



**MAKE  
WORK  
BETTER**

**GMB CONGRESS 2025**

**AWARD WINNERS REPORT**







## Will Thorne Award – Kelvin Enabulele

**The inaugural winner of GMB's Will Thorne Award for Organising is Kelvin Enabulele from our North West & Irish Region, for his work as part of the first cohort to participate in GMB's Race Achievement Scholarship Programme – GRASP.**

As part of his placement, Kelvin threw himself into campaigning activity across the country, organising workers into the union and encouraging them to take part in GMB campaigns to make work better.

At 6am on a cold day in November, Kelvin joined Amazon workers in Coventry on their picket line. More than 300 workers were on strike as part of their fight for union recognition, taking on a notoriously anti-union employer. To raise spirits on the picket line, Kelvin took hold of a megaphone and led the workers in song, singing Bob Marley's "Get Up, Stand Up" at the top of his voice. The workers rallied around him and set off marching, chanting and singing.

In Cumbria, Kelvin has supported the campaign for equal pay, visiting schools and other workplaces across the local authority and organising workers into the union to join the fight for pay justice.

Kelvin has recently been elected to GMB North West & Irish Region's Regional Committee, as well as the TUC Race Relations Committee, in recognition of his significant contribution as a trade unionist and campaigner for equality.

In her speech to last year's Congress which called for the creation of the Will Thorne Award, Joanne Wear of GMB's North West & Irish Region held up Kelvin as an example of an inspirational GMB member whose work she felt deserved recognition, but who did not meet the criteria for our existing awards – which recognise exceptional women activists and notable campaigners on the issue of health and safety.

As the inspiration for the award, and for his outstanding efforts to make work and our union better, Kelvin Enabulele is a worthy first winner of the Will Thorne Award.



## Eleanor Marx Award – Louren Evans and Carly Harries

**Louren and Carly work at Ferndale House, a council-run residential care home in the Rhondda Valleys, South Wales.**

In September 2024, the RCT Council proposed to decommission Ferndale House before the completion of a new dementia care facility planned for 2025. This sparked a significant GMB campaign led by Louren and Carly. They argued that closing Ferndale House before the new facility was ready would disrupt and risk residents' lives and break the council's promise to keep it open until the new facility was built.

Within a day of being notified, Louren and Carly spoke out in a Cabinet meeting, calling out the council director for breaking the promise. With union officers' support, they led the campaign with staff, residents, and families, rallying the community and gaining widespread media and political interest.

The campaign ignited passion and determination within the community, reminiscent of the miners' strikes. Louren and Carly organised events, public meetings, marches, and protests. They gathered over 1,600 supporters on Change.org, led email and letter campaigns, and arranged Christmas

cards for council members. They raised funds, organised buses, and gathered data to challenge the council, exposing flawed statistics and highlighting risks to residents and staff.

They packed community consultation events, resulting in the highest response rates the council had ever seen, overwhelmingly supporting saving the home. They mastered social media, providing updates and sharing campaign content on TikTok and Instagram. The campaign received extensive media coverage, including articles in Wales Online and other news outlets, and featured on ITV news.

Louren and Carly navigated their own emotions, while supporting staff and residents, organising social events to keep everyone's Christmas spirit alive, and continuing their day jobs caring for residents, looking after their families, and running their own home. They are our GMB superheroes and saved Ferndale House from closure!





## Mary MacArthur Award – Abigail Young

### **Abigail Young, Midlands Region, for outstanding campaigning using health & safety to create change and improve standards at Swissport Birmingham Airport**

Abigail became a Health and Safety Representative in Summer 2024. In a short period, she has more than doubled union membership in her workplace. Abigail has worked tirelessly to ensure that every worker knows their rights and understands the power of collective action. Her ability to build solidarity has strengthened the union's presence and influence in the workplace.

Beyond recruitment, Abigail has led a campaign to secure significant improvements in health and safety. Abi negotiated five hours of paid release each week for her to carry out her rep duties and during which she walks the workplace at Birmingham Airport. During these walkarounds, she engages with workers, spots any health and safety issues by taking photographs, and raises concerns directly with management. She ensures issues are not just logged but are visibly acted on, and she keeps members informed with regular updates.

An example of her proactive approach was her recent campaign to improve crew room facilities. Abi organised and ran a petition, gathering widespread support from workers. She collected photos to highlight the poor conditions and communicated the results clearly and effectively to both management and members. Her efforts led directly to significant improvements in the facilities, showing real results driven by worker-led action.

Abi shows that having determination and the confidence to speak up to management is just as important as knowing the technical elements when it comes to being a great safety rep. Thanks to her efforts, working conditions have improved, and her colleagues now have a safer, more secure environment. She has made a huge impact in a short time as an activist and is a well-deserved winner of this award.



## John McClean Award – BestFood Logistics National H&S Team

**Winners: Mick Vearer (pictured), Laal Flynn, Ion Ghiulea, Matt Hannon, Paul McCarney, William Scullion, Jose Suarez, Simon Wilde**

Over the past year, the team has demonstrated unwavering leadership, adaptability, and collaboration in the face of evolving challenges. Their achievements speak volumes about their commitment to continuous improvement in the employers' health and safety culture:

Recognising the increasing risks posed by extreme weather, the team proactively created and implemented a robust Adverse Weather Policy to ensure the safety of all employees during adverse conditions. This has enhanced their preparedness and protected both staff and operations.

The team played a key role in assessing and managing the use of a third-party equipment by employees. Their careful evaluation and oversight ensured that all new equipment met the health and safety standards and do not pose a risk to our members.

When one of BestFood's company clients proposed changes to the 'Dollies' traditionally

used, the Health and Safety team of reps was actively involved throughout the decision-making process. Their input was critical in ensuring that any changes prioritised ergonomic safety and operational effectiveness, while also supporting employee feedback and engagement.

In a dynamic work environment, the team has consistently challenged and adapted to operational changes with a safety-first mindset. Their ability to stay ahead of the curve has maintained compliance with safety standards.

Above all, the team has been relentless in identifying and addressing health and safety concerns as they arise. Their consistent vigilance and hands-on approach have created a culture where safety is everyone's priority.

The BestFood Logistics nomination is a textbook example of organising around a multi-site organisation, using committees and the power of Safety Representatives to make tangible gains. Organising in this sector is extremely difficult, so this is a substantial achievement worthy of recognition.



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