panels in support of nuclear and sensible policies for oil and gas. The union has also recently been at the forefront of the push for investment in SAF in order to both safeguard current jobs in aviation and to secure new opportunities for growth.

GMB have also been actively working with the Labour Party over energy and regularly meet the Shadow Secretary for Energy Security and Net Zero as we seek to secure our members' jobs for years to come.

### British Gas – Field Services

GMB recently concluded the 2024 pay deal which included an increase of 5% on base pay as well as number of other improvements to terms and conditions. The most notable of these was a reduction in weekend working for gas engineers and an increase in the overtime rate for weekends to around 220%. This was accepted by 76% of the membership and, following a great campaign led by the activists, a number of reps and new members were recruited in the ballot leaving GMB membership at over 95% of the collective.

Elsewhere we successfully negotiated a £5K payment for each member outsourced when the distribution function was moved to TVS following a great regional campaign which hugely increased membership in the area. Unfortunately, we did however lose the inducement claim run on behalf of thousands of members launched against the company in relation to fire and rehire. Whilst this is a disappointment, the fact that we have secured a commitment from the Labour Party off the back of our campaign to ban the practice shows that it is likely to be a case of losing the battle but winning the war.

## British Gas – Staff

GMB continued to grow in the staff area despite a disappointing response to the recent pay deal which resulted in members rejecting a deal, but then failing to vote in sufficient numbers to give any confidence that we would be able to undertake industrial action off the back of it. As a result of this, the deal (which increased salaries for most members by over 8% plus a one-off payment of £425) was accepted by default.

## PH Jones

A pay deal of 5% on base rates plus a minimum earning agreement for trades people and around £2.5k in shares was accepted. GMB are now working with the company in order to bring them back to profitability after a difficult few years in social housing.

## Cadent Gas

In July 2023, field force and staff members received a 12.84% GMB negotiated pay increase. Pay negotiations for 2024 are still on-going. GMB negotiators rejected 3.5% and are looking to improve new starter Cadent G terms and conditions.

Following a sixty-day consultation Cadent Gas took the decision to close the defined benefit contribution scheme to future accrual. This affected around 430 Cadent employees, across the field force, staff, and managerial grades. Although GMB could not get Cadent to withdraw the proposal we did get significant concessions for members including increasing the minimum transitional payments from £3,500 to £10,000 and getting the £25,000 limit withdrawn.

Cadent also increased redundancy protection from 2 to 4 years, changed the scheme rules to allow employees to take their pensions and continue to work and consolidated the full 2023 pay rise into the DB pension. The date for closure to future accrual has also been moved from 31st December 2023 to 31st March 2024.

## EDF

Negotiations on a new operations collective bargaining agreement for Hinkley Point C started but have ground to a halt because of EDF's announcement that HPC will not start generating until 2029 at the earliest, though more likely to be 2031.

Hunterston B nuclear power station is on course to defuel by 2026 and at that point it will pass to NRS formerly Magnox for decommissioning. Talks between GMB and the other trade unions, EDF and Magnox on TUPE, staffing levels, pensions etc. have been taking place.

There are three separate collective bargaining unit in EDF, customer, field/smart metering and generation. In customer GMB members voted to accept a 5.75% final offer. In field/smart metering members rejected the same offer and we are in discussions with the company about improving the offer. Generation pay talks are ongoing. The last offer was 6.75% and we are looking to improve on this in the next round of negotiations.

Separately to pay negotiations, in customer & field/smart metering last year's £1,250 cash lump sum will become an annual payment and the amount increased to £1,500 from October 2024.

## Gas Distribution Networks

The National Gas Distribution Forum has continued to meet quarterly and initiated a survey across the gas distribution members on fatigue and long working hours. The issue of workforce resilience and long working hours has been the main item for discussion with OFGEM and at HSE gas meetings. GMB gas distribution membership has increased by over three hundred and fifty over the past 12 months.

## National Gas Transmission

On 1st July 2023 National Gas Transmission paid the negotiated 9.5% pay settlement. Part of the agreement was a commitment to discuss pay progression for levels 6 to 8 and the bonus scheme. These negotiations have taken place and GMB members voted in favour of improvements to the bonus scheme and for a new pay progression system.

Progress has been made on pay for 2024 and the thorny issue of travel overtime, which has been the subject of a dispute between GMB and NGT for the past year. The company has tabled a 4.5% final pay offer and a compromise on travel overtime which will see GMB members getting time and a half for travel overtime after an initial commute time.

## National Gas Metering

This is a subsidiary of National Gas Transmission and currently employs around 180 people. A restructuring took place during March due to a decline in work and the company was seeking to cut 29 jobs. Trade unions are not recognised in gas metering business, but we do have members and are representing members through the process. We will be pursuing GMB recognition.

## National Grid

Following last year's pay settlement of 9.5% we have been in negotiations with the company on pay progression for levels 6 to 8. As part of pay negotiations for 2024, the company has put forward interim pay progression proposals.



National Grid has tabled a two year pay offer of 5% in year one, plus a CPIH + 1% offer for year two with a minimum 2.5% and maximum 6% cap. GMB and other Unions are seeking an improved deal.

When National Grid sold the gas distribution business, a large proportion of our reps and members moved to National Gas Transmission. Since then, we have rebuilt our membership and have an active GMB reps committee.

It is expected that the Electrical Systems Operator (ESO) business will become a public body called national Energy Systems Operator (NESO) in July 2024. GMB and other unions are in dialogue with National Grid about the transfer of circa 170 employees to the new public sector organisation.

### **Morrisons Data Services**

The employer has said that the drive to smart meters has led to a fall in demand for meter readers, and the trend is continuing. MDS members are currently being balloted on a pay offer.

### **SSE**

Pay talks with SSE have been hard going. There have been four rounds of negotiations and the April offer from the company was a two-year deal of 5% for 2024 and a CPI plus 1% for 2025 with a minimum of 2%.

There have been many meetings to talk about tackling fatigue and long working hours, but little progress has been made. Work by consultants has taken place to identify the jobs and geographical problem areas, but the solutions are still subject to argument. Management want shift patterns and the workforce are opposed.

### **Nuclear**

GMB and other unions met with senior executives at Great British Nuclear. Topics included the competition to build SMR's, the government's roadmap, potential sites for new nuclear and much needed skills and training in the sector. GMB has continued to support the generation extensions of EDF AGR nuclear fleet and campaign for the building of new nuclear including Sizewell C. The National Nuclear Group meets three times a year. The main theme cutting across the sector is recruitment, retention, and two-tier workforce. In both Sellafield and NRS, GMB reps have successfully negotiated away new starter contracts.

### **NDA**

Government has still not made a decision on whether NDA operating companies should continue to be inside or outside the civil service pay remit. NRS formerly Magnox and Dounreay are in, Sellafield is out. Both NDA, GMB and other trade

unions wrote to Government making the case for the NDA operating companies to be outside the pay remit. The operating companies cannot compete for jobs in the nuclear and engineering sector on public sector wages. Government has stalled on making a decision. GMB members at Dounreay have overwhelmingly voted for strike action on pay. This is the consequence of civil service pay restraint and the inability of management and trade unions to be able to collectively bargain on pay and conditions.

The Energy Minister has signed the regulations to bring about the pension change from a defined benefit pension scheme to a career average scheme. The change to a career average scheme was originally balloted on and agreed in 2017 but it has taken seven to enact.

Parallel discussions are taking place with NDA about improving the defined contribution pension scheme.

### **Gas Products Industry**

Despite its challenges, the sector continues to be highly profitable, and our members continue to protect and advance solid pay and conditions across both Air Products and BOC.

In the first of four sets of negotiations in Air Products, members in the Bay Staff bargaining unit settled for a pay increase of 4% for 2024/25.

### **Engineering & Construction**

This has been a huge year for the GMB in Engineering Construction with our members capitalising on the success of the local campaigns, built to improve bonus arrangements.

### **CIJC**

After extensive negotiations GMB members accepted a pay rise that was at least 7.5% across the whole year for 2023. We are currently out to ballot for the 2024 offer, the headline of which is a 4.5% pay rise with an additional day of annual leave.

### **NAECI**

In the National Agreement for Engineering Construction Industry (NAECI) we saw the GMB's first national industrial action ballot. This was a mammoth task that included over 50 separate ballots. This membership has never before taken part in a legal industrial action ballot and the almost 100% success rate on the ballots is a testament to the hard work and effort from the shop stewards and the regional teams who supported them.

The mandate to shut down almost every oil

refinery, every single nuclear power station as well other strategically important energy producers, resulted in the highest pay offer NAECI workers have ever received, with 73% of members accepting a pay award that included 11.3% for 2024 and 5.5% for 2025.

Also, within the NAECI we made huge progress with the UK's Nuclear Power Station Fleet. On all 8 of EDF's AGR stations there is a population of resident contractors as well as a significant pool of travelling workers that travel between outages on the stations. These workers have never been covered by any recognition or collective bargaining process, instead having their T's & C's "mirror" the NAECI agreement, often paying below the rate and never getting a vote in any pay and conditions negotiated under the NAECI but having them imposed by their employers, cherry picking the parts of the agreement they want and leaving a lot of it out.

Off the back of campaigns across the country over the NAECI bonus rates, regional officers facilitated members in raising grievances in their workplaces over their bonus structures and demanding their work be registered under the NAECI, gaining them recognition and a voice.

At Torness and Hartlepool campaigns have built members' confidence and delivered positive industrial action ballots for the first time ever with this workforce. This pressure, and being tactical with timelines around outages to ensure maximum leverage, was instrumental in getting EDF and the employers to the table.

Not only did members win NAECI registration, but they also gained the best bonus arrangements under the agreement and a framework to continue with positive industrial relations. All off this equates to about a 16% increase to people's pay packet, before we had even started to bargain on pay. Hinkley Point C Recruitment has continued to be strong at HPC and our team of reps and safety reps continues to grow. There have been a number of issues resolved by our strong team on site that have delivered improvements to health, safety and welfare. The project will continue to steadily increase its numbers of mechanical and electrical trades and the GMB team are poised and ready to recruit, organise and support those in this exciting phase of the build.

### **TICI**

Our members have accepted a 6.7% increase to TICI rates for 2024.

### **Sizewell C**

Work started in earnest summer 2023 to draft the collective bargaining agreements for Sizewell C. The draft documents await signatures which we

anticipate to be concluded in the first half of 2024, the contents of which include the most progressive welfare arrangements and benefits anywhere collectively bargained in the UK.

The project itself is still awaiting a final investment decision, which will be the official green light the project needs.

### **Steel**

The UK steel industry continues to face unprecedented times with two of the major steel manufacturers threatening to make over 2000 people redundant each. The coke ovens in Scunthorpe and Port Talbot have now closed, with blast furnaces at both sites now being fuelled with coking coal being shipped from as far afield as Japan, Australia and China. There are now no operational coke ovens in the UK.

### **British Steel**

British Steel has announced a £1.25bn plan to replace two blast furnaces in Scunthorpe, a move that would further reshape the UK steel industry and could eventually threaten the jobs of up to 2,000 steelworkers. The company, owned by Jingye, informed the trade unions that it proposed to replace the blast furnaces with electric arc furnaces. Under the proposals, the two blast furnaces at Scunthorpe, in North Lincolnshire, would be replaced by an electric arc furnace at Scunthorpe and another in Redcar, Teeside. GMB oppose these plans, much in the same way we oppose the Tata Steel plan. It is not ambitious, it does not plan for growth, it will not make the UK steel industry any more competitive and will result in thousands of job losses.

We have secured commitment from the business to engage with our industry experts, Syndex, with the hope that we can look for a better plan that protects and creates jobs, maintains primary steel making and utilises emergent technologies, such as Hydrogen Direct Reduced Iron blast furnaces (H2DRI).

### **Tata Steel**

Tata Steel have proposed to close down the 'heavy end' of their Port Talbot site, closing the Coke, Iron and Sinter plants, both blast furnaces and the BOS plant, these swingeing cuts will result in around 2800 people losing their jobs and the permanent loss of primary steelmaking capability in Wales.

The GMB, alongside sister unions, have formulated and presented an alternative plan to decarbonise the business, whilst avoiding the need for compulsory redundancies. We are still in the consultation phase, but the company are rallying hard against any alternative proposed.

GMB are campaigning hard, lobbying government and ministers, campaigning in the local communities and now, carrying out an industrial action ballot.

### Forterra

On 23rd January, National Office hosted an event in Parliament for our members working in the brick industry. The event was a chance for our members to meet with Shadow housing secretary Mike Amesbury MP and Shadow Minister for Exports Tan Dhesi MP to discuss their industry. A number of issues were raised including:

- The slowdown of the housing industry.
- Lay-offs and short-term working arrangements being utilised in the industry.
- The impact of Labour's 1.5m houses commitment.

Forterra continues to struggle in the current economic climate with further reductions to the driver population being announced early in the new year, taking their total people reduction to about 15% of the workforce. We have managed to secure a modest pay offer which included a 2% Increase in Pay across all rates from 1st January 2024, improvements to the short-term lay off agreement and a top-up payment for those dismissed due to ill health.

### Food and Drink Industry

Following the huge pressures of food inflation in the past two years, we are likely to see further pressure as the price rises associated with Brexit (and border checks) are now being levied.

#### Avara Food

One of the largest poultry producers/manufacturers are now looking to consolidate all their regional agreements into a single national agreement. Negotiations with the Company and Unite are ongoing.

#### Nestlé

The pay ballot concluded with 63% of members accepting a 7% pay award for 2023. We are still in negotiations for the 2024 pay award but have reached early agreement on the company carrying out an equal pay audit as well as setting up a working group in order to negotiate a 'New Technology' agreement, the aim of which is to safeguard our members in the face of increased manufacturing automation.

### Pilgrim's Food Masters

Since the last Congress, GMB members who

successfully defeated Pilgrim's Food Masters' fire and rehire proposals, are now faced with redundancies due to the proposed closure of the factory that was the centre of the dispute.

### Legal Services

#### Thompsons

A pay offer for 2023 was accepted in March 2024 after protracted negotiations. The offer amounted to 3% for the lowest grades and 2% for others with a non-consolidated lump sum for those not eligible for incremental progression.

### Paper & Packaging Industry

The Confederation of Paper Industries National Collective Bargaining Agreement was terminated by Smurfit Kappa. Negotiations are ongoing with DS Smith for a replacement National Agreement. Smurfit Kappa have reverted to local bargaining. This has been a tumultuous year for the sector as the boom in packaging in recent years from increased home shopping has waned.

### Shipbuilding, Aerospace & Defence Industry

The domestic skills shortage, and particularly the lack of investment in apprenticeships over many years, continue to present significant challenges to the sector. That said, there have been wins in all the major employers to celebrate this year.

#### APCL

At APCL (A&P and Cammell Laird) we have stood up to bullying and intimidation and won a significant improved pay rise.

#### Babcock and BAE Systems

Members have achieved decent increases, whilst activists have also led on our CSEU Breathe Safe Campaign on the dangers of fume and dust. The 'Windy Ship' initiative has been a huge leap forward for keeping our members safe.

#### Ferguson Marine

Members continue to rebuild the credibility of their yard that their management damaged.

#### Harland & Wolff

We have been negotiating a new National Agreement and improving our collective organisation.

### Ministry of Defence

Members in Defence Equipment & Support notably won their dispute at Beith.



## **Rolls Royce**

Activists are, as ever, fighting hard for their membership, and continuing to grow our base.

## **Spirit AeroSystems**

The Company faces some uncertainty for the future, but we can be sure our activists will be there, campaign ready.

## **Retail & Distribution**

### **ASDA Distribution**

GMB members in ALS have successfully won an inflation busting pay rise and improvements in shift premiums with no change to terms and conditions this year. Our national committee have also been working on health and safety campaigns around unsafe pallet heights. Our density has increased and our reps' structures are robust with positive engagement with members and reps across the ALS network. We remain vigilant to any potential threat or changes which ASDA's owners may consider in relation to the ASDA depots.

### **ASDA Retail**

2024 saw the first wave of strike action ever seen in ASDA retail. Starting in Gosport, spreading to Wisbech, Lowestoft and Brighton Marina at the last count. Our members are striking over their working conditions which have deteriorated since the debt leveraged buyout of ASDA by TDR Capital and the Issa brothers. Declining health and safety standards, cuts to hours on the shop floor, a lack of training and a bullying culture has led to our members wanting to take action.

We continue to hold the private equity owners of ASDA accountable – ensuring they have had to answer to parliament during Business and Trade Committee hearings, maintaining a high profile of our members issues in the press and of course, organising strikes and campaigning activity in stores.

We now begin our preparation for campaigning work during the second stage of the ASDA Equal Pay litigation which starts in September and is likely to see us win on the issue of 'equal value'.

### **Bestfood**

GMB has successfully won thousands of pounds in back pay, after our reps identified a miscalculation of over time for the purposes of holiday pay. Our reps' successful campaign to improve delivery point risk assessments continues to be a model for similar employers and our newly elected committee now prepares to enter pay talks for 2024.

## **Bidfood**

Our reps' network in Bidfood has increased significantly, with many new reps becoming involved in the union as we have increased our profile and campaigning activity. We have won our campaign to improve safety standards for drivers in relation to delivery point risk assessments and we prepare for this year's pay round with our reps' conference and newly elected national committee.

## **Evri**

A successfully negotiated pay claim resulted in a substantial increase in rates and rate protection for GMB members who took part in the ballot. This also resulted in over 3,000 members joining the union. At the same time, we negotiated and secured an additional 9 Representatives across the Regions with dedicated facility time and in March 2024, the National Committee endorsed a new constitution setting out elections processes and responsibilities. Campaigning on improving the delivery units for members has also been agreed with the Committee for the year ahead.

## **Wilko**

Over the Summer of 2023 GMB represented our Wilko members as they faced the news that Wilko, had collapsed into administration. GMB fought valiantly in the hope of finding a buyer for all or part of the business, sadly this was not to come to fruition and over 12,000 jobs were lost from over 400 stores and two distribution centres.

Following the collapse of Wilko, GMB called for the Business and Trade Committee to hold Karen Wilkinson, the family owner of Wilko, accountable for the job losses. She appeared in front of the Committee where GMB was also able to give evidence on behalf of our members. Our message was clear – that Wilko had not listened to its workers or heeded the warnings that made it clear their business plan was not allowing Wilko to thrive in an area of the retail sector where it should have had a clear advantage.

We now have failure to consult claims lodged on behalf of the union and our members.

## **Yodel**

A successful pay campaign was held in July 2023, which resulted in a substantial pay increase of 50pph and 3% increase on other benefits. A campaign to change banked hours and overtime was run which resulted in a reduction of 10 committed shifts to 5. The annual organising conference was held at Wortley in November, with reps deciding which campaigns were to be a priority for the coming year and organising within the SE sector.

Yodel underwent a change of ownership in the beginning of 2024 and there is a period of looking at how the company will function going forward, the new owners also purchased Tufnells, so there are additional volumes coming into the network and work looking at organising within this area has begun.

### Water Sector

The water companies continue to make the headlines for sewage dumping, huge debts, sky high executive pay and the lack of investment in assets and infrastructure. GMB senior reps meet with OFWAT regularly to make sure there is a worker voice in the industry.

The GMB National Water Forum has been at the forefront of increasing the profile and campaigning in the water sector. We conducted a violence at work survey, which got good press coverage and we presented the results to the Water UK health and safety meeting. A second member survey has given us campaigning priorities on terms and conditions, assets and infrastructure, executive pay and workforce resilience.

GMB got excellent coverage in the Joe Lycett versus Sewage programme on Channel 4. The GMB survey of wastewater workers commissioned for the show was prominent and Deanne Ferguson from NEYH did the union and our water workers proud. GMB membership in the water sector increased by over five hundred in the past twelve months.

### Thames Water

It has been a year of turmoil at Thames Water. Shareholders in Thames Water stated that they will not put in the £500 million investment promised last year because OFWAT will not put up customer bills by 56% over the next five years, reduce environmental penalties and allow Thames to pay more in dividends. Thames Water's parent company, Kemble Group, has defaulted on £190 million loans due to be paid in April. GMB believes shareholders should be putting in the money for assets and cleaning up the environment not the bill payers. GMB policy is for nationalisation of water companies. Thames Water is on the brink and could go into special administration. GMB met with the new CEO and with OFWAT and made our position clear.

Thames submitted a revised plan in late April, which proposes increased investment, but still means customers will pay up to 56% more. OFWAT are due to make a draft determination on Thames Water and other Water company plans on 12th June 2024.

Pay negotiations start on 29th April and the expectations from GMB members are for an inflation plus increase and in line with pay

increases across the water sector which around the 5% mark.

GMB and the other unions put in a dispute before Christmas in relation to a redundancy consultation and the company attempts to get control room staff to undertake customer facing work done by those being made redundant. Thames put these proposals on hold and it was resolved that the work would be done by volunteers.

## PUBLIC SECTION

GMB members working across public services continue to work under extreme pressures. Cuts to public services budgets and years of real terms losses have left many services extremely short staffed. Members are reporting stress, exhaustion and burnout as a result in many sectors. Job creep is impacting many sectors where jobs have changed and less people doing the same, or more work. The Conservative Government have continued their attacks on the public sector by introducing Minimum Service Levels (MSLs) during industrial action in the ambulance service which effectively removes the right to strike for most workers. Further announcements on MSLs in education and hospital settings are expected imminently. The Government have also pushed ahead with their unnecessary Check Off Regulations which will require public sector employers to charge unions for deducting membership subscriptions from wages, effective May 2024. Further moves to reduce facility time are also expected.

Organising and campaigning is at the heart of everything we do in the section. Leading and coordinating regions and nations where we are able on national issues and supporting their efforts on local campaigns and disputes. The last year has seen workers stand up and fight across sectors previously thought to be too difficult to deliver industrial action mandates, such as Care, Schools and the NHS. This is evidenced in the section's performance. Grade 1 and Grade 2 Public Services membership as of March 2024 was 254,114, an increase of 3,798 on the same period last year. Public services membership accounts for 53.6% of the total Grade 1 and Grade 2 membership and has been responsible for 46% of recruits into the union in the past 12 months.

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 national officer team are supported by Senior Section PA Monica Julius and two support workers that currently work across both private and public sections, Annie Lawson-Foley and Lacey Smith.

### Local Government/Chief Officers/Craft

The NJC pay offer for 2023/24 was £1,925 (pro rata for part-time and term-time workers) – an increase of between 3.88% – 9.42%. The offer was rejected by GMB members and consultative ballots on Industrial Action delivered very different results and identified areas of strengths and weaknesses. GMB pushed ahead with the dispute in a measured

and targeted way across regions conducting disaggregated Civica ballots. Unfortunately, we did not achieve enough mandates for industrial action nationally. However, the ballot provided an opportunity to organise and build for future disputes and the National Officer Sharon Wilde continues to offer support to regions running Part 3 NJC campaigns. Over 2,500 new members were recruited in schools and local authorities during the campaign.

At the time of writing, the joint trade union pay claim for 2024/25 has been submitted and we are waiting for a response from the Local Government Association. The claim calls for: at least £3,000 or 10% whichever is the greater on all spinal points; reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government; a two hour reduction in the working week with no detriment; an additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (for term time only also receiving a full day rather than a pro-rata amount that they can use at any time, including term time); and a phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 per hour in a maximum of two years.

Chief Officers accepted a pay offer of 3.5% for 2023/24. At the time of writing a pay claim is being considered by employers for 2024/25. The claim asks for: an increase no less favourable than the NJC claim; action to close the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps; and a model for national overtime working and mental health policies.

Craft Workers rejected the pay offer of £1,925 for 2023/24 but unfortunately, we did not secure significant mandates to initiate national industrial action. Members decided to focus efforts on the pay claim for 2024/25. At the time of writing a pay claim is with employers for consideration.

### Local Government – Scotland

GMB took industrial action during both the World Cycling Championships in Glasgow and the 150th Anniversary Scotland v England friendly. Before action could be taken across schools in Scotland, an improved pay offer which equated to £1 per hour for most workers was made and accepted by GMB members. GMB has also been leading campaigns regarding job evaluation across Scottish Councils. Industrial action has taken place in Falkirk, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire regarding dubious outcomes given to carers and we have launched equal pay claims across these councils and also Fife and Dundee.

### Local Government – Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Executive was restored in February 2024 after almost two years without a government. Currently millions of pounds worth of cost-saving measures are being considered across all eleven councils. We continue to



campaign on local issues of importance to GMB members, such as the win within Ards & North Down Council. Councillors had voted to outsource leisure facilities, but after unions, sports groups and the public protested, the decision was overturned.

### Schools & Academies

This year we welcomed to the national team, Stacey Booth as National Officer for Schools and Academies. Stacey replaces Avril Chambers who retired at the end of 2023 after years of service to GMB school support staff members. We continue to go from strength to strength across schools and academies with membership exceeding 100,000. The National Officer for Organising in Schools Mark Wilkinson continues to work with regions and nations to strengthen GMB organising structures. There are many issues of importance to members across the sector such as equal pay, right pay right job, special educational needs allowances (SEND), violence and term time only pay. Local campaigns are delivering for members. At the time of writing there is a live industrial action mandate for school support staff across Birmingham who are fighting for equal pay. There is a live campaign in Greenwich for school support staff fighting for the same London weighting arrangements as their teacher colleagues. There are several live campaigns for SEND and a protest in Leeds attracted significant media coverage and public support.

GMB has long been campaigning for a School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) and have secured a commitment from the Labour Party, that if elected, they will support. Members of the National Schools Committee recently attend Parliament to meet with MPs and discuss the SSSNB and other school specific issues.

GMB Scotland have played a key role in challenging the Scottish Government regarding violence in schools and pushed for a series of summits on violence and ensured that GMB gave a voice to our members. Local campaigning continues and a rally in Aberdeen City Centre lobbied for safer workplaces for school-based members.

Prior to power sharing being restored in Northern Ireland, the biggest public sector strike took place with over 3,000 GMB education members taking part, along with colleagues across health, transport and the civil service. A total of 150,000 workers were on strike on the 16th January 2024. Non-teaching staff employed within the Education Authority continue to be in dispute regarding the failure of the Department of Education to address the differences in job roles and deliver on a pay and grading review agreed on 2018. Meetings with the new Minister of Education continue and we are hopeful money will be made available in the budget. It is estimated it will cost £70 million.

### Higher & Further Education

Joint Trade Unions have started pay negotiations with the employers' association (UCEA) for pay in 2024/25 which represents 140 Universities. To win for members across higher education, campaigning locally will be essential. The National Officer Kevin Brandstatter is piloting a campaign in Southern Region, which if successful, will be rolled out to other regions. In further education a pay claim for 2024/5 has been submitted to the Association of Colleges and at the time of writing we await a response.

### National Health Service

GMB has been working with the Department of Health & Social Care and NHS Employers to deliver on the non-pay elements of the negotiated pay award from 2022-24. This includes a review of the pay setting process which remains a priority for GMB. However, due to there not being sufficient progress on reforming the process, GMB has not engaged with the Pay Review Body for 2024/25. A pay claim has been submitted directly to Government with a call for pay negotiations. The National Secretary Rachel Harrison continues to lead the campaigning across the sector, alongside the national health and ambulance committees and regional officers. The focus this year is on retaining and building membership and organising in preparation of future disputes, using pay claim specific messaging and targeted member communications.

After 14 years leading the National Ambulance Committee, Steve Rice stood down as Chair. Steve Rice was central to bringing Ambulance Service Union members into the GMB and has led the Committee through disputes, always encouraging others to stand up. Although Steve will no longer be Chair of the Committee, he will continue to support members across North West Ambulance Service. We formally thank Steve for his years of service to our ambulance members nationally and wish him all the best in the future.

### NHS Wales

Work continues to implement the non-pay elements of the pay award for 22-24, which includes taking steps towards a reduced working week with no loss of pay.

### NHS Northern Ireland

Upon power being restored, NHS workers were finally made an offer on pay, which has been accepted by GMB members after a full consultative ballot.

### NHS Scotland

Work continues to implement the non-pay

elements of the pay award. A reduced working week has already been introduced. Work around job evaluation in the ambulance service continues.

## Social Care

Since Congress 2023, a national organising strategy has been engaged and a new National Care Committee has been established that puts GMB members at the heart of our campaigning. We are aspiring to implement Regional Care Committees as a forum for care members and activists to have a voice and become active locally and share leadership to organise for real positive change in care.

We have begun the GMB's Sick of SSP campaign and through its implementation have won SSP from day one (a 2023 congress instruction) for 19,000 care workers, grown the union membership in our largest care provider HC-One by 1,000 and shown care sector workers that by standing together, we can win big changes. This campaign will be showcased in GMB Congress 2024 through a fringe meeting and campaign packs will be made available on the Care Congress Stall for the campaign to be replicated across the country.

The National Officer for Care Natalie Grayson and GMB's National Care Committee have begun work on organising around violence in the workplace. This work is now taking a lead position within the Health and Safety Department, and key recommendations are being used in the foundation of the national strategy, which will be relevant for all sectors.

The presence of the international workforce is growing across social care and with it, instances of human trafficking, abuse and wage bondage. GMB Care has approached international trade unions to support their work in educating their members on the risks of the UK care visa. We have approached UK organisations which support migrant workers and those more at risk and approached local councillors to put pressure in their local area to support workers at risk of exploitation. GMB Care have been lobbying the Department for Health and Social Care, Gangmasters, Local Authorities and Councillors to highlight the issues surrounding the care visa and lobbying to tighten regulation and create accountability. Thanks to GMB's campaigning, the Care Visa can now only be awarded to CQC registered businesses. However, we still have more work to do. With the collated research, GMB Care and GMB Race and Equalities are working together to organise sponsored and international workers in the care sector.

## Police Staff

A pay offer for 2023/24 of 7% was accepted by Police Staff members, alongside a review of the lower quartile of the pay spine. The review resulted

in the deletion of the lowest pay point and a new lowest minimum of £22,230. During the year, GMB sponsored the South Wales Police Force event 'National Black Police Association Conference'. We continue to explore options to provide a 24-hour helpline for PIM related issues and PIM training for activists.

## Civil Service

In 2023, the Cabinet Office and Treasury set a pay remit of 4.5% plus 1% for the lowest paid before the Pay Review bodies across the public sector reported. After the reporting, an additional non-consolidated payment of £1,500 was secured by unions. GMB is among unions calling for an end to fragmented bargaining (there are 144 bargaining units) and capability/skills-based pay progression. The Chancellor announced that staff levels would be capped at the number in work at the end of September 2023 and this would be followed by a reduction in staffing to pre pandemic levels, over 20% across the board but higher in some Departments. Many departments have continued to allow home/hybrid working with some having attendance levels of around 25% on any given day but a directive has gone to Depts for 60% attendance in offices which has not been received well. In the Environment Agency an increase equivalent to 6% was accepted by members - the highest increase in a decade.

## Probation

The three-year pay deal agreed in 2022 has been eroded in value since its agreement due to pressures within the economy. Real terms pay cuts and increased workloads and stresses due to the staffing crisis has impacted the workforce greatly. GMB has now called for the pay deal to be re-opened to address some of these issues. Most campaigning throughout the year has been on the Operation Protect campaign which is highlighting the consequences to the service and the public of staffing shortages, low morale, relatively low pay and high workloads. Other campaigns include the major, and unnecessary reorganisation and merger of the wider Ministry of Justice and Prison Service under Project OneHMPPS, and Operation Safeguard, the retention of prisoners in police cells due to capacity issues in prisons. GMB members are opposed to both, and we continue to meet with Ministers.

## Contractors

GMB continues to map rates of pay across local government refuse workers and contracted out refuse workers to understand the differences in pay across the sector. Detailed mapping work has been undertaken in Veolia and Biffa, identifying by company service and products, work sites, membership density and workplace representatives. Veolia Energy workers accepted

a 5% pay offer in January 2024 and negotiations are on-going in Veolia Wheels and Way Forward. Pay negotiations are also underway at Biffa I&C red Book and Biffa Municipal.

### **Pensions**

GMB contributed a significant amount of money to appeal the Judicial Review that was lost when we challenged the government's utilisation of Public Sector Pension Scheme surpluses to pay for the McCloud case. Unfortunately, the case has been lost and legal advice is that there are no further chances of success. However, GMB's participation and investment should reassure members that we will always fight on their behalf. GMB's Pension Organiser George Georgiou has met with hundreds of members over the year (online and in person) updating them on the appeal and discussing other pension changes and issues personal to them. He continues to provide training and will shortly be launching a session on gender and ethnicity pensions gaps.

### **European and International Affiliations**

Affiliations include: 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.



## GMB LONDON REGION

The Region has experienced growth in membership across almost all sectors with an average recruitment of over 1300 new members a month. Our Region has a very transient workforce, and we continue to work hard retaining and contacting leavers, sick and unemployed members. Regional staff and activists have been heavily involved in campaigning across our workplaces, resulting in some successful campaigns and wins for our members. Thankfully, due to our branches donating to a large Regional Strike Fund, we can offer our members who strike additional strike payments above the Rule Book amount.

### Staffing

Sadly, some long serving staff retired: Hilda Tavolara, Shaun Graham, Mick Ainsley, Bharat Vaidya, Anna Meyer and Keith Williams. Krissy O'Hagan, Richard Owen, Eseosa Akojie left the Region. Two Regional Organisers transferred to other GMB Regions, Paul Meddes to Wales and Southwest and John Weir to Northwest & Irish Region. Martin Hall became an Organiser and Jasmin Deans moved from Admin Support to the Organising Team. Three regional Organisers were promoted to Senior Organisers: Lisa Bangs, Ken Breach and John Colquhoun. New regional staff include: Sam Ord, Gaynor Todd, Jacob Tidy and new Regional officers Mary Goodson, Rachael Baylis, Danny Adilypour, Andrew Harden, Tony Tanushi, Paul Block and Kay Huntbach all joined the Region during this period.

### Democracy

Some Regional Council members resigned, and we were able to co-opt members from branches using our regional by-law. Following Congress 2023, we filled our 4 new Industrial Sector seats (NHS/ Care and Energy & Utilities). 3 new members were elected to Regional Committee (Madeline Daley, Abdi Mohamed and Tracy Beeson). In the 2024 CEC Elections, we have 31 candidates in total: 17 candidates for Regional Seats and 14 for National Seats.

### Branches

A number of Branch Secretaries (some long-serving) have retired, and presentations were made to them at their Branches or at Regional Council. The Region continues to consolidate branches, close dormant branches, merge branches and create new branches which include Prospect, Deliveroo and Tower Hamlets Carers. We intend to start a programme of training and information sessions for branches and new Branch Secretaries.

### Training

Between September and December 2023 112 Reps attended training with 76 Initial Support Meetings (IST) for Newly elected Reps and we currently have 1182 active Reps. A series of briefings on how to conduct IST's have been delivered to our new Officers and the Education Officer has started to deliver short courses starting with Stress & Mental Health. In January 2023 we launched the revised 10 Day National Induction Training, which has greater emphasis on campaigning and building the Union alongside the traditional content of industrial relations. Through our partnership with Shrewsbury College (TU studies Centre), their fully funded Tutors deliver our core programme in line with GMB@Work principles. In January 2024, we launched the first ever lay leadership programme where 18 experienced reps are receiving enhanced training and coaching, and we have 3 participants on the first ever GRASP national programme who have all been working in the region on organising campaigns.

### Equality

Senior Organiser Lisa Bangs covered the equality role and Rachael Baylis took over in January 2024 working with the Regional Equality Forum and all self-organised groups. We continue to ensure that our workplace campaigning and organising includes recruitment conversations around equality issues, looking for equal pay issues, tackling the ethnicity pay gap and identifying future activist workplace leaders.



### GMB Sisters

Over 60 delegates, the majority who were first time, attended the Regional Women's Equality Conference on 30 September 2023. There were

presentations on the impact on women workers of the cost-of-living crisis, experience in leading a strike, and a speaker on the violence against school support staff. This event empowers members who identify as women to become reps or more active in the Union. Our Sisters are now working more closely with branches to tackle the under-representation of women and campaigning to ensure that issues impacting women have a greater presence on GMB bargaining agendas. We also presented Regional Women's Rep of the Year to Donna Thomas, Joanne Turickki, Christina Dearlove and Tracy Beeson.

### GMB Ability

For Disability History Month in December 2023, Ability hosted a "Let's Talk" event focusing on what disabilities means to members and how it impacts on everyday life. They intend to continue these events and launch a newsletter.

### Young Workers

Young Workers have continued to campaign for "A Living Wage For All: Young Workers Demand Fair Pay" on social media and in person. Members have been involved with a number of regional and national union campaigns and were present at the Trades Union Congress' "Protect the Right to Strike" rally in Cheltenham in January 2024.

### GMB Race

In March 2024, Newham Council passed a motion and became the first to call for better reporting of the ethnicity pay gap as there is a significant disparity in pay for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers, a similar GMB motion has been passed by London Assembly Members in July 2023 at the Greater London Authority (GLA)

### Public Section

In December 2023, London Assembly Members backed GMB's 'Weighting for Change' campaign to address the inequalities surrounding how some London Boroughs apply Inner and Outer London Weighting for School support staff. We have also identified five local authorities where we believe the issue of Equal pay needs to be tackled. We launched a campaign for equality in London Weighting paid to teachers and support staff as the rates differ between Inner and Outer London Boroughs. This is grossly unfair and can mean a difference in the rate of London Weighting being paid between teachers and support staff in the same school of up to £1600. School support staff are already disadvantaged as being on term-time only contracts means they do not get paid for approximately 8 weeks a year.

### Schools

Our regular programme of School visits recruited nearly 1000 new school-based members and many new school-based Workplace Place Organisers. London Region prepared its NJC Pay Needs Survey and 1,000 members responded within the first few days with nearly 2500 in total, all in favour of a percentage pay increase.

### Council

In March 2024 GMB members lobbied Hounslow council over potential job losses in Lampton Services.

Skilled gardeners at Regents Park, employed by private contractor Idverde, took industrial action and downed tools for the first time (1 Feb 24) as they had lower pay than other Royal Park employees. Following this Idverde then agreed to pay them the same rates and backdate their pay.

### NHS

London Region continues to actively campaign focusing on the unfairness of car parking charges for NHS Staff and seeking to improve the terms and conditions of members working for NHS subcontractors. There is a campaign at Medirest, Northwick Park Hospital where we are fighting for Agenda for Change terms and conditions for all staff and for payment to all of last year's non-consolidated one-off payment.

### Social Care

We signed a new recognition agreement for care workers in Permacare Ltd following the TUPE of staff after the business transferred ownership.

### Private Section

Over the last year we have seen a fantastic amount of organising and campaigning activity with the private section in London region. A number of Asda stores have been targeted for industrial action with our first strike having taken place in Wisbech. The picket line was thriving with fantastic attendance on both days of action with members relishing finally taking the fight to the employer. A successful ballot has also taken place at Lowestoft which will see further action taking place shortly. As a direct result of our campaign activity, our Asda Stores membership has grown rapidly, and over one thousand have been switched to Direct debit in preparation for a wider dispute.

Our organising team have been active in the Region, supporting the National G4S campaign on the DWP contract, visiting many jobcentres across the Region. This has yielded significant membership growth as well as recruiting two more extremely keen workplace reps, putting us in a great position

to support the inevitable action. At the time of writing, another industrial action ballot is due to be launched for our members at Crane Building Services following the employers refusal to improve on their derisory pay offer. Thanks to the fantastic work by branches and activists, London Region has seen further growth in membership in Evri and Uber, constantly campaigning on the issues that matter to members and living the GMB@Work ethos.

Members at EVRI used a QR Code to sign up members and secured an impressive 13 per cent pay increase for our courier members



## NSL

Parking Enforcement Officers working for NSL in Islington had one the highest pay settlements. Through ACAS we secured a recognition agreement in January 2023 and the members submitted a pay claim and after some hard-fought negotiations, the members finally settled on a pay uplift which by April 2025 will see all GMB members earning 39.7% more than they were in March 2023. In real terms, this means that any traffic warden earning £11.55 an hour in March 2023 will be earning around £16.20 an hour by April 2025 - a jump from an average £24,000 a year to £33,000. NSL parking enforcement members in Kensington and Chelsea took 19 days of strike action to secure better pay and conditions.

NSL finally made an acceptable above inflation offer with members accepting a £1.55 per hour increase for 2023 (14%), taking their hourly rate from £11.95 to £13.50. In addition, GMB members have won a commitment from NSL for their pay to increase to £14.25 per hour next year and at least £15 per hour in 2025.

Other growth areas are at British Airways, Swissport, ICTS, G4S Job Centres, Urbaser where the members secured a 15% increase in pay through a local dispute and a 5.9% uplift for our members at Bakkavor Pizza.

## BestFood

Negotiations at BestFood (Pret A Manger contract) resulted in food delivery & warehouse staff

accepting a 6.6 per cent pay increase.

Airport: ABM at Stansted where our members settled on pay uplifts between 16% and 22% over three years, (recruiting 150 new members in the process), At Heathrow, as well as campaigning against the 200% increase in parking charges for our members working at Heathrow, we have secured substantial improvements to the staff facilities for our members working in the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA). We secured a restroom, toilets, a dedicated prayer room for each gender and a café offering food and drinks at reasonable prices.

## Pilgrim's Food Masters

Pilgrim's Food Masters announced 260 job losses at the Dean Way site which is devastating news for our members and their community. 100 members from Pilgrim's food partners (ex-Noon foods), and drummers held a demo at Pilgrim Foods Attleborough (Norwich) site.



## Health & Safety

Regional H&S Awards were awarded to Bismilla Mahomed and Adam Wade. Simon Wilde won the GMB National H&S Award presented at GMB Congress 2023 and went on to represent the Union to win the TUC Congress 2023 award.

Peter Hall became the Regional Health & Safety Officer and started a sustained focus on circulating H&S questionnaires to members across the region. We have already received hundreds of positive responses. These are to get information on specific H&S issues to campaign on or where members have been injured at work. He has visited Nestlé, East of England ambulance, Affinity water and Moorcroft school. He will be working directly with branches and workplaces. So far he has been working on issues affecting our members in schools (breaks, buildings) Labour Party Staff (stress and excessive hours), Ambulance (mental health, security, lighting) Asda (safety inspections), Serco (safe driving)



## Political

GMB London Politics has had a busy year with GMB playing a pivotal role in the Labour victories in the May 2023 local elections in Thurrock and Milton Keynes and also in the successful Mid Bedfordshire by-election. We have held fortnightly, and often weekly, canvassing and campaign events. Our industrial campaigns have included dealing with the Pilgrim's redundancy issue (#PilgrimsJobBlasters), ASDA Equal Pay visits with politicians, highlighting the issues with ULEZ, opposing London Weighting discrepancies, winning the argument over introducing a congestion charge in Cambridge and dealing with pernicious Private Hire Licencing changes on behalf of our members.

Politically, we have seen the selection of record number of GMB candidates (we now win nearly 90% of seats we nominate in), held regular large campaign days and phonebanks. We have proudly grown the GMB Councillors' Network for London and GMB continues to be the largest union grouping among both councillors and Assembly Members in London. We are now rolling out three key motions – anti-bullying, opposing the use of Amazon by local councils and closing the ethnicity pay gap – in authorities across London Region. We are pleased to say that our two motions to the London Assembly (on London weighting and the ethnicity pay gap report process) passed.

We created the first TULO and Socialist Societies' campaign day for a Labour candidate, organising alongside the Labour Party Irish Society in the Uxbridge (where 350 people attended) and again in the Mid-Bedfordshire by-elections (120 people). In the latter, our activists took responsibility for

erecting 750 garden boards over several months. We have attended and helped organise members

for the Protect the Right to Strike campaign in Parliament Square, and again taken activists to Cheltenham to proactively engage in TUC-run events.

With both the Labour Party Staff Branch and Parliamentary Staff Branch run as national branches from within the region, we have secured a record payrise for Labour staff (10.5% then 5%) over two years, fought a successful campaign to



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protect the Labour Party staff's defined benefit pension, secured General Election staff bonuses and empowered members to lead on the issue of bullying in Parliament. Our Labour Staff branch has grown for 24 months in a row. Our Labour Staff Social, at Labour Conference 2024, had over 150 attendees from the directly employed party membership and we thank both Penny Robinson and Barbara Plant for presenting outgoing gifts to our branch executive members.

We have been at the forefront of organising GMB fundraising for efforts for our sister unions in Ukraine, culminating in a meal with over 100 tickets sold and a branch appeal.

For GMB members who are candidates, including Margaret Mullane, Jen Craft, Bayo Alaba and Primesh Patel, we have organised fundraising dinners, that have raised crucial funds for their campaigns. We have distributed over 500 GMB Labour clipboards this year too, and GMB London Region won the Trade Union Activism Merit Award 2024 from the London Labour Party for our Pilgrim's campaign.

Proudly, we welcomed Tye Nosakhere, Anne Clark AM, Laurence Turner, Andy Prendergast and Robbie Scott as speakers at different Branch Political Officer meetings, to talk about their work. We have

provided speakers to several CLP debates on behalf of the union and on talks on the New Deal for Working People. We have created professional campaign videos for the New Deal, Pilgrim's dispute and also for the launch of our Councillor Network. Additionally, GMB London have played a full and active role at TULO London and led calls to the re-establishment of the East of England TULO group, and supported efforts to fund TULO training for BAME parliamentary candidates. We have also held a stall for another year at the Jewish Labour Movement.

We would like to thank the political panel of lay members who have interviewed hundreds of political hopefuls for nominations, and we retain our position as the most successful nominating affiliate in our region. We remain affiliated to all CLPs in our region too. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped us complete a successful last year.



## GMB MIDLANDS REGION

### PRIVATE SECTION

#### Aggregate Industries Building Products

Hulland Ward had a maintenance staff pay structure which was a bias pay scale award system. This rewarded one group of skilled craftspeople over others. We identified this inequality as a potential organising campaign and subsequently gained equal pay. GMB density is now 100% amongst this cohort of staff.

#### Altrad

The employer made an offer of a 10% across the board increase which also included no longer having local negotiations on pay and any future increases would be based on NAECI increases, but will not be paying NAECI rates of pay. A reduction in current sick pay arrangements and a move to NAECI sick pay and moving members onto Altrad contracts.

This offer was rejected. The employer made the following revised offer of a 2 year pay deal consisting of 10% effective from the 1st of September 2023 and a further 10% effective from the 8th of January 2024. Current bonus rate incorporated into the base rate prior to the increase being applied, which will attract overtime rates and a one-off lump sum payment of £500 (subject to tax & NI).

This offer was accepted by our members.

#### Amazon

Since August 2023, the Midlands Region has been leading the union in the fight for decent pay and a union voice for Amazon workers which has seen strike action spread from Coventry to Rugeley and now to the newest site in Birmingham.

With membership at Coventry now at around 1370, we have again started the CAC process for statutory recognition. The previous CAC bid saw Amazon bosses increase the workforce by around 1300 workers to prevent the union from taking this forward. This time, Amazon bosses have brought in union-busters and flooded the site with anti-union propaganda. This includes posters and displays with QR codes that automatically generate an email on a worker's phone that goes to our membership department to cancel membership.

This blatant union busting has not deterred our activists, who continue to grow the union and build a network of solidarity not just across the UK, but with trade unions across the globe. As a result of Amazon's union busting, we are looking at legal challenges through our colleagues in Foxglove.

They have offered huge support and are taking these on without any cost to the union.

The work undertaken in our region has seen the strike fund continue to grow and has made it one of the top campaigns on crowdfunder. We are also seeing an incredible amount of press interest in the work we are doing.

The Amazon Workers branch is growing fast with 1938 members across the Midlands Region from multiple Amazon sites.

In terms of real improvements for Amazon workers, GMB Midlands are making a real difference for Amazon workers.

As a result of our campaign, Amazon workers have received 2 bonus payments and 4 separate increases in hourly pay. We've also seen a significant increase in the number of jobs and workers being offered permanent contracts.

It is clear that GMB, and the Midlands Region specifically, is not only leading the world in the fight for Amazon workers, we are winning.



#### ASDA Distribution

We continue to build membership across Asda Distribution and have welcomed 5 new reps this year from sites across Magna Park, who have helped achieve an 84% turnout across 4 sites in the ASDA Distribution national pay ballot and recruited over 30 new members.

Asda have just completed the pay award ballot, where the company offer was a shift premium harmonisation of lates warehouse and lates transport to £1.77 (all premiums already at or above this rate remain as is) Shift premium harmonisation of nights warehouse and nights transport to £3.00 (all premiums already at or above this rate remain as is). A 4.3% increase on base rate and all premiums (including newly enhanced premiums). During the ballot, the GMB representatives also ran two ballots for new GMB reps.





### ASDA Stores

Our representatives at the ASDA store in Bulwell, Nottingham continue to work hard for our members at the site. We have had two new Representatives go through the Workplace Representatives training. Industrial relations at the site are strained at present and we are mounting a campaign to build the membership to a point where management can no longer ignore our concerns.

### Avara Foods Brackley

In early 2023, Avara offered a 0% pay rise to their drivers, and 50p per hour to the factory workers. We balloted our members and there was an overall rejection of the offers. The driver members were key to this pay campaign; they produced 6 examples of local employers who were paying their drivers more than Avara. Whilst the employer went away to consider this, we balloted the drivers for strike



action, with a strong result. When we informed the employer, who immediately responded with an improved offer however they refused to backdate the drivers' pay to April 2023.

We balloted the membership separately and the factory accepted 85% and safely in the bag. The drivers rejected by 74% due to the back pay issue. We then advised the employer of a Civica ballot for the drivers, to which the employer responded requesting 7 days to reconsider. In early October, the employer came back with the backdated pay for the drivers to the April anniversary date. The drivers accepted the offer and the pay was in their November pay.

### Bardon Hill Quarry

An initial offer of 5% was rejected by GMB members at Bardon Hill Quarry, however after lengthy negotiations and a member campaign, an improved offer was put to members, equating to an increase between 7.6% & 8.6% and included bonuses being incorporated into the hourly rate, which was accepted.

### British Steel – Scunthorpe Steelworks

Over the last 8 months and with the support of the region's campaigns team, we have visited the Scunthorpe Steelworks site numerous times and arranged off-site meetings to try and find a rep/organic leader. We have had resistance from Unite, who have had it their own way for far too long, but we are overcoming that. We have just had one volunteer come forward, with another possible volunteer too. With new reps and the support of the newly formed Branch, we are hopeful that we can continue to grow membership and influence at the site.

### Building Adhesives

Building Adhesives have paid a 4% pay increase with an extra day of holiday for this year only.

### Cargill Chocolate Products

The consultative industrial action ballot conducted following the company's offer of 5.5% and £1,150 showed a unanimous result in favour of action. We attempted to engage with the employer in a further round of negotiations but they refused to improve their offer. A Civica ballot produced the same result and strike days were booked for every Monday and Friday leading up to Christmas, along with continuous organised overtime bans in between to maximise the disruption of the chocolate making process before Christmas.

During the lead up to the strike, the press release gained significant media coverage from the mainstream media including, the Metro, the Mirror, the Daily Mail, the Morning Star and others. Our

members remained both united and in high spirits whilst our membership increased. Following 7 weeks of industrial action, including 14 days of strike action, the employer offered 10.4% and a £2,500 one off payment as part of a 2 year pay deal. This was referred to as the "longest chocolate strike in UK history" and the longest Cargill strike in global history by the Media.

### **Carlsberg Marstons Brewing Company (Mansfield Brewery)**

The GMB representatives at Mansfield Brewery have been in national negotiations regarding the 2024 pay award, with an 8% pay claim submitted. At this point the company have offered an uplift of 4% as a full and final offer. A ballot on the offer was fully rejected by 100% of our members with a strong mandate for industrial action. As a result, a 'failure to agree' has now been lodged.

### **Cinch Connectors**

Clare Semmens was elected as the new workplace organiser in 2023 and the GMB have increased the workplace membership density from 20% to 77% in less than a year. We secured the largest pay increase, in the history of pay negotiations at the company, of 15%, to be implemented from April 1st 2024.

### **Churchill China and Furlong Mills**

Churchill China along with Furlong Mills have paid a £1.05 pence per hour pay increase this year.

### **DHL Logistics – Nisa Scunthorpe**

Pay negotiations at DHL went well and the warehouse members voted to accept a 1-year deal. We are just about to start negotiations again for 2024. The transport membership was a different deal. £2400 non-consolidated for year 1 but from January 2024, the working week would be shortened to 42 hrs per week over a 4-day rota. This increased the hourly rate by over 16%. Additionally, the method for calculating hours was cemented as this was always contentious, and sick pay has been introduced.

### **Doulton Water Filters**

Doulton Water Filters are balloting on a £1 per hour pay increase this year.

### **DSV**

DSV have paid a 4.9% pay increase this year.

### **E.ON**

A 5.75% increase to the current salary rates and associated allowances was effective from

1 January 2024. This was a two-year deal, so

there will be a further 3.25% to base salary and associated allowances in April 2025. The company has also agreed to pay a one-off unconsolidated cash lump sum of £1,350 to all E. ON UK and Npower collective colleagues. The GMB challenged the company's plan which required field staff to work with asbestos. The GMB planned to inform the European Works Council about potential industrial action in relation to this matter however, after discussions with the employer, the company have now scrapped the plan.

### **Fiskars**

Fiskars are balloting on a 70p per hour pay increase.

### **Forterra Hoveringham**

We received confirmation in December 2023 that the Hoveringham site will be moved into the national bargaining unit. Its excellent news for our members at the site and should see a marked improvement in their terms and conditions.

### **Geberit**

Geberit have paid a 5% pay increase this year.

### **GXO (M&S)**

At present, the GMB are doing a pay ballot at GXO, increase of 7% on the base hourly rate, new rates would be, Days £11.72, Noon's £12.62, Nights £13.62. Step up pay for all roles when stepping up. E.G. When a warehouse operative steps up and completes the Clerk role they will receive the Clerk rate of pay, paid by the day. Holiday entitlement based on length service to increase by an additional day for each year served to a maximum of 5 days, to replace the need for colleagues to purchase additional hols; Start 20 days plus 8 bank holidays = 28 days After 1 year, 1 extra day, total entitlement will be 29 days After 2 years, 2 extra days, total entitlement will be 30 days After 3 years, 3 extra days, total entitlement will be 31 days After 4 years, 4 extra days, total entitlement will be 32 days After 5 years, 5 extra days, total entitlement will be 33 days. £10 Gift Voucher on your birthday.

### **IKO PLC**

After recruiting the entire workforce at the Matlock site following a successful campaign, we gained a voluntary Recognition Agreement. Moving forwards, we will be around the table negotiating our members terms and conditions of employment.

### **Jaguar Landrover**

The joint unions secured a 2 year pay award of 11% which was unanimously approved by the membership across all UK sites.





The company continues to move in a positive direction and the GMB are more visible with Convenor Steve Evans taking up the senior trade union position on the national committee. The Parent company owner TATA have agreed to build a gigafactory at Bridgewater to manufacture the batteries for future car production, which is a positive move for UK manufacturing.

### **Jenks and Cattell**

The employer wishes to make some changes to terms and conditions, which have been challenged by GMB and this has proven to be a useful tool for the Rep to get in and amongst the workforce to improve on our visibility.

### **Johnson Tiles**

Johson Tiles are balloting on 80p per hour pay increase this year.

### **Longcliffe Quarries**

A campaign and a collective grievance was raised regarding a proposal to install driver facing CCTV in the cabs. The grievance was successful, and the cabs remain as they are. During the process, we recruited all driving staff.

### **Meggitt Loughborough**

Members at Meggitt Aerospace, Loughborough voted to take industrial action over a 3% pay offer. A revised pay offer worth 4.5% plus a day's holiday was accepted by members.

### **Menzies Louth**

The GMB had been running a recognition campaign at the Louth based logistics company which serviced both the DS Smith Packaging plants in the town. After a fantastic effort by one of the drivers, Lee Rankin, in recruiting over half of the 50

strong workforce to GMB, negotiations started on a route towards a voluntary recognition agreement. Unfortunately, at this point an external decision by DS Smith to suddenly close one of the plants threw the recognition process into turmoil, as half the Menzies workforce were made redundant.

The GMB, after such a strong campaign, now have to reassess numbers to re-ignite the recognition process. Although it was an undoubted and unforeseen setback, the GMB remains committed to achieving collective recognition for its members in this location.

### **Metsa Wood Boston**

The GMB negotiated a 5% pay increase for members in January at the Boston wood processing plant. This was the single biggest increase in pay for many years and came on the back of significant business losses in the last two years.

### **Midlands Manufacturing Committee**

The Midlands region have created a Manufacturing Committee which is made up of working activists from manufacturing workplaces. The Committee represents the worker's voice and allows GMB activists to campaign on industrial matters. The Committee has already attended Westminster, formed political relationships and is engaging with employers on improving GMB members' working terms and conditions.

James Barwise chairs the Committee to a high standard and is a credit to the region. Rolls Royce, Wienerberger, JLR, fine manufacturing, Steel production and the building industry are all currently involved on the Committee.

### **Moorcroft**

Moorcroft have paid a 4.4% pay increase this year whilst still struggling.



### **Moveero Telford**

The workplace representatives secured a 5% pay award via a workplace ballot and have increased their membership levels. The workplace is a first-tier supply chain company to both JLR and JCB.

### **Moy Park Anwick & Boston**

The chicken processing plants in Anwick and Grantham already had two year pay deals in place with the GMB, with year two to be implemented this April. However, the GMB spotted an opportunity to push for an enhancement on year two due to the unexpectedly large increase in the National Living Wage. We were very pleased to achieve significant increases for members at both sites, with an additional 5% increase on top of the original deal giving members a much needed financial boost during these uncertain economic times.

### **Ornua**

Ornua have paid a £1.10 per hour pay increase this year.

### **Oxerra**

Oxerra have rejected a 4% pay increase, talks are ongoing.

### **Radius Systems**

Membership has grown by around 35% in the last year. Our reps team have been running campaigns to safeguard the sickness policy scheme, break times and annual leave. Reps are currently in discussions on pay talks and the company have put forward a three-tier full and final pay offer which will be balloted on in the coming weeks.

### **Rolls Royce Nuclear Submarines**

We have successfully mapped and recruited throughout the 2024 pay award industrial action ballot. This has been a multi-faceted campaign with a proven strategy of recruiting more members and workplace organisers from our strong industrial activities. We are seeking improvements in the Nuclear Submarines Domestic Pay Award. Sister Trade Union Unite have recommended a less than satisfactory offer to the disgruntlement of their members. We are currently meeting the employer for collective conciliation with ACAS in eleventh hour attempts to agree some form of gainful resolution, otherwise we will start industrial actions at the Derby nuclear facility in April/May 2024.

### **Ross Ceramics**

Ross Ceramics have announced that they will become a Rolls Royce Domestic Facility and the

workforce will transfer under the TUPE regulations, with pay talks ongoing.

### **Royal Stafford**

Royal Stafford have announced Short Time Working starting after the Easter break and are paying a 94p per hour pay increase with an agreement to come back to the table after Short Time Working ends to see if they can pay more to try and lift people above the living wage.

### **Schutz**

GMB workplace representatives at Schutz organised mass member meetings at the end of 2023 to gather pay aspirations for members for the pay claim submission. This exercise grew membership and achieved positive engagement. A pay claim for 15% pay increase as a 1-year deal was submitted. Following lengthy talks, a 10% pay increase as part of a 1-year deal with the addition of putting the company production bonus onto the member's hourly rate was offered. This proposal was balloted on by our members and accepted. The pay increase from £10.53 per hour to £12.25 is a significant rise for our members.

### **Siemens**

Pay negotiations concluded for 2024. A one-year deal for a pay increase between 5-7% dependent on role and a commitment to parity for working away from home across the business. The ballot was overwhelmingly accepted however, Siemens did not increase the working away from home element and refused further talks. We had a positive consultative ballot for industrial action short of strike, which led to the employer putting forward a new offer which was not of benefit to our membership. This was again rejected. The employer has now reached out for further talks. We will assess this as we move forward. We are hopeful that we can reach a revised offer which will be accepted by our members.

### **Steelite International**

Have paid a 1.05p per hour pay increase this year and also signed a new recognition agreement.

### **Saint Gobain – British Gypsum**

A 5% increase of pay from January 2024 with complete removal of Bank Hours from 1st July 2025 was secured, plus an increase in overtime rates to £450 for 12-hour shift and weekend rate of £540 for 12-hour shift and removal of Category 1 and 2 Sick pay. Therefore, no deductions from pay for absences due to illness.

### **Saint Gobain PAM**

Holwell Works near Melton Mowbray are planning

to make 161 redundancies by the end of the year and have issued the Union the HR1 and started the consultation period on 13 March 2024. This foundry has been trading since 1881 in the local community and Saint Gobain is moving production to their other site in France, stating poor trading in UK, Brexit and emissions the reasons for closing the plant.

We're currently working with the company and Reps to negotiate a retention bonus as the shutdown is happening over 9 months+ and members will be leaving in September and December, with the last few early next year. I've also spoken with the EWC Reps about the closure and they're supporting us too.

### **Saint-Gobain – Dudley Site**

A newly appointed rep has been supported by RO due to issues relating to arranging for them to attend GMB@WORK as they work nights. Multiple night visits booked in to increase visibility and offer support to members. The current pay offer is above what members wished for in their pay claim and will be recommended to members to accept.

### **Severn Waste**

Claim was rejected initially during late summer 2023 and a formal ballot for industrial action was conducted which led to a majority of members wishing to take strike action. This prompted the employer to make an improved pay offer which was then accepted by the members.

### **Somers Forge**

A tragedy occurred in December 2023 when one of our members was killed in the workplace. There is a current investigation taking place by HSE. The GMB supported members over the weeks following the tragedy and have also been supporting the family and the partner of the man killed.

### **Swissport East Midlands Airport**

Lots of positive action is being taken at Swissport East Midlands Airport over the past 12 months. The membership continued to grow during the winter period, in what has historically been a downward trend due to the reduced business at East Midlands Airport over the winter months.

Members' confidence is growing following successful campaigns in the previous year which we have continued to build on. Collective grievances around night shift work and incorrect pay uplifts have been won. Most recently, a collective issue around rotas was won and reverted back after members themselves took the lead and showed their determination and strength as a unit with the support of their representative.



### **Vossloh Cogifer**

Pay negotiations at Vossloh for 2023 were long and drawn out by the company. They prevaricated and then made a derisory offer. This after we had surveyed our membership and gave the company clear indications that our members were serious about the pay claim. The company's stance led us to an industrial action ballot, something that had never ever happened at this company. It also led to an increase in membership as people started to believe in the power of collective bargaining.

After 7 days of targeted industrial action, where members all walked off site together at a specified time, we achieved a pay offer which was acceptable to the members. A 2-year deal which is 10.5% consolidated plus an additional 3% bonus which is contractual.



### **Wiggle**

We are working closely with Branch Secretary to organise within Wiggle. The Branch Secretary worked at the site and recruited over 30 members within a short amount of time, with the Organiser supporting members in formal meetings/hearings (no recognition). Unfortunately, the employer has gone into administration and the Branch Secretary, along with all our members, have since lost their jobs. Current claim for a failure to consult and a protective award underway and we await an outcome to these over the coming months.

### Wilko

In a sad year for our Wilkinsons Members, where we have seen the closure of the high street chain, the GMB have lodged Protective Award Claims for over 1,000 ex-employees for inadequate consultation. Carol Robertson was presented with a TUC Award for her tireless work and devotion to supporting our members throughout the closure.

### Worcester Bosch

The new GMB Reps have worked together to establish a better level of organising for the GMB within the workplace which has seen us secure a 9.5% pay increase to reward them for their solidarity.

## PUBLIC SECTOR

### Aspire Housing

The GMB have completed the pay award ballot for 5%, this was accepted by 70% of the membership.



### Birmingham City Council

With the support of the Women's Campaign Unit both nationally and in the Region, GMB is continuing to lead the fight for equal pay justice in the Council. On the back of over 3000 claims already listed at employment tribunal and a campaign of protests and workplace visits, council bosses have been forced to acknowledge an equal pay liability of up to £760m.

We now face the huge challenge of the Council facing commissioners being brought in and potential cuts to services. However, with the support of the Branch, GMB is leading the campaign for the council's workforce. We are currently balloting members for strike action in 35 Birmingham schools on the council's failure to tackle the equal pay crisis.

We are continuing to see new members join GMB and there are now 87 members in the "We're Worth

More" campaign group.

### Blaby District Council

Blaby District Council refuse workers won triple time on Bank Holidays and a job re-evaluation to be done by the East Midlands Council with TU/worker participation following a vote for 3 weeks' strike action, which proved unnecessary. The 2-day strike attracted considerable media coverage for the Union.

### Coventry City Council

The Midlands Region is again leading the way with the second equal pay campaign in the region.

Since we launched our campaign, we have visited schools, libraries, children's centres and social care settings. We have supplemented these with online meetings to reach out to members and potential members to join the campaign.

GMB have also put forward a solution to the equal pay crisis based on a 4-day working week that would see terms and conditions improved, instead of worsened. The Council have not engaged with the GMB proposal and are looking to fire and rehire waste staff.

With the support of the WCU, GMB is spreading the message and making this a real campaign for women workers at Coventry City Council. This can only be done by engaging workers and making it their fight. This is a fight that GMB members can win and will win.

### Derby City Council

Refuse workers gained a 'Market Supplement' payment of £2,000 from our campaign to promote the Local Government NJC 'Part Three' agreement.

### EMAS (East Midlands Ambulance Service)

The ambulance dispute of 2023 has been very positive for GMB. As well as new members, currently 2196, we have gained an additional 8 reps.

Since the dispute, reps and members have been frustrated with local management practices and we decided to survey our members so we have some data to present to the EMAS management rather than anecdotal comment. Over 500 members filled out the survey and it was quite damning. We presented this to the CEO and Chair of Board and have agreed an action plan to make the working environment better for our members.

Two reps attend the National Ambulance Committee, rotated to give everyone experience.



## Grand Union Housing

In early 2023, our members at Grand Union were told they were receiving a 2.1% pay rise, which had been agreed by the Board. Our members were rightly very angry about this on the back of them having 5 days less holiday than the office staff. The employer refused to improve the 2.1% so we proceeded to ballot the members for strike action and action short of strike. They started to work to rule on their contracted hours, which increased the backlog of jobs from 6000 to 8000+. The members then increased their action to strike action on Mondays and Fridays for the next 4 weeks. After two days of strike action, the employer asked for a meeting to try to resolve the action. The employer proposed 6 weeks of negotiations on improving terms and conditions; the members agreed to suspend strike action and entered into negotiations.

To date we have agreed overtime and TOIL for working late Mon-Fri, 5 days' extra holiday per year, a 39hr working week from 42.5hrs with no loss of pay and a lunch break of 50 minutes. A new rota will include 4-day weekends, 30-minute travel cap (mornings and evenings) and new warmer/cooler workwear. A new rota was proposed for 18 extra paid days off per year, 2 weeks of early finishes and 2 weeks of later starts. Discussions are ongoing on a fortnight of 6pm finish. The 2024/25 pay claim for a 6% increase on all rates of pay and increments has been accepted by GMB members.

## Leicestershire Schools – SEND Campaign

Leicestershire Schools 'Special Education Needs Defending' Campaign has gained traction and we are gaining access into schools we've previously not visited and recruited new members.

## Leicester County Council – Refuse

Members at Leicestershire County Council Waste



Tips had their market supplement and retention payments extended for 2 years, following a successful GMB campaign.

## NET Nottingham Trams

This year has been a difficult but rewarding year at the Trams. After a long and hard-fought pay negotiation which included issuing notice of strike action, we secured a 10% pay increase resulting in their Branch Secretary, Anthony Brown, being awarded the 2023 Midlands TUC Jack Dromey Campaign Award.

The Branch has also been awarded the 2024 GMB Midlands Michelle McCrossen Equality Award.

## NHS

Following an open letter submitted by over 200 Medirest employees at Sherwood Forest Hospitals, our members have now begun the Civica industrial action ballot process following a consultative ballot result, with 98% of our members voting in favour of action and several meetings which led to no progress on the matter of terms and conditions.

The ballot closed at the end of March which resulted in a strong mandate for both strike action and action short of strike. The campaign has been a success for the growth of the union at Medirest, with our membership increasing from 91 members to 158 members throughout the campaign, a membership increase of 73%.

## North West Leicestershire Council

GMB refuse workers for North West Leicestershire Council won the reinstatement of 2 members whose temporary contracts were ended by the Council during an overtime ban about workloads. We successfully sought a mandate for strike across all waste streams.

## Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Our team of GMB activists and reps ensure the smooth running of the branch and members are supported fully on a regular basis. The pay campaign for 2024 is due to start and a full check of all academy schools has been completed with a view to an Academy campaign in March/April 2024 to begin where they do not follow NJC terms and conditions. These schools will be targeted in relation to individual pay claims where necessary and to organise and recruit new Reps.

## Serco Sandwell

Current pay claim for 8%, harmonisation of contracts in relation to sick pay and annual leave for NJC contracted employees. No offer from the company as yet. Any offers will be put to members to have their vote on whether to accept or reject.

### Serco Refuse (Charnwood Contract)

After a successful pay campaign and a 93% Industrial Action result in favour of full out strike action plus talks with ACAS, an 18% – 8% pay increase was achieved and accepted by the membership.

### United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

We have achieved some growth after a few stagnant years. Senior Rep, Elaine Taylor, has retired and returned but has continued to represent members. We have recruited another rep in 2023, Kevin Lee, who has now had his training and is proving to be a good addition to the team. We are planning to hold some recruitment activities on site at Lincoln over the next few months on the back of the NHS pay claim. Current membership is 116.

### University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

The GMB was formally recognised for full bargaining rights in July 2023. We now have two fully trained Reps, who are attending staff-side meetings and working with the other trade unions. Membership numbers are growing steadily, and we are still seeking more Reps at the other two Hospitals in the City.

### Veolia Solihull

Workers at the Veolia refuse contract in Solihull have lived through 20 years of outsourcing, different contractors and attacks on pay and conditions. Faced with another below pay offer, GMB members stood together and took strike action.

Building strength across the contract, their dispute forced the employer to climb down and award workers up a 15% increase in pay.

### Walsall Housing Group

Working alongside three GMB reps, the pay claim was submitted January 2024. The latest offer from WHG has been rejected and a counter-offer submitted in March 2024. We are awaiting confirmation from management before putting this to members for their vote.

An Employment Tribunal claim for inducement has now ended and we are awaiting the result. Barristers appear confident the case will be successful and if so, members will be eligible for a compensatory payment of £4193.

### West Midlands Ambulance

Over the last year, 2 of the West Midlands Ambulance Representatives have been elected onto Regional Committee, 2 have also been nominated for the CEC, one of which has been

elected unopposed.

The lead West Midlands Ambulance representative & Branch Secretary suggested a regional version of the 'NAC/NAG' to ensure that the views being provided to the national group were a true representation of the NHS membership within the Midlands Region. This has now been created with a true 'member led' ethos engrained.

## EDUCATION / HEALTH & SAFETY

### GMB@Work Training

Over the last year, 347 new GMB workplace reps have attended their induction course.

### Follow on Representatives Training

Over the last year, 705 reps have attended follow on training delivered by the region.

### Organising Around Safety

A series of workplace visits called 'Health Checks' have been carried out. Officers in the Region have been tasked with examining their worksheets, and identifying those workplaces where we can best:

1. meet with the H&S reps and find out the level of involvement;
2. discuss what we need to address to improve the level of involvement;
3. identify any development needs and arrange the appropriate training.

Workplace visits have so far revealed that there is wide and varying levels of engagement and activity by GMB Safety Reps, with most reporting that employers are reluctant to fully consult over health, safety and welfare issues, despite their legal obligation to do so.

The ongoing plan will be to support those reps who are unaware of their rights under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 (SRSC Regs), and establish – where necessary – properly functioning Safety Committees and Inspection regimes.

### Accompanying Reps

Specialised training continues for Regional Accompanying Reps across the Region. Over 50 have now been trained and plans are being made to create a forum whereby reps can share experiences, ideas and trends. We are striving for representational excellence.

## Regional Equalities Conference

The Education Department continue to support other regional initiatives and the latest was the Equalities Conference held on Monday 25th March. Two sessions were delivered: Developing Robust Equality Policies and Mental Health Awareness.

## Mental Health First Aid Training

MHFA courses continue to be delivered in the Region with a Nottingham course delivered in November and another planned for May/June.

## Advanced Representative Training

To ensure that the Region is following the 'representational excellence' requirements, a series of training for reps that focusses on case work has been delivered. The 3 - day intense course, equips representatives with the skills and knowledge in order to fully represent members in grievance and disciplinary situations with confidence.

## Officer Health, Safety & Welfare Training

A Regional Safety Reps survey had been conducted, with responses indicating that GMB are having little involvement in inspections and accident investigation. We therefore planned Officer training around this to brief them on how they and their reps can successfully use H&S as an organising tool.

The training also covered 'Behavioural Safety' – a tool used by employers to move towards a culture whereby employees are at fault if any accidents or near-misses occur. It was also an opportunity to examine some of the obstacles that employers put in the way of our Safety Reps and how to deal with them.

## Amazon Leaders Training

Since January, 9 Amazon reps have attended 10 days of training. This training has covered representation and organising. Of these we now have 6 people who are prepared to represent members in the workplace. In total 32 activists have attended at least 3 days of training.

## BRANCHES

### Grimsby General Branch

It is with great sadness that the team records the loss of Grimsby General Branch Secretary, Ken Vincent in February after a short illness.

Ken had only been Branch Secretary for just over a year but had made tremendous strides in re-establishing the GMB in Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham. He had been involved in representing members from many workplaces as well as being

active on the Retired Members Association. One of Ken's proudest achievements, was a campaign that saved three school nurseries in Scartho that were faced with closure, with the potential loss of many jobs.

Ken also worked tirelessly to support his GMB workplace reps, always making himself available to give them the benefit of his experience. A lifelong trade unionist and a larger than life character, Ken will be missed by everyone who knew him.

### GMB North Lincs Branch

The Branch has recently merged with the other Branches in the Scunthorpe area to create a more diverse platform for GMB to promote itself in the community, which will include a campaign to support retaining Scunthorpe Steelworks as the main provider of Green Virgin Steel.

### The Tommy Dawkins MBE Education Suite

In February 2023 our irreplaceable Tommy Dawkins MBE retired from the GMB. As a true trade unionist at heart, he can still regularly be seen in GMB offices and at workplaces speaking to members. Tommy has faced many challenges during his life one of which are his struggles to read and write, he has been open and transparent about these challenges becoming an inspiration for so many who face similar issues but do not possess the confidence to discuss their own difficulties. Upon retirement it was revealed that our intention was to rename the education room at the GMB Stoke office to 'The Tommy Dawkins MBE Education Suite', the official opening of the room took place in February 2024.





## GMB NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION

### Campaign and Organising Team (COT)

The region introduced a Campaign and Organising Team (COT) whose primary role is to ensure we have a regional recruitment and campaign strategy that covers our NOT targets (Schools, ASDA, NHS & Care).

In our region we put a big emphasis in the Campaigning side of these strategies and help to identify, support and prioritise our regions campaigning opportunities too. We have, in partnership with the Education department, helped to and continue to develop the regional bargaining calendar.

We achieve our objectives by deciding:

1. What is success and when do we want to achieve it?
2. Who are the people we have to influence and mobilise in order to achieve success?
3. What do they have to know and do to deliver us success?
4. What is the emotional compulsion that makes them want to take action?
5. What is the story that we tell over time that explains our cause and gives them information that will help us achieve success?

How do we do it?

- We have a campaigning and recruitment focus – with a key aspect to build industrial muscle to win campaigns whilst growing the UNION.
- Ensure that everyone involved in our campaigns (Staff, Organisers, Assistant Organisers, our Conveners, reps and branches) know that our growing strength and influence is everyone's responsibility.
- We will build and reinforce membership by identifying Reps, discovering campaigns and reminding existing members of the value of their membership.
- The Team will take pride in the part we will play in contributing to the success of the Region.

### Schools

We are currently running, in partnership with the respective area teams, Schools campaigns in Calderdale, Durham, Sunderland, Bradford, Leeds and Sheffield and continue to see growth in all of the school areas where the COT team is deployed. The Leeds and Sheffield Schools campaigns are built around equal pay, but we are also launching the 'Blowing the Whistle on Bad Behaviour' Campaign that has seen huge success in Calderdale, in Sheffield and Bradford. We have also now included an option in the campaign survey link to offer this campaigning option for all of the regions Schools.



### ASDA

We have and continue to build a store schedule of visits throughout the region, again, in partnership with the area teams and have an industrial ballot planned for 1 x store in the North East, in line with the national industrial action campaign.



### Scholarship Support

We have started a new Regional Scholarship programme and have taken on 5 new Scholars to this 6-month programme. These Scholars are seconded from their employment to undertake intensive training and shadowing with experienced officers in the COT and the area teams, helping to deliver our campaigning goals whilst gaining a unique insight into the work our officers carry out on a day-to-day basis.

## Durham County Council

Duty Managers – Service came up with resolution which we will be balloting our members to seek their views.

## Fleet Drivers

Service have conducted a management led re-evaluation and members went up one grade, however they believe they should be on the next grade up. We are arranging meeting with members to complete a consultative ballot for IA.

## Chartwells – Schools

Team have visited school kitchens with Chartwells staff in over the past 6 months. The branch have been negotiating directly with Chartwells and the Council. Chartwells have refused to pay our members what they promised.

## Active Leeds Coaches Campaign

Finally, the coaches are putting pen to paper in respect of contracts, issues related to amending length of contracts from 52 to 48 weeks, and issues around coaches' squad competitions on a weekend and whether annual leave must be requested, a local arrangement has been accepted by management and in the process of being worked through as we speak.

## Parks and Countryside Campaign

The local agreement has finally been signed some 18 months later; it will require a review at some stage however the members are in the main very happy with the agreement. It has ensured a much better work life balance.

## Equal Pay

Through investigation into job evaluation, local agreements, and job descriptions, the Regional WCU has identified a potential equal pay claim in Leeds City Council that is far reaching in its scope for potential claimants. From this investigation, the local team have begun to plan a campaign.

Whilst working through the data we have received from Leeds City Council; rank order, gender percentage in roles, to identify who we need to capture for a potential claim. The planned launch date for this campaign, which will include the initial communication to members is the 7th of February, followed by a number of equal pay drop-in sessions across the city to open initial interest to the campaign.

## Catering Campaign

A draft charter has been drawn up and shared with Catering Leeds, still awaiting a few testimonies and then a meeting can be held with senior HR and leader of the council to have their input into the next steps, it is vital this campaign happens due to the amount of TUPE transfers of catering. GMB members report bullying in these companies, and we incur problems with pension applications, tax code issues, pay not being paid correctly etc, we must be pro-active in campaigning to keep these contracts in-house.



## SEND Campaign

The SEND campaign goes from strength to strength. We have forged strong alliances with parents for SEND reform and provided them with information as to what our issues are within the union. There was a demo held in parliament and James Wilton – NEYH Workplace Representative – attended as a member of support staff to highlight our issues.

We have linked up with an organiser in Leicestershire who is facing the same issues in schools in terms of the rise of SEND and lack of support for our members who are front line working one to one with a lack of provision, lack of school breakout space, lack of support due to staffing issues and often not being paid at the right rate. 55





### Denso

The pay dispute at Denso that had started earlier in the year continued until November. Two days of strike action took place in September which resulted in a new pay offer of 9.5% that was accepted. Membership grew throughout the campaign and the solidarity shown by members was inspirational.

### Northern Gas Networks

Industrial relations are at an all-time low. An indicative ballot for industrial action has taken place 19-23rd Feb, as part of a campaign to improve terms and conditions. Early signs are that an overwhelming mandate for industrial action will be given.

### Burberry

A campaign for GMB recognition and a £15 min wage has increased membership and seen the election of two stewards at Burberry. Gate jobs and a working party is taking the momentum forward, bringing the employer to the table. Talks have begun with ACAS mediating to explore voluntary RA.



### Dellner Romag

Submitted the pay claim following meeting with members to seek their views. Company responded and proposed instead of a pay offer they wanted

to negotiate a pay and grading scheme. We understand from the rep this is what our members want. One meeting has taken place to discuss this with the company and is an ongoing situation.

### Glaxo SmithKline

Supported the branch with the consultative ballot on the pay offer (4% plus one additional day annual leave). Members accepted this offer.

### Dyson Technical Ceramics

Submitted pay claim following a meeting with members, members accepted company offer of 5%.

### NJC

National Pay Claim submitted; this has been distributed to members. Once we receive an offer we will book visits in as part of our consultative ballot process.

### Middlesbrough Council

Team have carried out targeted visits to identify a new rep in this employer, this will be ongoing in our attempt to identify new reps and organic leaders.

### BHK

GMB members have recently accepted an improved pay award of 8% on basic pay, because of the mass meetings, members have expressed concerns regarding their company sick pay scheme. The team are now surveying members to understand what they would like a new sick pay scheme to look like and find out if our members are prepared to campaign on the issue.

### CAV ICE

Since December the team have been on site talking to members regarding the company pay offer of 4.2%. Members overwhelmingly rejected this offer. There was an improved offer of 9.2% tabled by the employer, which our members overwhelmingly accepted.

### Expamet

We have been out to see our members to discuss this year's pay claim following a pay survey. Members have two different contracts which has caused a divide in membership. We are continuing to support our members and we have arranged to meet management mid-March to discuss pay. We are actively trying to identify a workplace rep.

### Northern Powergrid

The team are working with local reps on a strategy to improve GMB membership through



campaigning and organising.

### NAECI

Pay award accepted 11.3% this year 5.5% for 2025 accepted nationally.

### OCS

Demo held outside Hull Royal Infirmary in February on a 'Show Me Love' theme for OCS cleaning staff. The main points that members are challenging are no regular management meetings, inadequate training, no proper changing facilities, secure storage for belongings, or anywhere to have their breaks.



### Teesside International Airport

The team have recently submitted a pay claim on behalf of the membership following workplace visits, surveys and through the local rep speaking to members. We have seen an increase in membership since the new rep was elected.

### Tetley

The team are working with two newly elected reps on the back of last year's industrial action. The reps have held workplace surgeries for members to come and raise any concerns they may have and highlight their aspirations on pay.

### KCOM

We have been campaigning against KCOM who were trying to move longstanding employees from 6 months full sick pay down to 3 months. We campaigned outside their offices & held many meetings with affected members as well as distributing a video on social media which resulted in the employer dropping the proposed changes.

### Altrad (Drax Power Station)

We have been campaigning for the full IBA payment of £2.37 per hour throughout the year, rather than just paid on shutdowns. After plenty of discussions, we agreed a formula for paying the £2.37 throughout the year, averting industrial action.

### Deliveroo

Membership is increasing steadily. First meeting held and rep continues to achieve great results for members through representation. We have launched the York Cycle Lane Campaign, lobbied the Executive Board member for Transport alongside Deliveroo. Achieved over 600 signatures to date.



### DHL Inside Track

Supported DHL Inside Track members' dispute over pay and a collective grievance submitted. Legal cases for unpaid wages are ongoing. Applied for recognition through CAC. Members protested on unpaid wages and terms & conditions not being respected.

### Doncaster Taxi

A new branch set up for Doncaster taxi's professional drivers campaigning for better access and fairness with DMBC Licensing. 'No Excuse for Abuse' campaign ongoing.

### Sunderland City Council / SCAS – Equal Pay

In September 2023 an Equal Pay Claim campaign was launched against Sunderland City Council and Sunderland Care and Support (SCAS) on the basis that their pay and grading structure is not fit for purpose, and they are offering mainly female workers an inferior pension scheme to their male comparators, working for Sunderland Council.

Sunderland Council treat SCAS as an arm's length

company, however they own the 1 share in the Company, and they are managed by Sunderland Council's Head of Adult Services and are in every way ran as a directorate of the Council. This means we can use the predominately male groups of employees for the purpose of Equal Pay comparators.

With the fantastic support of the Women's Campaign Unit, we provided SCC with the evidence they needed to understand the GMB position and respond as to whether they agreed they were vulnerable to the claims or not. Unfortunately, SCC have chosen the months after to prevaricate, and not respond formally to our claims. So, in January 2024, at the full council meeting, we announced that we are formally lodging claims at the Employment Tribunal, and we are supporting members to do so immediately. We have also sought an urgent meeting with the leadership of the Council to find out what is taking them so long to form an opinion of our evidence.

Further work has also been undertaken by the Women's Campaign Unit and also the National Legal Office and we believe that the Equal Pay Claims can be expanded into the wider workforce and also schools that are still within the control of the Local Authority. Visits are being arranged to meet all members to encourage and support them in bringing their legal claims, with further drop in sessions being planned for the Easter holidays.

We won't stop until we have pay justice for our members in Sunderland Council and SCAS and our members know who is on their side and membership is increasing week by week.



### South Tyneside Council – Refuse Dispute

In June 2023 GMB members employed in STC's refuse service lodged a grievance claiming bullying and mismanagement by 2 managers of the service. They claim that over a number of years the workforce has been bullied, dismissed and ignored and decided collectively to stand up against the treatment and demand that the Council do something about it.

In September 2023 the Council appointed an external investigator, to meet the members and gather evidence to support or refute the members claims and present an outcome which would be actioned. It was clear from the beginning that the Council were bogged down in Council process and members were becoming extremely frustrated with how the Council were dealing with their complaints and they embarked on a series of strikes, beginning in November 2023 and then over the Christmas period into the New Year, with the latest action concluding on Friday 23rd February 2024.

Up until early February management have not engaged to resolve the dispute, however, there has been a marked improvement since the 2 local MPs got involved and urged them to negotiate themselves out of the problem.

Commitments have been made to improve the service, with Senior Managers going out with the crews to experience the problems they encounter, and members have met the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to explain the personal issues and bullying they have encountered.



All employees of the service are now members of the GMB, where previous density was just over 50%

### Formica

GMB tabled 8% plus shift allowance enhancement following members survey, Company offered 3.25% which has resulted in us moving to a formal industrial action ballot.

### Port of Tyne

A survey was sent to members and some issues are still to be resolved. The company made the mistake of dealing with another union outside of the negotiations, which gave them a substantial pay rise, and the members were not happy with this situation. Pay talks continue with the management and the issues are still to be resolved by the company. However, they have committed to a further offer for GMB members to resolve the current impasse.



## VLS

VLS provides a fleet service to both Powergrid and Northumbrian water.

Following a survey of our membership, it was apparent that their pay aspirations for 2024 was circa 8%. The initial offer from the company was 5% on which we refused to ballot on given that it was far less than our ask of 8%, in response the company increased the offer to 5.5% and a one off non-consolidated payment of £250, it was stated that this was the full and final offer.

This offer was rejected by 76%. We informed the company that if a further improved offer was not made it was our intention to ballot for strike action. A number of new members joined during this period, all by check off which the company noted.

A new offer of 7.5% and a one off £250 non-consolidated payment back dated to 1 January 2024 was tabled, this offer has just been accepted by our membership by a majority of 68%.

## North Tyneside Council

GMB had been informed that North Tyneside Council planned to fully withdraw from School Catering. GMB maintain that this position is nothing but detrimental to our members T&C's, Pensions and Working Conditions. During the Campaign to try and save the School Kitchens, GMB recruited more the 60 members and held a protest outside of the full council meeting. The campaign to save this service continues and from the 1st of April the North Tyneside Council Branch will launch a further campaign to bring the service back in house.

## NHS

The Sheffield Childrens Hospital which also includes Ryegate Childrens Centre and Becton CAHMS centre are currently involved in the closure of beds. I am working with the local reps on this issue which obviously effects the health of children with special needs in the local area. This, in turn effects the workforce and ultimately our members.

Membership at Barnsley Hospital remains large with ongoing focus on pay and conditions. We are working closely with the local reps on the issue of a TUPE transfer of the entirety of the laboratory service. This has been a time-consuming piece of work but is important with regards to maintain the membership we have within this area.

## Safestyle

On Monday 30th October 2023 Safestyle members were informed without any previous communication that the company was in receivership and the sites including Barnsley were closed with immediate effect.

GMB have been supporting members for redundancy pay, notice, holiday pay and are currently pursuing protective award claims.

## Cepac – Manvers

After a protracted campaign which included a submission to the CAC, Cepac agreed on 25th August 2023 to sign a voluntary recognition agreement.

## BMBC/Schools

GMB have been visiting Barnsley schools/academies to campaign around holiday pay for term time employees, negotiations are taking place with Barnsley council and a resolution to claims with back pay is almost finalised.



## Wickersley Partnership Trust

GMB attended a staff induction for Wickersley Partnership Trust at the New York Stadium (Rotherham United) to discuss the benefits of joining GMB.

## Kirklees Council

After 13 successive years of inadequate and unfair Tory funding, Kirklees Council joined many other Local Authorities in 2023, in announcing that it was on the verge of bankruptcy with a budget deficit in the region of £47 Million for 2024. One of the measures proposed were cuts of up to 750 potential jobs.

Consultation continues across a number of services and no final decisions have yet been taken in regard to any of the service areas.

Agreement has been reached that volunteers would be sought across impacted services before any compulsory redundancies would be considered.

Whilst a potential Equal Pay claim was detected in late 2023, it appears that following further inquiry that there are no claims in this particular area, although we continue to look out for any such



potential claims in other areas of the authority. Recruitment and organising opportunities have been capitalised on in both the care sector and in particular schools, where we continue to perform well, and despite the LA's financial backdrop, membership is growing month on month.

### Yorkshire Ambulance Service

After a seven-year battle, Clinical Supervisors won £5 million in a regrade claim, and whilst many reps have contributed to this success over the years, the fight was taken up and led throughout by Wakefield Ambulance Station rep Remmy Jones, who despite every obstacle and challenge that was thrown at her along the journey stood fast, a true demonstration of resilience and tenacity. GMB has chosen not to engage with the NHS Pay Review Body process until significant reform has been undertaken and GMB members in the NHS and ambulance services can be confident that process is truly independent.

Following extensive consultations with our members, we have submitted a pay claim to Government and asked for pay negotiations. The response was, as expected, a refusal to engage in talks and to encourage us to pay a part and submit our claims and arguments to the Pay Review Body.

Workplace visits will begin to seek the views of members and to identify and progress any local issues and campaigns.

rejected heavily by the membership, we managed to re-negotiate a deal of 5.5% that was accepted by the membership.

### BMBC

Term Time Only claims are ongoing in schools, and we are working with legal to get this issue resolved in the easiest and most efficient way possible.

There are a few issues with refuse workers to do with safe working practices and some conflicting information from the council. This seems to have settled, but I think this will still become an issue.



### JELD-WEN UK Ltd

Our Members in JELD-WEN work at the heart of British Manufacturing producing and dispatching internal and external doors and frames. Currently the membership is taking part in workplace ballots after submitting a 10% pay claim with their employer, this is to catch up with inflation over the previous difficult year.

### Cepac

After the initial offer of 4.5% by the employer was

## GMB NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

The region has had to face a number of challenges this year but has finished in a good position.

Last summer the region began implementing a change programme for Organisers to move away from a representing culture to a more campaigning and organising culture. The Regional Senior team was to split into four geographical zones of Cumbria & Lancs, Greater Manchester & Cheshire East, Merseyside & Cheshire West, and Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland, with each Senior line managing each zone.

Due to a large number of retirements, the region was for long periods operating with a significant reduction in Senior Organisers and Regional Organisers until replacements could be employed. This put a significant pressure on the day to day running of the region and a significant delay in the changes needed, being implemented. It wasn't until February 2024 that the region had all but two positions replaced. In total, 4 new Senior Organisers and 6 new Regional Organisers have taken up their positions, with 2 new Regional Organisers yet to be appointed.

The good news is that with the Senior Organisers now in place and the new teams in their zones, progress is being made on the changes we need.

During the last 12 months, the region has been undergoing a programme of membership cleansing where our data shows no payment is being received or the sick/unemployed rate is being received for longer than the rule book allows. This is an ongoing programme but the figures already show that 25% of all our leavers in the last 12 months were not paying Grade 1 or Grade 2 subscriptions but paying lower or zero rates.

Our data shows Grade 1/Grade 2 joiners v Grade 1/Grade 2 leavers during the year are virtually the same but when taking into account the issues mentioned above during the last 12 months, it's actually testament to a great team effort by all those involved, that region ends the year in a strong and healthy position.

Politically, the region is gearing up for the anticipated General Election. I don't think beyond our wildest dreams we thought it could much worse than 2022 and a Liz Truss Tory Government and a collapsed Northern Ireland Assembly, yet Rishi Sunak and his band of ideologues continue to run the country into the ground with devastating effects on the lives of working people and although the Northern Ireland Assembly is at last resitting, following the 2 year boycott by the Democratic Unionist party, the starvation of public funding

for public services finds working people and the services they desperately rely on, at breaking point.

Although official figures on inflation have slowly been coming down over the year, the continuing rise in the hidden cost of living continues and our members collective response to stand together and fight has been inspirational. We have seen numerous pay and conditions offers made by companies being rejected by our members in 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.

Some notable examples of successful campaigns are:



### Private Section

#### BAE Systems (Barrow)

During the last 12 months the branch have developed an intense recruitment and retention campaign. The success of this is shown in the recruitment of 700 new members (570 Grade 1 members and 130 Apprentices). With 135 leavers, mainly due to retirement, the branch has a net growth of 565 members, which is nearly double the figure reported in last year when the branch grew by 300.

#### United Utilities

This campaign spans across the end of last year's report and the beginning of this this year's. The mandate from the members was a 7% base pay increase and to increase the standby allowance. This was rejected by the company.

We created a Branch led strike committee and used this group to steer our comms strategy, allowing us to ensure our campaign started and ended with members.



The reps held a mixture of local face to face meetings and Teams online meetings, to keep the members across all 40 sites, at the heart of what we were doing. We took the company on using press, politicians, but most of all the industrial might of the workforce.



Within days of gaining a mandate with over 87% voting for strike, the company relented and offered an 8.5% increase on base pay and a 20% increase on standby. The members overwhelmingly accepted the offer, which was in excess of what our members had originally asked for.

During the campaign and the subsequent months, we recruited over 400 members, of which 200 were recruited since last year's report.

### Sapphire Utilities

This company dismantled our recognition agreement in 2019, during a TUPE process, so we started the campaign with single figure membership but by working with the Branch, we started carrying out gate visits, recruiting members and picking up issues to campaign on.

We built a core group of activists across the region, to help keep the members informed, so we didn't lose momentum and added over 100 members during this part of the campaign. Using our increasing numbers, we launched a CAC Recognition application, which the company chose to ignore at first but after many false dawns and by leveraging the arbitration process, the company eventually agreed to a voluntary recognition agreement, which now gives us access to over 500 employees.

### Public Services Section

In Northern Ireland, following two years of no government, power sharing was finally restored in February 2024. With no ministers to negotiate public sector pay thousands of civil servants went without an increase for 2023/24, this led to

industrial action on the scale that Northern Ireland has never seen before.

Trade Unions under the guidance of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions organised disputes across Education, Health, Transport and Civil Service. On the 18th January 2024, an estimated 150,000 public sector workers took part in a day of action, which included over half of the total Northern Ireland GMB membership taking action.

Workers from across 16 Trade Unions took part, the biggest number in over 50 years and our GMB members played their part in what led to formal pay offers being made by the Dept of Finance Minister within days of Stormont functioning again in February.

Our School Support members employed within the Northern Ireland Education Authority continue to be in dispute regarding the failure of the Dept of Education to address the difference in jobs roles and to deliver on a pay and grading review that's been agreed since 2018 and this dispute has led to just over 500 new school support members joining in the last 12 months.

In Translink, the ongoing Industrial Action has stayed strong. GMB have been at the forefront of this campaign, industrially and organisationally. The lengthy dispute has seen 230 new members join GMB, in what is seen as a high density unionised workforce. This is down to the clear leadership the GMB has shown and the solidarity and strength of our existing membership.



Since last year's report, in Local Government across the whole of the region, over 1800 new members have joined GMB, including the 500 mentioned above in Northern Ireland schools, plus 130 in our campaign in Liverpool schools and a further 100 in Cumbria schools.

The campaigns led by the Cumbria County Council Branch have seen a further 6% growth in financial membership. They continue to utilise their campaign approach and are currently engaged in



an Equal Pay Campaign in the council run Cumbria Care. The branch has recruited 360 new members during the last 12 months with 50 new members coming in the Care campaign.

Sadly, due to a Local Government restructure of 7 councils merging into 2 Unitary Councils, we have lost 220 members, with the majority of those being members who have taken voluntary severance, so a 6% net growth is a great achievement in such circumstances

In the NHS, we have recruited 250 new members in Northwest Ambulance Service and over 340 new members from across other areas of the NHS.

In the Care Sector, despite the continual sale of care homes from the big, recognised providers to smaller unrecognised providers, our membership continued to hold up.

Our members seem much more engaged about their pay and conditions since the NHS and other Public Service strikes in the media and they are realising their worth within the industry.

With 700 new members recruited, it's a shame that turnover of staff results in many leavers but we did have a slight 1.5% net increase during the last 12 months.



## Political

As well as our continuing work on politics with a capital P, we always pride ourselves in working and supporting our members in politics with a small p.

Our support for various foodbank initiatives continues as strong as ever and this year we have worked closely with Right to Food and Sweet Treats.

Having working people struggling to feed their families, is a scourge on our country's political elite but the generosity of GMB branches and members across the region, shows the GMB will not stand idly by and see our people go without food.

We continue to put pressure on our Sponsored Labour MP's and Councillors with regard to the ongoing Asda Equal Pay claim. The Issa brothers who own Asda reside in our region and it was good to see a parliamentary committee grilling Asda on its practices and GMB being there in front of the committee having the opportunity to express our views and concerns.

## GMB SCOTLAND

### Membership

On the back of the cost-of-living crisis and the fall in living standards, GMB has continued to grow. Over the last 12 months, we have 785 more members since April 2023. In September 2023, there were 1631 new members put on the system. This was the largest number of new members put on the system in over the last 20 years.

This is down to the hard work of our lay members and staff running good campaigns, working tirelessly to win for members, making work better for members, and making GMB the union of choice.



### Public Services

#### Local Government

Pay negotiations for 2023/24 were once again arduous with some workers not getting their pay rise until February 2024, 9 months after it was due. Despite the length of time taken to reach conclusion, the willingness of GMB members to take industrial action once again achieved a pay rise of at least £1 an hour. In the last two years local government workers in Scotland through taking industrial action have secured a £2 per hour increase, meaning salaries of full-time workers have increased by circa £4,000.

GMB took industrial action in Glasgow, with parking wardens going on strike during the World Cycling Championships and on the day of the 150th anniversary Scotland vs England friendly at Hampden. It was a matter of days before GMB took industrial action in schools across Scotland that

an improved offer was made which GMB members voted to accept.

We have embarked on a series of job re-evaluation campaigns across Scotland, this has highlighted some of the outdated evaluations and structurally discriminative practises across many councils. This has not just brought up undervalued workers' pay but is being the genesis for launching Equal Pay campaigns.

We have also highlighted violence in schools through a national campaign and local campaigning, to try to tackle the issue and making it clear it is our members who face the brunt of behaviours. We recently held a large public demonstration in Aberdeen, where we have also won back pay for school workers in a holiday pay dispute.

### NHS

GMB Scotland continues to grow through our campaigning work in the NHS and SAS. We have been heavily involved in the Agenda for Change working groups that were part of the 2023/24 pay deal. It was the unions that remained in dispute GMB, RCN and RCM that secured the Agenda for Change review that has reduced the working week, band review for nurses and will re-establish protected learning time. This is having a direct impact with the reduction of the working week coming into action from April 2024, with workers either seeing a reduction of 30 minutes per week or being paid overtime for that 30 minutes until the reduction is implemented.

A longstanding campaign in NHS Lanarkshire saw us come to the brink of industrial action with Radiographers over a disputed rota. The grassroots organising of this group of workers has seen them successfully fight for higher staffing to avoid a rota imposition. Getting within days of taking industrial action in the NHS, which has been avoided up until now by the NHS in Scotland.

### NCS

National Care Service implementation is incredibly slow in Scotland, held back by a lack of drive from Scottish Government and political mismanagement between local government and national government. We are focussing our capacity on trying to secure the implementation of sectoral bargaining in care which we believe is the key to unlocking real change in the sector.

## Women's Campaign Unit

GMB Scotland Women's Campaign Unit has been successfully supporting 14 job evaluation campaigns and 6 Equal Pay Campaigns with 2 more possible equal pay campaigns currently being investigated.

WCU have been supporting members, reps and Organisers with job revaluation campaigns. A large volume of this support is dedicated to training everyone involved in these campaigns to understand the job evaluation schemes and processes.



It is through the active engagement of workers in their own evaluation and the uncovering of process and scoring flaws that have launched new Equal Pay Campaigns in Scotland in Falkirk, Renfrewshire, and West Dunbartonshire. These campaigns have already led to incredibly well supported industrial action amongst home care, the first industrial action on equal pay since the dispute in Glasgow in 2018.

WCU have also been supporting Glasgow City Council to implement the SJC scheme to end pay discrimination – this is the largest job evaluation implementation work to date and will continue into 2025.

WCU have also been engaging with women in the Whisky industry looking at more women entering into the industry. However, historic policies are not keeping up with the needs of the changing workforce. We have successfully negotiated with North British Whisky a commitment to implement menopause and fertility policies in 2024 with a further commitment to updating maternity/paternity and family leave policies in 2025. We have begun a campaign plan to replicate this work in other workplaces within the Whisky industry.

## Private Sector

### Ship Building

Another great year for shipbuilding in Scotland. We have seen the new build hall being opened at Babcock Rosyth Naval Base. This has been a massive investment and the first type 31E frigate is nearing completion. The size of the build hall allows for 2 frigates to be built side by side. There are 5 frigates to build in the first batch ordered by the MOD for the Royal Navy.

BAE Systems Glasgow are progressing well with the Type 26 Submarine Hunter Frigates. There has been a recruitment drive in both companies with hundreds of apprentices being taken on, however there does remain a skills shortage. Our BAE Systems shop stewards have run a great campaign for parity with their colleagues in BAE Barrow and this has successfully galvanised the workforce and made a compelling case for equal pay avoiding the need for industrial action.

### DE&S Beith (MOD)

Our members led by our shop stewards committee ran a series of strike actions of non-craft workers which ran for 5 months starting in July 2023 going through until November 2023. This was the first ever dispute and the shops stewards should be commended for maintaining morale. They were successful in getting an improved offer, closing the gap between the craft workers and non-craft workers.

### Engineering and Construction – NAECI Agreement (Blue Book)

Following a breakdown in pay negotiations for 24/25, a huge exercise was undertaken to map the workforce. This was hugely problematic given the transient nature of the workforce. This was completed and resulted in a ballot for industrial action, the first legal ballot in the history of NAECI. This brought the employers back to the table and an improved 2-year deal comprising of 11.3% from Jan 24 and 5.3% from Jan 25, with a flow through on to overtime, shift allowance, lodgings and travel payments.

### Logistics and Distribution

GMB Scotland have been steadily moving into areas that are not traditionally ours, such as haulage. Notable successes have been the signing of 2 recognition agreements. 1 with Carantyne Transport who contract to the Whisky and Spirits industry and the other with Wincanton Logistics who are contracted to Howdens Kitchen Suppliers. Both of these agreements were achieved with good campaigns, growing the membership and when demonstrated to the employers, voluntary recognition was gained.





## Whisky and Spirits

The pay claim campaigns across various employers have resulted in above inflation rises across the board, with a particularly notable increase in North British where we have seen 22.6% increase over the last 3 years. Another good year for Whisky and spirits in Scotland, we continue to grow the membership. There have been many new reps identified and have completed their training.

## Offshore Oil and Gas

Some challenging pay campaigns have been run successfully for our Offshore Oil and Gas members working on the rigs. This is again, a very difficult task given the rosters that they work and the fact they are moved from rig to rig.

We were successful in getting Civica ballots over the line in favour of strike action following the rejection of the ESA's (Energy Services Agreement) 4% offer of an increase on the base rate. This ultimately resulted the companies being knocked

over 1 by 1 and adding a further 6% on top of the 4% giving us 10%. This was backdated to January 2024. This means for a craft worker basic flat week would amount to £55000 a year. However, with the shift patterns and allowances, many of our oil and gas members will be earning £80000 plus a year.

## Organising Team

The Organising Team regularly visit as many Asda stores as possible with a recent sweep of stores in the Northeast and Highlands being visited. We are currently undertaking a Health & Safety survey after

concerns were raised by our members at the poor state of some of the stores.

## Asda Retail

The campaign for Equal Pay continues in Asda Retail. GMB Scotland has lodged over 250 equal pay claims, and we have seen good membership growth as a result with over 200 new members signing up.

Another GMB Scotland campaign within ASDA has been a campaign against violence and abuse of staff by customers. GMB Scotland met with the assistant chief constable of Police Scotland to seek their support to protect our members.

GMB Scotland have also identified 2 stores which we are focusing on for potential industrial action. These are Asda Govan and Asda Perth.

## Asda Distribution

GMB Scotland are intending to carry out a consultative Ballot for industrial action within the 2 sites in Scotland due to the wage errors that our members are currently experiencing. Since Asda introduced the new system which ironically was designed to eradicate wage errors, they have increased as there has been no proper investment in training for this system.

## Silverline Derecognise GMB Scotland

In June 2023, Silverline derecognised GMB Scotland. Following industrial action, with a 98.51% prepared to take industrial action, we had cross party support.

Humza Yousaf MSP (First Minister of Scotland): "My own relationship with trade unions has been positive and constructive. "Even where there have been disagreements, my approach has been to always continue constructive dialogue to try and find a solution. "Social care workers provide a vital service. "Their work providing personal care and social support to residents is essential to the running of care homes that are rooted in compassion."

Bob Doris MSP: In the first instance, it is wholly wrong to seek to withdraw GMB Trade Union representation from a committed workforce who care for some of the most vulnerable people within our communities. I would ask that this position is reviewed and reversed. It is deeply concerning that such a withdrawal of Union recognition appears to be occurring at the same time as there is a significant threat to the pay and conditions of the workforce.

Paul Sweeney MSP (Labour): With 200 workers balloting for strike action, it is crucial that Minister Care Group (Silverline) recognise GMB Scotland under the new voluntary recognition agreement and return to negotiations with the union in good faith to secure a fair offer which not only avoids strike action but values the vital roles of social care workers.

Following days of industrial action, the first ever strike in Scotland by workers at a private care company occurred on 29 February 2024. After our campaign for members to win back their rights, a new recognition agreement between GMB Scotland and the employer was signed.

We ensured the daily toll of physical and verbal abuse endured by our members working in schools was one of the year's biggest stories, for example, making front pages everywhere from the Daily Record to the Inverness Courier.



More media campaigning was used to combat the negative headlines around the troubled CalMac ferries and build a new, positive narrative around Ferguson Marine shipyard and its skilled, committed but blameless workforce.

We were back on the front pages during a pay dispute with Scottish Water when we revealed how the public utility had breached official guidelines on executive salaries to ratchet up the pressure during pay talks. Energy and the failure of both our governments to deliver the green jobs promised for years was another recurring theme as we harnessed the media to call for more urgency and effective action.

More strong coverage came out of the care sector, most often based on surveys detailing the experience of our members, while our equal pay campaigns continued to claim a lot of column inches in Scottish and UK national titles.

Our coverage was not limited to the news pages with hard-hitting opinion pieces in titles including the Record, Times, Herald and Scotsman raising the voice of our members in the most important public policy debates, from the proposed National Care Service to the threatened closure of Grangemouth. Meanwhile, we exposed sector services contractor McTears in the press before our threat of a rolling media campaign compelled the firm to pay our members £120,000 compensation owed after a six-year legal battle.



### Summary of GMB Scotland media wins 2023/24

GMB Scotland has been making plenty of headlines in the last 12 months with our media campaigns winning extensive coverage locally, regionally, and nationally. Print, broadcast and digital media were all enlisted to support campaigns, highlight the concerns of our members, and increase pressure on employers.



## Political Campaigning

The Scottish Government's last minute Council Tax Freeze was implemented in a panic. As a result, local government continues to be starved of resources to fund pay offers which value frontline council workers and improve frontline council services which are on their knees. However, Councillors are not standing up to the Scottish Government or demonstrating political leadership, frequently hiding behind council officers.

This is especially true when it comes to equal pay. Neither councils or the Scottish Government have learned the lessons of the past and are forcing claims to Tribunal further increasing costs as the settlement bill rises. Councils are sleepwalking towards another nationwide wave of claims. However, Scottish Government cuts mean that bankruptcy is now a real possibility for Scottish councils.

The tide has been turned on Ferguson Marine with the focus now on the yard's future rather than its past. Cross-party MSPs are calling for investment in a publicly owned shipyard and have agreed the need for the yard to win a pipeline of work (such as the new Scottish small ferry fleet) to protect jobs. We continue to push the Scottish Government to act on the plans being laid before them.

In energy, the Scottish Government is proposing damaging legislation which would see boilers ripped out and replaced with mostly electric heating systems with significant costs being forced onto households. Despite this, they have continued with their ideological opposition to nuclear despite the security and jobs it brings. Offshoring of jobs in energy manufacturing is proving to be a standard practice for the Scottish Government in the absence of any meaningful industrial strategy or investment.

## Thank you to Lay Reps

GMB would like to thank all lay reps for their hard work and commitment campaigning to make work better for our members.





## GMB SOUTHERN REGION

We are still in tough times. Inflation may be down, but prices are still rising and the pressures on hardworking people real and persistent. These economic realities and their effects on our membership have continued to drive the Region's activities and performance across the last 12 months.

Congress is an opportunity to take stock. Looking back at this time last year, it felt like the Region had turned a corner. Since then, the campaigns and disputes have driven a record year of growth. The Region's combined grade 1 and grade 2 membership has risen in every month except December and, starting in September 2022, the Region recorded growth in 19 out of the 20 months up to April.

We are in workplaces, listening to members, supporting them in their campaigns and helping them to make work better.

It has been a tremendous team effort from Branches, Activists, Officers and Support Staff. More battles than ever, more campaigns than ever, more wins than ever. A few of these are highlighted below.

### AREA 1

#### Asda Gosport Strike

February saw the first ever strike in an Asda store at Gosport in Hampshire. This groundbreaking dispute centred around members' treatment at the hands of management – wage errors, staffing numbers, health and safety concerns and a toxic culture were more than enough for over 100 GMB members to walk out for two days, forcing Asda into settlement talks at ACAS. The unprecedented action has been the catalyst for other disputes outside the Region as more Asda members say "enough is enough" to the atrocious working conditions in their stores.



### Wiltshire County Council (WCC)

In 2021, members employed as parking wardens said "no" to a 10% cut in their pay. Three years on – and many strike days and demonstrations later, they are still resisting. In March this year the Employment Tribunal ruled that the council's Chief Executive had acted unlawfully when he wrote an email trying to intimidate our members from voting for industrial action. The Tribunal found his evidence to be "simply implausible".

### BCP Council

Following the amalgamation of three local authorities – Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole – four years of negotiation to try and harmonise pay and conditions concluded with a rejection in January of the "final offer" which did not tell members how they were affected! After GMB was the only union to reject, further negotiations led to a revised offer and at the time of writing, over 100 BCP employees have joined GMB's campaign to resist the changes. Notice of a ballot for industrial action is about to be served.



### Swindon Council

GMB have been in dispute with Swindon Borough Council over the last year in the Emergency Duty Service, the out of hours service providing 24-hour emergency care to vulnerable people. It is extraordinary that their employer reduced the pay and status of the key staff with responsibility for quality assurance in child protection, therefore putting children at risk.

The council had announced that these staff would lose around £700 per month from September 2023, following a pay and regrading review, due to the removal of a 20 per cent unsocial hours payment. A strike proceeded from midnight on Monday 4 September, with action taking place daily until 13 September. Eleven social worker Assistant Team Managers then commenced a two-week strike in December and were joined by the Emergency Duty Service from Christmas Eve. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) also joined the dispute.

GMB have spent many months seeking to resolve



the dispute through ACAS and have worked hard to bring the employer to the table.

### Urbaser

Refuse workers in Gosport secured significant pay rises to avert a strike over New Year 2024. With a successful strike ballot announced, Urbaser met the membership's claim in full – £15.00 per hour for Drivers and £12.00 for Loaders.

### AREA 2

Area 2 ran a number of campaigns, many resulting in improved terms for our members without strike action. However, there were also sustained strikes where needed.

### NJC Pay Campaign

Southern Region – including Area 2 – balloted every employer under the NJC pay umbrella, including all LEA's, District Councils, NJC Academy Trusts, Foundation and Voluntary Aided Schools: over 640 individual statutory ballots covering 22,000 members. We got two Local Authorities over the threshold for the first time in a decade, along with 50 Academies and Voluntary Aided Schools. Membership increased by over 300 and a new Rep Network was established. As part of the process, we rewrote the workplace membership coding system to ensure a simpler process next time round.

### SGN

After one of SGN's best-ever no-strings pay award settlements in 2022, the second part of talks in 2023 concluded with a raft of improvements on top of a 22% pay increase over 3 years. The Union grew by 162 new members.

### Canenco

After 10 weeks of industrial action, members employed by Canterbury Council's wholly-owned refuse subsidiary won an increase in pay of 11.2% for Drivers and 12.2% for Loaders. This was a hard-won fight against a newly elected Labour council.

### Thanet Council Refuse & Cleansing

Following big successes in Biffa, Veolia and Canenco in particular, members were poised to take industrial action. However, a few days after the Canenco dispute ended, Thanet Council got in touch via ACAS and talks ended with Thanet offering the same rates that our members in Canenco had just won. As the refuse and street cleansing is carried out in-house at Thanet Council, and in order to maintain equal pay, all of the council's bandings were reviewed and increases made to each, meaning members working outside of refuse and street cleansing also received a pay rise.

### Gatwick Ground Services

A consultative ballot on the company pay offer was overwhelmingly rejected with support for starting an industrial action ballot. The company improved their original offer for two years: 12.5% for 2023 and 4% or inflation for 2024. The campaign brought 60+ new joiners, two new Reps and a sole recognition agreement.

### Asda – Eastbourne and Brighton, Hollingbury

After the first Asda strike in Gosport, the Brighton Hollingbury store voted for strike action, with the Eastbourne store close behind. The Region continues its strategic campaign to help our members win better staffing levels and decent treatment for everyone.





## AREA 3

### ISS – South London and Maudsley NHS Trust

Begun back in 2002, this dispute aims to achieve parity of pay and conditions between ISS contracted staff and Agenda for Change (AfC) contracted staff. Our claim demanded £14.04 per hour basic for everyone, a Covid Bonus and full AfC for all. Members voted 99.09% in favour of Action and took a total of 13 days strike action, along with marches on Canary Wharf and Parliament Square. With another 8 days of strike action scheduled, a 17% pay rise was offered and accepted, plus a Covid Bonus.



### Yoox Net-a-Porter

Following a dispute and workplace ballot for industrial action, all members are now paid at least the London Living Wage. We are in dispute with the company at present concerning non-payment of rest breaks and have started a campaign for the implementation of a Menopause Policy.

### APCOA Parking Limited (Bromley)

A new workplace Recognition Agreement was achieved in July 2023, through negotiations & CAC application process. Two new GMB workplace Organisers were elected and membership increased.

### LB Greenwich – “London Weighting Needs Inflating”

Launched in February with a massive lobby of the council, this huge equal pay campaign is picking up momentum and members as it builds towards strike action at the end of the year.

### Edible Oils

Members rejected their first pay offer of 3% in March, then accepted a pay award including 7% back dated to April 2023, 5% in January 2024 and 5% in March 2024.

## Leathersellers Federation

The Leathersellers Schools Federation announced they were applying to be a multi academy trust.

Members went into a dispute and took strike action. The campaign did not stop the academy conversion, but following talks with ACAS, guarantees and confirmation of “no detriment” to terms and conditions were won by the members and a campaign by the NEU to take our membership thwarted.

### South London Waste Partnership (Merton, Kingston, and Sutton)

We gave notice of strike action across the waste and parks workers on the South London Waste Partnership in October 2023, to end endemic low pay. We expanded our density throughout this campaign and now have majority membership across six sites.



### London Borough of Croydon

A number of simultaneous campaigns have been run across the Borough in support of members who are either at threat of redundancy or being outsourced from employment. This has generated an increase in membership and a new layer of activists coming through. One notable success is the reversal of the Academisation of Redgate's School.

### University of Arts London

A gender equalities issue identified with the Technician's has seen a survey sent out as the first part of a campaign. The long running campaign to get parity of terms and conditions for the cleaners continues and a new strike ballot is in progress with ballot papers going out in March.

### Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust

Members in the Patient Transport Services backed strike action over pay by 94%. Action took place in April with further days set for May.



## REGIONAL ORGANISING TEAM (ROT)

In the 12 months from April 2023 to March 2024, Southern Region recruited 17,384 new members, a net gain of 2,070 over the period.

In November 2023 Southern Region saw our 15th consecutive month of net growth.

The Regional Organising Team contributed by organising and recruiting around national campaigns such as NJC Pay and HC-One Sick Pay, plus numerous local campaigns including Kent and Surrey Councils and SGN. We recruited new members at formal inductions such as SERCO as well as supporting members taking industrial action around the Region.

Please see below the top 25 employers for the period March 2023 – March 2024. Membership growth in these areas has largely been down to organising around workplace ballots, industrial action and inductions.

ASDA STORES LIMITED	630
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL	557
KENT COUNTY COUNCIL	490
EVRI (formerly HERMES)	404
BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL	367
SOUTH EAST COAST AMBULANCE	355
NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	
LONDON BOROUGH OF WANDSWORTH	322
SGN	303
THE GRAHAM CARE GROUP	272
LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM	239
G4S FORENSIC & MEDICAL SERVICES	236
SERCO UK LIMITED	224
VEOLIA ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PLC	222
UBER	209
ASDA DISTRIBUTION	207
LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON	205
ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH	201
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON	192
ISS UK LTD	191
WILTSHIRE COUNCIL	190
BOURNEMOUTH CHRISTCHURCH & POOLE COUNCIL	189
EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL	174
BIDFOOD (BFS Group)	160
DORSET COUNCIL	155
HC-ONE LTD	149

Including our Senior Organiser and MDO, the Regional Organising Team has 3 experienced core Organisers and an Organising Assistant. For the third year, we have continued to rota each Area Officer for 2 weeks annually in the ROT.

The Regional Organising Team trains all newly appointed Organisers, Organising Assistants and any secondees for a minimum period of 6 – 12 months. All additional resources help cover big





campaigns faster and more thoroughly – as an example, we can capitalise on greater access to larger numbers of support staff specifically on INSET days. The Region recruited 242 new members and more than a dozen Reps on the first two days of the Autumn 2023 term (62 more than the comparable 2022 period). In addition to recruitment, we have seen hundreds of existing members which strengthens our retention. Our combined Schools and Academies recruitment during that time period was 6,725, or 38% of all new members recruited within the Region and which we are particularly proud of.

ROT members participate in different campaign working groups across all Areas to share best practice and maximise potential recruitment. The data shows Southern Region's average recruitment remained steady through this period. To maximise coverage with large, spread-out employers such as HC-One, South West Ambulance Service, ASDA etc, we organise Region-wide schedules that include all Officers and Organising Assistants, which works well for us.

Workplace meetings around pay surveys, inductions and ballots take place at a higher frequency than ever before – the result being the Region pulls together as a team and we achieve consistent growth.



## EQUALITIES REPORT

### Regional Women's Conference

Once again, the Southern Region's Women's Conference was hugely oversubscribed and a roaring success. Over 50 women delegates attended the Conference, with the usual focus on developing personal action plans and leading workplace campaigns with the intention of changing something.

### Southern Race Network (SRN)

The outstanding work of the Region's SRN continues – from well-attended webinars, launching the race pay-gap motion for councils, to preparing for the upcoming keynote Conference in October.





## GMB WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

### Acknowledgement

Once again, it's my honour and privilege to be writing 2024's report on behalf of the Wales & South West region. May I take the opportunity in thanking all staff, the Regional Committee, Regional Council, CEC members and all our activists for what we have achieved throughout 2024.

You are the foundations and core of the GMB, who have passionately given dedication and commitment to help re-build and grow our union, support our members, listen to our members and campaign on the things that matter to them, by making their work better.

The membership growth within the Wales and South West region has been continuous month on month, and it is with great pride that we acknowledge the substantial contribution from our dedicated staff and activists across all structures. Their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts have been pivotal in driving this growth, reflecting a collective determination to advance our union's mission. Our commitment to staff development has remained a top priority within the region.

We have placed support/ admin staff on the Women's leadership course to secure future women leaders within the GMB. Hopefully, many now feel included and part of an organisation where they see their long-term future. Through tailored programs and initiatives, we have continuously invested in enhancing their skills and

enhancing career progression, ensuring that they are equipped with the knowledge and expertise necessary to personally plan a pathway for their career within the GMB. It is their dedication and commitment that lie at the heart of our success, and we remain deeply grateful for their ongoing contributions.

We also saw our colleague Kelly Andrews Senior Organiser take her own career path and leave the GMB after many years. May I take this opportunity in thanking Kelly for her dedication and wish her a great future in her new role.

Our thanks to the National President and Vice president Barbara Plant and Malcolm Sage for their steadfast leadership. Also, to the CEC for their commitment in moving the union forward, hopefully many of our colleagues will be successful in gaining another term to serve of union, but we also want to congratulate any new CEC member to their new role.

Our final acknowledgement is to our General Secretary Gary Smith. Gary reminded us, that if we wanted to protect everything this union has built over the past, and if we want the GMB to thrive and prosper, we need to come together and respectfully work together to campaign, to listen to our members, to fight for our members and to grow.

In the Wales & South West region we have adopted the campaigning agenda and have recognised the enthusiasm from our members when we listen to them, the credibility it gains our union and our members loyalty stands with us throughout future endeavours.





## POLITICAL

It has been unsurprisingly a very busy political time. Alongside the daily interactions GMB Officers, reps and members have with elected officials and Government agencies, we have been making big political waves. In this report we wanted to highlight the big political stories and hundreds of local employers GMB has an active political presence in which is making change for our members.

### Mark Drakeford Resigns

In December Mark Drakeford announced that he intended to stand down as Wales First Minister. Mark has been a strong friend of GMB in his time in office, supporting our campaigns throughout all industries in Wales.

He also introduced the landmark Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill which provides a framework allowing for trade unions to be involved in the decision making of government policy as well as having a role in procurement decisions. This move allows GMB to actively fight for our issues and values inside government, making sure that good, unionised work is at the Heart of Welsh government decision making and spending.

Mark's dedication to Welsh people throughout the pandemic was outstanding, he was steadfast in his leadership and grew the confidence and trust from the people in Wales. Thank you, Mark.

### Welsh Labour Leadership Election

GMB was actively involved in the decision making of the new leader of Welsh Labour. Over 14,000 of our members were balloted for their vote on who they believed should be the next leader of Welsh Labour.

GMB's political committee met to pick the candidate they would like to see as the next leader of Welsh Labour. In Welsh Labour's rules, an essential part of the criteria of being eligible to stand for leadership is a Trade union endorsement.

Our political committee met and after a rigorous process decided to endorse Vaughan Gething as our candidate. It should be a point of pride that both candidates Jeremy Miles and Vaughan Gething were both GMB activists, with Vaughan serving as GMB workplace organiser before going on to chair Wales TUC as GMB delegate. On Saturday 16th March, Vaughan was confirmed winner, with GMB members playing our part to get him selected.

### General Election

Welsh Labour selected all seats except Swansea West before the autumn, whilst South West Labour initiated selections for all remaining seats

in January. GMB have backed many winning candidates who we are looking to support in the upcoming election, and we will be looking for our army of activists to come out on the doors to usher in a Labour Government in Westminster and deliver the changes needed for GMB to meet our aims and goals of making work better.

## Conferences

As a union we should recognise and be proud of ourselves for our hard work over the last few years, and reflect the fact that from the rostrum we heard lists of GMB campaigns, aspirations and goals repeated as policy positions from the Labour Party. Our hard work is paying off, and whilst there is more to do, our goals are now Labour's goals.

Welsh Labour Conference has been delayed until sunny July (In Llandudno) in line with the leadership election. SW Labour has seen the retirement of Phil Gaskin as regional director, with Alex Mitchell appointed in March. Dates of conference TBC.

## EQUALITY

### Menopause Conference 19th August 2023

We were lucky enough to secure guest speaker Carolyn Harris to attend this event and share her journey and fight to Smash the Stigma on Menopause with the fabulous Lisa Guscott from Solicitors, Watkins, and Gunn, who spoke about her experience in the workplace and the law around menopause. The conference was rounded off by our very own Women's Forum members, Gwylan Brinkworth and Maxine Butler, who took us through the GMB's Smash the Stigma Toolkit.

### Women's Conference 14th October 2023

The conference theme centred around having confidence and being confident. A panel of speakers included GMB National President Barbara Plant, Hannah Blythyn MS and Sarah Murphy MS and a confidence session with Jos Andrews, BBC producer writer and consultant.

### Regional Equality Conference 11th November 2023

We had a successful conference which was well attended, the calibre of speakers attending was outstanding which included the WTUC, SARI, JW Walker, American LGBTQ+ activist and Tyehimba Nosakhere, GMB National Race Officer. The conference was rounded off in style by the Tenvous choir where a collection was held, and the region donated £500 to the Cancer Support Charity.

## REF

The strands are each working on a campaign and using the 5 campaign questions as their framework, and we hope to see some progress on

this at the next REF meeting.

### Neurodiversity Training

Working in conjunction with the regional educational team we are currently having discussions about setting up neurodiversity training for officers and a similar session for the REF. Tentative dates have been set for the end of June 2024.

### Menopause Training

The Regional Education Team are now including this as part of their training opportunities, so we have more uptake in 2024. A successful session was run for HPC reps at the Sedgemoor campus.

### Pride Events

All officers asking for community prides to be the focus of the support from the region this year do so with the understanding that branches will finance and run the stalls at their pride events and the region will support. So far, we have had requests for support from Cornwall, Neath Port Talbot, Merthyr Plymouth and Gloucester. We have 12 potential prides across the region and will shortly be sending out poster and social media posts to encourage members to attend the events.

### Legal

Since the implementation of our new regional legal structure, we are thrilled to welcome Jonathan Williams as our Regional Legal Officer. With Jonathan's expertise and dedication, our legal team has seen a significant enhancement in its capabilities. Since Jonathan joined us, we have experienced a notable increase in efficiency and effectiveness in addressing legal challenges.

Within the 6 months of July to December 2023, the Legal department has taken up 211 new Personal Injury cases on behalf of WSW Region members which are currently being dealt with by UNIONLINE. We have achieved settlement in 67 of the region's current outstanding cases. Recovered £747,247.85 in compensation for our members and achieved an average settlement of £11,152.94 per case.

The top 3 PI Compensation awards between July to December 2023, were: £80,000.00, £75,000.00 and £66,442.00

ELS Cases opened: 6

- Achieved a settlement in 18 of the region's current outstanding ELS cases
- Recovered £175,864.40 in compensation
- Achieved an average settlement of £9,770.24 per case

ET cases: Employment Tribunal Cases transferred to panel: 4

Employment Tribunal cases dealt with in-house: 20

- Achieved a settlement in 6 of the region's current outstanding ET cases (in-house)
- Recovered £177,500.00 in compensation for our members
- Achieved an average settlement of £29,583.00 per case.

### Industrial Action

Since November 2023 we have conducted a total of 6 industrial action ballots, some of which have resulted in direct industrial action being taken which are as follows: -

- Oil refinery workers at Altrad Employment services - 97% of members supported IA - improved pay offer secured, and no action was required.
- Oil refinery workers at Jenkins & Davies Mechanical Engineering - 87% of members supported IA - improved pay offer secured, and no action was required.
- Scaffolders at ASG group - 33% of members supported IA - improved pay offer secured, and no action was required.
- G4S security guards at the Department of Work & Pensions - ballot process ongoing
- Maternity care workers at the North Bristol NHS Trust - ballot process ongoing
- Leisure centre & care workers at Merthyr Leisure Trust - 100% support IA

### Industrial

#### Asda Retail

Regular visits are ongoing to every store within the region to support local reps and listen to members/identifying local workplace leaders. The equal pay claim remains a massive focus for our visits and the number of members who have now lodged equal pay claims in our region has increased significantly and now stands at 2167. There are still several stores that do not have their own workplace reps and officers have identified these stores and are concentrating visits in a bid to identify workplace reps and points of contact.

#### Asda Distribution

Pay negotiations have been ongoing leading to an offer from the company that the national reps

committee were prepared to recommend. The offer that members were asked to consider was: 4.3% increase on base rate and all premiums. This offer was accepted by 77% of members and the total membership across our two sites in Chepstow and Bristol has now increased to 693.

## Uber

Uber membership continues to grow, and we are now up to 97 members who are mainly based in Bristol and Cardiff.

A new Uber driver hub has recently opened in Swansea, and we attended an open day which gave us a great chance to engage with new drivers that are using the Uber driver App for the first time. We have now a national/local rep in place, Majid Khan, who is doing a great job of supporting our members, attending the driver hubs to recruit new members.

## Wales & West Utilities

Our members are currently part of a 5-year deal which is linked to CPIH and pay for 2024 is likely to around 5% and implemented in July. This is following on from the 8.8% award that was secured in 2023. A survey of all industrial members was conducted and in total 551 our industrial members took part, which is a significant improvement on the survey we conducted in 2021, where only 134 members responded. Membership has significantly increased because of our activity within WWU from 1095 in January 2022 to 1306 in March 2024.

## Water Industry

Reps from our four regional water companies (Wessex Water, Bristol Water, Southwest Water & Welsh Water) have combined to create a regional water forum which will help to shape future campaigns, trade organising ideas and assist in the negotiations of future pay and conditions. This joint working will also help us understand just how badly our water companies are being run, where the money is being spent/wasted and just how big the salaries of those at the top are!

## Bidfood Pay Survey

In preparation for this year's pay claim, pay survey session were organised in the sites in Chepstow and Swansea. All members were released to attend a meeting with their local rep, and asked to complete a pay survey and confirm that their membership details were accurate.

Membership continues to increase within Bidfood, and this has enabled us to argue successfully for an additional rep at the Chepstow site to join our team.

## Evri

This an extremely challenging environment to organise in as our members are basically self-employed and located at small delivery units spread throughout our region. Despite these challenges membership continues to grow and currently stands at 596. The new national constitution is now in place which has enabled us to elect a deputy regional rep who will be able to support our members in the Bristol/Wales delivery units.





## Cardiff Airport

Negotiations on pay have begun – We have received a pay offer of 4.5% in line with RPI for March and the maintenance of the Real Living Wage £12.00 pr hr for hourly paid staff with differentials being maintained upwards of that rate.

## ICTS – Bristol Airport

We are about to embark upon a Skill Based Pay system which was agreed during last year's pay claim. Branch B07 continues to regrow membership, the workplace has a high turnover rate due to the complexities of the shift systems. Despite this the branch has 110 members and continues to grow.

## Tarmac

Members have rejected a pay offer of 4.75% – this has been accepted across Tarmac throughout the country. Unfortunately, the Quarry based in Cornelly is also being impacted negatively by the proposed closures of the blast furnaces at TATA as they supply the Stonedust for the Sinter Plant – this order has dropped by 75%.



## TATA Steel UK

Our members at Tata in Port Talbot and Llanwern are to strike after the company ended negotiations over changes to the business which will result in 2,800 direct job losses. Negotiations between the

unions and the Indian steel giant have ended at a meeting in London in April, formally closing any chance of an alternative plan put forward by unions being adopted.

The company will end blast furnace steel production at the Port Talbot plant and will build a £1.25bn electric arc furnace, recycling scrap steel. The UK Government has contributed £500m grant towards the plan saying it was the only way to secure any jobs.

The company has confirmed it will close blast furnace five in June and blast furnace four in September. This is devastating. Our current Tory Government has utterly failed to stand up to Tata and demand better for Port Talbot and Llanwern's steel communities and the country. Tata's workers, with GMB using every power at its disposal, will not so easily be defeated. Our thanks to Charlotte Brumpton-Childs, Tom Hoyles and Rosemary Broad for their dedication and continued support to fight for our members at Tata.

## Shipbuilding

Workplace reps across Devonport Dockyard, Appledore and Falmouth continue to work with the CSEU on the Breathe Safe campaign. Pay negotiations have taken place for Devonport dockyard with members accepting an offer of 7.5% with a consolidated lump sum of £1000 and a non-consolidated payment of £700. Appledore shipyard to date there has been no pay offer from the company, as a result a Failure To Agree has been lodged.

## Hinkley Point C

HPC continues to be the largest employer in the region. We have fantastic reps, who 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 2023/24 we have gained a significant growth in membership, with nearly 2,000 members now part of the HPC/GMB family.

Women in Nuclear is currently one of the priority campaigns and we are seeing a real GMB family building and our women members being at the forefront of change.

## NJC Pay & Local Government

A programme of visits has been undertaken across in schools and MAT academies focused on Cheltenham, Gloucester, Somerset at the end of the academic year. Then from September Bristol, Plymouth Cornwall and after the Easter holidays Devon.



We are currently in dispute with a MAT academy in Cornwall for not following the NJC and members have voted for industrial action in a consultative ballot. We are currently in dispute resolution talks with the employer. On the back of the 2023 pay dispute we have had a Multi Academy Trust return to following the NJC in Cornwall.

## Social Care

### HC One

The pay offer was accepted by the majority of those who voted in England and Wales and has therefore been accepted nationally. The pay campaign was accompanied by the launch of the Sick of SSP campaign, which aims to win full sick pay through organising.

### Four Seasons

A final pay offer has been received: 5% increase (variable and bottom loaded for the lowest paid); The ballot will run from 29th April to 20th May 2024. We will continue to visit homes throughout the region and will be launching a local training initiative to build on membership and listen to our members.

## NHS

We are engaging with members regarding the 2024 pay campaign. We have been holding information stalls in health trusts in the South West where we have been updating members, cleansing data and talking to them about the 2024 claim. The

dispute at North Bristol NHS Southmead Hospital regarding incentive payments for midwifery support workers, housekeepers and receptionists is ongoing.

## South Western Ambulance Service

The campaign, based around rest breaks for ambulance workers, continues with an outcome to the collective grievance being that the members are now being consultatively balloted for industrial action. The ballot opened at the beginning of April. The campaign for recognition continues with planned coordinated visits across sites in WSW/SO

## Training

Our members benefit from our Wales Union Learning Fund (WULF) Project and our Regional Learning Fund, which together provide learning support and over 650 courses to Members throughout the whole Region. Despite the differences in devolved education across the 2 parts of Region our Members Learning offer is consistent throughout.

## Equal Pay

Equal Pay learning sessions are currently being developed and the Women's campaign unit continue to support on developing individuals' knowledge and skills in fighting Equal Pay. We currently have Equal Pay campaigns running within Swansea City Council, Bristol council, Monmouth and Blaenau Gwent. We have a number of opportunities which we will be focussing on moving forward.



Our staff are undertaking training to enable self-sufficiency within the campaigns and thanks must be given to the National Women's Campaign unit, for their dedicated work and unwavering support. We will continue to enhance our knowledge and build on campaigns to benefit our members to gain what always should have been their right.

### Special Condolences

#### Lesley Bishop

It is with heavy hearts and profound sadness that I inform you of the passing in January of our dear colleague and friend, Lesley Bishop. Lesley was not only a valued member, but also a passionate activist and Branch Secretary, whose dedication and tireless efforts made a significant impact on the members she represented in the Gloucester area.

We extended our deepest condolences to Lesley's family and loved ones. As we mourn her loss, let us also remind ourselves of the remarkable work she did as an activist. Lesley has worked for many years with an ongoing illness and was always on the end of the phone for our members, she was a truly inspiring individual.

#### Jimmy Dent

Again it's with profound sadness that I inform you of the passing of Jimmy in October 2023 Jimmy was not only a valued member of our Plymouth team, but also a passionate activist whose dedication and tireless efforts made a significant impact on the causes he championed. We continue to celebrate his life and the remarkable work he did as an activist. Jimmy's unwavering commitment to social justice and his advocacy for change were truly inspiring. His legacy will continue to inspire us all, reminding us of the difference one person can make in the world.

#### Ross Tilbury

Ross was a representative in Wales and West Utilities. Ross passed away July 2023, after a relatively short battle with cancer. He was only 35 and leaves a wife and small children. He was a lovely guy and an active rep that just wanted to get involved and help others, he will be really missed by his fellow reps and members.

In honour of Jimmy's, Ross, and Lesley's memory and all other close friends and colleagues we have lost, let us remember our commitment to the values they stood for and continue the work they were so passionate about. Together, we can carry forward their legacy and make a positive impact throughout everything we do, just as they did throughout their lives.







**Join GMB now online at  
[www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join)**

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