



GMB
U N I O N

Award Winners Report
GMB Congress 2026



Will Thorne Award – Gemma Williamson

Gemma is an outstanding GMB activist. Over the past year, she has transformed our union's organising work at Airedale Hospital, winning locally and creating change nationally.

Gemma took on the fight for "NHS Pay for NHS Workers" on behalf of her colleagues employed by a SubCo entirely owned by her NHS Trust, AGH Solutions.

She built relationships across the hospital estate, growing the union, finding and developing new reps, and gaining support for industrial action.

They demanded that the Trust treat subcontracted workers as NHS staff, and deliver parity on wages, pensions, allowance rates and sick pay.

When negotiations with the Trust broke down, Gemma led two strikes – taking the fight to the front line. She also worked with community groups and politicians to make her members' case.

The result was impressive. AGH workers won sick and holiday leave parity, alongside their allowance rates, and some pension improvements. In addition, as a result of Gemma's political work, she was referenced by Wes Streeting MP, then Secretary of State for Health, in his rationale for ending the creation of future SubCos in the NHS.

Gemma is not stopping there. Until the battle is won for full NHS pay and conditions, she is continuing to organise and grow the union every day.

GMB North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region is immensely proud of Gemma, and we are proud to nominate her for this award.



Eleanor Marx Award – Alexandra Findlay

GMB Southern Region's K19 South London General Branch is proud to nominate Alexandra Findlay for the 2026 Eleanor Marx Award.

Alex is the Workplace Rep at APCOA Bromley, an outsourced company that provides Civil Enforcement Wardens and associated parking services on behalf of Bromley Council. She led her members in a successful dispute over pay in the autumn and winter of 2025/26.

APCOA is a multinational company based in the United States, who over the course of pay talks had asserted that the contract was barely profitable, and therefore they could only afford to raise pay by a paltry amount.

Alex supported the members through multiple indicative ballots as the campaign ramped up and the offers increased. She delivered a successful ballot for industrial action and represented members in ACAS talks with the employer.

When the company failed to meet our members' aspirations, Alex led ten days of strike action and a period of action short of strike.

Alex showed exceptional leadership throughout, keeping morale up during the action, acting as an ambassador on behalf of her members and crucially leading them back to work when they secured an offer that was acceptable to them.

All members participated in the strike for the entire duration and the members achieved a pay rise of more than 11%.

We have no hesitation to put Alex's name forward for this award. She would be a very worthy winner and we are very proud of her.



John McClean Award – PPE Fit for All National Campaign Team

John McClean Health and Safety Team of the Year Award Winners: PPE Fit For All National Campaign Team: Abeda Uddin (London Region), Jo Pitchford (North West and Irish), Marcia Durkey (London), Martina Vrajitoru (Wales and South West), Ruth Pitchford (North West and Irish), Tracy Immediata (North East Yorkshire and Humber), Vanessa Roberts (Southern)

The team volunteered to participate when Lynsey and Melanie put out the call for members with a passion for campaigning on PPE provision. Martina won the Mary MacArthur Award in 2024 for her activism at Hinkley Point C, and Vanessa was runner up in 2022 for her campaigning in British Gas.

The team's collaborative approach helped to shape the entire approach of the campaign. They brought the experiences of colleagues in their diverse sectors.

They identified how regional differences in supply chains shape procurement decisions. This fed into the development of survey questions, and the drafting of campaign materials.

Crucially, the team have been able to bring their lived experience to briefings with MPs, and their evidence helped GMB to contribute to the BSI's groundbreaking new British Standard on inclusive Protective Equipment.

The team represent the ideal that the John McClean Award was created to celebrate, that workers coming together to share their experience create power and can make meaningful change in diverse workplaces, and they are worthy winners of the award.



Mary MacArthur Award – Patrick Timson

Mary MacArthur Health and Safety Representative of the Year Award Winner: Patrick Timson, North West and Irish Region, for outstanding leadership and campaigning in health & safety to create change and improve standards across Asda Stores.

Patrick has demonstrated outstanding commitment to improving health and safety across the North West and Irish Region, consistently going above and beyond to protect colleagues and customers.

He regularly visits stores to train Safety Representatives, ensuring risks are identified and addressed early. In response to injuries caused by faulty equipment, such as broken roll cages, he has driven a proactive safety culture, encouraging formal reporting and introducing an anonymous survey so colleagues can raise concerns without fear.

His leadership extends regionally, delivering training courses, building a strong campaign on equipment safety, and developing new leaders.

As a member of the National Asda Stores H&S Committee, his work has influenced national policy, leading to agreed working groups and a clear equipment glossary outlining ownership and accountability.

He has worked closely with management and suppliers to secure meaningful improvements that are already making stores safer. During consultations on changes to in-store security, Patrick investigated contractor practices, identifying risks and pushing for improved training standards to protect staff.

He has also strongly supported disabled members, successfully challenging discrimination and promoting reasonable adjustments, while championing neurodiverse inclusion.

Widely nominated by GMB members, Patrick is tireless in his efforts, consistently striving to improve safety standards and make stores safer for everyone. He fully embodies health and safety leadership.

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Gary Smith, GMB General Secretary
GMB Union, Mary Turner House,
22 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD
0207 391 6700 info@gmb.org.uk