

GMB
CONGRESS 2026

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BARBARA PLANT
(National President)
(In the Chair)

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Held in:

The Winter Gardens,
Blackpool

on:

Sunday, 8th June 2026
Monday, 9th June 2026
Tuesday, 10th June 2026
Wednesday, 11th June 2026
-and-
Thursday, 12th June 2026

.....

PROCEEDINGS

DAY THREE
(Tuesday, 10th June 2026)

.....

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THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 10TH JUNE 2026

MORNING SESSION

(Conference assembled at 9 a.m.)

Call to Order

THE PRESIDENT: Can I call Congress to order, please. I hope you all had a good night last night, whatever you were doing, and welcome back to Day 3.

Just before I begin I have been handed a very, very pretty silver locket obviously somebody has lost. It was found in the ladies' toilets in this building. It belongs to somebody so please come and reclaim it because it is very beautiful. Can I ask Karen Dudley from the SOC to move Special Report No. 5, please?

Standing Orders Committee Special Report No. 5

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, Karen Dudley, Standing Orders Committee Chair moving SOC Report No. 5.

Withdrawn motions

From London Region: Motion 168 NJC Should be the Highest Standard of Pay and Terms and Conditions has been withdrawn.

Emergency Motions

Congress, thank you for regions for compositing emergency motions, Composite 15 comprising of Emergency Motions 2, 4 and 7, on Trans Rights, will be debated this afternoon, as will Composite 16 which comprises of Emergency Motions 8 and 9 regarding Workers' Rights for Volunteer Coastguards.

The SOC will consider further requests for emergency motions and the SOC will update Congress accordingly.

Bucket Collections

I am pleased to announce that North West & Irish region raised £391.58 at yesterday's bucket collection. (*Applause*). Thank you, delegates.

President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 5.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to that report? (*No response*) Can I put it to the vote then, please. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That report is carried.

*SOC Report No. 5 was **ADOPTED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Regions will be asked if they want to top up those donations, because it is obviously for the regional committees to decide on their finances and how much they want to top up that up, to add to that wonderful amount that you already collected in the hall, thank you.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

THE PRESIDENT: We are carrying on with motions relating to Employment Policy: Rights at Work. It is the ones we did not have time for last night. Could the movers and seconders of Composite 6, Motions 104, 105 and 106 please come to the front and could the mover of Composite 6 come to the rostrum, please.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND STRENGTHENING MORE RIGHTS FOR ALL WORKERS

COMPOSITE 6

C6. EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS AND STRENGTHENING MORE RIGHTS FOR ALL WORKERS

Congress notes that in December 2025 the long-awaited Employments Rights Bill became law.

This has meant a win for strengthening workers' rights including: Ban on exploitative zero-hours contracts, day-one sick pay for all workers, expanded parental and bereavement leave, stronger protections for pregnant women, whistleblowers, and victims of harassment, etc.

However, Congress notes that there is room for even more strengthening of workers' rights such as an enforceable injunction banning fire and rehire, a statutory right to collective bargaining for all workers, and repealing of all anti-union laws. These further rights for workers can be strengthened in a second Employment Rights Bill.

This Congress notes:

1. That the impact of significant parts of the Employment Rights Act will be shaped by an implementation process over the coming year.

2. That the legislation itself, measured against the demands of our movement, the needs of working people and the promises of the Labour Party contain very significant weaknesses on, Repeal of anti-strike restrictions, Unfair dismissal rights for all, Preventing fire and rehire & zero hours contracts; union access to workplaces; processes for union recognition; and “Collective bargaining” in social care and for school support staff

3. That the ERA does nothing on:

- Reinstatement for workers dismissed unfairly.
- Creating a single worker status to prevent use of fake self-employment to deny rights.
- Promoting collective bargaining throughout the economy.

Congress believes:

1. That we require a second, stronger Act addressing the problems left or created by the 2025 Act’s inadequacies.

2. Workers need the right to strike / take industrial action by a process, at times and for demands of their own choosing, including in solidarity with any other workers and for broader social and political goals, and to picket freely.

3. In the urgent need for:

a. In line with TUC Congress policy, repeal of all anti-union / strike legislation, back to 1979, and replacement with a positive legal charter of workers’ rights, with strong rights to strike and picket, to include the right to solidarity action with any group of workers.

b. Strong measures to establish and promote collective bargaining rights and structures, including for sectoral bargaining, throughout the economy;

c. A strong single worker status and other measures tackling use of fake self employment to deny rights, and two tier / multi-tier workforces.

Congress calls on the CEC to:

1. Campaign vigorously around implementation of the Employment Rights Act 2025.

2. Launch active campaigning for a second Employment Rights Act, addressing all issues noted above and with particular emphasis on these three central areas.

3. Encourage branches to campaign on both these fronts, providing materials to help do so.

4. Work with other unions on campaigning for a second ERA, to repeal all anti-union laws and advance workers’ rights more broadly; also working with campaign groups including Institute of Employment Rights, and Campaign for Trade Union Freedom.

5. Campaign within the Labour Party, on its NEC, within the National Policy Forum (NPF) and at Conference for a second Employment Rights Act

Moving Region: London

Seconding Region: London

(Carried)

DAVE LEVY (London): President, Congress, moving Composite 6: Employment Rights and Strengthening More Rights for All Workers. In the CEC Political Strategy paper yesterday, much was made of the success in getting the Employment Rights Act

on to the statute book, and it is a success, but it has been a long fight and neither the GMB nor TULO have got all that was asked for. First, we had to get those demands into Labour's Green Paper, the New Deal for Workers, then the manifesto; then after Rayner's resignation sustain the position of the Bill within the Government against both business lobbying and their acolytes in the Labour Party and government. In addition, we need to recognise the malign influence of the House of Lords, now packed with lightweight political apparatchiks who have no respect for the convention that the House of Lords does not block legislation that implements manifesto promises.

We should recognise that solving the latter problem is actually in the Government's hands, although they are running out of time. There are still things that we need. Strike ballots still need a 50% turnout and, while notice has been reduced, it is still there and the role of e-voting is still not what we want or need. Not all the Tory anti-strike laws have been repealed. The new law does not have a satisfactory answer to single worker status nor to zero-hour contracts. The equal pay provisions have also been delayed. I never thought it would be easy, but I thought once it was in the manifesto we would get it right. There remains much to do.

The CEC will suggest that we don't need a second Act but primary legislation needs to be repealed by parliamentary process and secondary legislation is much easier to reverse. The way things look at the moment, the odds of a second Labour-led Administration don't look good. We need the whole deal, together with an increased minimum wage and a better statutory sick pay policy. We should aspire that the UK becomes a beacon to the world for trade union freedoms. It is not there at the moment,

even after the passage of the Employment Rights Act. I ask you to support the composite. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Short and sweet, thank you. The seconder, please, for Composite 6.

ROBERT WHEELER (London): President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Congress, good morning. Seconding Composite 6. I am proud to support this crucial motion (now composited). The Employment Rights Act 2025 represents a missed opportunity to deliver a genuine progressive framework of employment rights fit for the 21st century. Employment rights must be universal, enforceable and accessible, not dependent on employment status, length of service or the goodwill of the employers. Congress believes that strong employment rights are essential to protect workers from arbitrary treatment, ensure fair and transparent processes, promote equality and inclusion, support collective bargaining, strengthen trade union bargaining. Without robust enforcement, employment rights which exist only on paper should be deemed as worthless. As trade unions, we must lead a national conversation on strengthening employment protections and expose the shortcomings of the Employment Rights Act 2025.

Congress I second and support this motion and composite, and hope you do too. Have a good day. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Robert. Mover of Motion 104, please.

SUPPORT A LEGAL DEFINITION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING

MOTION 104

104. SUPPORT A LEGAL DEFINITION OF WORKPLACE BULLYING.

Congress, there is currently no statutory legal definition of workplace bullying in UK law.

Unlike sexual harassment, which is legally defined under the Equality Act 2010, bullying that is not linked to a protected characteristic has no legal standing.

Currently, victims of bullying are forced to rely on harassment law or to resign and claim constructive dismissal, both being inadequate routes.

Workplace bullying is a serious health, safety, and dignity issue that affects wellbeing, retention, and organisational culture.

By embedding bullying within statutory law—including as part of the Equality Act framework and Employment Rights legislation—would raise national awareness and drive consistent behavior standards.

A clear legal route would shift the burden away from subjective interpretation and ensure fair, consistent, enforceable protections for workers.

The Bullying and Respect at Work Bill, introduced by Labour MP Rachael Maskell (July 2023), seeks to close this gap by:

- o Creating a statutory definition of workplace bullying.
- o Enabling bullying claims to be brought to an Employment Tribunal.
- o Establishing a Respect at Work Code to set minimum behavioral standards.
- o Granting enforcement powers to the EHRC.

Bullying is widely recognised as hard to define, involving both subjective experience and objective assessment of behaviour. A statutory definition would provide employers, unions, and employees with clarity and consistency.

Congress, please support this motion to:

1. Campaign for the Bullying and Respect at Work Bill, and for bullying to be recognised within the Equality Act 2010 or aligned statutory frameworks.
2. Promote improved workplace culture, by encouraging employers to adopt Respect at Work policies aligned with best practice and the proposed statutory Code.
3. Raise awareness among members about the legislative gap.

We need to address bullying not just because it is incredibly painful for the victim but can often feel that reporting concerns is risky, with fears of retaliation or disbelief.

What we need is a wider awareness of the issue to help people overcome shame and stigma and to speak out.

There needs to be a fundamental shift of what we want and what we should expect from our working lives and relationships.

**C30 CITY OF LONDON BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

DIANE TIMMINS (London): President, Congress, moving Motion 104. Congress, please support this motion to support a legal definition of workplace bullying. Workplace bullying is a serious health and safety and dignity issue which devastates people's lives. Across the workplace it impacts wellbeing, retention of staff and the culture of an organisation. We need to address bullying not just because it is incredibly painful for the victims but because employees can sometimes feel that reporting concerns is risky, comes with fears of retaliation or disbelief. What we need is a wider awareness of the issue, to help people overcome shame and stigma and to speak out. *(Applause)* Thank you.

There needs to be fundamental shift in what we should expect from our working lives and relationships. There is currently no statutory legal definition of workplace bullying in UK law. Unlike sexual harassment, which is legally defined under the Equality Act 2010, bullying is not linked to a protected characteristic and has no legal standing. This means that victims of bullying are forced to rely on harassment law, to resign and claim constructive dismissal, which are both difficult and inadequate routes.

Bullying can often be hard to define, involving both subjective experience and objective assessment of behaviour. A statutory definition would provide employers, unions and employees with clarity and consistency. Embedding bullying within statute law including as part of the Equality Act framework and employment rights legislation would raise national awareness and set consistent standards. Having a clear legal route

for redress would shift the burden away from subjective interpretations and ensure fair, consistent, enforceable protections for workers.

The Bullying and Respect at Work Bill, introduced by Labour MP Rachael Maskell in April 2023, seeks to close this gap by creating a statutory definition of workplace bullying, enabling bullying claims to be brought to an employment tribunal; establishing a respect at work code to establish minimum behaviour standards; and crucially, granting enforcement powers to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Congress, please support this motion to:

- Campaign for the Bullying and Respect at Work Bill and for bullying to be recognised within the Equality Act 2020 or aligned statutory frameworks.
- Promote improved workplace culture, by encouraging employers to adopt Respect at Work policies
- Raise awareness among our members about the gap in the legislation which we currently have.

Please vote yes to this motion to get a statutory definition of workplace bullying into British law to protect all workers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Diane, and the seconder, please.

BEN CAMPBELL-WHITE (London): Seconding Motion 104: Support a Legal Definition of Workplace Bullying. Workplace bullying can have a devastating impact, leaving people feeling like a shadow of their former selves. One GMB member said, “I felt ashamed about being bullied as an adult and powerless to stop it, despite

informing senior staff who took no action.” Another member described bullying as “a lonely experience which affected my whole life. When I spoke up I felt kept in the dark about how my complaint was handled.” These experiences are not unique. Too many workers suffer in silence because they lack confidence that they will be heard, believed or protected.

It is shocking that there is still no legal definition of workplace bullying. Without one complaints, can be dismissed, accountability can be avoided and victims are left without clear protections. A Respect at Work Code would set minimum standards of behaviour while giving enforcement powers to the Equality and Human Rights Commission would help drive real cultural change. Embedding workplace bullying in statutory law would raise awareness, promote consistent standards and provide clarity for employers, employees and unions alike. More importantly, it would create fair, consistent and enforceable protections for workers. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ben. I can tell everybody has been practising their speeches last night. They have all been to time and that sets the standard for the rest of the day, thank you. Can I have the mover for 105, please.

TUPE AND OUTSOURCING

MOTION 105

105. TUPE AND OUTSOURCING

Congress believes that in retail, security staff are a key part of the team. They work often long hours and put themselves at risk in order to protect their colleagues. As well as doing their full - supporting staff and customers, deterring shop lifters, securing premises and liaising with police, they often also support their other colleagues in their duties.

Increasingly these workers are being separated from their colleagues through brewing TUPE'd to other companies. Asda recently told their security staff that they were being transferred without any consultation. This is completely unacceptable.

Congress resolves

- to always defend workers facing TUPE without consultation.
- To launch a national coordinated campaign to resist any TUPE proposals from employers in the Retail sector, including balloting for potential strike action if appropriate.

**A10 ASDA NORTH
NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION**

(Carried)

JULIE SHAW (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President, Vice-President, moving Motion 105. Proud to be a rep for the proud North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region.

(Applause). Proud to be a rep for Asda in Hull.

Good morning, Congress. I have spent years working on the front-line of retail. I have worked through Covid and survived the venture capitalists taking over our businesses and endless restrictions and I have lived with the reality of customer frustration and violence. Throughout it all, I have worked long hours and been undervalued in my pay. But through it all, I have been a big part of the family. That is honestly how I feel about my members. Being the rep in my store mean working together and looking after each other as well as our customers. So, it was a real shock to us all when Asda suddenly announced that our security colleagues were being TUPE-ed without notice to a private company. These are key members of a team within the stores and yet they are being treated as if they are an entirely different business. Our experience is not uncommon. We must resist these companies starting a race to the bottom. We have to fight back against TUPE without consultation and stand together to resist downgrading of conditions and no clear communication from either side of the business. This motion is about bringing us together to build a united campaign. Congress, please stand in

solidarity with our security colleagues. Congress, please support this motion. I move.

(Cheering and applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Perfect. Well done, Julie. Secunder, please.

GEMMA WILLIAMSON (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): K40 Branch, North East, Yorkshire & Humber, seconding Motion 105. For anyone who has ever worked in retail you will know the pay isn't the best. You will also know weekend working doesn't pay enhancements. Retail is no longer a job with customer satisfaction where customers appreciate help and advice. It is also about staff receiving abuse - verbal and/or physical. In Asda, the security team are a valuable part of everyday life, working to protect both staff and customers alike. Unfortunately, Asda has now chosen to TUPE security to another company through outsourcing. These workers have had no consultation, leaving them vulnerable to worse pay, terms and conditions. Outsourcing staff causes a workplace divide, a "them and us" attitude, with low morale and an unwillingness to support each other. This is bigger than Asda alone. Too many companies are now willing to split workers up, putting unseen lines between workers. They are seeking to divide us. I see this daily working in the NHS and being part of a wholly-owned subsidiary. We should always oppose the employer causing a divide between us. So please, Congress, support this motion before Asda decide to use AI robots as security staff. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Perfect well done, Gemma. The mover of 106, please.

ENDING UNFAIR THIRD-PARTY DISMISSALS

MOTION 106

106. ENDING UNFAIR THIRD-PARTY REMOVALS

This Congress notes with concern the growing practice of "third-party removals," where a client company can demand the immediate removal of an outsourced worker (such as security, cleaning or catering staff) from their site without providing a valid reason or following a fair client removal process.

Congress believes that this practice creates a two-tier justice system in the workplace. It allows clients to bypass UK employment law, often leaving loyal workers with no site to work at, reduced hours, or facing "SOSR" (Some Other Substantial Reason) dismissals by their direct employer, despite no fault of their own.

Congress calls on GMB to:

- Campaign for a change in the law to ensure outsourced workers have the same protections against arbitrary removal as direct employees.
- Demand that all GMB recognition agreements with outsourced providers include "Right to Remain" clauses, preventing clients from removing staff without a proven, evidence-based justification.
- Lobby for legislative reform that makes client companies legally liable for unfair dismissal or discrimination claims if they trigger a removal without following a transparent and fair procedure.

G36 SECURITY BRANCH SOUTHERN REGION

(Carried)

LOUISE ADAMS (G36, Southern): Good morning, Madam President, and Congress, moving Motion 106. Congress, third-party removals are one of the quietest but most damaging practices for all workers. Workers can turn up for their shift and be told the client doesn't want them on site any more. No explanation. No right to defend themselves. And for many workers and their families this could lead to psychologically damaging effects, resulting in the loss of money and hours, and possible dismissal. This motion calls for reasonable protections. Every worker facing third-party removals should have the right to have their account heard. Employers must provide clear written reasons before the action can be taken. Alternative work must be explored before dismissal is considered.

This motion ensures that no worker is, removed from the workplace without transparency and without representation and without a fair process.

Congress calls on the GMB to send a clear message that if third parties want a worker removed, they must justify it. We must show accountability from all parties. Please support this motion because it is very, very dear to me. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Louise and the seconder, please.

CLIVE MERTON (Southern): Seconding this motion. President, Congress, I second the motion because too many companies can use this way of removing people from the workplace unfairly and they leave people facing financial hardship, disruption to their home and caring responsibilities, causing considerable stress. A person should only be able to be removed from their job if it is proven their behaviour merits removal, otherwise there is the danger of creating a two-tier system with injustice prevailing. On too many occasions, employers may be receiving pressure from a third party to dismiss their employee, and sometimes against their own better judgment. The employer does not have to establish the truth of any allegations that have been made against the employee, and too often take into account the importance of the third party to their business rather than the need for protection of their own employee. Ultimately, the reason that the third party is applying the pressure is not of particular importance, but it is often cited by the third party as due to being poor performance, poor conduct or a breakdown in relationships. If the employer considers that an injustice would be caused, they must consider any steps they could take to avoid that injustice, such as any alternative roles that the employee could be redeployed to within the firm. Dismissing

people from their jobs because of power and pressure exerted by a third party needs to stop. I therefore request you stand with me in seconding this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Perfect, Clive, well done. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (*No response*) Can I ask Geraldine McVicar from the CEC to respond, please.

GERALDINE McVICAR (CEC): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC, responding to Composite 6 and Motions 105 and 1206. Firstly, the CEC is supporting Composite 6 with qualifications. GMB welcomes the passage of the Employment Rights Act which repeals the anti-union legislation from 2016 which the GMB, along with other unions, has worked hard to push the Labour Party to pass through in government. However, we agree that more can be done to improve the rights of working people in line with our existing policy to campaign for the scrapping of all anti-union laws.

The qualifications are:

1. The introduction of a second Employment Rights Bill is a matter for government legislative scheduling. GMB's role is to influence policy development and build a case for further reform rather than prescribe the precise legislative vehicle.
2. The priority remains the delivery of the wider New Deal for Working People set out in the manifesto in full on measures such as equal pay reform.

3. Any proposals must be subject to a detailed legal and industrial assessment to ensure enforceability and compatibility with existing legislation.

Subject to these qualifications, the CEC supports continued development of policy aimed at:

- Prohibiting fire and rehire practices through robust enforcement mechanisms;
and
- Expanding collective bargaining coverage, including sectoral approaches.
- Reform of remaining anti-trade union restrictions.

The CEC will continue to work with sister trade unions TULO and the TUC to press for the next phase of employment law reform, balancing our collective policy priorities and recognising that TULO must take the lead role in co-ordinating the work of Labour affiliated unions in this area.

On Motion 105 we have a clear policy on our views on outsourcing, which recognises how employers use it in order to maintain services with fewer responsibilities. GMB believes that workers should not be fragment through outsourcing. This motion highlights how supermarkets and the wider retail sector treats the important facility of security guards. Our qualification is that we will not be able to have the reach of representation that the motion aspires to, especially as other retailers have recognised trade unions, and we are not in business of disrespecting union member agreements.

Finally, on Motion 106 we support the principles set out in this motion that workers should not, effectively, be in insecure work when contracted to a third party. Our

qualification is that removal clauses should be negotiated by the membership affected either locally or through a national recognition agreement.

Therefore, Congress, please support these motions with the qualifications that I have laid out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Geraldine. Does London Region accept the qualification on Composite 6? (*Accepted*) Does North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region accept the qualification on Motion 105? (*Accepted*) Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 106? (*Accepted*) Thank you. The CEC are supporting Motion 104 so I can put all those to the vote. All those in favour of Composite 6, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 105, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 106, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you, that is also carried.

Composite 6 was ***CARRIED***.

Motion 104 was ***CARRIED***.

Motion 105 was ***CARRIED***.

Motion 106 was ***CARRIED***.

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: REBUILDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CEC Special Report: Rebuilding Local Government

1. Summary

1.1. The basis of this report is that we will only be able to have decent Local Government services again if GMB rebuilds and organises our membership base to a position of strength – and engages in relevant campaigns.

1.2. The principles of GMB@Work, which has been relaunched are relevant as ever. Building our strength through the workplace organising isn't complicated, but it does require commitment to ensure success. Dedicated and confident GMB activists who are trained properly are the best placed to lead the charge at a local level. In turn, GMB must invest in and support our activists so they can get on with this work.

1.3. This report outlines the issues our members will face in the next 12 to 24 months, and the practical ways to tackle them, with an emphasis on mapping local government workplaces directly employed and outsourced.

1.4. Decent services are delivered by well organised and respected workers, whose terms and conditions are best in class. Our communities are healthier and safer in the hands of directly employed workers, from street cleansing, to managing social housing, and delivering care. GMB has a vital role to play in making work better in local government, which can only be delivered through a strong and unified membership.

The full Special Report can be accessed here:

<https://www.gmb.org.uk/assets/media/downloads/3834/cec-special-report-local-government-2026.pdf>

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to our CEC Special Report on Rebuilding Local Government. Kay Doherty and Gary Harris will be moving and seconding the report on behalf of the CEC. After they have finished speaking, I will call the regions in alphabetical order starting with Wales & South West, but if all of the speakers from each of the regions would come down the front please and be ready to speak.

KAY DOHERTY (CE, North West & Irish): Moving the CEC Special Report: Rebuilding Local Government on behalf of the CEC. GMB members in local government, whether in town halls, in schools or out delivering services, keep our communities safe and healthy. For too long, local councils have been starved of resources deliberately by central government. This has caused a long decline in our local services. Short-term funding has meant that councils have been in never-ending cycles of restructuring and redundancies, and we are now in the shameful position that 1.5 million people have been taken to court over council tax debt, 4.6 million accounts are in arrears, £4.6 billion is owed to councils. Too many of those in poverty are expected to plug the gap in our local authority finances while those with the broadest holders get to be the beneficiaries.

We need radical changes to tax systems, fair council tax banding and business rates that do not punish our local high streets while rewarding anti-trade union, multi-trillion dollar companies like Amazon. Our local governments are supposed to be a vehicle of redistribution of wealth for our communities. 1.3 million households are on local authority waiting lists for social housing and our members make the bricks that can help build them. We urgently need a programme of house building. We demand council houses built by GMB members, using materials manufactured in the UK by GMB members, and managed by GMB members. Crucially, we need more money in our members' pockets. Pay freezes and below-inflation offers from employers have meant that those on the lowest grades are basically on the National Minimum Wage. These are poverty wages.

But this report is not a narrative about what is bad and only putting forward policy demands on governments. It is about what we need to do: to organise our members, to build our industrial force within councils. When we organise GMB is a formidable voice. In Northern Ireland GMB members took part in the largest one-day public sector strike in history over pay in 2024. 175,000 public sector workers went out. We were in a cost-of-living crisis and what was being offered was nowhere near what we needed. I worked with my GMB teams across all the counties to get into workplaces, talking to members, building their understanding of the pay campaign and building trust in us. We got to know our members really well and they got to know us, too. It solidified their understanding of what a trade union can do and what we can achieve when we build our campaigns together. Action was taken across every single county and we won. When GMB gets activity going in the workplace, we do make a difference.

This report set out what can be done on issues like resource outsourcing, with practical mapping tools. We want workers in our councils to be directly employed, have decent terms and conditions and have access to a proper pension scheme.

Let me be very clear, if there is an equal pay issue in any authority, we will root it out and we will win. For too long, councils have devalued the work of women, but GMB has been winning back millions and millions of pounds stolen from the wages of women for decades. If you think there is an equal pay issue in your workplace, use this report.

Congress, we have had a seismic shift across the nations in terms of local and national politics this year. In England, the local elections saw total upheaval in political management of councils across the country. Reform UK has already threatened to slash pension schemes, racing everyone to the bottom, pitting older workers against younger. We must be organised to fight this, just like we knocked back the coalition in 2011 when they tried to cut our pensions.

Twenty years ago, in this very hall, this Congress carried into policy our enduring organising model GMB@Work. GMB must be active in the workplace before we can make any real difference at national negotiating tables. We will never be able to rebuild our local government services without well-organised GMB workplaces, fighting for better pay, better conditions and for the communities that we serve. The CEC report makes this absolutely clear throughout. Congress, please support the report. I move.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kay. Gary.

GARY HARRIS (CEC, London): President, Vice President, Congress London seconding the CEC Special Report: Rebuilding Local Government. Congress, the CEC has been immensely proud of all of the organising that our members have been doing across the union to improve our industrial strength - in local government, in our schools, refuse depots and council offices. You heard it here yesterday from Debbie from Sandwell when she told us of building the union out of what could have been a disaster for her and her colleagues. It is proof that when we take fights on locally, we can grow the union, bring in activists and win.

As the report highlights, our members in schools, in Greenwich and Merton, are taking strike action over Inner London Weighting payments, and rightly so. School support staff have been paid an outer London payment when the teachers they support day in, day out get the higher inner rates. In both boroughs school support staff have had enough and taken action. By mapping our membership, we knew where we would get high turnouts and make the most impact. Across 30 schools in both boroughs, thousands of school support staff went on strike on 1 May, International Workers' day. The turnout was massive. Some 75% of members cast their vote, with 80% in favour of taking action. More schools are being balloted with another day of action in September. As a result, we have grown our membership across those two boroughs, with Merton's GMB membership reaching over 70% of the council, yet again proving that low-paid women workers are prepared to fight for their pay. This year's NJC ballot turnout is up again, particularly where our activists are meeting their members in person, talking to them about pay, and taking part in workplace ballots.

Congress, the CEC report lays it all out. We hope it serves as a reminder of what we need to do. Please support the report. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gary. Can I have the speaker from Wales & South West, please, and then Southern and then GMB Scotland.

JANE HUNT (Wales & South West): Speaking in favour of the CEC Special Report. First-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, local government workers are at the heart of our communities across bins, parks, schools and social services. Local government is the institution we all have the most interaction with on a daily basis, whether they are cleaning our streets, caring for the vulnerable, maintaining our housing or keeping our public spaces alive, these are the people who make our society work.

Colleagues, the way our members, our public servants have been treated over the last 15 years is a scandal. Pay has been eroded with below inflation or underfunded pay rises for the last 10 years. This year there was no debate, there was a diktat. we did not have pay negotiations we had a final offer. That lack of respect is at the heart of the treatment of our local government members, not only from employers but from far-right wing politicians and members of the public ridiculing the practices and culture of the sector.

Congress, it is time to put pride back into our communities. It is time to support our local government workers. This report does not just describe the challenges. It gives us a roadmap to fight back. It recognises the damaging legacy of austerity, the chaos

of short-term funding and the impact of outsourcing and privatisation. It highlights what our members already know, that you cannot deliver decent public services on the cheap and you cannot build strong communities without a respected and properly funded workforce. But crucially, this report is not defeatist. It is rooted in the principles of GMB@Work that our strength comes from our workplace, from organising and empowering our members to lead. It reminds us that change does not happen from top down. It happens when confident trained activists take action at local level, backed by a union that invests in them and stands beside them.

Colleagues, we have seen what happens when we get that right. We have seen it in the equal pay victories in Glasgow, where solidarity delivered justice for thousands of women. We have seen it in Northern Ireland, where co-ordinated action secured real gains on pay and conditions. And we have seen it in workplaces across the country, where members are organising, growing in density and making their voices heard.

This report sets out clear priorities, ending insecure short-term funding and demanding proper investment in local government, defending national collective bargaining while strengthening local campaigns, challenging outsourcing and bringing services back in house, standing firm on pensions on equal pay and on fair treatment for all and ensuring that new technologies, including AI, works for workers and not against them. It also makes the point that local government workers not just service providers; they are service users too. Please support this report.

THE PRESIDENT: Jane -- you are there. Thank you. (*Applause*) Well done, Jane. Southern.

TRACEY ALLAM (Southern): Madam President, Congress, rising to support the CEC Statement on Local Government. This report is a warning, not a light bedtime read. I have worked in local government for 24 years. I have lived it. For over two decades, all I have witnessed is a consistent heartbreaking reduction in our services. A decade of brutal austerity didn't just break the system, it broke our communities. Today our town halls run on the sheer unyielding exhaustion of our members and who is waiting in the wings to exploit this: Reform UK. They want to block future workers from the local government pension scheme. Richard Tice is writing to councils right now demanding employer pension contributions be slashed to zero. Let's be clear, a multi-millionaire landlord is telling a school cleaner that her pension is too gold plated? It is insulting. We must tell them loud and clear we will not be with divided and we will not let people who have never held a broom asset strip our futures. (*Applause*)

We finally have a new three-year funding settlement but read the small print. The Fair Funding Review 2.0 shifts the cash. Deprived cities might see a little bit more but rural shires will be squeezed. And here is the trick - they are using council tax rises to drive spending power. Our members pay higher bills just to fund the services they are already overworking to deliver. Meanwhile non ring-fenced libraries and community centres are left out in the cold. There are no political super heroes. No one is flying in to save us. We need to build our own power.

Look at Northern Ireland. The councils refused to negotiate. Our members read Part 3 of the Green Book and registered disputes across 11 councils. Striking for eight weeks, they grew their base and won extra spine points and cash lump sums. In Scotland, just

eight GMB members at Clyde Tunnel stopped 100,000 vehicles a day and forced council leaders back to the table. (*Applause*) In Southern Region, striking for London Weighting in Merton and Greenwich has led to GMB density in Merton rising to over 70%. That is power. We have an equal pay crisis. Women's work is systematically devalued but Glasgow proves what solidarity means: 8,000 women strikers, GMB bin workers refusing to cross the picket line, winning £750 million in stolen wages. Equal pay is not women versus men. It is workers versus a discriminatory law. We must stop the outsourcing circus to Serco, Biffa and Veolia. Our facility time has been slashed by 40%. Hostile forces want us invisible, but they cannot ignore a workplace organised as if a ballot is due tomorrow. Let's leave Blackpool, let's go back to our branches, build our density and rebuild local government from the shop floor up. Solidarity, brothers and sisters! (*Applause and standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Great speech, Tracey. GMB Scotland, please, and then it will be North West & Irish and then North East, Yorkshire and Humber.

LYNNE LOGAN (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Well, I don't know how I am going to follow that because that was absolutely epic, but, do you know what, we'll gi' it a try! In the famous words of Deacon Blue, "I'm a worker for the council", and, Congress, I have been a worker for the council for 20 years. People used to be proud to work for local authorities. They were proud to serve their communities. They were proud to deliver services that people relied on. But years of budget cuts packaged as austerity has had a detrimental effect on both workers and the communities they serve. It does not matter if you live in Scotland, England, Wales or Northern Ireland, councils are there to serve the

communities, but governments seem to have forgotten this. Year on year councils are given less and less funding. That means cuts to council services and job losses. It means fewer school support staff to look after our children. It means fewer carers to look after our grannies and our grandads. And don't even get me started on the bin collections and the grass cutting. These are not luxuries. These are services that hold communities together. They are the services people notice when they disappear and there are delivered by workers who are already stretched, underpaid and under pressure. And yet the top tiers of councils seem to be exempt from all these cuts. They enjoy their massive pay rises while those at the bottom are struggling to survive. Many of the working poor are having to use food banks to get by. Congress, this is so wrong. Everyone who goes out to work should be able to afford to live, but when councils are forced to increase rents and council tax to balance the books, workers and families are pushed to the brink.

We call on the government to start funding our local authorities properly so they no longer have to cut their budgets and no longer have to outsource our council jobs to private companies. That would have a positive effect not just on councils but the people who work there. Workers would feel that their jobs were safe instead of having dread in the pit of their tummies every single time there is a budget meeting, wondering, "Is my job safe? Is it going to be me this time? Am I going to lose my job?" Working for the council used to be a job for life. It used to mean decent pay and security but now many workers have to have a second job just to survive.

Congress, this cannot be the future for local government. Council workers have carried the burden of austerity for too long. Our communities have paid the price for too long.

It is time to save our local authorities, defend council jobs and restore pride in pub service. Congress, GMB Scotland are pleased to support the report. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lynne. North West & Irish Region.

DAVID HOPE (North West & Irish): President, Congress, supporting this with the North West & Irish region and proud to do this as national Chair of Local Government. I have worked in local government for 46 years and I saw the Tory cuts, outsourcing, CCT/Best Value - never good for the worker at all.

Congress, our industrial strength in local government must be improved. For too many years, the national employer has provided the first and final pay offer. This is directly due to their belief that the NJC trade union are not ballot ready - I can't read that word - their membership base is scattered, with strong membership levels in some councils but not in others, with strong membership in some departments and not others. Employers that take a union seriously do not provide a first and final offer: they negotiate at the earliest point, knowing the union can retaliate.

All government workers have been taken advantage of for too many reasons and now we see in the near future even more challenges, the SSSNB and AI among them. More people are working from home and we need to re-establish our fundamental organising principles of GMB@Work. In local government, it is clear -- I am going to take that out because I can't read that -- Let's remember the sort of work our members do in local government. They look after vulnerable adults and children and they keep the street

lights on and they empty the bins. They keep their local communities running and keep this country running. They are our heroes! (*Applause*)

Congress, if we do not get better at organising and build our strength in local government, soon it will be too late. We have seen Reform take councils this year, last year and probably next year. And my council Wigan Council will turn a nasty vile shade of blue next year. I have added that bit - I will get in trouble. Where they take control, they mismanage councils and before long they will come after you lot, the reps. We must boost our membership, find new activists, improve our industrial strength and face the challenges of new technology and political threats and changes to the NJC. I want to put a special thanks to Anna and all the team for putting this report together, thank you. The North West & Irish Region wholeheartedly supports this, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. North East, Yorkshire & Humber.

AITHAN COOPER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Good morning, Congress, President, I am from the Doncaster branch of the outstanding and fastest-growing North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region supporting the Special Report. (*Sings*) There is something inside so strong!

Fourteen years ago, Doncaster workers all had their wages slashed by 2.5% and lost holidays and special allowance in the name of austerity. Actually, that is not quite true. Everyone below a grade 10 had their wages slashed by 2.5%. Somehow those at the higher grade were missed out. Funny that! That is the impact that local agreements

have. In Doncaster, with so many years passing, staff retiring and moving on, collectively, we had forgotten why we were paid so much less than our neighbouring council workers. However, they hadn't counted on Donny GMB. Over the last year we ran a pay restoration campaign to get us back on to NJC terms and conditions. We visited every workplace and got members on board. We lobbied our local Labour Mayor and Reform councillors. We held stunts and made cupcakes. Gary Smith had one of them as well! In short, we were relentless and ultimately we won! (*Applause*) Putting that money back into the members' pockets getting our pay and overtime restored and showing just what we can do together. But we did more. We gained a dozen brilliant reps, one of whom is here today, we grew our membership and, most importantly, we gave people the confidence to stand together and fight for more. And today we are taking on our next big fight which in our case is pension fairness.

Local government is still experiencing incredibly difficult funding settlements. Our pensions are under threat from some local opportunists and we are constantly asked to do more with less, yet our services and role have never been more important. This Special Report not only highlights the challenges we face but it also lays out a strategy to bring us together to fight collectively for the future.

To win in local government, we need a comprehensive strategy, a plan for organising on the ground, delivering politically, growing our active base and the next generation of activists. That means always looking for the next campaign, always having the claim on the table, constantly agitating and seeking out the next generation. This report acts as our organisation guide as we see the political leadership change and our work ---

THE PRESIDENT: Can you wind up, please?

AITHAN COOPER: Nearly there.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you might be.

AITHAN COOPER: The all new improved Donny GMB knows that organisation is our future. We hope we can win not just in Donny South Yorkshire but across the whole country. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. (*Applause*) I thought you might do a Mick Jagger tribute as well. Midlands Region.

ANGELA GILRAINE (Midlands): Everybody, President, Vice-President, General Secretary and the top table, you are going to have to forgive me but I have just been asked to do this today. First of all, can I send out solidarity to Debbie from The Orchard School, Sandwell, who was on the platform yesterday, to support her and her team. (*Applause*) Midlands, what has happened in the Midlands? First of all, how do I follow all that? What has happened in the Midlands? Oh, equal pay! We had a rising membership obviously with regards to that. Another union came on our coattails with regard to their members and one union totally ignored their members, absolutely ignored the equal pay claims for their members, so a lot of them came out of their union and into ours, which is really good and which I am proud of. Without the GMB and without workplace reps, and without the lay members, we wouldn't be where we are with regards to equal pay.

My branch BO2 in Birmingham have been absolutely amazing. Without the support from Martin our Regional Secretary, Gary and everybody else up here, and obviously from yourselves, none of us would be where we are and our membership would not have increased. We would not have members coming from other unions, and I can only talk about me and I don't know if it is because of me, but we have people coming from other unions to join our union because of how proactive we are. With regard to equal pay, it is to lift women but not to push men down, because men are also getting equal pay well in Birmingham. For me I am proud to be a member of GMB and I am also proud to be a member of our branch which supports equal pay. The staff in that branch have worked tirelessly as have the staff in the regional office. Can I suggest people who are just starting out to get equal pay for their members speak to people from Scotland and from Birmingham who have already done it so they haven't got to go through the stress and everything that everybody else has gone through.

Birmingham local government has gone bankrupt but it is due to staff in unions, especially ours, that we have got to where we are now. So we support the report. *(Applause)* And all I can say is for me, as a workplace rep, thank you to all the workplace reps in this room now and in the union, because without us, and without the lay members and obviously people like Barbara and Gary and Sonya, we would not be where we are now: a growing union for our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angie, and thank you for stepping up at the last minute. London Region.

DAVID CHATTERTON (London): Speaking on the CEC report. I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) We welcome the concentrated effort and focus on strengthening and building membership in the public service. Local government workers are committed to delivering for the local communities and it is disgraceful they are the lowest paid public sector workers in the country. For too long, there has been a narrative that public sector workers are on gold-plated terms and conditions when the reality is that thousands of local government workers are paid 60 pence an hour less than the Real Living Wage of £13.45. Recent pay claims calling for a minimum of £15 an hour for NJC workers have all been rejected. Further disputes and citing a lack of funding as a reason for low-paid employees, the employer has refused to join the joint unions in calling for increased central government funding. It is shameful that anyone working in public services funded through taxpayers' money is earning less than the Real Living Wage. We need to grow our members so that we can fight back against an employer that has taken advantage of their goodwill for too long. Years of cuts have not only left services depleted but services reduced and a number of disputes over growing demands. GMB workers should be empowered to speak out against job creep which sees them doing more work and taking on more responsibilities without the pay and recognition they deserve. Our local government convenors and reps are best placed to be mapping out the workplace and recruiting and organising members.

In relation to equal pay, it is important that we are vigilant to local authorities making changes to allowances, bonuses and additional payments without acknowledging the unfairness and discriminatory elements of some of these. GMB's commitment to campaigning for outsourced contracts to be brought back in house remains, but until it happens, we must organise the workers and these contracts. As said in this report, these

same large companies have contracts across numerous local authorities and quite often the services provided and the day-to-day running such as parking and refuse contracts, the terms and conditions are often poor in relation to sick pay entitlement. These are campaigns which can grow and strengthen the members. Every local government worker deserves dignity at work and decent pay and conditions and GMB members can deliver these by standing together. London Region, we support this report. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David. I can now put that report to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

*CEC Special Report was **CARRIED**.*

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to motions relating to Industrial & Economic policy: Public Services. So could I have the movers and seconders for 116, 159, 161 and 162 down to the front, please, and the mover of 116 to the rostrum.

PROTECTING FRONT-FACING LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFF, INCLUDING LIBRARY WORKERS, FROM ABUSE

MOTION 116

116. PROTECTION FOR FRONT-FACING LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFF, INCLUDING LIBRARY WORKERS, FROM ABUSE

This Congress notes that front-facing local authority staff, particularly those working in public libraries, community hubs, reception areas, and customer-facing service points, are increasingly subjected to verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation, aggression, and in some cases physical threats while simply carrying out their duties.

Congress further notes that public libraries and community facilities are vital, inclusive and accessible safe spaces for all residents. However, due to rising social pressures, cuts to public services, mental health challenges, homelessness, and anti-social behaviour, staff are too often left without sufficient staffing levels, training, security support, or escalation procedures to keep them safe.

Congress is deeply concerned that many workers feel unsafe, undervalued, and unprotected, and that reporting systems are inconsistent and sometimes discouraged due to fear of blame, reputational risk, or lack of follow-up. No worker should be expected to tolerate abuse as “part of the job.” The right to workplace safety is fundamental.

Congress believes that all employers have a duty of care to maintain safe working environments, and that library and council workers deserve the same respect, protection, and seriousness of response as workers in other public-facing roles such as healthcare, education and transport. Abuse is not customer feedback; it is harm.

Therefore, this Congress calls on GMB to:

1. Campaign for all local authorities to adopt a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, harassment or violence against public-facing staff, with clear and consistently applied consequences.
2. Ensure risk assessments are routinely updated and that appropriate measures — including safe staffing levels, security support, panic alarms, safe exit routes and lone-working protections — are fully implemented across services.
3. Lobby for mandatory trauma-informed and de-escalation training, alongside support pathways including counselling and incident debriefing.
4. Demand guaranteed reporting, recording and follow-up of all incidents, ensuring transparency, accountability, and learning rather than blame or minimisation.
5. Advocate for continued investment in library and community staff, recognising them as skilled, professional public service workers — not voluntary caretakers of underfunded spaces.

Congress asserts that everyone has the right to access public spaces with dignity and safety — and that must include the workers who deliver them.

P18 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION
(Carried)

JANE HUNT (Wales & South West): Moving Motion 116: Protecting Front-Facing Local Authority Staff, Including Library Workers, From Abuse. President, Congress, moving Motion 116. Congress, across our libraries, community hubs, reception and public service spaces workers are increasingly facing verbal abuse, intimidation, threats and aggression simply for doing their jobs. These workers are often the first point of contact for vulnerable members of the public. They help people accessing housing,

benefits, education, digital services, support networks and safe community spaces yet far too many are expected to tolerate abuse as though it is somehow part of public service. It is not. Abuse is not customer feedback: abuse is harm.

Libraries and community spaces remain some of the last truly accessible public spaces we have left, but years of cuts, understaffing, rising social pressures and mental health crises and anti-social behaviour have left many workers exposed and unsupported. Too many staff members feel unsafe at work, too many incidents go unreported and too often, workers fear they will not be taken seriously, or worse, that they themselves will be blamed.

Congress, every worker has the right to safety, dignity and respect. This motion calls for practical action, zero-tolerance policies, proper staffing levels, risk assessments, panic alarms, safe lone working procedures, de-escalation training, counselling support and proper reporting systems that lead to action, not silence. These are not unreasonable demands, they are basic workplace protections. And let us be absolutely clear, library workers and council staff are skilled professionals, delivering essential public services. They are not unpaid caretakers expected to absorb the consequences of underfunded systems. Congress, if we value public services then we must value the workers who provide them. No one should go to work fearing abuse, intimidation or violence. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jane. Secunder? (*Formally seconded*) Thank you.
Mover of Motion 161.

POLICE SERVICE TO BE REAL LIVING WAGE EMPLOYERS

MOTION 161

161. POLICE SERVICE TO BE REAL LIVING WAGE EMPLOYERS

This Congress notes that:

The Real Living Wage, Living Wage Foundation, reflects the actual cost of living and is essential to tackling in-work poverty. Only a small number of the 43 police forces in England and Wales are currently accredited Real Living Wage employers.

Some forces, including South Wales Police, have already achieved Real Living Wage accreditation and demonstrate that this commitment is both achievable and beneficial.

An increasing number of police staff across the country face rising living costs, and those police staff working, in often extremely challenging roles, earn just 12p more an hour than the National Minimum Wage. This Congress believes that no police staff member should earn less than the Real Living Wage.

Paying the Real Living Wage improves morale, productivity, recruitment, retention, and workforce wellbeing.

Police forces should lead by example as public sector employers, setting fair pay standards across the workforce.

This Congress resolves, by supporting GMB representatives in police forces to negotiate, campaign, and organise around Real Living Wage accreditation, to:

- Work with the other Police Service Trade Unions, recognised by the Police Staff Council, to campaign locally for all police forces to become accredited Real Living Wage employers.
- Encourage police forces that are already accredited, including South Wales Police, to actively share best practice, evidence, and support with forces that are not yet accredited.

S62 BRANCH WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

KATE BENDELOW (Wales & South West): First-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Congress, without police staff there is no police service. In the roles that police staff undertake the stress levels are high, the workloads are growing and increasingly our members are being expected to do more for less. Congress, work should pay and it should pay enough for us to live on. The Real Living Wage, set independently by the

Living Wage Foundation, reflects the genuine cost of living: the amount that people actually need to get by. It is one of the most effective tools we have to tackle in-work poverty.

This motion is rooted in a simple principle: no police staff member should earn less than the Real Living Wage, not as an aspiration but as a baseline standard of decency. The good news is we know it can be done. Forces like South Wales Police have already achieved accreditation and did so over a decade ago at the height of Tory austerity. They have shown this is not only achievable but beneficial. Paying the Real Living Wage boosts morale, improves recruitment and retention and it enhances productivity. It supports the wellbeing of those who are too often stretched beyond their limits. When people feel valued, services improve. When people are paid fairly, organisations grow stronger. This is not just the right thing to do morally. This benefits our communities. Police forces, as public sector employers, should be leading the way. They should be setting standards, not lagging behind them. They ask the public to trust them, to respect them and to work with them and that trust must be reflected internally too through fair pay and decent conditions.

This motion sets out a clear way forward. It calls on GMB representatives, our reps on the ground, to negotiate, to campaign and to organise for Real Living Wage accreditation in every force. It commits to working alongside our sister unions across the Police Staff Council to build a united co-ordinated campaign for change. Forces which have already achieved accreditation should not stand alone. They should share success and assist other forces to achieve this success as well.

Congress, this is about fairness, it is about dignity, it is about saying that those who keep our communities safe should not be struggling to make ends meet themselves. We cannot accept a situation where public service is rewarded with poverty payment. We cannot accept a system where public service does not guarantee a fair wage. So today let us send a clear and united message: we believe in fair pay, we believe in the Real Living Wage and we will organise, campaign and fight until every police force meets that standard. Congress, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kate. Secunder please. Can I ask people to make sure your phones are on silent. I know you are reps and you have to keep in touch with members but just make sure they are on silent, thank you.

CHARLES JAGGER (Wales & South West): Good morning Congress, seconding Motion 161. First-time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) Thank you. Across Great Britain, only Police Scotland and nine of the remaining 43 forces across England and Wales are accredited Real Living Wage employers. That simply is not good enough, not for a modern public service, not for proud employers and certainly not for the dedicated police staff that we represent. Let's be clear about the reality on the ground. Like everyone else, police staff today are facing rising costs housing costs - energy, housing, food - all increasing at a pace that wages have not kept up with. Those staff on the lowest pay scales do difficult, emotionally demanding and absolutely essential roles and are paid just 12 pence above the National Minimum Wage. 12 pence! That is the value currently placed on their professionalism, their resilience and their commitment to public service. Congress, that is not just unfair, it is unsustainable and our members deserve better. As my colleague has already said, this is about fairness,

it is about dignity: it is about saying those who keep our communities safe should not be struggling to make ends meet themselves. Please support this motion. I second.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Charles. Mover of Motion 162, please.

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN THE POLICE SERVICE

MOTION 162

162. MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN THE POLICE SERVICE

This Congress notes with deep concern that there is a growing mental health crisis within the Police Service, with evidence showing that over 100 police officers and staff in England and Wales are known to have taken their own lives between 2022 and 2025, and more than 200 attempted to do so during that period — figures that are likely undercounted due to inconsistent reporting.

Congress further acknowledges that in England and Wales the overall number of people taking their own lives among the general population remains a significant public health concern, with 350 deaths reported in the year to March 2024, at a rate of approximately 12.4 per 100,000 people.

Despite these concerning trends, there is currently no statutory requirement for the police service to record death by suicide or attempted suicides among serving officers and staff, meaning the true scale of the problem is not accurately measured or understood.

This Congress believes that policing must prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of its workforce as a matter of urgency, recognising that traumatic exposure, chronic work-related stress, and organisational pressures place officers and staff at elevated risk of mental illness, distress, and suicide.

The GMB Union commits to working with other Police Service Trade Unions and the Police Federation to address this increasing crisis within the Police Service.

Congress therefore calls on the relevant authorities and Government to:

- Introduce mandatory recording and transparent reporting of all suspected and confirmed deaths by suicide and suicide attempts involving serving police officers and staff, to ensure accurate data is available for analysis and prevention planning;
- Ensure access to independent, trauma-informed mental health support services for all police officers and staff, including proactive counselling, peer support, and psychological risk assessments, with protected time to attend these services;
- Implement a statutory framework for early intervention and ongoing mental health care, including mandatory debriefs and evidence-based support following exposure to traumatic incidents and stressful operational duties;

This Congress asserts that the mental health and safety of those who serve must be treated with the same seriousness as physical safety, and that proactive, structured support will save lives and strengthen policing for both staff and the communities they serve.

**S62 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION**

(Carried)

ROB SWIFT (Wales & South West Region): Moving Motion 162. *(Applause)*

Congress, between 2022 and 2025, over 100 police officers and staff in England and Wales are known to have taken their own lives and more than 200 others attempted to do so. We know these figures are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg. We raised this motion as we feel a sense of responsibility and profound concern, because behind the statistics in this motion are lives lost, families shattered and a workforce under strain. Because unlike so many other critical risks in policing, there is no statutory requirement to record these deaths or attempts. No consistent reporting, no clear national picture, no proper understanding and without understanding there can be no prevention.

Congress, policing is a profession unlike any other. It demands courage, resilience and sacrifice. Day after day police staff are exposed to trauma that most people will ever encounter in a lifetime - violence, tragedy, death and human suffering - but some police staff see the worst of society day in, day out. It is not just the incidents they deal with but the accumulation. Accumulation over a decade of underfunding, increasingly chronic understaffing, scrutiny and public expectation and a culture that still too often tells people to “just get on with it”. This is a perfect storm for mental ill-health and yet we continue to treat mental wellbeing as secondary, as optional, as something to be addressed after crisis strikes.

Congress, that is no longer acceptable. If over 100 officers had died due to faulty equipment or unsafe working practices, there would rightly be outrage. There would be investigations, reform and immediate action. So, why is it any different when the risk is psychological? Why is mental health still treated as less urgent, less visible and less deserving of protection? Congress, it should be. It is about people, it is about lives, and it is about ensuring that no one in policing feels their only option is to suffer in silence.

Congress, we cannot undo lives that have already been lost, but we can act now to prevent future tragedies. We are calling on the GMB to work with our sister trade unions in the Police Service as well as the Police Federation and Police Service staff associations to demand transparency and understand the true scale of the problem. Then we can build support systems and create a culture where seeking help is a strength not a weakness, and we can send a clear message that the mental health and safety of those will be treated with the seriousness, urgency and dignity they deserve. Please support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rob. Secunder of 162. (*Formally seconded*) Anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (*No response*) The CEC is supporting all of these motions and there is no CEC speaker needed to respond. Before I go to the vote, can I ask all movers and seconders of 172, 175, 176 and 177 to come down to the front. I will now put those motions as one group because there is no opposition and the CEC is supporting them all. Motions 116, 161, 162, all those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried, thank you.

*Motion 116 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 161 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 162 was **CARRIED**.*

The Vice-President took the Chair.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Carrying on with motions relating to Industrial & Economic policy: Public Services. Can I please have the mover of Motion 172, Southern Region.

THE PRESIDENT: The motion will fall if there is not a speaker. *(Pause)*

FAIR TERM-TIME LEAVE FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

MOTION 172

172. FAIR TERM-TIME LEAVE FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

This Congress notes that school support staff (predominantly women, the lowest paid in schools) face inconsistent, discretionary and sometimes punitive approaches to term time leave, causing distress and undermining wellbeing, retention and equality. Representative case evidence from support staff reps shows inconsistency, hostile responses and disciplinary threats linked to discretionary leave decisions.

That the NJC 2026–27 pay claim includes “the ability of all school support staff to take a day of paid leave during term time” — an important step that nevertheless does not bind academy trusts or other non NJC schools and may still be treated as discretionary.

That current GMB policy already supports greater flexibility around leave to enable parents to take annual leave outside term time and routinely mandates model policies/charters where employer practice is inconsistent — providing a clear route for national action in schools.

This Congress believes:

- That one guaranteed paid term time personal day per year for school support staff should be a universal minimum, not subject to headteacher discretion, and should apply across all school types (maintained, VA/VC, academies, and MATs)

- That discretionary leave abuse and opaque processes damage morale, retention and equality outcomes (especially for women and carers) and contradict existing GMB policy on fair leave and respect at work.
- That the union should convert the NJC claim into formal GMB Congress policy: a national charter, a model policy, and a coordinated industrial/political campaign to normalise a guaranteed paid term time day and end discretionary leave abuse in schools.

This Congress resolves that GMB will:

- Publish a GMB School Discretionary Leave Charter and an accompanying Model Discretionary Leave & Personal Day Policy for schools/MATs
- Make the guaranteed paid personal day a standard GMB bargaining claim in schools (maintained and academies/MATs), aligning with the NJC claim but not dependent on NJC coverage.
- Campaign for statutory or DfE mandated guidance guaranteeing at least one paid term time personal day for school support staff, and for DfE/Ofsted to monitor and report on staff wellbeing/employment practices including discretionary leave processes.
- Establish a national evidence log (via Regions) to record discretionary leave decisions, appeals, and related detriment; publish an annual report highlighting systemic issues and best practice; and provide specialist training for education reps on negotiating the model policy and supporting members through disputes.
- Run a national campaign, with member stories (anonymised), branch resources, and media/MP engagement; coordinate Days of Action to highlight employers/MATs who adopt or resist the Charter.
- Report progress to the CEC and back to Congress each year (consistent with existing Congress reporting practice), including the number of employers adopting the model policy/charter and the coverage of guaranteed personal days achieved.

C60 CROYDON BRANCH SOUTHERN REGION

(Carried)

CAROLINE SMITH (Southern): Good morning, President, Vice President, Congress, seconding Motion 172. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am here to second this motion because I work as a teaching assistant in a special needs school and I see every day the dedication, patience and skill that support staff bring to our roles. We are not just supporting learning, we are supporting children with complex needs, often providing emotional care, physical support and stability that goes far beyond the classroom. Yet despite this, many of us are employed on term-time only contracts. This leaves us financially stretched particularly when it comes to discretionary leave. Years ago staff were entitled to paid discretionary leave, but now

it is structured so it is under the total discretion of the head teacher, which is mostly unpaid. This is unfair and inconsistent and it does not reflect the value of the work we do. Asking for one day's paid discretionary leave when we need to take it is not a luxury. It is a basic expectation of decent work. It would provide stability, improve wellbeing and help retain experienced staff in roles where continuity is so important for the children we support. If we want strong schools and the best outcome for our pupils, we must also look after the staff that make that possible. Give me my day: it is one day. I am proud to second this motion and urge Congress to support it. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Do we have a mover for Motion 172 from Southern. Thank you.

AVA PAYNE (Southern): President, Congress, I rise to move Motion 172 *(Applause and cheers)* I just want you to listen and think about something very simple. Imagine your daughter is getting married on Thursday, your son's graduation falls in the middle of school term or you have just been told the funeral of a close friend is next week. For most workers, these are moments of life, moments that happen once, moments that matter, but for thousands of school support staff those moments can become a source of anxiety, stress and even fear. Because whether they can attend or not is often dependent on the discretion of somebody else and the reality is that they are told to wait until the school holidays. Life doesn't wait for a school holiday. Funerals don't wait. Weddings don't wait. Graduations don't wait. And neither should our members have to wait and put their lives on hold.

Congress, school support staff are among the lowest-paid workers in education. The overwhelming majority are women. Many are carers, many are parents, yet too often they are expected to choose being present for the people they love and being present at work. That can't be right. This motion seeks to establish a simple principle: one guaranteed paid personal day during term day. One day. Not a week, not a fortnight: one day. If schools can continue to function when someone is sick for one day, surely it can continue to function when a valued member of staff needs one day to attend an important event.

Congress, many of you will already have seen the GMB's national My Day campaign. The campaign asks a simple question: when is a day off, not a day off? When you work in a school. This issue is not about annual leave. It is about dignity. It is about fairness. It is about recognising that school support staff are parents, carers, partners, grandparents and friends before they are employees.

Congress, let's send a clear message to every school, every academy trust and every employer: Support staff deserve the same respect as every other worker. Support staff deserve the right to live their lives. Support staff deserve one day. Support staff deserve My Day. I ask Congress to support Motion 172. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Ava. Can we have the mover of Motion 175, please.

GMB GUIDANCE ON PHYSICAL RESTRAINT TRAINING FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

MOTION 175

175. GMB GUIDANCE ON PHYSICAL RESTRAINT TRAINING FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

This Congress notes school support staff face increasing incidents of violence and aggression in schools, yet they are expected to manage such situations without legal protection or adequate training.

There is no legal requirement for school support staff to be trained in physical restraint techniques. This training is voluntary, and employers cannot mandate staff to undergo restraint training or require them to physically intervene in incidents.

Staff who decline restraint training or refuse to intervene physically must not face disciplinary action. Employers must respect that restraint training is voluntary and cannot be imposed as a condition of employment.

The legal responsibility for any restraint incident falls entirely on the individual staff member. In cases where an incident results in injury or an allegation of assault, the worker—not the employer—may face suspension, dismissal, criminal prosecution, or civil action.

Employers provide unclear and inconsistent guidance on restraint use, leaving staff uncertain about their rights and responsibilities, increasing legal risks, and leading to inconsistent decision-making.

Employers must prioritise alternative de-escalation strategies, ensuring robust behaviour management policies and staff training to safely handle violent or aggressive situations without resorting to physical restraint.

Congress believes GMB must take the lead in ensuring that members understand that physical restraint training is not mandatory. Employers must take full responsibility for ensuring a safe working environment and provide clear policies that protect staff. There must be an explicit commitment that school support staff cannot be penalised for refusing to engage in physical restraint training.

Congress resolves to call on GMB to:

1. Issue clear guidance to all school support staff, stating that:
 - Physical restraint training is strictly voluntary, and staff cannot be required to participate.
 - Any decision not to undergo training or use restraint must not lead to disciplinary action.
2. Educate members on the legal risks of physical restraint, including:
 - The potential for criminal prosecution, disciplinary action, or civil claims.
 - The lack of employer-provided legal protection in such cases.
 - The physical and psychological risks are associated with using restraint.
3. Campaign for legal protections for school support staff, ensuring that:
 - Staff cannot be held personally liable for restraint-related injuries or allegations.
 - Clear, enforceable policies govern when restraint can be used, if at all.
4. Demand that employers prioritise de-escalation and behaviour management training rather than placing the burden on staff to use physical restraint.
5. Provide legal and professional support to any GMB member facing allegations related to physical intervention and to those experiencing discrimination for refusing to participate in restraint training.

This motion seeks to ensure that school support staff are fully informed of their rights, protected from undue legal risks, and supported in their workplace.

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

CAROLINE NODEN (GMB Scotland): President, Congress first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Moving Motion 175: GMB Guidance on Physical Restraint Training for School Support Staff. Congress, school support staff are being put in impossible situations. They are facing unprecedented violence and aggression in schools. They are trying to protect pupils, protect colleagues and protect themselves. They are being asked to manage behaviour that should never have been allowed to escalate to that point. Too often, they are doing it without proper guidance, without proper staffing, without proper training and without confidence that the employer will stand behind them if something goes wrong. The sickness absence rate is unprecedented within this sector due to the impossible circumstances that the support staff are placed in. This is not acceptable. Physical restraint is serious. It carries risks for the pupil. It carries risks for the worker. It carries physical risk, psychological risk, disciplinary risk, legal risk and professional risk.

No school support worker should be pressured into restraint training without fully understanding what they are being asked to do. No worker should be made to feel that refusing to use physical restraint makes them a bad colleague, a bad support worker or someone who is failing the children they work with. And no employer should be allowed to use support staff as a human shield for failures in staffing, behaviour policy, classroom support or specialist provision.

Congress, the answer to violence and aggression in schools cannot be to place more risk on the lowest-paid workers in the building. The answer is prevention, it is proper staffing, it is de-escalation, it is behaviour management, it is specialist support, it is support for management. It is clear policy agreed with trade unions that protects pupils and protects staff.

This motion asks GMB to issue clear guidance to school support staff about their rights, about the risks of physical restraint and about the support available when allegations are made or workers are placed under pressure. That guidance is needed because our members need to know where they stand. They need to know they will not be abandoned and they need employers to take responsibility for safe schools, instead of pushing risk down on to individual workers. Congress, school support staff should be protected, respected and properly supported. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Caroline. Can I have the seconder, please?

MARTIN MEYER (GMB Scotland): Seconding Motion 175. Congress, I am pleased to second this motion. I do not work in a school, I work in a nursery and I have occasionally witnessed instances where children need to be restrained for their own safety and the safety of others. I will never forget the first time I had to ask my manager to come and restrain a child. They were in danger of hurting both themselves and their friends. It was not a pleasant decision to make. It felt like a failure but it wasn't. My manager was trained and knew they might have to intervene with this child. The nursery knew then, as it knows now, that it is their responsibility for every decision to

restrain a child. My manager would never have dared make me or my colleagues shoulder this burden because doing so would have abandoned professional responsibility. The notion that support staff are being forced with this responsibility. Coerced into restraining children without training when their job roles should not require them to do so is of grave concern. Physical restraint should only ever be used as a last resort by those willing, informed and properly trained on how to do so, and of the consequences and responsibilities of doing so. As Caroline says, staff should be protected, respected and properly supported. That means they get a choice whether to take that on. If they are unwilling the employer must be respect their right to say no. If they are willing that employer must not place that burden on them until they have had the proper training. Support this motion and show the support staff in our schools GMB has their back. Congress, I second. Thank you. (*Applause and cheering*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover of Motion 176, please?

KNIFE BLANKETS

MOTION 176

176. KNIFE BLANKETS

This Congress seeks to secure national recognition that support staff working in LA Schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), SEND settings, and alternative provision face heightened risks of encountering knives or bladed objects as part of their everyday duties.

Support staff in these environments frequently manage challenging behaviour, respond to safeguarding crises, undertake de escalation work, and provide frontline care to pupils with complex needs—yet they are often expected to do so without appropriate protective equipment.

We call for the establishment of clear national standards requiring all academy trusts, local authorities, and specialist education providers to provide knife resistant blankets wherever risk assessments identify potential exposure. This includes integrating knife blankets into behaviour policies, safeguarding frameworks, crisis response procedures, and specialist provision operating models.

We also ask that support staff receive consistent training on when and how knife resistant blankets should be used, with an emphasis on safety, de escalation, and trauma informed practice. The aim is to prevent staff from being placed in avoidable danger during violent incidents, emergency interventions, or situations involving pupils in crisis.

This motion also seeks to empower GMB branches to negotiate for knife blanket provision across all education settings—including academies, PRUs, SEND schools, and alternative provision—and to position GMB as the leading union championing practical, preventative safety measures for the protection of education support staff nationally.

**R27 REDBRIDGE BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

JONATHAN COLES (London): Good morning, President, Congress, moving the motion on Knife Blankets. Support staff face a lot of difficulties in their work. We are highlighting another worrying risk that they are facing. We have seen just in recent days reports of knife incidents in schools. The BBC in October 2025 reported there were for the calendar year of 2024, 1,304 incidents involving knives and sharp objects reported by 41 out of the 43 police areas in England and Wales. Apparently, that is a gradual decrease over three years but three police forces had very large increases. We don't want to raise unnecessary alarm, but this clearly is an issue of great concern, as you can see if you have done any internet searches. Support staff frequently manage challenging behaviour and respond to safeguarding crises and undertake de-escalation work and yet they are expected to do this without appropriate protective equipment.

This motion is calling for the establishment of clear national standards requiring all academy trusts, local authorities and specialist education providers to provide knife blankets wherever risk systems identify potential exposure. As the motion states, this includes integrating knife blankets into behaviour policies, safeguarding frameworks, crisis response procedures and specialist provision operating models where appropriate.

GMB of course has a proud record of campaigning on behalf of its members, especially support staff. This motion calls for consistent training to be given, with the emphasis on safety and de-escalation. Our members deserve all the training they need to do their job in safe conditions. We have emphasised in the motion the use of knife blankets does depend on proper risk assessments being carried out, which in reality should already be in place, but these blankets now should be considered as a control measure where the risk is high.

We welcome the commitment in the qualification to this motion that reps and branches will be reminded of the employer's duties under health and safety and their rights and that this will be taken up as a campaign nationally. I move this motion. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Secunder, please.

CAROL ELLISON (London): Good morning, President, good morning, Vice-President. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* You have no idea how wonderful it feels to hear that. Schools today are increasingly volatile environments, from primary schools, right through to secondary schools, colleges and even universities, staff are facing challenges that were once considered outside the education setting. Health and safety must be at the forefront of our thinking. The workforce in education is a predominantly female and these workers are often on the front-line dealing with highly complex and sometimes dangerous situations. They are not only educators, they are safeguarding leads, consultants, mediators and crisis responders. Schools are dealing daily with the impact of domestic violence, family

breakdowns, child sexual abuse, neglect and mental health challenges and trauma experienced outside the school gates. These issues do not stay at home. They walk into the classroom every day and affect pupils, staff and the wider school community. Alongside this, there is a growing concern around weapons and incidents of serious violence in and around some of our educational settings. This raises urgent questions about proper preparedness, responses and staff protection. Preparedness is not a single action or one-off response. It is an ongoing stable condition of being ready to face the challenges at any given moment. In that context, we must consider any practical safeguarding measure, including the availability of emergency protective equipment such as knife blankets.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can you start finishing, please.

CAROL ELLISON: Clear protocol training and rapid response systems - these are not about changing the ethos of schools but about ensuring the staff have the tools they need to reduce harm in critical incident.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can you wrap up, please, speaker.

CAROL ELLISON: This motion recognises the real challenges facing education workers and calls for the protection, resources and support needed to keep both staff and students safe. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Carol, well done. Can we have the mover of Motion 177, please. GMB Scotland. Scotland, can I have a response, please?

(Formally moved from the floor) Thank you. Is that for the seconder as well?

(Formally seconded)

COLLEGE FUNDING

MOTION 177

177. COLLEGE FUNDING

The Congress notes that the UK College sector is in a crisis that many in the college sector saw emerging for over twenty years. The FE sector is critical to the UK economy bringing much needed, highly skilled people into the workforce and functioning as anchor institutions in local communities.

The UK and devolved governments continue to prioritise schools and universities at the expense of investment in colleges which train and educate predominantly working-class and marginalised learners. College employers, for their part, continue to get themselves into recurring financial difficulty and putting their hands out for bailouts while resisting any/all efforts to make them more transparent and accountable to the taxpayer.

Some of these employers are obscenely overpaid but have failed to successfully fight for FE funding. They have instead simply managed decline and compliantly implemented cuts to access-level provision and frontline student support while threatening jobs and using scarce funds to pursue their own vanity projects and mismanaging the rest. The lack of transparency and poor governance has resulted in the most flagrant abuses of public funds. This misuse of funds undermines the sector's efforts to lobby for more funds from the public purse.

The college sector is a long-suffering victim of underfunding and needs a significant cash injection to keep afloat let alone improve and thrive. Any new money should though be ring-fenced for its intended purpose with guarantees of full transparency and proper scrutiny of spending. Unions should be invited to be part of national finances and spending reviews to understand why there are chronic financial problems in colleges.

This congress calls for the GMB General Secretary to write to the UK Minister for Education and those the devolved regions to meet with the GMB to discuss additional ringfenced funds for the college sector and the creation of a joint body to scrutinise college funding and how it used in the college sector.

G85 SCOTLAND FURTHER EDUCATION BRANCH

GMB SCOTLAND

(Referred)

Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? Can we ask for the CEC to respond,

Kevin Buchanan, thank you.

KEVIN BUCHANAN (CEC): Speaking on behalf of the CEC, responding to Motions 172, 175, 176 and 177. On 172, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. This is a current NJC campaign and is currently with the NJC employer side for consideration. The expectation is that this is not isolated to maintained schools but that academies are also included, as most multi-academy trusts follow NJC conditions of service. We have a current data base and we do not currently present the data annually but we can do going forward. There is a current national poster with a QR code that members and reps can access to identify if this is a campaign they want to support in their schools. We can look to create a best practice policy template for reps and members to follow and highlight stories nationally. We did this when the United Learning Trust implemented a paid day off for term time for all staff. We would struggle to establish a national evidence log of all decisions but we can look to advise on best practice. GMB will ensure to campaign that a minimum one day paid off in term time is taken into Department for Education negotiation, and as part of Improving Education Together Workforce subgroup, we have been involved in creating policy guidance for staff wellbeing. We can provide national campaign materials and guidance but the policy will need to be rolled out locally.

On Motion 175, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. Violence in any workplace is not acceptable. Risk assessments should identify where any risk might occur. Schools, regrettably, have seen increases in violent incidents and schools should have behaviour policies in place that are been consulted with the recognised trade unions. All staff should have awareness of these policies for individuals in pupil-facing roles. Staff training should be tailored for those individuals. GMB has developed

several materials including on violence in schools. We can look at the current materials and seek to refresh the guidance materials. T

he qualification is that some job roles may carry with them a requirement to undertake physical restraint training in the job specification. We cannot state that any use of restraint must not lead to disciplinary action as each case has to be assessed via an investigation and, if an allegation is made, there are policies that all staff should be aware of that are statutory. The GMB does provide legal assistance in the event of any potential legal action being taken against a member involved in an incident with a child and would ensure that a school provides a counselling support service, as these situations can be very stressful.

On Motion 176, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. Risk assessments should be undertaken by each school to identify what preventative measures are required to reduce any potential risks up to and including knife blankets. The qualification is that we do not want knife blankets to become a first line of defence, as their use should be the exception and strategies to reduce and minimise risk must be the priority. However, if identified in a risk assessment then the GMB will ensure reps and branches are aware of their rights under health and safety to ensure employers are carrying out their duties, up to and including implementing preventative measures.

GMB will also raise directly with the Department for Education to identify what advice they are giving to schools in this area. GMB will discuss with political teams as this also might be on the agenda within the National Policy Forum.

On Motion 177, the CEC is seeking to refer. Further education is a fully devolved matter and the Scottish and Welsh Governments and the Northern Ireland Executive have complete responsibility for their own sectors. The UK Government only has responsibility for England. The Association of Colleges is the English employer body but while unions submit pay claims that are negotiations, the outcome is a recommendation to individual colleges and is not binding. The Post-16 White Paper setting out the Government's plans for the sector in England only will see a cash injection and the creation of new colleges.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is supporting with qualifications Motions 172, 175, 176 and asking for Motion 177 to be referred. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on Motion 172? (*Accepted*) Does Scotland accept the qualification on Motion 175? (*Accepted*) Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 176? (*Accepted*) Does Scotland agree to refer Motion 177. (*Agreed*) Can I put all those motions to the vote now, please. Motion 172, all those for? Anyone against? That is carried. Motion 175, all those for. Anyone against? That is also carried. Motion 176, all those for. Anyone against? Thank you, that is also carried.

*Motion 172 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 175 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 176 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 177 was **REFERRED**.*

GRASP VIDEO

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Congress, I am really pleased to show you a video from our National Race Organiser Tyehimba Nosakhere about GMB's Race Achievement Scholarship Programme.

Video shown to Congress.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: I am happy to say a lot of our GRASP cohort 3 are in the hall:

From North East, Yorkshire & Humber: Amy Khan and Marcus Waite.

From London Region: Simba Tsotsoro. I hope I haven't said your name wrong.

From Midlands Region: Ashton Green, Harjinder Nahal, Rattan Bhorjee.

From Southern Region: Aysha Mahmood, Francis Rigault and Lin Fing-Shum. Can I please ask the GRASP cohort to stand up at the back so everyone can see them. Give them a round of applause. (*Applause*) Thank you, everyone.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Could the movers and seconders for Composite 7, 180, 181 and Composite 8 please come to the front. We are now going to move back to motions under Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Services. Can the mover of Composite 7 please come to the rostrum.

EXTEND THE PROTECT THE PROTECTORS BILL FOR FRONTLINE AND EMERGENCY WORKERS

COMPOSITE MOTION 7

C7. EXTEND THE PROTECT THE PROTECTORS BILL FOR FRONTLINE AND EMERGENCY WORKERS

Congress notes:

That the Protect the Protectors legislation was introduced to increase protection for emergency service workers facing violence and abuse in the line of duty. However, it currently only covers so-called “blue light” staff — such as paramedics, police, and firefighters — leaving many other frontline public service workers without the same legal safeguards.

This Congress is concerned with the Incidents of verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, and physical violence against emergency workers and frontline staff continue to rise across the UK. Workers in sectors such as ambulance services, healthcare, social care, policing, local government, education, and public facing roles are disproportionately exposed to aggression in the course of their duties.

Existing legislation — including the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act — does not sufficiently cover all frontline roles, nor does it adequately deter persistent offenders.

Many employers fail to provide consistent reporting mechanisms, post-incident support, or meaningful sanctions against perpetrators. GMB members across local government, social care, health, education, refuse collection, housing, and other sectors regularly face intimidation, aggression, and physical assault while simply doing their jobs. These workers deliver essential public services and deserve equal protection under the law.

Congress Believes:

- Every worker has the right to carry out their duties free from fear, threat, harm, abuse, and violence.
- Verbal aggression, harassment, and threats can be as psychologically damaging as physical assault.
- Employers have a legal and moral duty to ensure safe working environments, including robust prevention measures, training, and support systems.
- Stronger national standards and enforcement are essential to protect workers who serve the public.
- The current legislation unfairly excludes many staff who face similar risks.
- Extending the Protect the Protectors provisions would send a powerful message that abuse of any worker providing public services will not be tolerated.

Congress calls on the CEC to:

1. Campaign for strengthened legislation that expands legal protections to all frontline and public-facing workers, ensuring verbal abuse, harassment, and threats are treated as serious offences.
2. To campaign for an extension of the Protect the Protectors Bill to cover all frontline and public-facing workers, not just blue light staff.

3. To lobby MPs, devolved administrations, and local authorities to support this change in law.
4. Lobby government to increase penalties for assaults — verbal or physical — against emergency workers and frontline staff and ensure consistent enforcement across all regions.
5. To raise public awareness of the abuse faced by non-blue light staff and the need for stronger legal protection.
6. Demand employers implement mandatory incident reporting systems, with clear escalation routes, zero-tolerance policies, and guaranteed follow-up action.
7. Push for comprehensive training for staff on de-escalation, personal safety, and recognising early signs of escalating aggression.
8. Ensure access to post-incident support, including counselling, occupational health, paid time to recover, and representation for affected members.
9. Launch a national awareness campaign highlighting the impact of abuse on workers and promoting respect for those delivering essential services.
10. Monitor employer compliance and publish annual reports on violence and abuse against members, using data to drive further campaigning.
11. To Lobby for a National Government Compensation Scheme for victims of “Front line workers abuse”

Moving Region: Wales & South West

Seconding Region: Wales & South West

(Carried)

ALLISON JONES (Wales & South West): President, Congress, second-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I stand before you to speak on Composite 7, but more importantly, to speak for people who too often don't get the chance to stand here for themselves: the people who keep our communities running, the people who keep our most vulnerable safe, the people who every single day go to work not knowing whether they will come home shaken, hurt or changed. Because let's be clear about something, violence, abuse and intimidation this is no rear, this is not exceptional, this is becoming normal and that is absolutely unacceptable. We talk rightly with pride about protecting our emergency services, our blue light workers, and, yes, they deserve every protection we can give them, but I ask you this: what about the care work facing threats in someone's home, what about the refuse worker abused in the street, what about the school staff dealing with aggression in the classroom, what about housing workers, NHS staff council employees and also us bus drivers, or the ones who face

daily hostility simply for doing their job. Are they worth less protection? Of course they are not and yet right now the law states otherwise. Right now protection depends on your job title, not the risk you face, and that is not justice: that is inequality written into law.

Congress, our members are telling us what is happening, they are telling us the verbal abuse wears them down, the threats that stay with them long after their shift ends, the intimidation that chips away at their confidence, the physical assaults that should never ever be part of the working day. And here is a truth we cannot ignore: words hurt, threats damage, fear changes how people live and work. The idea that only physical violence matters is outdated and it is dangerous because psychological harm is real and it accumulates. It affects mental health, it drives people out of jobs, it leaves understaffed communities worse off.

So, when we say every worker has a right to feel safe we must mean every worker, not some, not selected, but all. This composite is not radical, it is reasonable, it is necessary and, frankly, it is overdue. We are not asking for special treatment. We are demanding equal protection. We are demanding that the Protect the Protectors Bill actually does what the name promises, protect and serve the public, because right now, too many of our members are left exposed, too many instances go unreported, too many employers fail to act and too many perpetrators face no real consequences. That must change and this motion gives us the road map: stronger legislation, expanded protections, clear accountability real consequences for abuse, whether it is verbal, psychological or physical. We call for proper reporting systems because then it is not recorded, it is ignored. We call for training because prevention matters. We call for post-incident

support because no one should be left to deal with trauma alone. And yes, we call for a national compensation scheme because when workers are harmed they deserve justice not just sympathy. But above all, we call for something simple - respect for people who care for others, who keep services running, who show up every day and carry the weight of the public's need on their shoulders.

Congress, extending this legislation would send a clear message not just to employers, not just to government but to society: abuse on front-line workers will not be tolerated, not any form, not any setting: not any more. So, let's be the voice our members need. Let's stand up for those who don't always get heard. Let's ensure their protection is not a privilege but a right. I urge you to support Composite 8. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the seconder, please?

SAMANTHA HARRISON (Wales & South West): Good morning, President, Congress. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*). Congress, we have already heard why this matters. I want to bring it back to something simple. It is all about fairness because right now, two workers face the same abuse, the same threats, the same violence, one of them may be protected by the law and the other is not. Not because of the risk they face but the label of their role. This is not right not. Our members experience danger every day,. They experience it in the streets, their homes, schools and hospitals, wherever they serve the public. And too often they experience it alone.

This composite recognises something incredibly important: abuse is abuse. Whether it is physical or verbal abuse, it has a major impact on confidence and mental health and yet too many workers simply put up with it and carry on. I myself have been the victim of violence in the NHS. We are saying no. No one should expect to be abused, no one should feel unsupported when it happens, no one should feel left outside the protection of the law because their role doesn't fit a narrow definition. This motion is about closing the gap, it is about making sure every front-line worker, and not just some, is recognised and protected and valued. It will send a clear message that someone abuses a worker in the public sector there should be consequences. It is about making sure that workers know we stand by them not just in words but in actions. Congress, this is practical, achievable and overdue. Let's stand up for our members. I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder, please? Do you have a seconder, Wales & South West? Southern, sorry. *(Formally seconded)*

SAFEGUARDING STAFF IN SOCIAL CARE

MOTION 180

180. SAFEGUARDING STAFF IN SOCIAL CARE

This Congress notes that while it is appreciated that any allegation of abuse requires investigation and reporting to relevant bodies when a proven false allegation is made by a service user there is very little or no support for the staff member and no consequences for the service user, meanwhile the staff member remains under investigation by SSSC and the police despite employer finding allegation to be false.

While many employers have Zero Tolerance Policies these policies are usually aimed towards protection of service user, families and visitors very rarely is there any mention of consequences towards staff, social care staff are frequently subjected to physical violence and unable to use restraint to protect themselves, when incidents are investigated it frequently turns on staffs approach or behaviour that caused the trigger for physical violence again distressing for staff member and no consequences for service user.

We ask GMB to support and campaign for social care providers to implement a specific policy – Safeguarding Staff.

**S14 PRIVATE CARE BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover for 180, please.

LIZ MARTIN (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 180: Safeguarding Staff in Social Care. Congress, every one of us believes in safeguarding. We believe that any allegation of abuse must be taken seriously, investigated properly and reported to the relevant bodies: the Care Inspectorate for Social Work, SSSC, the NMC and the police. That principle is not in question but what is in question, and what this motion addresses, is what happens when an allegation is proven to be false, because right now in social care when a false allegation is made by a service user with capacity, the staff member is often left completely exposed. Even when an employer finds an allegation to be false, the worker still remains under investigation by bodies like the SSSC and the police, which can take many months. Careers are put on hold, reputations are damaged, mental health suffers, and too often there is little or no support offered to that worker. Congress, that is not safeguarding, that is abandonment.

We are told that many employers have zero-tolerance policies but, let's be honest, who do those policies protect? They are overwhelmingly aimed at safeguarding service users, families and visitors. Rarely do they mention safeguarding staff. Yet social care workers are frequently subjected to physical violence. They are hurt, spat on and injured, and at the same time they are often restricted from using restraint, even to

protect themselves. When incidents are investigated, it is all too common for the focus to turn back on the worker, their approach, their tone, their behaviour, as if violence is something they somehow provoked. That process is humiliating, distressing and deeply unfair and, once again, there are no consequences for the service user, while the worker is left feeling blamed, traumatised and unsupported.

Congress, this motion doesn't ask us to weaken safeguarding, it asks us to balance it. We are calling on GMB to support the campaign for social care providers to implement a specific policy safeguarding staff. A policy which recognises that staff are not disposable. A policy that ensures workers are supported when allegations are proven to be false. A policy that acknowledges the reality of violence in social care and protects workers from become automatically blamed for it. Safeguarding must work both ways. We cannot protect services by sacrificing the staff that deliver them. Congress, if we want a stable, skilled, compassionate social care workforce then workers must know that their union has their back, not only when allegations are made but when they are cleared.

This motion is about fairness, it is about dignity and it is about standing up for social care staff who deserve protection just as much as everyone else. I urge Congress to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Seconder please. Scotland, are you formally seconding Motion 180? (*Formally seconded*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can we have the mover for Motion 181, please.

(Formally moved from the floor) Is that the same for seconding? *(Formally seconded)*

FAIR JOB EVALUATION FOR SOCIAL CARE WORKERS

MOTION 181

181. FAIR JOB EVALUATION FOR PRIVATE SECTOR CARE WORKERS

This Congress notes that care workers across the UK deliver essential, skilled, and emotionally demanding work that underpins the health and social care system.

Many care workers employed by private, voluntary, and outsourced providers undertake roles directly comparable to those employed in public sector settings, particularly local authority and NHS-owned care services.

Public sector care workers benefit from nationally recognised job evaluation schemes, such as Agenda for Change and local authority grading systems, which provide transparent, consistent, and fair assessment of roles, responsibilities, skills, and pay.

Private sector care workers are frequently excluded from robust job evaluation frameworks, resulting in lower pay, reduced progression, weaker recognition of skills, and poorer terms and conditions.

This disparity disproportionately affects women and migrant workers, reinforcing inequality and contributing to recruitment and retention crises across social care.

Congress believes that equal value work should be recognised and rewarded equally, regardless of whether care is delivered in the public or private sector.

The lack of proper job evaluation in private care undermines professional recognition, workforce morale, and quality of care.

A fragmented and unequal system benefits employers who compete on low pay rather than quality, stability, and workforce development.

GMB has a responsibility to champion fair job evaluation and pay justice for all care workers, not only those in publicly owned services.

Congress calls on GMB to campaign nationally for the extension or development of fair, transparent, and sector-wide job evaluation frameworks that apply to private and outsourced care workers. Actively compare private care roles with equivalent public sector roles to expose inequities in pay, grading, and recognition. Support branches and regions to pursue collective bargaining, job evaluation claims, and equal value challenges in the private care sector. Lobby government for funding models that require private care providers to implement fair job evaluation and pay structures aligned with public sector standards. Work with care workers to ensure their skills, responsibilities, and lived experience are central to any job evaluation process.

Congress asks that GMB will continue to organise, campaign, and negotiate to secure dignity, fairness, and equal recognition for private sector care workers, ensuring that care work is properly valued wherever it is delivered.

**M18 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION**

(Referred)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the mover for Composite 8, please?

**MINIMUM SAFE STAFFING LEVELS OR RATIOS IN ADULT SOCIAL
CARE SECTOR**

COMPOSITE 8

C8. MINIMUM SAFE STAFFING LEVELS OR RATIOS IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE SECTOR

The current way care to resident staffing is arranged is not fit for purpose. A lack of minimum ratios of carers to residents means that many companies are cutting corners on staffing levels. This inevitably means that safe care is not always provided, particularly where residents have dual dependency issues.

Equally the lack of safe staffing levels puts additional physical and mental pressures on staff, leading to exhaustion, increased sickness and a disaffection with the profession.

Elsewhere in the world there are minimum staffing ratios in the care profession - as are used in childcare. It's time the UK did the same.

This Congress notes that there is currently no legislation that sets mandatory minimum staff-to-resident ratios in adult social care, and the Care Quality Commission does not prescribe fixed numerical staffing levels across care homes or care settings. Instead, staffing levels are regulated through the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which require providers to deploy sufficient numbers of suitably qualified, competent, skilled and experienced staff to meet people's assessed needs safely. While this needs-led approach is appropriate in principle, it lacks clarity and consistency in practice. It also gives unscrupulous home providers the opportunity to manipulate the system for their own financial benefit.

The absence of clearly defined minimum safe staffing standards, combined with chronic underfunding, workforce shortages and commissioning pressures, has resulted in staffing levels that are frequently unsafe. Care workers are increasingly expected to support unmanageable numbers of residents, including individuals with complex physical, cognitive and behavioural needs, while also maintaining dignity, administering medication, responding to accidents and managing safeguarding risks.

Unsafe staffing levels place residents at significant risk of harm, including missed or delayed care, medication errors, increased falls, neglect and safeguarding failures. They also represent a serious health and safety issue for workers, contributing to burnout, stress, injury, moral distress and high staff turnover. A system that allows staffing decisions to be driven by cost rather than care need fails both workers and the people who rely on care services.

Safe staffing levels are fundamental to the dignity, safety and human rights of people who receive care, and to the wellbeing and protection of the workforce delivering that care. Leaving staffing levels largely to provider discretion, without enforceable minimum standards, creates inconsistency, normalises unsafe practice and undermines public confidence in the care system. Reliance on regulatory action only after harm has occurred is not an adequate safeguard.

his motion therefore calls on GMB to make minimum safe staffing in adult social care a national campaigning priority, to actively campaign for the introduction of legally enforceable safe staffing standards based on dependency, acuity and risk, and to lobby government for the funding required to make those standards deliverable in practice. It further calls on GMB to press for stronger regulatory oversight and clearer enforcement of staffing requirements under Regulation 18, and to strengthen support, protection and representation for members who raise concerns about unsafe staffing levels, ensuring that staffing is treated as a fundamental health and safety issue across the sector.

Congress resolves

- to launch a national campaign for minimum staffing ratios across the care sector.
- to establish a link with unions across the world where minimum ratios are in place to gather evidence as to their impact on care provision.
- to lobby the Secretary of State to bring forward ratio minimums in legislation.

Moving Region: Southern

Seconding Region: North East, Yorkshire & Humber

(Carried)

STACEY BLAIR (Southern): Stacey Blair, proudly Southern Region (*Cheers*) and also proud to be part of the National Care Committee. Care - you all have an idea of what care is, but until you have needed it yourself or watch someone you love rely on it, you don't really understand what it is. I remember trying to explain to somebody down the pub when they asked me what the difference between a nurse and a carer really was. After I thought about it, admittedly there is some crossover, but the key difference is nurses help keep you alive but carers help you live. Carers help people get out of bed in the morning, they help them wash, dress, eat, take their medication

and stay connected to the world around them. They preserve dignity, independence and quality of life. Nurses do something similar, but there is something carers do that no one else can do because we are rare, not everybody can do what we do. For many people their first experience of care comes with a shock: the reality often doesn't match the expectation.

In England, care isn't delivered through one national organisation like the NHS. It is largely delivered by private providers operating within a system that is unfunded, under pressure and increasingly stretched. Some providers do care deeply about the people they support, but we should never build a system that relies on good intentions alone, because when budgets are squeezed and fees are driven down and providers are struggling to survive, staffing becomes one of the easiest places to cut costs.

And that brings us to the problem before the Congress today. There are no legally enforceable minimum safe standards in adult social care, which sounds crazy, doesn't it, seeing as you have it in education and other sectors, but you don't have it within adult social care.

Let me ask you to imagine something. Imagine it is your mum living in a nursing home. She is bedbound, she needs help getting washed, dressed, repositioned, supported to eat and to use the toilet. Now imagine there is only one member of staff on shift and that member staff has 11 other people to support. Who gets help first? Who waits? Who misses out? These are people waiting for somebody help them do the most simple things that you and I take for granted, because when there isn't enough staff the care doesn't stop being needed. It simply gets delayed, rushed or missed altogether. And

when that happens people suffer. Falls increase, medication errors increase, safeguarding risks increase and neglect becomes far more likely. The workers then burn out and people leave the profession. And believe you me, you can't just go out and find more carers. We are here because we care and often that gets exploited.

I have worked in care long enough to know that when staffing is unsafe, care workers don't stop caring. What they do is skip their breaks, stay late and they work through the exhaustion. They run themselves into the ground trying to make a difference for the people that they care for. Because that is who carers are. But goodwill isn't a staffing strategy and dedication isn't a substitute for safe staffing levels, and everybody in this system loses.

Congress, safe staffing should never be determined by what is cheapest and it shouldn't be a race to the bottom. It should be determined by what people need. This motion isn't asking for bureaucracy and it is not asking for arbitrary numbers. It is asking for safe staffing standards based on dependency, acuity and risk, backed by funding necessary to make it a reality, because good care should not be determined by luck, and neither should safety. I urge Congress to do the right thing and support Composite 8, thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have a seconder, please?

JACQUIE KITCHEN (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President, Congress, seconding Composite 8. (*Cheers*) I will let you off, I am not going to sing! I have worked in care for over 25 years and I am a workplace rep for HC1 which at present is

one of the biggest care companies in the country. Like Stacey, I also sit on the National Care Committee. I represent my members, fighting for a fair, funded, people focused care service that deliver for residents, family and staff alike.

Congress, everyone knows that care in this country is in crisis. Not a week goes by without a headline about the system breaking down and yet nobody is prepared to do anything about it to sort the mess out. I see the reality at work every day where companies are struggling to recruit. It leaves us short of staff and people are forced to use equipment alone when potentially it should be a two-person job. Residents are left on their own and isolated because there are not enough staff to go and talk to them and sometimes not even being able to deliver the basic care. Predominantly, we are a female workforce - low-paid, overworked and definitely undervalued.

There is a long way to go to fix our care service but I believe small steps is the way forward. Around the world other countries have made it the law that there must be minimum staffing ratios in care, and we need to follow their example. In the UK, this is in place for childcare but it is time this was mirrored and put in place for domiciliary residential care. This motion calls for united campaigning to push the Government to introduce minimum staffing ratios. It is a campaign not only for the thousands of low-paid workers delivering care across the country but it is the right thing to do for the wider society. So, Congress, I urge you to support this motion. Let's win the battle not just for the carers but for those we support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thanks, Jacquie. Does anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? (*No response*) Can I ask for Dian Burke to speak on behalf of the CEC. Thank you.

DIAN BURKE (CEC): President, Congress, I am for the CEC responding to Motions 180 and 181.

On Motion 180, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. We support this motion that GMB should campaign for social care providers to implement a specific policy safeguarding staff against false allegations and violence at work, with a qualification that campaigns will be best identified in line with GMB@Work employer by employer.

On Motion 181, the CEC is seeking to refer. The motion calls for GMB to campaign for a national sector-wide evaluation scheme framework for private or outsourced care workers. GMB is currently working with English and devolved Governments to establish fair pay agreements which will establish legal minimum threshold on terms and conditions for all workers in care through collective bargaining. It is also an existing policy that GMB supports and campaigns for the establishment of a national care service. The care sector consists of over 20,000 separate employers that do not currently have any legal obligation to engage with a job evaluation scheme across employers. However, the establishment of the FPA and the NCS could lead to avenues enabling this. We ask that the motion be referred to the GMB Public Services Team to research and consult with relevant bodies how this might be achieved rather than

beginning national campaigns that could affect or hinder ongoing local campaigns and success on job evaluation.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is supporting with qualification Motion 180 and is asking for Motion 181 to be referred. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dian. The CEC is supporting Composite 7 from Wales & South West Region. Does Scotland accept the qualification on Motion 180 (*Accepted*) Thank you. Does Wales & South West Region agree to refer Motion 181? (*Agreed*) The CEC is supporting Composite 8 from Southern Region. We are now going to take the vote. I am going to put them all together because the reference back has been agreed. Could I please ask if you are in support of Composite 7, Composite 8 and Motion 180, all those in favour, could you please raise your hands. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Composite 7 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 180 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 181 was **REFERRED**.*

*Composite 8 was **CARRIED**.*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I please ask for the movers of Motions 185, 186, 190 and 192 to come forward, please.

The President took the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sonya. Can the mover of 185 come to the rostrum? I have a notice, because people have been brilliant about their speech times we are running ahead of schedule so we are going to bring forward Motions 201, 202 and 203 which would have been this afternoon. We are going to put them at the end of this morning's session. I think they are all from GMB Scotland, so please can those people who are expecting to speak this afternoon be ready to speak this morning. Thank you.

APPROPRIATE THE BLAME CORRECTLY

MOTION 185

185. APPROPRIATE THE BLAME CORRECTLY

This Congress notes that NHS management repeatedly blames the systemic failings to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic had real impact, persistent use of it as a blanket explanation risk obscuring management failures, chronic workforce shortages, and funding shortfalls. This retrospective blame needs to stop.

The NHS needs to acknowledge the full range of causes behind current service failures, including staffing shortfalls, resource allocation, infrastructure deficits, and leadership decisions.

We call on congress to:

Publish transparent, evidence-based reviews distinguishing pandemic effects from pre-existing or management-driven problems.

Commit to clear, time-bound improvement plans with measurable targets, regular public reporting, and independent oversight.

Prioritise staff wellbeing, recruitment, and retention measures rather than relying on pandemic-related explanations to justify inaction.

Encourage the Government to ensure accountability, restore public trust, and secure the resources and reforms needed for a safe, resilient NHS.

Protect staff from punitive responses when they raise concerns and supporting lawful industrial action where management fails to address serious patient-safety or staffing issues.

We ask congress to call on the government to action all the above.

**S11 SCOTTISH PRIMARY CARE NURSING BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

ANNE DEAN (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 185: Appropriate the Blame Correctly. Congress, nobody in this hall needs to be told that Covid damaged the NHS. Our members lived through it, they worked through it, they carried fear, exhaustion, risk and loss while keeping services going when the country needed them most. So, this motion is not about denying the impact of the pandemic. It is about saying that Covid cannot be used forever as a blanket excuse for every failure in the NHS. Because when everything is blamed on the pandemic no one is held responsible for the decisions that came before it, during it or after it. Staffing shortages were not invented by Covid. Pressure in primary care was not invented by Covid. Under-investment in buildings, services and workforce planning was not invented by Covid. Poor management decisions were not invented by Covid. The pandemic exposed these failures, it made them worse, but it did not create all of them. And Congress, our members know the difference. They know the difference when a service is struggling because demand has increased. They know when it is struggling because there are not enough staff. They know when resources are being misdirected. They know when concerns are raised and ignored. They know when management reaches for Covid as an explanation because it is easier than admitting that something has gone wrong. This has to stop. Workers deserve honesty, patients deserve honesty, the public deserves honesty.

This motion calls for transparent evidence-based reviews that separate pandemic impact from pre-existing problems, management failures and funding shortfalls. It calls for improvement plans, with clear targets, public reporting and independent oversight. And it calls for staff to be protected when they raise concerns about safety, staffing and patient care. Because the answer to NHS failure is not to blame the pandemic and move

on. The answer is accountability and investment. The answer is recruitment, retention and respect for the workers holding the service together.

Congress, our NHS cannot recover properly until those in charge are honest about what is going on. Congress, I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. Secunder? (*Formally seconded*) Thank you, Scotland. Mover of 186, please.

THE FUTURE OF THE NHS

MOTION 186

186. THE FUTURE OF THE NHS

This Congress notes that an increasing number of NHS staff are choosing to retire and then return to work part-time.

While this helps retain valuable experience, it also contributes to an ageing workforce and reduces the number of available full-time posts.

A balance must be struck that allows new staff to join the service while preserving the skills and knowledge of more experienced colleagues. Experience and enthusiasm are both essential: established staff must be able to pass on skills and advice, and newer staff must be able to learn and contribute fresh perspectives.

The NHS should therefore implement provisions to support and retain experienced staff without limiting opportunities for new entrants or further increasing the workforce's average age.

We call on congress:

To urge the Government to recognise the importance of this balance and to ensure the NHS supports this mutually beneficial relationship to secure its future.

G89 GLASGOW NE & SW HEALTH SERVICE BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND

(*Carried*)

CIORSTAI DH REICHLE (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 186: The Future of the NHS. Congress, as a newly qualified nurse in what feels like 1932, I relied heavily on more experienced staff I worked with, and this is no different from any role in the NHS. Their guidance was crucial in my development and to the nurse that I was to become. The NHS has changed since then. And looking to the future fills me with concern. More staff than ever are taking retirement at the earliest opportunity, leaving a huge experience gap. Posts are often not being replaced. The only saving grace is that some staff choose to retire and return, coming back to work but with a reduction of 10% in their hours.

Congress, this 10% of a post most certainly will not be replaced because of budget cuts. Subsequently we are losing the balance between experience and enthusiasm and, let's face it, a career in the NHS is not as attractive as it once was. We are rapidly developing an ageing work force and by God we are tired.

So, what does the NHS's future hold? Well, we call on the Government to recognise the importance of this mutual balance and we call on GMB to pressure the Government to provide the funding to the NHS for the entire UK, to help increase the appeal of being part of the NHS, so we can all, please, retire! Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ciorstaidh. Seconder.

TERESA WILL (GMB Scotland): Congress, seconding Motion 186: The Future of the NHS. The NHS remains under sustained pressure from workforce shortages, ageing infrastructure and increasing demand for services. Staff across all roles are

experiencing high workloads, emotional strains and reduced capacity to deliver safe high-quality care. Reports of unsafe buildings and out dated facilities continue to place patients and staff at risk, undermining confidence in public healthcare provision. There are growing concerns about the erosion of terms and conditions, alongside increasing use of outsourcing and fragmented service delivery. The NHS must remain a publicly owned and publicly funded service, free at the point of need. A safe and sustainable NHS depends on valuing all staff equally, recognising the critical contributions of all staff. Investment in infrastructure and workforce is essential to ensure safe environments, improve patient outcomes and staff retention. All trade unions play a crucial role in protecting staff, raising concerns and shaping the future direction of the NHS. We ask GMB to campaign for:

- Increased and sustained government funding to support staffing, infrastructure and service delivery across the NHS.
- To campaign for a national programme to address unsafe NHS buildings, ensuring repairs, upgrades and long-term capital investment.
- To oppose outsourcing and fragmentation and support services that brings services back in house where appropriate.
- To promote fair pay, safe staffing levels and improved working conditions for all staff.
- To work with the NHS, government bodies and stakeholders to ensure a long-term workplace strategy that supports recruitment, retention and well-being. I second. (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you Teresa. Mover of Motion 190.

PUBLIC SERVICES MINIMUM EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

MOTION 190

190. PUBLIC SERVICES MINIMUM EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

This Congress notes that in Peterborough and similar local authority areas, essential public services are increasingly delivered by a mixed workforce of directly employed council and NHS staff alongside outsourced and contracted workers.

Congress recognises that many workers delivering frontline public services-including cleaners, catering staff, porters, facilities workers and school support staff are employed by private contractors operating within council buildings, schools and NHS sites.

Congress is concerned that despite being funded through public budgets, these workers are frequently employed on lower pay, inferior sick pay, weaker pension provision and insecure contracts compared to colleagues doing comparable work under direct public employment.

Congress further notes that contractors delivering NHS and local authority services, including facilities management and catering services, are often subject to repeated retendering processes that drive down terms and conditions rather than improve service quality.

Congress believes this has created a fragmented and unfair workforce, where employment standards are determined by contractual arrangements rather than the public value of the work being done.

Congress is alarmed that in-work poverty is rising among outsourced and school-based workers, many of whom rely on overtime, second jobs or state support despite delivering vital public services.

Congress believes that public money must not be used to subsidise poverty pay, insecure work or the erosion of collectively bargained standards.

Congress calls on the GMB to:

- Campaign for a single minimum employment standard for all workers delivering publicly funded services, regardless of employer.
- Demand that all public sector contracts include mandatory and enforceable requirements on pay, sick pay, pensions, job security and trade union recognition.
- Oppose the awarding or renewal of public contracts where employers fail to meet these minimum standards.
- Support branches organising outsourced and contracted workers, including those working within NHS and local authority settings, to achieve parity, dignity and collective bargaining rights.

Congress affirms that one service must mean one standard, and that all workers delivering public services deserve fairness, respect and security

P35 PETERBOROUGH LA BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

ADRIAN LUKASIEWICZ (London): P35 Local Authority Branch, Peterborough, moving Motion 190. When I became a union rep I thought most of my time would be spent arguing about pay. The reality is that I spend a lot of time talking to members talking about fairness. Members who work hard, care about what they do and take pride in the job, but still feel like they are being left behind. And that is what this motion is about. Over the years, I have sat in meetings with workers who are worried about paying their bills. I have spoken to people who are anxious every time a contract is up for renewable because they don't know what changes are coming next. I have listened to school support staff, teaching assistants and council employees talking about increasing pressures and responsibilities while feeling that their value is not recognised in the way it should be. What strikes me is that these conversations are often not about the work itself - the work matters, the workers know it matters, the public knows it matters - the problem is that too many people delivering vital public services are treated differently because of the way those services are organised.

Congress, I don't believe a worker becomes worthless because their pay slips come from different employers. I do not believe somebody's contribution suddenly becomes less important because a service has been outsourced. And I certainly don't believe public money should ever be used to create a situation where one group of workers is expected to accept lower standards than another. Yet this is exactly what too many of our members experience. As union representatives, we see the human side of these decisions. We see the frustration of workers who do everything that is asked of them and still feel like they are getting a worse deal than the person standing next to them.

That is why this motion matters. Because this is not really about contracts, it is not really about procurement: it is not even really about outsourcing. At its heart, it is about respect. It is about whether we believe that every worker delivering a publicly funded service deserves fairness, dignity and security at work. I believe they do and I believe our union should say clearly that public money should never be used to drive down standards and should never create second-class workers.

Congress, our movement has always been at its best when it brought workers together, not divided them. This motion follows the same principle. It says that workers deserve decent standards not because of who employs them but because of the value of the work they do. I ask Congress to support this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Adrian, thank you. Secunder.

ALASTAIR BLUNDELL (London): President, Congress, top table, I am going to second Motion 190: Public Service Minimum Employment Standards. As my comrade Adrian has said to you, this motion is about fairness. Your payslip just because you may not work for the hospital, you may be a contractor, if you are doing that job, then you are entitled to the same money. Services are getting more and more outsourced, no matter where you work. The person on the left or the right of you matters more so than a pen-pushing manager who sits in their office. As Adrian said, fairness, dignity and security - everybody who goes to work, that is all they are really looking for. These are all the things that this great union says that it stands for. Workers deserve decent standards not because like utility companies they get to send you the bill, but because

they deserve decent standards. We ask Congress to support this motion and we thank you all for your support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alastair. Mover of Motion 192, please.

NHS PAY FOR NHS WORKERS

MOTION 192

192. NHS PAY FOR NHS WORKERS

For too long many workers in the NHS have been employed by subcos on poorer pay, terms and conditions.

These workers are often the lowest paid in the service and are disproportionately women and from global majority backgrounds.

Workers at Airedale hospital recently took on the battle for NHS pay for all NHS workers. Through industrial action they won improvements in pay and leave, but the battle for pension equality goes on.

Congress welcomes the Secretary of States announcement that subcos should only be used in the NHS as a last resort, but it's now time to go further and call for all those who work for NHS trusts to be given full NHS pay and conditions.

Congress resolves

- To lobby for an end to subco contracts in the NHS
- To push for this to be included in a future Labour manifesto
- To coordinate a cross regional campaign group made up of activists and officers from all the sub co workforces fighting for full NHS pay and conditions to develop a national strategy on this work.

K40 KEIGHLEY AND AIREDALE GENERAL NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION

(*Carried*)

GEMMA WILLIAMSON (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): From the K40 Branch of North East, Yorkshire & Humber. (*Cheers*) Over the last year I am proud to have led hundreds of workers from Airedale Hospital in their industrial campaign, to improve not only their working terms and conditions but also the future of NHS workers across

the country. I want to start by paying tribute to my members for their bravery and their resolve. We are cleaners, technicians, catering staff and porters. We care greatly about our patients and our community, yet we came together against the odds to fight for one basic principle: that all NHS workers deserve NHS pay. That is fundamentally what this is about. In Airedale and so many NHS trusts around the country, management have set up subcos to employ staff on poorer terms and conditions. Of course these staff are the lowest paid in the trust and of course we are most likely to be women, BAME and on the lower breadlines. Of course we are workers that care that our wards are cleaned and that our patients are fed and that the needs and standards of the hospital are kept. The Trust never thought we would get organised and take them on but they were wrong. In Airedale, it became increasingly obvious to me that this model was simply not sustainable, and that could not go on accepting that many of our members would be forced to retire on poverty pensions. We are absolutely integral to keeping the hospital running. We take on extended roles going above and beyond, working as a team to deliver despite our two-tier workforce. And let me be clear, we should all be on NHS terms and conditions, with the same rights to pension, holiday pay and sick pay. Who can it possibly benefit that a publicly run NHS sews division among its staff? It is time to close this loophole to ensure every worker stuck in a subco, past, present and future, gets the working benefits we deserve.

I started at Airedale 16 years ago as a receptionist and moved through various departments. Today I work as a sterile technician cleaning theatre equipment. Having become a GMB rep, I was determined to change things for the better. I was told it couldn't be done, and I particularly remember while using record levels of agency staff that one manager said to me, to boost staff morale, he handed out chocolate bars. That

didn't put a meal on the table. So, we did. We got organised on the ground, we recruited, we fought for change. We balloted and took repeated strike action. We gained supporters from across the country and took our fight to the Secretary of State himself. And we won. (*Applause*) When this began, I am sure that our subco, AGH Solutions, never thought we would win parity in our wages, holiday and sick pay entitlements. But they were wrong - we won. I know for certain they never expected Wes Streeting to stand up at the Labour Party Conference and say, having heard testimony from one of our domestic cleaners Sandra from Airedale and the unions, that no new sub-cos would be created without worker support, and that announcement caused a kerfuffle in trusts across the country.

Because that is what we can do when we stand together. I want to thank the Secretary of State for what he has done but I also want him to go further. This motion is about taking the next step: to give all those currently working in subcos full NHS pay and work. At Airedale we have more to do. Pension parity is our next battle and I know that by standing united, we will win. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Gemma. Seconder?

MATHEW THOMAS (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Airedale Branch. Congress, can I start by sending my wholehearted thanks from all our members to every branch that donated to our strike fund and kept our members on the picket line. You are the best of our movement, thank you. (*Applause*)

This motion's call to set up a regional campaign of groups of activists and officers from all subco workforces fighting for full NHS pay and conditions to develop a national strategy is an incredibly important one. Thanks to the brave action of our branch members, legislative changes have been made, and the framework for other sub-cos to fight back has been laid. It was an enormous privilege to stand beside Gemma in this organising campaign and during the action I spoke to staff and patients to explain the strike and its importance. It did not take much explaining. Every staff member, every patient I spoke to, despite the increased workload and disruptions caused by the strike action, was 100% behind our members and their cause. For every NHS subco out there that is thinking of engaging, or is engaging with their employers in this righteous fight, know that your sisters and brothers in the NHS stand behind you. Don't let your employers intimidate you, don't let them silence you and don't let them deny your true worth. We have taken big steps at Airedale for pay justice but to win more, we need to take this to a national fight. Together we fight for NHS pay for our workers and NHS workers and together we will win. Congress, I second this motion, please support.

(Applause and cheers)

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant. Thank you, Mathew. Does anyone want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? *(No response)* In that case, can I ask Tracey Ashton from the CEC to respond, please. While Tracey comes up, can I ask the movers and seconders of 193, 194, 196 and Composite 9 to come down to the front, please.

TRACEY ASHTON (CEC): Tracey Ashton of the CEC responding to Motion 190. On Motion 190, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. This motion is in line with the previous year's motions on insourcing and outsourcing, the qualification

being as outlined in the 2023 CEC Special Report on Public Sector Pay. Congress does not seek to bind the hands of our negotiators. GMB will, through our policy and political work, campaign for ending the injustice of a two-tier workforce. We can create resources to support local campaigns to organise outsourced workers, achieve parity and oppose future contracts. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is supporting with qualification Motion 190, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Tracey. Does London Region accept the qualification on 190? (*Accepted*) The CEC are supporting 185, 186 and 192. London accepts the qualification, so I will put all those to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Motion 185 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 186 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 190 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 192 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Could I have the mover of Motion 193, please.

CAMPAIGN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF AGENDA FOR CHANGE FOR ALL NON-NURSING STAFF

MOTION 193

193. CAMPAIGN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF AGENDA FOR CHANGE FOR ALL NON-NURSING STAFF

This Congress recognises that many non nursing NHS staff groups, including administrative, estates, facilities, AHPs, ambulance, healthcare science, technical, and support staff report that Agenda for Change (AfC) no longer reflects the complexity, responsibility and workload

of their roles. These professions are essential to safe patient care and NHS services, yet their pay, banding and progression structures often lag behind the realities of their work.

Congress notes that significant changes in job responsibilities, professional standards, service pressures and new technology have left many AfC profiles outdated. Staff frequently face unclear banding pathways, slow progression, inconsistent job evaluation outcomes and widening pay gaps between roles. A modern NHS requires fair, national terms and conditions that recognise all professions, not only clinical roles traditionally prioritised.

Congress therefore resolves to:

1. Campaign for a full, independent review of Agenda for Change specifically addressing the needs and experiences of non nursing NHS staff groups;
2. Call on the UK Government and NHS Employers to modernise job evaluation, banding, progression and pay structures to reflect the actual responsibilities and professional growth of these roles;
3. Ensure unions and frontline non nursing staff are fully involved in shaping any reforms, guaranteeing their voices and expertise guide the process;
4. Demand protections for national terms and conditions, preventing down banding or erosion of roles, and improving recruitment and retention across all non nursing professions;
5. Push for AfC to properly value essential non clinical and clinical support roles, ensuring fair pay that matches the workload and pressures these staff face daily.

L27 LEICESTER HEALTHCARE BRANCH

MIDLANDS REGION

(Carried)

ASHTON GREEN (Midlands): *(Applause and cheers)* I rise to move Motion 193: Campaign For a Comprehensive Review of Agenda For Change For Non-Nursing Roles, in line with the qualification that has been set out by the CCC. Agenda for Change was introduced across the NHS in 2004. This was to provide a fair and consistent framework for pay, grading and job evaluation.

More than 20 years later, there are growing concerns that this has not kept pace with changes across the NHS workforce. The NHS has changed dramatically but many job descriptions, profiles and bandings have not. Responsibilities have increased, technologies have advanced, we have the use of AI, professional standards have evolved and workforce pressures are ever growing, yet too many staff feel the reality of their roles is not reflected in their banding or pay.

As a result, in 2023, following concerns raised by staff, employers and trade unions, a national review of nursing profiles was launched. This was aimed to recognise that nursing roles had evolved significantly since Agenda for Change was first introduced. Since our motion was written, I am pleased to say that NHS national reforms and discussions have begun with our National Officer with responsibility for the sector.

While I welcome this opportunity, I remain somewhat sceptical that they will fully address the concerns raised in the motion unless NHS staff continue to press for meaningful change. I must say if nursing roles have changed enough to warrant a national review, then it must be only right that we examine how other roles have evolved too. Administrative and support staff are often found to be doing additional duties within their roles without any banding or increase in pay. Allied health professionals, scientific professionals, ambulance service professionals, technical staff, healthcare support workers and many others have also seen their roles become increasingly complex and demanding. This is why a comprehensive review of the NHS evaluation system is needed to ensure that job profiles reflect the work that is being done today and that workers are fairly rewarded for the responsibilities that they carry 24/7.

We must also address workforce change. Congress, too often band 2 and band 3 vacancies are advertised as fixed-term posts while staff are being considered for suitable alternative employment. A temporary role is not a suitable alternative when workers need job security and certainty in the current political and economic landscape. Every NHS worker contributes to patient care and deserves effective delivery of

services. Every worker deserves to know that their role is properly recognised, evaluated and appropriately rewarded.

Congress, a framework that was introduced in 2004 cannot be assumed to remain fit for purpose without regular review. The NHS, healthcare and the workforce have all changed. Our job evaluation must change too. And that is the message I send to the DHS today. I would therefore ask Congress to support Motion 193 and the qualification that has been set out accordingly by the CEC. Congress, I move. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Ash. Secunder?

ANGELA GILRAINE (Midlands): Good morning, everybody. It is me again! Everybody that works in hospitals and the NHS are valued staff from the nurses right down but some staff are still discriminated against. You see the cleaners -- I will give an example, I was in a hospital and one of the cleaners was being abused. English wasn't her first language, so I said to the person in no uncertain terms where to go and leave the person alone to do their job. When I said to the member of staff, "Would you like me to report them?" she went, "No, no, no." She was agency and without staff like that who clean up the mess that people make or the porters, and other non-nursing staff, and I am not being funny because my wife is a nurse. They don't get the value that they should. Nobody in the NHS gets the value they should, including nurses, and for me they should all have a pay rise and it should be a permanent job. Not agency, not bank, you can choose to be bank, but it needs to be permanent because they aren't on a

living wage, they are on a low working rate. For me that is why I am seconding this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Angie. Then the mover of Motion 194.

UNIFIED APPROACH ACROSS THE NHS FOR THE APPLICATION OF NO DETRIMENT DUE TO SICKNESS ABSENCE RELATED TO UNSOCIAL HOURS FROM DAY ONE

MOTION 194

194. UNIFIED APPROACH ACROSS THE NHS FOR THE APPLICATION OF NO DETRIMENT DUE TO SICKNESS ABSENCE RELATED TO UNSOCIAL HOURS FROM DAY ONE

This Congress notes that the NHS and Ambulance staff are underpaid and feel under appreciated. Our NHS is in a crisis of recruitment and retention, and staff and members are looking elsewhere for better pay, terms and conditions. Out members on Agenda for Change Bands 2-6 have lost on average one third of their pay in real terms since 2010 and now rely on unsocial hours payments on top of their base pay to make ends meet. When employers remove these payments in the event of sickness absence it can take weeks or months to reinstate or back pay them. The application of no detriment in relation to unsocial hours varies across the UK – when absent due to sickness in England no unsocial hours are paid. In Wales, currently there is a loss of one week's unsocial hours payments in place, while Scotland and Northern Ireland there is not detrimental loss.

Congress believes this is a punitive measure applied to individuals who are not fit to work which is causing harm to our members and has a negative effect on their mental and physical health as well as a concrete financial detriment. The threat of loss of income means some feel pressured to attend work when unfit, putting themselves, other staff and patients at risk. NHS management claim to practice compassionate management yet these policies are an obvious contradiction to that. These policies, amongst other punitive measures are driving the churn of attrition and fuelling the recruitment and retention of crisis and costing NHS and Ambulance employers millions. That as a matter of principle there should be no detriment or a loss to be repaid at a later date in cases of industrial injury and any absence related to sexual safety.

Congress resolves to launch a campaign for no loss of unsocial hours payments from day one of sickness absence for NHS and Ambulance staff. To ensure that this demand is considered in any negotiations with NHS and Ambulance employers and to lobby governments both national and devolved to ensure that this demand is included and any future relevant legislation involving workers' rights.

**W17 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION**

(Carried)

GARETH BROMHALL: (Wales & South West): W17, Welsh Ambulance Service Branch. Second-time delegate but first-time speaker. *(Applause)*. I am proud to move this motion, a motion that I wrote with a complicated technical title and all, which is born out of the reality I and my members face every day. I am a band 3 call handler in the Welsh Ambulance Service and I am the child of two psychiatric nurses, so I understand that NHS staff are overworked and underpaid. Our pay is worth one-third less today than it was in 2010 and a decade and a half of no or below inflation increases in pay and conditions has left the workforce on our knees.

There is a crisis in recruitment and retention. Thousands of roles are left unfilled and turnover is through the roof as staff look for better terms and conditions elsewhere, often in the private sector. Our union and the movement as a whole have fought to win and defend unsocial hours enhancements to ensure shift workers are properly compensated for their time away from family, friends and their wider community. Many now rely on these payments to make ends meet, pay their mortgage, utilities, grocery shops, all of which are going up faster than our pay.

We must absolutely fight for higher pay and better conditions this year and in the long term, but this motion serves to preserve and enhance hard fought for conditions when staff are at their most vulnerable. Currently, the landscape for maintaining unsocial hours pay across the UK is messy, unequal and, in most areas, detrimental to our staff and members. As well as the loss of paid enhancements, there is also the indignity of waiting for payments to be restored. In Wales, for instance, once a member goes sick

it is currently taking between two to three months for enhancements to be restored and back paid. Our NHS management claim to practise compassionate management, but this is a punitive practice aimed at members already not fit for work, and can have a further detrimental effect on their health and wellbeing. That threat of financial hardship means some staff are hesitant to report sick, meaning they work while unfit, which is a genuine risk to the health and safety of them and patients.

Importantly, this motion states as a matter of principle there should be no loss or delayed payment of enhancements in cases of industrial injury or in cases related to sexual safety. The demands in this motion are simple but I think powerful. We are making the first demand because we want to highlight the issue of inequality across the NHS, and organise around an effective campaign for no loss of pay. This can support recruitment and our other organisational priorities.

We are making the second demand to ensure that this demand is considered at any pay negotiations within the NHS and ambulance employees. We don't want to dictate negotiations in individual NHS organisations; however, we think it is worth considering as an example of a clear gain for members.

With the new Plaid Cymru Government in Cardiff, a continuing SNP Government in Hollywood and the existing Governments in Westminster and Stormont, we are also calling for the specific final demands following the recent Employment Rights Act coming into force to be lobbied for by our union in the halls of power.

Our NHS faces an existential crisis. The next period will see the future of our NHS decided. This motion forms part of a solution to support staff and reduce turnover whilst aiding recruitment. Nye Bevan said the NHS will last for as long as there are folk left to fight for it. Support this motion. Support that fight. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gary. After Cliff yesterday I am very suspicious of people wearing hats today! Secunder, please.

JONATHAN STRACHAN-TAYLOR (Wales & South West): I am an NHS worker from the marvellous Wales & South West Region, seconding Motion 194. Congress, I am proud to support this motion. It is about something simple: fairness for the people that keep our NHS running. The NHS has the lowest-paid women members on minimum wage across the country. Our pay has gone backwards in real terms since 2010, and for many, unsocial hours payment aren't extras, they are essential to their pay. It is what allows people to pay their bills, to run their homes, to survive. And yet if those same workers fall ill, those payments are taken away or delayed for months on end. Congress, how can we justify this withholding of pay? In England they lose pay from day one, in Wales from week one, in Scotland and Northern Ireland we do see some protection, but this inconsistency isn't just unfair, it is damaging physically and mentally. Because when staff know they will lose income they don't always stay home when they are sick. They come into work often because they are too scared to call in sick and while exhausted and not fit for work and burned out. That puts them at risk, it puts colleagues at risk, it puts patients at risk - it puts you at risk.

This is not compassionate management. These are punitive policies that punish people for being human, punishing good workers. It makes a worsening recruitment and retention crisis even worse, driving people out of the NHS and costing more in the long run. No worker should face financial loss for being ill, no worker should be penalised after industrial injury or issues of sexual safety and no worker should have to choose between their health and their income. So, we say no delay, no detriment from day one across the whole UK. This motions calls for a campaign for negotiation and pressure on Governments to make this a reality. Our members have given everything. Now they are asking for your help to Make Work Better! Congress, help our NHS heroes and support this motion. (*Applause*)

RESTORING AND SUSTAINING PAY PARITY WITHIN THE NHS

MOTION 196

196. RESTORING AND SUSTAINING PAY PARITY FOR NHS & NIAS WORKERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

This Congress

This Branch/Committee/Conference notes:

- That Northern Ireland health staff have historically fallen behind colleagues in England, Scotland, and Wales due to delays or failures in applying national NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) recommendations.
- That on 6 November 2025, the Northern Ireland Health Minister confirmed that pay parity with UK mainland NHS staff is to be restored, with uplifts backdated to 1 April 2025 and expected to be paid in February 2026.
- That the Minister has also stated that future pay awards should be funded and applied at the start of each financial year to prevent future delays.

This Branch/Committee/Conference believes:

- That all NHS and NIAS employees in Northern Ireland deserve fair, equitable, and timely pay awards fully aligned with those received by colleagues across the UK mainland.
- That sustained pay parity is essential for retention, recruitment, morale, and safe staffing across Health & Social Care (HSC).
- That failure to deliver parity places Northern Ireland staff at a disadvantage and contributes to the ongoing workforce crisis.

This Branch/Committee/Conference therefore resolves to:

- Call upon the Northern Ireland Executive and Department of Health to fully implement all NHS PRB recommendations simultaneously with the rest of the UK.

- Demand that the Executive maintains permanent pay parity, including timely implementation of all future uplifts, backpay, and any non-consolidated payments awarded elsewhere in the UK.
- Urge the Department of Health to ensure that NHS & NIAS pay awards are funded in full at the start of each financial year and that no further delays or disparities occur.
- Mandate our union to engage with other health unions, political representatives, and public campaign partners to secure long-term equality in pay and conditions for all Northern Ireland health workers.
- Support members in NI NHS and NIAS taking appropriate collective action, where necessary and democratically agreed, to defend and maintain full pay parity

**NHS – IRELAND E76 BRANCH
NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

(Referred)

THE PRESIDENT: Mover Motion 196, please. Do you want to move it formally?

(Accepting reference) You are accepting the reference back? Perfect, thank you very much.

The mover of Composite 9, please.

**INCONSISTENCY OF THE EMERGENCY WORKERS ACT AND GREATER
SUPPORT FOR NHS WORKERS FACING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

COMPOSITE 9

**C9. INCONSISTENCY OF THE EMERGENCY WORKERS ACT AND GREATER SUPPORT
FOR NHS WORKERS FACING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE**

Incidents of violence and abuse against staff across the NHS are increasing. Often, nothing is done to support staff and keep them safe even when violent episodes are reported. Many trusts have zero tolerance policies in place, but when staff are abused at work, these policies are often not upheld, leaving workers vulnerable and undervalued. This Congress notes that The Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005, the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 (England and Wales), and the Emergency Workers (Northern Ireland) Act 2006, are intended to protect police, fire, ambulance and NHS staff from aggression and assault. That said, in practice, these laws are not always used: members report incidents where prosecutions are discouraged or dropped and assaults are effectively ignored.

We therefore call on congress to speak to all:

Employers to fulfil their duty of care by providing robust support to employees who are assaulted or abused while performing emergency duties.

To urge the UK Government to publicly reaffirm these Acts and promote their use as a deterrent to assaulting emergency workers. For the GMB to write to the relevant government ministers, police chiefs and employer bodies setting out and seeking a commitment to improved enforcement and support.

Ask the GMB to run a public awareness campaign highlighting the protections these laws provide and how incidents should be reported and prosecuted.

GMB to consult with NHS Reps to build a campaign plan and produce materials needed to address this issue as a matter of urgency.

Congress calls on the GMB to campaign to Nationally raise awareness and demand Trusts to put staff safety and wellbeing at the forefront of their priorities.

Moving Region: GMB Scotland

Seconding Region: North East, Yorkshire & Humber

(Carried)

MARY MULLIGAN (GMB Scotland): Moving Composite 9: Inconsistency of the Emergency Workers Act and Greater Support for NHS Workers Facing Violence and Abuse. Congress, no NHS worker should go to work expecting to be hit, threatened spat at or abused or assaulted, but too many do. Across the NHS violence and abuse against staff has become far too common. It happens in hospitals, in ambulances, in clinics and wards, in reception areas and in community settings. And Congress, our members are tired of being told this is a zero-tolerance policy when after the incident nothing seems to happen. We are tired of employers paying lip service to staff safety while the workers who are assaulted are left to carry the consequences on their own. They report the abuse and assault, they fill in forms and then they go back to work shaken, injured and frightened, and too often are left wondering whether anyone in management, policing or government is really prepared to act.

The law exists for a reason. In Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland, there are legal protections for emergency workers. Those laws are supposed to send a clear message that assaulting NHS and emergency workers is serious and it should have consequences, but a law that is not used consistently does not protect workers properly. A policy that is not in force does not keep staff safe. A poster on the wall saying “Zero tolerance” is no comfort to a worker who has been assaulted and left unsupported.

Congress, this Composite calls for practical action, not lip service. It calls on employers to fulfil their duty of care. It calls on Governments to reaffirm these protections. It calls for GMB to write to Ministers, police chiefs, employers’ bodies to demand better enforcement and better support and it calls for public campaigning so patients, visitors and the public understand that abuse of NHS workers is not part of our job. Our members care for people at their most vulnerable. They deserve to be protected when they are vulnerable, too. Congress, violence against NHS staff must be reported, taken seriously, followed through and acted on. Zero tolerance means zero tolerance. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. And then the seconder from North East, Yorkshire & Humber.

MATHEW THOMAS (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): As an NHS healthcare assistant, I have cared for countless patients from a variety of backgrounds and a wide range of conditions. We don’t do it for the pay cheque but because we are passionate about our patients, the incredible NHS and the brilliantly diverse nation that we proudly call home. Despite this, workers within the NHS are often subject to verbal, physical,

homophobic and racist abuse. Every NHS trust has a form of Challenging Behaviour policy and a zero-tolerance approach and yet time and time again workers are expected to stand there and take it, often not supported by their employer. Too often management waits until a member of staff goes off sick with stress before they even think to put in an employee health referral. From the junior sister being horrifically strangled to the point of bruising, to the nursing associate being threatened by a dementia patient wielding a fire extinguisher, to the healthcare support worker being spat at, kicked and punched: if you are an NHS worker, this will all sound familiar. Scenes like this are happening all over the country right now. That is unless workers make the most important decision of their lives, to prove to themselves that they have the strength and the courage to stand up for dignity at work.

Congress, we must demand better support and greater access to essential training such as Breakaway and de-escalation techniques, and to raise awareness amongst GMB members and wider NHS staff that violence and aggression is not simply a natural part of life in healthcare. I call on Congress for GMB to demand that the NHS at a local and national level to really aggression violence and abusive behaviours in the NHS. Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mathew. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (*No response*) In that case, can I ask CEC speaker William McClusky to respond?

WILLIAM McCLUSKY (CEC): Responding to Motions 193 and 196. On Motion 193, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. The CEC agrees there needs to

be a comprehensive review of the Agenda for Change, and that is ongoing at this present time. However we would seek a review not just for one sector of the workforce but for all.

On Motion 196, the CEC is seeking to refer. This motion affects Northern Ireland specifically, and therefore, we recommend this motion be referred back to North West & Irish Region for action. We support the intention of this motion that no workers from the NHS or NIS should fall behind in pay just because of where they live.

Therefore, Congress the CEC is supporting with qualification Motion 193 and asking for Motion 196 to be referred. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, William. North West & Irish Region have agreed to that reference back. Does Midlands accept the qualification? (*Accepted*) Thank you. The CEC are supporting 194 and Composite 9, so I shall put those to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 193, Motion 194 and Composite 9, please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

*Motion 193 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 194 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 196 was **REFERRED**.*

*Composite 9 was **CARRIED**.*

That takes us on to the continuation of Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Services. Could I have the mover and seconder of Motion 20. Also the ones I said we are bringing

forward, 201, 202 and 203 down to the front, please. Could the mover of 200 come to the rostrum.

ALWAYS AVAILABLE, NEVER RESTED: THE CASE FOR ENDING ON-CALL WITHIN NHS EMERGENCY CARE SETTINGS

MOTION 200

200. ALWAYS AVAILABLE, NEVER RESTED: THE CASE FOR ENDING ON-CALL WITHIN NHS EMERGENCY CARE SETTINGS

This Congress notes that many NHS employers operate on-call arrangements under which designated groups of staff are rostered to be available for work outside the normal working hours, as and when required. Staff impacted include ambulance personnel, midwives, and cardiac specialists who deliver emergency and life-saving care. These provisions negatively impact work-life balance and are significant contributors to fatigue among the affected staff members. In addition to the burden placed on our members, there is also a risk to patient safety due to call out delays, fatigued staff and reduced coverage following the necessity to take compensatory rest after a period of on call working.

This Congress believes that on-call working in the NHS should be eradicated in settings where emergency care and life saving treatments are provided. Workers and patients deserve better and should not be harmed by practices aimed at saving money and getting frontline healthcare on the cheap.

This Congress calls on GMB to prioritise the wellbeing of members who work on-call arrangements in emergency care settings by campaigning for its removal and by conducting further research into the wider impact of these unsafe practices.

A33 SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE BRANCH GMB SCOTLAND

(Carried)

MARY MULLIGAN (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 200: Always Available, Never Rested. Congress, the title of this motion says it all - always available, never rested. That is the reality facing our members in the NHS emergency care settings every day. Ambulance crews waiting for a call that could come at 3 am; midwives who have already worked a full shift expected to drop everything at a moment's notice; cardiac

specialists, people who we trust with our lives at our most vulnerable, running on empty. This is not dedication, this is exploitation dressed up as commitment.

On-call arrangements were never designed for emergency care settings. They were built to save money, to get front-line life-saving healthcare on the cheap and the cost is being paid by our members in exhaustion, burn-out and in broken work/life balance. It is being paid by patients through delayed call-outs, fatigued staff and dangerous gaps in coverage when workers rightly need compensatory rest.

Let's be clear, a tired paramedic is not a safe paramedic. A midwife running on three hours' sleep is not the standard of care that mothers and babies deserve. This is not just a workers' rights issue; it is a patient safety crisis. Congress, we must call this out for what it is. GMB must lead a campaign on ending on-call in emergency care settings and to conduct the research that provides what our members already know to be true: workers and patients deserve better. Let's fight for both. Please support this motion. GMB Scotland accepts referral. That is all I am going to say. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. Seconder? (*Formally seconded*) Is anyone speaking in opposition to that motion? (*No response*) I heard Mary accept the reference back but I will ask Syed to explain as the CEC speaker.

SYED RAZA (CEC): Responding to Motion 200. The CEC is seeking to refer. We support most of the motion; however, the motion's proposal for an end to all on-call work needs to be made after full consultation with NHS national committees and the membership. This motion therefore needs to be reviewed involving the national

committees and membership with a report back to Congress 2027. Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking that Motion 200 be referred. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Syed. Just to confirm, GMB Scotland are happy to accept that reference back? (*Accepted*) That means there is no vote.

*Motion 200 was **REFERRED**.*

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

THE PRESIDENT: That moves us on to Public Services and the mover of Motion 201. Thank you to those delegates who had their motions brought forward. I know you thought you had lunch time to prepare a bit more and I really appreciate it, but you can relax now and once you have done this you can go and have a really nice lunch.

NO PHOTOGRAPHS PLEASE

MOTION 201

201. NO PHOTOGRAPHS PLEASE

This Congress notes that NHS staff have the right to carry out their duties without being photographed, filmed, or posted on social media and without their knowledge or consent.

Signs asking visitors not to take photographs or videos in clinical areas are increasingly ignored.

The routine practice of uploading images and videos to social media can cause real harm to staff, patients and service delivery.

NHS Health Boards and Trusts have a duty to protect their staff and to enforce existing policies.

We therefore call on congress to:

Encourage NHS Boards and Trusts to enforce non-photography/no-filming policies and to take appropriate action where policies are breached.

Work with NHS employers and trade unions to raise public awareness of the consequences of unauthorised recording and sharing, including signage and communications campaigns and clear reporting pathways.

Seek guidance and, where necessary, legal advice on further measures to deter, prevent and remedy unauthorised social media exposure of NHS staff.

**G87 GLASGOW HEALTH SERVICE (APEX) BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

ANNE DEAN (GMB Scotland): Thanks, Barbara. You are getting your fill of GMB Scotland this morning! Moving Motion 201: No Photographs Please. Congress, NHS workers have the right to do their jobs without being filmed, photographed, posted online or turned into social media content without their consent. That should be a basic matter of dignity. Across the NHS staff are increasingly facing phones being pointed at them while there are trying to deliver care. Sometimes it is in a ward, sometimes a waiting room, sometimes it is during a consultation, a procedure or a moment of distress. And Congress, this is not harmless. It can identify staff by name badge or face. It can capture other patients in the background. It can record confidential conversations. It can turn a difficult clinical moment into something shared, commented on and judged by strangers online. Our members should not have to worry about that while they are caring for patients. They are also being recorded for TikTok, Facebook, Instagram or whatever other platform. They should not have to wonder whether a bad day, a difficult exchange or a stressful incident will be taken out of context and uploaded for the world to see.

Patients have rights, too. We are all NHS patients. Hospitals and clinics are places where people are vulnerable. They are places where private information is shared, where bodies are exposed, where families are frightened and where dignity matters. We have a right to confidentiality when it comes to our medical information and situations. And staff are obliged to ensure that this is maintained. It is part of their code of conduct.

That is why a no filming and no photography policy exists, but a policy that is ignored is not enough. A sign on the wall is not enough. NHS boards and trusts must enforce their own rules. They must give staff clear reporting routes and they must challenge breaches. They must support workers when they are being filmed without consent and where further legal guidance is needed employers should get it.

Congress, this motion is not about stopping patients from understanding their own care. It is about protecting staff and the patients and protecting safe services. NHS workers are there to care, not to be recorded without consent. Congress, I move, thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Anne. Secunder.

CAROLINE NODEN (GMB Scotland): Veteran speaker, seconding Motion 201. Congress, I am pleased to second this motion. This is about the basic right of NHS workers to be treated with dignity and respect while they are doing their jobs. No member of staff should have to work under the threat that they be filmed, photographed or posted online without their consent. No nurse, porter, cleaner, healthcare assistant,

receptionist, paramedic or other NHS worker should have to worry that a difficult moment at work could be taken out of context and shared across social media.

Congress, hospitals and healthcare settings are not public stages. They are places of care, privacy and vulnerability. Staff are dealing with people at some of the most difficult moments in their lives. Patients may be distressed, unwell or exposed. Families may be frightened. Confidential information may be discussed. This is why unauthorised filming and photography is so serious. It affects staff but it also affects patients and the safe running of services. It can breach privacy, undermine trust and make already pressured workplaces even more difficult. Policies do already exist but they must be enforced. Staff need clear support from employers, they need proper reporting routes and they need to know that when they raise concerns, action will be taken.

This motion asks for practical steps, proper enforcement, public awareness, clear communication and further guidance where needed. Congress, NHS workers are there to care for patients. They are not there to be recorded without consent. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Caroline. Mover of Motion 202.

ENDING TOXIC CULTURE IN THE NHS - PROTECTING STAFF WHO SPEAK OUT

MOTION 202

202. ENDING TOXIC CULTURE IN THE NHS – PROTECTING STAFF WHO SPEAK OUT

This Congress recognises that despite repeated commitments to improving workplace culture, NHS staff continue to operate under environments where fear of reprisal, bullying, and intimidation discourage them from raising safety and staffing concerns.

Congress notes the 2024 NHS Staff Survey found 17.6% of staff experienced bullying or harassment in the past year, with 9.5% citing bullying by managers.

- Whistleblowers report that staff remain "terrified due to a culture of bullying", and 87% of doctors say they face obstacles when speaking out.

Congress believes that this level of bullying not only damages staff wellbeing and psychological safety but also undermines patient care and trust in the NHS.

Congress therefore resolves to:

- Campaign for mandatory psychological safety and anti-bullying training for NHS leaders and managers.
- Lobby for stronger enforcement of whistleblowing protections, including anonymous digital reporting systems and independent oversight.
- Press for transparent reporting of bullying investigations and outcomes within NHS Trusts.
- Collaborate with unions and stakeholders to ensure regular, publicly published culture audits of NHS workplaces.
- Hold all UK governments accountable for delivering cultural change in the NHS by demanding national action plans, annual progress reports, and independent audits.
- Demand legislative change to: - Strengthen whistleblowing laws with statutory protections against retaliation.
- Introduce legal requirements for NHS organisations to demonstrate compliance with anti-bullying standards.
- Mandate independent investigations into workplace bullying and harassment.
- Support members who raise concerns by providing clear guidance, legal assistance, and GMB advocacy.

LANARKSHIRE HEALTH BRANCH

GMB SCOTLAND

(Carried)

ELIZABETH AIRNS (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 202: Ending Toxic Culture in the NHS - Protecting Staff Who Speak Out.

Congress, our members don't need warm words: they need action. When NHS trusts allow toxic cultures to persist staff are harmed, voices are silenced and patient care suffers. That failure must have consequences. NHS staff are told to speak up when something is wrong and every policy says concerns should be raised, unsafe practice should be challenged and patient safety should come first, but in practice that is too

often not what happens. When staff do speak up, too many are labelled difficult, isolated from their colleagues and left to face the consequences on their own. GMB must use its collective strength to lobby government to hold NHS trusts to account, where toxic workplace cultures are allowed to continue. This means real oversight, independent scrutiny and clear sanctions for employers who fail to protect staff. Trusts that tolerate bullying, harassment, discrimination or retaliation for speaking up should not be shielded from accountability. Our members deserve a union that does more than respond after harm is done. They deserve a union that fights proactivity, challenges power and forces change. GMB must be relentless in demanding action - no excuses - and stand alongside members who speak up at personal cost.

Congress, supporting this motion is about a commitment to our members. A commitment that we will not accept toxic cultures as “just the way it is”. A commitment that we demand accountability from employers and government alike and that we will fight for safe, respectful workplaces across the NHS. That is the action our members expect and that is the action they deserve. If the Government, the NHS and employers are serious about improving care, they must start by protecting the workers who know where the risks are. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Elizabeth. The seconder, please.

ELSIE SNEDDON (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, I am feeling privileged to second Motion 202. Having worked as a nurse and midwife for the past 41 years, I have personally witnessed the changes not for the better that affect staff and cause the need to whistle-blow. They are attempting to raise concerns about bullying and

harassment, about staffing levels and about issues which can affect patient safety and patient care. This then has an impact on recruitment and retention because whistle-blowing makes them leave the job. Our sister union has done a survey and 42% of nurses and midwives are leaving the NHS. “Why?” you may ask. Because this is what a toxic atmosphere causes in the NHS. When staff are considering or making the decision to raise concerns, they can feel intimidated, under-valued and isolated. They are labelled as a problem while the real issues are avoided. Some managers don’t wish to deal with the situation and some don’t know how to deal with it. Too often, concerns are avoided because managers are worried what the next level of management will think or because they cannot cope with the situations themselves. All of this leads to staffing issues, sickness absence, with staff under pressure to retract statements or not voice them at all. NHS staff need to feel valued, appreciated and safe at work. NHS staff need to be able to have open, honest relationships with peers and management.

This motion is asking Congress to take forward Motion 202 to support NHS staff in all GMB regions. This is not a Scottish issue, this is a UK-wide issue, and it is asking for anti-bullying training, stronger protections for those who speak up and transparent reporting. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Elsie. Thank you. The mover of 203, please.

INCREASING COST FOR NURSES

MOTION 203

203. INCREASING COST FOR NURSES

This Congress notes that the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is proposing an increase to the annual registration fee for nurses. The current fee is £120 per year, paid in full by

individual registrants. Conference further notes that since 2015 the NMC implemented a freeze when the fee rose by £20, creating ongoing uncertainty for nurses about the extent and cost of any future increase.

The NMC attributes the proposed rise to increasing costs associated with disciplinary hearings. While disciplinary processes are necessary, not all nurses will be subject to such proceedings during their careers, yet all registrants would bear the cost through an increased annual fee.

We ask that congress:

Monitors closely any proposed increases to the NMC registration fee and assess their impact on members.

Take appropriate action, including representation and campaigning with affected members, if any increase is disproportionate or unjustified.

To lobby the Government to ensure that the NMC conducts any public consultation on registration fees in a fully transparent and accountable manner and that responses from stakeholders are properly considered.

**G95 GLASGOW NURSES BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

ELIZABETH AIRNS (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 203: Increasing Cost for Nurses. Congress, nurses cannot practise without registration. This means the NMC fee is not optional, it is not a subscription and it is not a professional extra that workers can choose to pay if they want to. It is a compulsory cost of doing the job. For years, the annual registration fee has been £120 but now the Nursing & Midwifery Council has approved an increase to £143 subject to parliamentary approval. For some that may be presented as a modest monthly rise but for nurses already facing rising bills, stretched household budgets and years of pressure on the NHS it is another cost being placed on the worker, and, Congress, that matters. Nurses already pay to stay in the profession. They pay to maintain registration, to meet professional standards and to keep doing the work that our health service depends on. They do that while working under pressure, covering gaps, carrying responsibility and often facing abuse,

exhaustion and unsafe staffing. So, when the regulator increases the fee, nurses are entitled to ask why. They are entitled to know whether every option has been examined. They are entitled to know why the cost is falling on registrants. They are entitled to know whether the consultation has properly listened to those who actually pay the fee. They are entitled to expect transparency in how their money is being used.

Of course, the disciplinary and fitness to practise process matters. Patients must be protected and professional standards must be upheld. But it cannot simply be assumed that every increase in regulatory cost should be passed on to every nurse without proper scrutiny.

This motion asks GMB to monitor these increases closely, assess the impact on members and take action where any rise is disproportionate or unjustified. It also asks the Government to ensure that the consultation on the registration fee is transparent, accountable and properly considered.

Congress, nurses should not be treated as an easy resource for income for a regulator under pressure. They deserve fairness, accountability and respect. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Liz. Secunder, please.

PAULINE WARD (GMB Scotland): Seconding Motion 203. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause and cheers)* Congress, I am pleased to second this motion. The point at the heart of this motion is a simply one nurses should not be

expected to absorb rising professional costs without proper scrutiny, transparency and accountability. Registration with the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) is a condition of practice. Nurses have no real choice in the matter. If they want to continue doing the job they are trained to do and the job our NHS depends upon, they must pay the fee. That is why any increase really matters. At a time when nurses are already facing pressure at work and pressure at home, an increase in registration fees is not just an administrative issue: it is another cost being placed on workers who are already giving so much. We do recognise the importance of regulation, professional standards and patient safety, but those principles don't remove the need for fairness. They make transparency that much more important.

Congress, nurses deserve to know why the increase is needed, how the figure has been reached, what alternatives have been considered and whether their views have been properly taken into account. This motion asks GMB to stand with members, to monitor the impact of these increases and, crucially, to challenge any rise that is disproportionate or unjustified. Congress, nurses deserve better than being treated as a convenient source of funding. They deserve fairness, accountability and respect. Congress, I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Pauline. You see none of you needed that extra time to prepare. Your speeches were great and your timing was spot on, so well done.
(Applause) Does anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? *(No response)* The CEC are supporting all three so I will put them all together as one group. So all those in favour of 201, 202 and 203, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Motion 201 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 202 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 203 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: That is the end of the motions for this morning. Before we close for lunch we have a short solidarity message from our sister trade union centre in south Korea, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

Video shown to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: I think these messages are really lovely. That is the end of Congress this morning. Please be back in the hall at 2 pm. There have been another 11 first-time speakers this morning. Have a great lunch. (*Applause*)

Congress adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Congress assembled at 2.00 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, can you take your seats please. I hope you all have a good lunch time. Can I ask Karen Dudley, SOC to move SOC No. 6.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 6

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, moving SOC Report No. 6. Congress, before I start, the SOC requests that delegates are mindful when talking to each other on the floor not to disturb other delegates in close proximity trying to listen to the debates. Also, as previously requested, no smoking outside the main door. Barriers will be erected and smoking will not be permitted between the building and the barrier.

Withdrawn motions

There have been no further withdrawn motions.

Emergency motions

Congress, please note that Emergency Motion 5: Middle East Conflict Impact on Aviation and Emergency Motion 6: Government Adoption Apology, will be debated tomorrow morning.

The SOC will consider further requests for emergency motions. The SOC will update Congress accordingly. President, Congress, I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 6

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Anybody want to speak in opposition to it? In that case, can I ask everybody in favour of the report, please show. Anybody against? That report is carried. Thank you.

*SOC Report No. 6 was **ADOPTED**.*

MARY MacARTHUR AWARD FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it is my great pleasure to announce the winner of this year's Mary MacArthur Award for Health and Safety is Patrick Timson from North West & Irish Region. (*Applause*) Patrick has consistently gone above and beyond to protect Asda colleagues and customers. He regularly visits stores to train safety reps and improve health and safety standards. Patrick's work has made many Asda stores safer and more inclusive for disabled members by successfully challenging discrimination and promoting reasonable adjustments. We will now play our award winner video.

Video shown to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, Patrick cannot be here in person to receive this award but Clare Ebbrell, Alan Ferguson and Melissa Johnson will collect the award on Patrick's behalf and read out a short message from him.

MELISSA JOHNSON (North West & Irish): Good afternoon, Congress. Patrick, unfortunately couldn't be here with us today but he has sent a little message that he wanted me to read out to you all.

“Firstly, please send my apologies for not being there in person but I am celebrating with my mum who has recently received the all clear from having cancer so I hope you understand why I’m not here. (*Applause*) I am truly honoured to receive this award but it is not just for me alone. Please pass on my sincere thanks to Lindsay and Dan from the National Office for always having my back and also to everyone in the North West & Irish regional team for giving me my voice. Also to the National Health and Safety Forum for their tireless commitment and continuous hard work on behalf of our members throughout Asda. Finally, above all, I want to recognise our incredible army of reps across the country. Every day we stand together, shoulder to shoulder, with one another, learning together, fighting together and winning together. We do this not for the recognition or for the awards but for the belief that a unionised world is a better world. So thank you, Congress, and keep on fighting the good fight.”

(Presentation amidst applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Please take our best wishes back to Patrick and his mum for us.

ACTIVIST SPEAKER: NWI - TETRAD

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I am pleased to start this afternoon’s business with another GMB activist speaker, this time from North West & Irish Region. Will Bennett is one of our GMB reps from bespoke furniture maker Tetrad in Lancashire. He will be speaking about their successful campaign to rebuild the union in the workplace and win recognition from the employer. Welcome, Will, to the rostrum. (*Applause*)

WILLIAM BENNETT (P42 Branch, North West & Irish): President, Vice-President, Congress, my name is William Bennett from Preston Branch P42, North West & Irish Region. I have been employed by Tetrad for around five years now. We are a high end bespoke furniture manufacturer, once a family-run business, now owned by an investor-backed group. But what was a business focused on conserving livelihoods and providing long-term stability for employees has increasingly become a business focused on maximising returns for shareholders. That is why I became a workplace representative two years ago. I wanted to protect our members and fight for better working conditions. In that time we have secured what I believe is our most important win: our recognition agreement.

Since becoming a rep, I have had countless opportunities to develop myself and gain the skills needed to represent my members effectively. GMB has taught me how to organise, how to listen and how to bring workers together, to achieve real change.

One issue that members repeatedly raise with me is fatigue. Our members work long ten-hour shifts in a physically demanding manufacturing environment. Historically, workers received an afternoon tea break which gave them an opportunity to rest and recharge during the working day. Over time that break was taken away. As workloads increased and long shifts remained, members felt increasingly fatigued and believed a basic part of their working conditions had been eroded. Rather than simply taking the issue to management myself, we organised. We spoke to members across the workplace, gathered support, identified our priorities and built a collective campaign around restoring additional paid break time. The campaign was not easy, it involved difficult conversations and a lengthy battle with management, but because members

stood together and remained united, we achieved what we had set out to do. I am proud to say we secured an increase in paid breaks for our members along with hundreds of pounds in back pay. (*Applause*) Thanks.

Most importantly, this campaign showed our members what can be achieved when workers organise collectively throughout the union. This issue was resolved but our work isn't finished. There are many more challenges ahead and many more battles to fight, but thanks to the work of our members and the principles of GMB@Work, we are in a far stronger position to face them together.

The difference today is that our union is stronger than it was before. Following this campaign, we saw membership grow and workers who had never previously been involved begin to take an active interest in the union and the work we were doing. All this has rebuilt the union in my workplace. More people believe in the work we are doing. More people understand the value of being organised. Members are more engaged, more confident and more willing to stand together when issues arise. That is what GMB@Work is all about.

For me personally becoming a representative has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. I have developed enormously in confidence, knowledge and leadership and I am proud to stand here today and represent my members. Our campaign delivered better conditions, put money back into workers' pockets, attracted new members and strengthened our workplace organisation. That is the power of GMB@Work. A special thank you to my branch Secretary Derek Sutcliffe, the officer who supported my campaigns, Tim Collins, and everyone here as well who are

continually fighting for our members. Give yourselves a clap. (*Applause and standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Inspiring ways to start this afternoon with the award and then Will.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SECTION

Moving back to motions on Industrial & Economic Policy: Public Section. Can I have the movers and seconders of 204, 205 and 207 down to the front and the mover of 204 to the rostrum, please.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION TRAINING

MOTION 204

204. MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION TRAINING

This Congress notes:

- That supervised administration of some medicines during training is essential to the development of safe, competent paramedic practice and to the protection of patient safety;
- That paramedics play a critical and expanding role within modern English Healthcare, routinely delivering time-critical pharmacological interventions.

This Congress believes:

- That Schedule 17 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 is outdated and applied inconsistently between healthcare student groups, permitting midwifery students to administer medicines under supervision whilst excluding student paramedics;
- That requiring newly qualified paramedics to administer medicines, including via parenteral routes, without prior supervised experience during training presents an avoidable clinical risk. For example, student paramedics are required to learn how to gain intravenous and intraosseous access, a vital part of these skills is to flush the adjunct with saline, under current legislations, this is illegal for a student to perform.

This Congress resolves to:

- Campaign for the amendment or authoritative clarification of Schedule 17 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 to explicitly permit student paramedics to administer medicines under appropriate supervision;
- Lobby the Department of Health and Social Care, the MHRA and relevant professional regulators to address this regulatory inequality;

- Work with ambulance trusts, higher education institutions and professional bodies to establish safe, standardised supervision and competency frameworks for medication administration by student paramedics;
- Support Branches and Student Members in challenging policies and practices that prevent student paramedics from gaining supervised experience in medicines administration.

A02 WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE BRANCH
MIDLANDS REGION
(Carried)

ALEX KAPITANEC (Midlands): My name is Alex Kapitanec. I am a paramedic and rep from the West Midlands Ambulance Branch Midlands Region and I am moving Motion 204. At present, student paramedics are unable to legally administer intravenous medicines during their training because there is no provision under Schedule 17 of the Human Medicines Regulation of 2012 that permits them to do so. This creates a significant gap between education and practice. While student paramedics spend years developing the theoretical knowledge required to administer medicine safely, they are unable to gain legal supervising experience in administering many of the medicines they would be expected to use immediately on qualification. In contrast, student midwives are provided a formulary of medicine under Schedule 17 that they can administer under appropriate instruction and supervision. This enables them to develop competence, confidence and clinical judgment before they enter autonomous practice.

For student paramedics, however, the first occasion on which they can legally administer any intravenous medicine is often their first day as a registered paramedic, when they are no longer practising under direct supervision. There is an anomaly that benefits neither practitioners nor patients.

Perhaps the clearest example of this problem is intravenous cannulation. Student paramedics are trained and assessed as competent to insert a cannula into a patient's vein. However, once that cannula is inserted they cannot legally flush it with saline to confirm its patency under the current legislative framework. As a result, a student may be permitted to perform the invasive procedure itself but is prevented from carrying out the routine medicines administration required to complete it. The paramedic mentor has to step in and complete the procedure. This demonstrates a disconnect between current legislation and contemporary practice.

If student paramedics were permitted to administer a defined formulary of medicines under instruction and supervision, they would gain greater competence and confidence, and, more importantly, patients would benefit from practitioners who have already demonstrated proficiency in medicines administration before assuming full professional responsibility.

Let me be clear, this is not a request to lower standards or expand practice without safeguards. Rather, it is a request to modernise legislation so that student paramedics can train safely and effectively under supervision of a registered professional, in the same way that other healthcare students already do. I therefore call upon Congress to engage with government, NHS committees and working groups to review and hopefully amend the Human Medicines Regulations of 2012, specifically Schedule 17, to introduce a supervised medicines formulary for a student paramedic. I urge Congress to support this motion. Thank you very much. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Alex. Secunder.

SALLY HUSSELBEE (Midlands): Hi, I am Sally, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am newly qualified paramedic as well as branch president from the West Midlands Ambulance Branch, Midlands Region, and I am proud to second this motion. The mover has clearly explained the legislative issue so I want to speak about the impact on student paramedics and, most importantly, patient safety. As a student paramedic, I spent years studying medicine management, pharmacology and clinical decision making. I was trained, assessed and trusted to perform many advanced clinical skills, yet despite this, I was unable to legally administer certain intravenous medicines, even under the direct supervision of an experience paramedic mentor. I remember the frustration of completing most of a patient's treatments only for my mentor to step in to administer the medicine or finish the procedure because the law prevented me from doing so. Then overnight everything changed. One day I was a student unable to gain opportunity supervised experience, the next as a registered paramedic I was expected to take full responsibility for administering those same medicines.

Congress, confidence is built through supervised practice but so is safety. Administering intravenous medicines is not simply about giving a drug. It is about recognising complications, understanding how patients respond in real time and knowing when something is wrong. Patients can experience pain, phlebitis and even tissue damage if these are not identified and managed promptly. The current system also creates an unintended risk. Some students aware of the experience gap on qualification may feel pressured to seek experience before they are legally permitted, placing themselves, mentors and employers at risk. Let me be clear, this motion does

not lower standards. It strengthens them. It allows student paramedics to gain safe, legal, supervised experience before qualification.

Congress, if we are serious about patient safety and preparing the next generation of paramedics, please support this motion. Thank you. (*Cheers and applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sally. Mover of Motion 205.

NHS STAFF PARKING CHARGES

MOTION 205

205. NHS STAFF PARKING CHARGES

This Congress notes parking charges for staff in the NHS vary greatly.

Congress instructs the CEC to propose all NHS staff are treated equally and provided with free public transport in their local area, a free bus pass or train travel to and from work and to possibly include out of work time.

The aim of this motion is to encourage sustainability and free up parking for patients and visitors. This would also ensure parking for those on call which could then be allocated as on-call staff arrive at work.

Parking spaces should be free at all NHS premises.

With more public transport use, better public transport for health services, in turn this would be better for staff, patients and the environment. The lottery of who gets a parking permit would stop.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY BRANCH MIDLANDS REGION

(*Carried*)

NAHIRA KHAN (Midlands): Hello, I am Nahira Khan, Midlands, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I move Motion 205 NHS: Staff Parking Charges.

President, Congress, this motion is about fairness; it is about dignity; it is about common sense. (*Applause*) Across the NHS staff are being treated differently depending where they work. Some workers are paying hundreds of pounds a year just to park at the hospital they help keep running. Others are stuck on waiting lists waiting for permits. Some are forced to park streets away whilst walking late at night back to their cars after exhausting shifts. The same NHS, the same dedication, the same public service - completely different treatment. That is not fair. That is a postcode lottery and, Congress, it must end. NHS staff should not have to pay to simply turn up for work. Cleaners, porters, healthcare assistants, nurses, admin workers, catering staff, ambulance staff - every one of them plays a vital part in keeping the NHS moving. Yet too many are being charged before their shift has even begun. For some workers parking charges are not an inconvenience, they are another bill, another deduction, another pressure on already stretched wages. And at the same time patients and visitors struggle to find spaces. On-call staff need quick access. Hospital sites are congested. Public transport is often poor, patchy, unreliable, or simply not there when shift workers need it.

So, this motion gives us a fair practical answer: free parking for NHS staff at NHS premises; free local public transport where it supports staff getting to and from work; better transport links to hospitals; and proper protection for those who must drive, including on-call workers and staff working unsocial hours.

Congress, let us be clear, this cannot be dumped on to already stretched NHS trusts. If government wants a functioning NHS then government must fund the workers who keep it moving. That means ring-fenced national funding. It means working with local

authorities, transport providers and NHS trusts. It means national standards, not local excuses. Because fairness should not depend on your postcode. It should not depend on your job title and it certainly should not depend on whether your trust can afford to do the right thing.

Congress, NHS staff cared for this country through the hardest of times, which was very evident during Covid. They turned up when the country needed them the most. They kept wards clean, they moved patients, they answered phones, they prepared food, they provided care, they kept services running. The least this country can do is stop charging them to come to work.

So let this Congress send a clear message: no more parking lottery, no more charging workers to care, no more unfair treatment by postcode. Free parking, free transport, fair transport, proper funding: respect for NHS workers. Congress, support Motion 202 and end the parking lottery. Back NHS workers and demand the funding to make it happen. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Nahira. Secunder?

SIMON MARTIN (Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, President, I rise to second Motion 205 on NHS Staff Parking Charges. I may end up echoing some of the excellent points that have just been said, so excuse me. A few years ago I had a cancerous brain tumour removed and this took place the day before my birthday, so, as you can imagine, my birthday wasn't the first thing on my mind. But there was a nursing assistant there named Santi. Throughout the day he

kept appearing beside my bed singing “Happy birthday” and presenting me with what he claimed were gifts. Most of these were discarded items he had found lying around the ward. At one point he proudly presented me with a crisp he had found on the floor and to this day it still puzzles me how somehow he knew it was prawn cocktail flavour, and I still don’t know because I didn’t want to ask him!

That does sound like a silly story but this is not really about the crisp, it is about NHS staff. It is about people working long shifts under pressure dealing with patients on some of the worst days of their lives yet still finding the time and energy to make somebody smile. Staff like Santi don’t do it because they are paid extra. They don’t do it because they are rewarded. They do it because they care. And after giving so much of themselves, what do many NHS workers get in return? A bill to park at work. A charge simply for turning up and doing their job. Many NHS staff have no choice but to drive. Shift patterns don’t always match public transport. Early starts, late finishes and emergency call-outs make driving a necessity and not a luxury. Charging healthcare workers to come to work is unfair. It is an unnecessary financial burden on people who already give more than others ever will. If we value NHS workers we should stop treating staff as a parking revenue stream and start treating it as a basic workplace provision.

Congress, for every Santi out there, for every nurse, healthcare assistant, porter, cleaner, therapist and member of NHS staff who turns up every day, let’s send a clear message: they should not have to pay simply to come to work. I urge Congress to support Motion 205. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Simon. Mover of Motion 207, please.

FIGHTING TO BE A STEWARD IN THE NHS.

MOTION 207

207. FIGHTING TO BE A STEWARD IN THE NHS

This Congress notes that GMB NHS Stewards come from many different backgrounds and occupations. As a general union, we are proud to advocate for all members, as our diverse knowledge and experiences contribute to well-rounded and effective representation. We take pride in this inclusivity.

The decision to become a GMB Steward in your workplace is a positive step. However, why does the NHS need to make this process so difficult, particularly depending on your job role?

Facilities agreements are recognised policies, so why are we not receiving the appropriate time to attend to members?

Partnership time is acknowledged as vital, and NHS boards agree on its importance. Yet, Stewards are often not provided with the necessary time to fulfil their roles by Trusts and Health Boards who are ignoring this situation. Unions should be present at meetings, but Stewards are not always given dedicated time to attend.

We call on congress:

To recognise the pressures involved in balancing work, home life, and steward responsibilities when not being given adequate union time by management.

We urge discussions with the Government to clarify the current NHS facilities and partnership agreements to prevent any misunderstanding in the policies.

We request that the GMB support regions in assisting branches to ensure NHS Stewards are provided with equitable time, regardless of job title, banding, or role.

S11 SCOTTISH PRIMARY CARE NURSING BRANCH GMB SCOTLAND

(Carried)

TERESA WILL (GMB Scotland): Chair, Congress, moving Motion 207: Fighting to be a Steward in the NHS. The National Health Service is one of the UK's greatest institutions and built on the principle of care based on need. Yet today both the service and its staff face unprecedented financial and workplace challenges. NHS staff are the

backbone of the service but they are under immense pressure. Chronic workforce shortages, rising service demands, burnt-out staff and declining morale are now everyday realities. At the same time stewards are the very people who support staff through these pressures and are not being treated with the fairness and respect that they deserve. This is visible when having meetings with management and staff.

Congress, where our stewards work within the NHS should not determine whether they receive facility time as this is a major issue. They must be equality for all stewards regarding their role or their settings. We have recognised partnerships and facility policies in the NHS, so why is it still acceptable for HR and management to interpret them inconsistently, or to deny stewards the time that they need to support members, as this is a regular issue with management? Choosing to be a steward means standing up for colleagues, often in difficult circumstances, but that should not come at a cost of their own work/life balance. Stewards should not be expected to carry out union duties in their own time. This happens more frequently as we cover all shift patterns over a seven-day period.

These issues sit in a wider crisis. Workforce pressures have been compounded by years of pay restraint, poor planning, insufficient staffing and pressures of being overworked. Staff need better pay, improved conditions and meaningful support if we are to sustain the NHS for future generations. Whether that is new working models, reduced hours or service redesigns, these must be negotiated properly with trade unions and implemented fairly across all roles. This includes our stewards. We need national guidelines and facility time so that health boards cannot continue to apply policies inconsistently. We need recognition that supporting staff is not optional, it is essential.

We need the Government and NHS leadership to act and to strengthen the voice of staff and their representatives, as this requires immediate action. So Congress, I call on the GMB to push for clarity, fairness and support for NHS stewards in every role and in every setting because without staff there is no NHS and without stewards there is no voice for staff. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder? (*Formally seconded*) Thank you very much, anybody wish to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (*No response*) Can I ask the CEC Paul Turner to respond, please?

PAUL TURNER (CEC, North West & Irish): President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Congress, responding on behalf of the CEC to Motions 205 and 207. Both we are supporting with qualification.

On Motion 205, this motion is in line with existing GMB policy campaigning for free car parking for all NHS workers. Our simple qualification is that public transport is not always an option for all NHS workers, due to where they live in relation to the hospital, or the hospitals being in rural areas with limited transport options.

On Motion 207, we acknowledge and support the intent of the motion. We are committed to supporting branches in securing appropriate facility time for stewards, ensuring they are able to carry out their roles effectively and represent members properly. Our qualification is that facility time arrangements are ultimately the responsibility of the individual employing trusts or health boards. These decisions sit with the employer level and cannot be determined by the union. However, we can and

we will raise our concerns at a national level. We will continue to engage with the Department of Health and Social Care and encourage the development of clear, supportive guidance to all employers on the importance of enabling effective trade union representation. Subject to the qualifications, the CEC supports Motion 207.

President, in summary, the CEC support both motions with the stated qualifications.
(*Applause*).

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Before I go to the vote, can I ask movers and seconders of Composite 4, Motion 77 and 81 to be ready down the front, please. The CEC is supporting 204 from the Midlands Region. Does Midlands accept the qualification on Motion 205? (*Accepted*) Does Scotland accept the qualification on Motion 207? (*Accepted*) I will put those to the vote. All those in favour of 204, 205 and, 207, please show. Any against? They are all carried.

*Motion 204 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 205 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 207 was **CARRIED**.*

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: EQUALITY & INCLUSION

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Employment Policy: Equality & Inclusion. Could I have the mover of Composite 4, please.

PROTECT TRANS AND NON-BINARY WORKERS' RIGHTS IN LAW AND PRACTICE AND INCLUSIVE TRANS, NON-BINARY & INTERSEX WORKPLACES.

COMPOSITE 4

C4. PROTECT TRANS AND NON-BINARY WORKERS' RIGHTS IN LAW AND PRACTICE AND INCLUSIVE TRANS, NON-BINARY & INTERSEX WORKPLACES

This Congress notes that the Supreme Court ruling in April 2025 on women's representation on public boards has caused serious problems for trans and non-binary people. It has led to unfair treatment, confusion, and in some cases the segregation of trans people at work.

In October 2025 the EHRC withdrew its interim guidance on the Supreme Court's judgment in *For Women Scotland v Scottish Ministers* [April 2025] UKSC 16 ("FWS judgment"), which created considerable uncertainty as to how trans people (those with and without a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC)) could exercise their continued rights under the Equality Act 2010.

The guidance told employers and service providers that they must exclude trans people from accessing spaces and services. Many places implemented this interim guidance with devastating impact on trans people both in the workplace and society.

Many employers don't know what to do. Many workers feel anxious. Some trans people are now being told they must use toilets that don't match the gender they live as. This can lead to them being "outed", which increases the risk of harassment. Some avoid using toilets altogether when at work or in public, which is unacceptable.

The ruling has also created confusion around the Health and Safety Act. Some employers may now try to avoid providing gender neutral facilities, even though they should be doing so.

The problem comes from the law itself. Courts and the EHRC can only interpret what Parliament has written. Trans and non binary workers deserve dignity and respect, especially in their workplaces.

Access to toilets is a basic human right. Everyone should have facilities that match their identity and meet their needs.

Congress notes that many workplaces / service providers want to continue to be trans inclusive and want to know how they can be so, in a lawful way. This also applies to reps in the workplace supporting and representing trans, non-binary, intersex members.

Congress notes this ambiguity from the ruling is still causing confusion to reps who support trans, on binary, intersex members in the workplace and things are unclear.

What is clear however is that trans people are protected from discrimination if treated less favourably by an employer or service provider because they are trans, this is discrimination.

It is also clear that trans people are protected from discrimination on the ground of 'gender reassignment', regardless of whether they have a Gender Reassignment Certificate or not.

This motion asks GMB to continue to support LGBTQ+ members and:

- Actively lobby the UK Government and devolved governments to update the Equality Act so that its protections apply to all women: trans women, cis women, and non-binary people who identify as female.
- Continue pushing for a simpler, quicker process for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate.
- Actively lobby governments across the UK to reform building regulations so that new buildings must legally include gender neutral toilets.
- Encourage employers to provide gender-neutral toilets in line with the Health and Safety Act.
- Ensure that all reps/members are clear on this issue when representing trans, non binary, intersex members when delivering training on equalities.
- Campaign to highlight that trans non binary intersex members are still protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.

Moving Region: GMB Scotland

Seconding Region: London

(Carried)

CIORSTAI DH REICHIE (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, moving Composite

4. Congress, access to toilets is a basic human rights. In April 2025, the Supreme Court ruled that for the purposes of the Equality Act, the definition of sex is based on biological sex. The fundamental issue with this debate stems from the guidance issued by the EHRC. Initially, guidance was released, followed by further guidance after a legal challenge from The Good Law Project and further legal analysis, and then further guidance was released. This leaves workers and representatives confused once again and the rights of trans-gender people remain unequally protected.

Individuals have been forced to use facilities, and usually ones for disabled workers, that do not align with their gender identity, or to use gender-neutral facilities, which are always singled out for this purpose. This risks outing individuals in the workplace and

violates their right to privacy and protection against discrimination. Of course, if all facilities had individual toilets and sinks behind a closed door, they would effectively all be gender neutral.

We call on the GMB to lobby government across the UK to uphold laws to protect everyone, and to reform building regulations to include the provision of gender-neutral toilets for all. We also urge GMB to encourage all employers to provide gender-neutral facilities within their workplaces.

Congress, finally, some choose a very narrow view of this issue. They should perhaps investigate another fundamental human right: the right to education. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ciorstaidh. The seconder from London Region.

TARANJIT CHANA (London): Seconding Composite 4. Solidarity with all our trans+ siblings. We hear you, we see you, you exist, you have always existed. No Executive Order, no code of practice, no Supreme Court ruling, no guidance will ever erase your existence. We are with you! *(Applause)* This weekend Blackpool celebrated Pride. Congress, there is no Pride without the D. Stormé DeLarverie, a black lesbian drag queen and the spark of the Stonewall uprising, said: “It was a rebellion and was not a riot. Pride began as a protest.”

The EHRC guidance tells employers and service providers that they must exclude trans+ people from accessing services and spaces. This means that trans+ workers, our

members, will be prevented from accessing life-saving support and healthcare services and safety. Congress, as front-line workers, we are being forced to abide by transphobic practices and policies. It is therefore crucial that our reps and our members are provided with clear and supported information, trans-inclusive, when representing our non-binary, our inter-sex and gender-diverse workers. Congress, there is no workers' liberation without trans liberation. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Mover of Motion 77.

EQUALITY, INCLUSION & FAIR TREATMENT IN RESTRUCTURES

MOTION 77

77. EQUALITY, INCLUSION & FAIR TREATMENT IN RESTRUCTURES

This Congress, we note with concern the increasing use of restructures in which roles are deemed “suitable alternative employment” without proper consideration of workers’ caring responsibilities or existing reasonable adjustments.

We are recognising that in many cases, members are told that failure to apply for or accept such roles will be treated as a resignation, placing workers under pressure to accept unsuitable roles or risk losing their employment.

This motion calls on the union to challenge unfair restructuring practices and to campaign for clear standards requiring employers to fully consider caring responsibilities, reasonable adjustments, health conditions, and equality impacts before roles are deemed suitable alternatives.

Congress affirms that restructures must be conducted in line with equality legislation and the principles of inclusion and fair treatment, and that no member should be forced out of employment because an employer has failed to properly assess suitability.

GMB commits to supporting members affected by such practices and holding employers accountable for discriminatory and unfair outcomes.

I35 ISLINGTON & HARINGEY BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

GEORGE SHARKEY (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, moving Motion 77. This Congress notes with serious concern the growing number of restructures where roles are labelled as suitable alternative employment without any real consideration of the worker in front of them. Decisions are made on job titles and job descriptions, not on people's lives, responsibilities or needs. Across our workplaces members with caring responsibilities - parents, carers for disabled children or elderly relatives - are told that a role is suitable when the hours, location or flexibility make it completely unworkable. Disabled members and those with long-term health conditions are seeing reasonable adjustments they have taken years to agree suddenly ignored as if they never existed. We are increasingly seeing members told that if they did not apply for or accept these so-called suitable alternative roles they would be treated as having resigned. It forces workers to choose between their job and their caring responsibilities, their health or their dignity. That is why this motion matters. Restructures are not neutral processes when they fail to take account of caring responsibilities, reasonable adjustments and equality impacts. They disproportionately harm women, disabled workers, older workers and other marginalised groups. They undermine the very principles of equality and inclusion that employers so often claim to champion.

This motion calls on our union to challenge these unfair restructuring practices and to campaign for clear, enforceable standards: standards that require employers to properly assess whether a role is generally suitable not just on paper but in practice; standards that recognise caring responsibilities, health conditions and agreed reasonable adjustments as essential factors, not inconvenient obstacles.

Congress, equality legislation exists for a reason. Reasonable adjustments are not optional, caring responsibilities are not a personal failing, and inclusion is not something that can be switched off during a restructure. No member should be forced out of employment because an employer had failed to do their job properly. No one should be put in their resignation through fear and pressure simply because it is easier for management than doing a fair assessment.

GMB has a proud history of standing up for fairness at work. By supporting this motion, Congress is reaffirming that restructures must be done with people at the heart, not as a number exercise but as a process rooted in dignity, respect and justice. I urge Congress to support this motion and send a clear message to employers that equality, inclusion and fair treatment do not disappear in times of change. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, George. Secunder.

JAHANARA UDDIN (London): Good afternoon, President and Congress. I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am here to second Motion 77. Restructuring at work is always a stressful time. However, it becomes a nightmare when employers use the term “suitable alternative employment”, setting a trap. Right now, many of our members are being forced into roles that simply do not work for them. We are seeing parents being told to take shifts that make childcare impossible. We are seeing disabled people being pushed into roles where their reasonable adjustments have been ignored. I want to be clear this isn’t just happening in theory: it is happening right now in my workplace, in my school. When an offer is truly

unsuitable, it isn't a choice; it is a threat. It is a way to push people out of their jobs without the employers taking responsibility. This motion is vital because it demands that suitability is not just about a job title, it is about the person, it is about their health, their caring responsibilities and rights under the law.

By supporting this motion we are sending a clear message to employers: you cannot restructure people out of their rights. We are committed to better training for our reps and stronger protection for our members. I am proud to second this motion. Please support it. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jahanara. Mover of Motion 81, please.

EXTENDING VAT EXEMPTIONS TO ALL MENSTRUAL AND MENOPAUSE PRODUCTS.

MOTION 81

81. EXTENDING VAT EXEMPTIONS TO ALL MENSTRUAL AND MENOPAUSE PRODUCTS

This Congress notes that in 2021, the UK Government took a positive and welcome step by removing VAT on menstrual products, commonly referred to as the “tampon tax”. This decision acknowledged that sanitary products are essential healthcare items, not luxury goods.

Since the introduction of the VAT exemption, product innovation has increased, with manufacturers developing new menstrual products that fall outside the original classifications and are still subject to VAT.

Products used to manage the symptoms of menopause — including absorbent products, medical-grade supports, and hygiene aids — remain fully VAT-rated, despite being essential to daily life, dignity, and the ability to work.

Stigma surrounding menstruation and menopause continues to contribute to period poverty, workplace inequality, and barriers to participation in education, employment, and public life.

This GMB further notes that:

Women and people who menstruate do not choose to have periods or experience menopause.

These are natural, biological processes experienced by thousands of women every day, including in workplaces and public settings.

Access to appropriate products — discreetly, safely, and without embarrassment — is fundamental to health, wellbeing, and equality.

While menstruation is often described as a private matter, its impacts are public: affecting productivity, attendance, confidence, and dignity.

This GMB believes that:

The original intention of removing the tampon tax was to ensure all essential menstrual products are treated equally and fairly.

That intention must now be reiterated and expanded to reflect modern product ranges and the realities of menopause.

It is inconsistent and unjust to remove VAT from some menstrual products while continuing to tax others — and to exclude menopause products entirely.

Essential health-related products should not attract “value added tax” when their use is unavoidable and biologically determined.

We formally thank the UK Government for the removal of VAT on menstrual products in 2021.

Now we must call on the Government to:

Clarify that the VAT exemption applies to all menstrual products, including newly developed and reusable items.

Extend VAT exemptions to menopause-related products that are essential for managing symptoms and maintaining dignity and participation in daily life.

Support the principle of #TaxFreeFullStopPeriod, recognising menstruation and menopause as essential health issues, not lifestyle choices.

Encourage the provision of free menstrual products in:

Workplaces

Educational settings

All public toilets

to reduce stigma, prevent period poverty, and ensure access without shame or embarrassment.

Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, relevant Ministers, and local MPs urging legislative and fiscal action to address these inequalities.

**X17 MEDWAY GENERAL BRANCH
SOUTHERN REGION**

(Carried)

KARIMAH KELLY (Southern): Hot, isn't it. I am Moving Motion 81. Madam President, Madam Vice-Chairman, my colleagues and my comrades - hold on a minute (*Opens and waves fan*) I am moving Motion 81. I campaigned to end period poverty back in 2019 with the support of my union. In 2021, the Government rightly removed VAT from menstruation products, recognising that these are essential items, not luxury goods. Also I just want to mention that the GMB are doing some fantastic work for the menopause. This is the tool kit. If you have not already used this with your employers, please do. So this decision was welcomed by many women who menstruate, who have been campaigning and all the trade unions across the country, but today we are asking that Congress recognise that this job is not finished. Since the removal of the so-called "tampon tax", new menstruation products have entered the market and some of them still have VAT because they fall outside of distinct definitions. This includes daily supplements, vitamins, and symptom relief items. They still carry 20% VAT in the UK.

At the same time, millions of women experiencing menopause continue to pay VAT on these products to help them manage symptoms, maintain their dignity and remain in work. Colleagues, menstruation is not a choice and neither do we choose to experience menopause. Hold on a moment. (*Waving fan*) (*Applause*) It is just one of the other many symptoms we can get. So for me, the reality is that this can affect many women across the world and throughout their working lives. As trade unionists we believe in dignity at work, equality and fairness, so, it is time that we get it right. These products because we have this biological condition should not be taxed. This motion asks for no special treatment. It is just asking for equal treatment and asking for consistency. We

are asking for it to be recognised that women's health is not a luxury and we are also life givers and it is a miracle.

Please remind removing these VAT burdens would have a minimal impact on the Treasury's revenue but a significant impact on our wellbeing, workplace participation and financial security. Congress, this is about dignity. It is about equality. It is also about ensuring that nobody is penalised financially for something that is entirely beyond their control. And so are my emotions. *(Fans)* I ask Congress to support this motion and send a clear message that the principles behind ending the tampon tax must be extended to all menopause products as well. Please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Karimah, love the prop. Secunder.

MODESTA SMITH (London): Madam President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Congress, first-time speaker, first-time delegate. *(Applause)* I am here to support Motion 81 because, as my colleague has just said, this issue is not about luxury or preference: it about dignity, health, equality and fairness. No one chooses menstruation and no one chooses to have the menopause; therefore, no one should have no pay tax simply to manage a natural part of life. At a time when many people are struggling with the cost of living, it is unfair that essential health and hygiene products still incur VAT. Men do not have to pay extra tax on basic products they need so why should women pay extra tax for menstrual and menopause products? As I said, it is about dignity, equality and common sense. Menstruation and the menopause affect millions of people every single day and the products that support them should be affordable and accessible to all. Extending VAT exemption would send a message that women's

health matters and no one should be financially penalised for their biology. I therefore ask Congress to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Modesta. Before I go to the vote, can I ask the movers of 74, 75, 76 and 79 to come down to the front. Was there any opposition to those motions? (*No response*) The CEC is supporting all three of those motions so I shall take the vote. All those in favour of Composite 4, Motion 77 and 81, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Composite 4 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 77 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 81 was **CARRIED**.*

We continue with Employment Policy: Equality and Inclusion. Can I ask the mover of Motion 74 to come to the rostrum, please.

ENDING MISUSE OF CAPABILITY PROCEDURES AND PROTECTING EQUALITY

MOTION 74

74. ENDING MISUSE OF CAPABILITY PROCEDURES AND PROTECTING EQUALITY

This Congress notes capability policies are intended to support employees to improve performance through training and reasonable adjustments. Evidence from unions and ACAS shows widespread misuse of capability procedures as a punitive measure, leading to stress, unfair dismissals, and loss of experienced staff. Research and union casework indicate that misuse disproportionately affects protected groups, including ethnic minorities, disabled staff, and women, often due to systemic bias, lack of cultural competence, and intersectional discrimination. Ethnic minority staff are more likely to face capability action linked to subjective performance measures, unconscious bias, and lack of inclusive support structures.

Congress believes misuse of capability procedures undermines equality, diversity, and inclusion commitments and breaches the Equality Act 2010. Intersectional impacts—such as ethnicity combined with gender or disability—magnify vulnerability to unfair treatment. Employers must adopt transparent, fair, and culturally competent processes that actively mitigate bias.

Congress resolves to Campaign for policy reform requiring Mandatory equality impact assessments before initiating capability procedures. Clear evidence of objective performance concerns, not subjective judgments. Informal support and reasonable adjustments offered first, with documented evidence. Union representation at all stages.

Lobby government and regulators to strengthen statutory guidance preventing misuse and mandate reporting on capability actions by protected characteristic. Develop training for managers on cultural competence, unconscious bias, and inclusive performance management. Monitor and publish data on capability cases by ethnicity, gender, disability, and intersectional factors to expose patterns of discrimination. Provide legal and advocacy support for members disproportionately targeted under capability procedures. Call for employers to commit to zero tolerance of discriminatory misuse of capability policies and embed this in equality strategies.

X12 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION
(Carried)

MARGARET LEWIS (Wales & South West): Moving Motion 74. *(Cheers)*

Congress, I stand before you today to speak about something that should never be controversial: fairness at work. Capability procedures were designed with a clear and positive purpose - to support workers to help them improve, and to ensure they are given the tools, training and reasonable adjustments they need to succeed, but that is not what is happening. Across workplaces, and particularly in the NHS and public services, we are seeing a growing pattern: capability procedures being misused not as support but as punishment. They are being weaponised and the consequences are serious. We see workers pushed out of their jobs, experienced staff lost from already stretched services and individuals left dealing with stress, anxiety and the lasting impact of feeling targeting and unsupported.

But Congress, this is not happening evenly. The evidence is clear and it is deeply concerning. This misuse disproportionately affects people from protected groups: ethnic minority staff, disabled workers and women. And often those who sit at the inter-section of these identities face the greatest harm, because this is not just about poor process, this is about bias. It is about subjective judgments dressed up as performance concerns. It is about a lack of cultural competence and it is about systems that fail to recognise difference and instead penalise it. We see ethnic minority staff more likely to enter capability processes based on unclear or subjective standards. We see reasonable adjustments overlooked. We see informal support skipped entirely. And what should be a process of development becomes a fast track to dismissal. That is not fairness. That is not equality. That is not acceptable.

Congress, if we are serious about equality, diversity and inclusion then we must confront the reality that processes like these are undermining those very commitments, because equality is not just about policies on paper, it is about how those policies are applied in real workplaces, to real people, and right now too many people are being let down. This motion sets out a clear and practical way forward. It calls for mandatory equality impact assessments before capability procedures even begin so bias can be identified and challenged, not ignored. It demands clear objective evidence, not vague or subjective judgments. It ensures that informal support and reasonable adjustments are offered first, as they always should have been. And it protects workers by guaranteeing union representation at every stage. But it does not stop there. It calls for accountability; for government and regulators to strengthen guidance; for employers to report data on capability actions by protected characteristics; for transparency, so patterns of discrimination can no longer be hidden, because what gets measured gets

addressed and silence allows inequality to thrive. It also recognises the need for changing culture, training for managers in cultural competence and unconscious bias and inclusive performance management, because policies alone are not enough. People must understand how to apply them fairly and, crucially, it commits us as a union to stand with those most affected to provide legal support, advocacy and a voice for members who are being unfairly targeted.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you come to a finish, Margaret, thank you.

MARGARET LEWIS: Congress, this is about drawing a line. We cannot talk about equality while allowing systems that undermine it to continue unchecked. This motion is not radical: it is reasonable, it is necessary and it is long overdue. So Congress, I urge you to stand for fairness, stand for accountability, stand for equality in action, not just words. Support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Margaret. Secunder.

JACKIE SHORT (Wales & South West): Good afternoon, Vice-President, President, General Secretary top table. My name is Jackie Short and I am from the mad wonderful Wales & South West Region, seconding Motion 74. Congress, I am seconding this motion on ending the misuse of capability procedures and protecting equality. Capability processes were never meant to be disciplinary by default. They were designed to support workers, to identify barriers to performance and to put in place training, adjustments and understanding. Yet for far too many of our members that is not the reality they experience.

As this motion clearly sets out, we are seeing widespread misuse of capability procedures as a punitive shortcut, causing stress, driving people out of work and stripping organisations of skilled and experienced staff. Crucially, Congress, this misuse is not experienced equally. Union evidence and casework shows that ethnically diverse, staff, disabled workers and women are disproportionately drawn into capability processes, often based on subjective judgments, unconscious bias and a failure to provide meaningful support. Where characteristics intersect the impact is even more severe. That is why this motion matters. It names the problem honestly and offers practical, credible solutions - mandatory equality impact assessments, objective evidence standards, early support and reasonable adjustments, guaranteed union involvement and proper data collection - to expose discrimination rather than hide it. It is not about lowering standards. It is about fairness, transparency, and compliance with the Equality Act. It is about shifting the culture from blame to support, from bias to inclusion and from silence to accountability. For those reasons, Chair, I urge Congress to support this motion in full. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jackie. Mover of Motion 75.

ENHANCED PATERNITY PAY BASED ON NORMAL EARNINGS

MOTION 75

75. ENHANCED PATERNITY LEAVE PAY BASED ON NORMAL EARNINGS

This Congress is asking to introduce a proposal to ensure that enhanced paternity pay and other forms of enhanced leave are calculated in line with enhanced holiday pay, based on a worker's normal earnings/ take-home pay rather than basic pay alone. This should include regular overtime, shift allowances, bonuses and other contractual earnings. The aim is to promote fairness and consistency across leave entitlements, better support for workers taking family-related or approved leave and prevent additional and unnecessary financial burdens.

**G20 ENERGY GENERAL BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

KIERAN SMITH (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Moving Motion 75 on enhanced paternity pay. Congress, this motion is about fairness. When workers take annual leave, the law is clear - holiday pay should reflect what they normally earn, not just their basic wage. This includes regular overtime, shift allowances, bonuses and other contractual payments. But when it comes to paternity leave and other forms of family-related leave, many workers are paid on basic pay alone. For thousands of our members that means that taking paternity leave comes with a substantial pay cut at exactly the moment their families need financial security the most. Overtime and shift allowances are regular parts of pay for millions of UK workers. The Office for National Statistics reports that around 3.2 million UK workers work paid overtime in a typical week and 4 million UK workers work shifts including nights and weekends. It is estimated that one in four workers receive regular earnings beyond their base pay.

For many of our members, particularly in the energy sector, manufacturing, transport and emergency services, overtime and shift premiums are not occasional extras; they are a regular and essential part of take-home pay. The same goes for bonuses and allowances: they help pay the mortgage, rent, childcare costs, household bills and put food on the table. So, when parents take paternity leave they can see their income drop sharply simply because they choose to take time off to support their partner and bond with their new child. No worker should be forced to choose between being present for their family and keeping up with the bills. This is wrong.

Congress has already established strong policies on extended maternity leave and increased paternity pay. This motion builds on that policy by addressing a simple but important principle: where enhanced paternity pay exists it should be based on normal earnings just as holiday pay is calculated.

We welcome the CEC's qualification which recognises that arrangements will vary between workplaces, and this principle should also be applied to maternity pay where applicable. The key principle is simple: if a payment forms part of a worker's normal earnings, it should be reflected in enhanced paternity pay.

Congress, this motion is about equality. It is about encouraging parents to take the leave that they are entitled to. It is about supporting mothers recovering from childbirth. It is about ensuring that family-friendly policies are genuinely family friendly. And it is about ensuring that workers are not financially disadvantaged for doing what every parent should be able to do: care for their family.

Congress, let's send a clear message: if these payments are part of a worker's normal earnings, they should be reflected in enhanced paternity pay. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Kieran. Secunder?

EDDY ELUM-SMITH (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, many of our GMB workers, our members, who take paternity leave, or any other approved leave,

see a real drop in income because enhanced leave pay is often calculated on base pay only rather than their normal earnings. A fair approach should reflect the worker's true take home pay by including regular overtime, shift allowances, bonuses and other contractual earnings which form part of their normal wages.

Congress calls on GMB to:

- Campaign for enhanced paternity pay and other forms of enhanced leave to be calculated on the basis of normal earnings, not basic pay alone.
- Press employers to include regular overtime shift allowances, bonuses and other contractual earnings when calculating enhanced leave pay which form part of their normal wages.
- Promote this reform in bargaining, dispute and political campaigning to ensure that workers are not financially penalised for taking family related or approved leave.

Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Eddy. Can I have the mover of Motion 76, please.

CAN WE CHANGE THE NARRATIVE BRING BACK INCLUSION

MOTION 76

76. CAN WE CHANGE THE NARRATIVE, BRING BACK INCLUSION

We are asking the Government to stop using belittling language when referring to British Citizens over the age of 65.

We are asking the Government to remove the phrase "An Aging Population" from the British Citizenship Application Textbook and it's Qestion Bank

The rhetoric used by our government when mentioning anyone over a certain age is degrading. Can we change the rhetoric, can we re-introduce a culture where we respect and value people of all ages.

The compulsory retirement age was scrapped, and people now work well into their 70's and beyond.

The government thinks it is important to brainwash both new and current British Citizens to view people over 65 years as a burden on society. "An Aging Population" this mantra is used at every opportunity. It is belittling and it de-humanises parts of our society. The objective is to devalue British Citizens over the age of 65.

The government, other politicians and the media constantly disrespect a large part of society by claiming folk over 65 years of age cost taxpayers a lot of money.

The government speak of social care costs and the "burden" on the NHS. It is an attack on people who should be respected and appreciated for the services they have given. People over 65 years old are human, with family who love and cherish them. They are not a different species!

Our current Government are more intent on promoting Assisted Dying than supporting people and the Disabled.

People over 65 years old work in the voluntary, public and private sectors.

It is sad to read within the preparation notes and the Textbook of the British Citizenship test: "We have an aging population", the government are imbedding hatred and division.

The constant rhetoric is offensive and an ongoing attack.

GMB should challenge the government to rethink its treatment and its use of a disrespectful mantra. Please can we all stop saying "an ageing population"

Remove the negativity within the British Citizenship test instead add something about desired cultures and respecting each other regardless of age. We are accepting of all!

It must include "AGE".

Can we ask politicians to remember all British Citizens have the right to vote once you are 18 years old.

People do not retire once they reach 65 years old. This should be acknowledged, added into the British Citizenship Textbook.

Can we thank people for all their contributions to society and the economy.

People get older every day. We can include and thank people for being part of our community and family, let's not let someone's age keep dividing us.

Can we also note that if you are lucky enough to reach 65 years, then it is more than likely that you have paid in full your National Insurance contributions and Income Taxes.

Age is a protected characteristic; we need the Government to acknowledge it divides parts of society with its negative narratives; it must take action to change this. Our Politicians must deliver Inclusion with Dignity for all Ages.

C35 ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
LONDON REGION
(Fell)

CATHY HOLLAND (London): Congress, I am going to turn my back on you for a minute. It sounds weird but I have got a picture here of a lady who helped me when I first started. Her name was Mary Turner. *(Applause)* President, Congress, moving Motion 76, without the support of my region. I am moving this because there is growing disquiet about older people in our population. The rhetoric used by our Government when mentioning anyone over a certain age is degrading. We can change the rhetoric. We can induce a culture where we respect and value people of all ages.

The compulsory retirement age was scrapped and people now work well into their 70s and beyond. The government thinks it is important to brainwash both new and current British citizens to view those over 65 years a burden on society: an ageing population. This mantra is used at every opportunity. It is belittling and dehumanising parts of our society. The objective is to devalue British citizens over the age of 65. The government, the politicians and the media constantly disrespect a large part of society by claiming folk over 65 years of age cost taxpayers a lot of money. The government speak of social care costs and the burden on the NHS. It is an attack on people who should be respected and appreciated for the services they have given. People over 65 years old are human with families who love and cherish them. They are not a different species. People over 65 years do still work in the voluntary, public and private sectors, and we also pay tax. It is sad to read the preparation notes and the textbook of the British citizenship test that we have an ageing population. The government is embedding hatred and division. The constant rhetoric is offensive and an ongoing

attack. Can we challenge government to re-think its treatment and its use of a disrespectful mantra. Please stop saying we are an ageing population. Remove the negativity within the British citizenship test; instead have something about the desired culture and respect each other regardless of age. We are accepting of all and it must be including age. Can we ask the politicians to remember all British citizens have a right to vote once you are 18 years of age. People do not retire when they reach 65. I haven't. This should be acknowledged and added into the British citizenship textbook.

Can we thank people for all their contributions to society and economy. People get older every day. We can include and thank people for being part of our community and family. Let's not age keep dividing us. Can we also note if you are lucky enough to reach 65 then it is more than likely you will have paid your full national insurance contributions and income taxes. I have. What has happened? It is a sad state of affairs. I move on my own. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy. Is there a seconder speaking without the support of the region for that motion. If not, it will fall, Cathy, but well done for coming to the rostrum. The mover of Motion 79, please.

Motion 76 FELL.

MENOPAUSE POLICY AND TRAINING BE ALL INCLUSIVE AND TO INCLUDE DARK THOUGHTS AND SUICIDE.

MOTION 79

79. MENOPAUSE POLICY AND TRAINING BE ALL INCLUSIVE AND TO INCLUDE DARK THOUGHTS AND SUICIDE

This Congress acknowledges that the menopause is a key health and safety issue in the workplace.

Menopause (which includes, peri and post menopause) does not just negatively impact on women/trans/non-binary and intersex people experiencing menopause systems but can have a ripple effect on partners, husbands, wives, children, family members, friends, work colleagues and the wider community. The ripple effect can cause relationship breakdowns and financial difficulties. Therefore, menopause policies, training, advice and support should be all inclusive to include everyone and anyone.

Congress will be aware there is not enough information or research carried out on the menopause and how it can negatively impact on people's lives, especially around neurodiversity and mental health. This was confirmed in research carried out in 2024 by Cardiff University, The Menopause and Mental Health.

The topic of dark thoughts and suicide during menopause is rarely mentioned, included or talked about in menopause policies and training. This should not be a taboo subject and where anyone experiences dark and/or suicidal thoughts during the menopause should have access to appropriate healthcare and also support and understanding in their workplace without fear of being discriminated against.

Congress will be aware there is inadequate health care provision and access to treatment for women experiencing the menopause where there are significant delays and waiting lists to attend a menopause clinic, even with an urgent referral, can take up to three years.

Where the retirement age is increasing and an aging population, better healthcare provision and support needs to be available at an earlier stage of the menopause to ensure people have a better quality of life.

This Congress believes that menopause policy and training should be mandatory in all organisations to ensure better understanding, reasonable adjustments are in place to support workers and prevent discrimination.

This Congress notes:

- Not enough research is being carried out in relation to menopause and the neurological effect it has, including dark thoughts and suicide.
- Believes menopause policies and training should be mandatory in every workplace.
- Notes more needs to be done in the workplace by organisations to provide appropriate and adequate policies and training, to include neurodiversity, dark thoughts and suicide support for anyone affected by the menopause.
- Believes menopause policies should be all inclusive as it is not just the person experiencing menopause symptoms but the ripple effect on loved ones, in the workplace and community and the impact on their mental health and relationship.
- Believes better health care provisions should be available for anyone experiencing menopausal symptoms.

Congress resolves to:

- Review and update GMB menopause policy/factsheets and menopause training and materials to ensure they are all inclusive and robust, to include neurodiversity, dark thoughts and suicide.
- Continue to support and promote GMB menopause campaigns in the workplace and these include neurodiversity, dark thoughts and suicide.

- Continue to support GMB representatives in promoting mandatory menopause policy and training in all workplaces and these include neurodiversity, dark thoughts and suicide.
- Ensure GMB Union is the grade union leading the way in supporting its staff and members who are experiencing mental health issues during the menopause and preventing any form of discrimination. This includes support for anyone who may be negatively impacted by a person experiencing menopause symptoms.
- Work with the GMB political team in raising concerns in Parliaments across the UK, around the lack of research, health care provision and long menopause clinic waiting lists and especially for neurodiverse members and those experiencing dark or suicidal thoughts during the menopause.
- Make contact with MP's and Ministers across the UK raising concerns around the poor health care provision for menopausal women and their mental health.

R01 BRANCH

WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

SUSAN KELLY (Wales & South West): President, Congress, speaking on Motion 79.

It is another Congress, I am back again and again, I am going to speak on something that is going to make some of you very uncomfortable. Sit down and buckle up, we are talk being menstruation and menopause.

I am going to start off by telling you a really short story. As a woman who went through menopause in her 30s, I have a weird reaction to meds, they do strange things to my body, I was totally lost. I couldn't get an appointment with a sensible GP. The only one I could get an appointment with was one who quite frankly had the bedside manner of a rabid dog. I am sure you have all seen the recent TV depictions of a rabid badger in a household - that's about him. Then my former workplace brought in a menopause policy. I thought it was wonderful. I could finally see a specialist woman GP. I took advantage and I am on compulsory HRT because I went through menopause so early. In that two-year period in between I thought I was getting off lightly because I didn't really get hot sweats and I have a really good partner who loves me - poor bloke! Apart from bursting into tears at the drop of a hat, and being a bit unpredictable, which for

me is nothing unusual, I thought that was fine until I started writing that speech. He reminded me of how many nights I went to bed telling him to leave me and find someone better. Then he reminded me that my mother (who is now 78) has been having hot flushes for 38 years and she is terrified, petrified of having HRT. Then he reminded me how many times I have woken, not just saying I am not good enough or telling him to go and find someone better, but saying I don't want to be here anymore. And that is why we are having this motion, because menopause costs jobs, menopause costs relationships, it costs families and it costs lives. We don't talk about that side of it. We talk about hot sweats. We talk about the lovely fans which I can see a lovely lady a bit further back waving at the moment and we talk about the fact that, you know, we might have extra accommodations we need, but we don't talk about the mental health aspects. Our tool kit is brilliant but it is not talking about the mental health aspects, and we need to get it updated to include it, because we can't have other people going through what I, my colleagues, people I work with now are going through. We are not just asking for that, we are asking you to help our reps because if we don't help our reps, if we don't train our reps and we don't train our staff and we don't get this into workplace policies, we will lose our members. And we won't lose them by them leaving us. We will lose them because we will go to their funerals. So please, support this motion, support our staff, support our reps and most of all, support our members. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Susan, for that very powerful and honest speech.
Seconder of Motion 79.

ABIGAIL BAKER (Wales & South West), President, Vice-President, Congress,
Abigail Baker, Wales & South West Region, Bristol Water Branch B96, seconding
Motion 79. First, I would say, wow, how can I follow that?

Congress, I second this motion on menopause policy, training and inclusion, as a
perimenopausal woman, a survivor, a first-time delegate and first-time speaker.
(*Applause*) I want to begin by commending the mover of this motion for her courage
and her clarity. She has brought forward this issue that is far too often overlooked,
under-researched and, in some cases, still treated as an uncomfortable discussion.
Menopause is not just a personal health matter. It is a workplace issue, it is a health
and safety issue and it is a wider social issue. Despite that, the support available remains
inconsistent and,, in many cases insufficient.

This motion rightly highlights the critical gap, the lack of awareness and inclusion of
mental health impacts, and particularly severe distress, including dark thoughts. These
experiences are real and for some they can be overwhelming. Ignoring them does not
protect people. Acknowledging them and providing proper support does. Workplaces
must be environments where people feel safe and understood and supported. That
means having policies and training that reflect the full realities of menopause, not just
the physical, but the psychological and neurological effects as well. This motion
recognises something extremely important - inclusion. Menopause does not happen in
isolation. It affects partners, families and colleagues, working environments and team
dynamics. By taking an inclusive approach we strengthen the understanding and create
workplaces that are more compassionate, more informed, and ultimately, more
productive. I am out of time, people, so I am just going to skip. I would say for these

reasons I am proud to second this motion and I urge Congress to support. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Abigail. And thank you for moving to the end of your speech because it is not easy when you are a first timer. Does anybody want to speak in opposition? *(No response)* Then I ask Geraldine McVicar to reply on behalf of the CEC.

GERALDINE McVICAR (CEC, GMB Scotland): Responding on behalf of the CEC to Motions 74, 75, 76 and 79. On Motion 74, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. We support the principle of this motion. GMB is clear that capability procedures must not be misused. We regularly represent members where processes are unfair or discriminatory. Many of the actions called for in the motion reflect what our reps already do: supporting members, challenging unfair treatment and ensuring procedures are applied properly and lawfully. Our qualification is a practical one. While we will always defend members subjected to unfair capability procedures, the union is not responsible for the training of managers. That responsibility sits with employers. Subject to that qualification, the CEC supports Motion 74.

On Motion 75, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. GMB has a longstanding policy supporting enhanced paternity leave and pay and we continue to campaign for improvements to both statutory entitlements. This motion raises an important point about how paternity pay is calculated, particularly in workplaces where earnings include shift allowance or bonus payments. Our qualification is that arrangements will vary across workplaces and a single model will not be appropriate in every case.

Where enhanced pay is negotiated it should reflect what is most favourable to workers and should also be considered alongside maternity provisions. This is an area where workplace campaigning and negotiation will be key, as such arrangements may not be deliverable solely through statutory mechanisms. Subject to that qualification, the CEC supports Motion 75.

On Motion 76, the CEC is seeking withdrawal. The motion raises issues around language and inclusion which we take seriously as a union. However, we do not have influence over the British citizenship test, nor are we proposing to pursue changes to it. In addition, the term “ageing population” is not widely regarded as pejorative. However, we will continue to ensure that GMB’s own communications are inclusive and respectful and we will engage with retired members where concerns are raised. For these reasons, the CEC is seeking withdrawal of Motion 76.

On Motion 79, menopause training, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. GMB has already taken important steps in this area. Their Smashing Stigma Tool Kit includes guidance on menopause and covers a wide range of symptoms including mental health impacts such as anxiety and depression. It is also providing practical resources for reps including a model workplace agreement. Our qualification is that we will review existing materials and training to consider how issues such as how severe mental health impacts, including dark thoughts or suicidal ideation, can be appropriately and sensitively incorporated. This will ensure that our resources continue to reflect the full experience of members and remain supportive, practical and responsible. Subject to that qualification the CEC supports Motion 79.

President, in conclusion, the CEC is supporting Motion 74, 75 and 79 with the stated qualifications and are seeking withdrawal of Motion 76. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nadine. Motion 76 did fall because there was no seconder. Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on Motion 74 and 79? Does London accept the qualification on Motion 75? (*Accepted*) Thank you. I will put those to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 74, 75 and 79, please show. Anyone against? They are all carried.

*Motion 74 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 75 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 76 **FELL**.*

*Motion 79 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: We are expecting a political speaker to be on the stage at any moment. We will just carry on with business. When they are ready to arrive I will pause business even if we are in the middle of the debate I will pause and have the political speaker. Could I ask the movers of Motions 82 and 83 to come down, please, and the mover of 82 to come to the rostrum.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS EXPERIENCING FERTILITY

CHALLENGES - ADOPTION OF THE FERTILITY SUPPORT PLEDGE

MOTION 82

82. SUPPORTING MEMBERS EXPERIENCING FERTILITY CHALLENGES- ADOPTION OF THE FERTILITY SUPPORT PLEDGE

Congress notes that:

- One in six people experience fertility challenges, meaning many of our members are directly affected.
- Fertility treatment is still heavily stigmatised in the workplace, with 61% of employees afraid to tell their employer they are undergoing IVF.
- 64% of employees are forced to take sick leave to attend fertility treatment, an issue that reflects inadequate workplace policies rather than illness.
- This lack of support has real consequences for workers, with 38% having left or considered leaving their job due to how they were treated while experiencing fertility challenges.
- Fertility treatment can be physically and emotionally demanding, yet workers are too often expected to manage this in silence and at personal cost.

Congress believes:

- Fertility challenges are a workplace issue, not a private problem, and should be treated as such.
- No worker should be penalised, disadvantaged, or pushed out of employment because they are trying to start or grow a family.
- GMB have a vital role to play in breaking stigma, defending members, and securing fair and consistent workplace support.
- Proper policies and trained managers reduce discrimination, improve wellbeing, and help retain experienced workers.

Congress additionally notes that the 'Fertility Support Pledge' provides a practical, worker centred framework that GMB can campaign for and negotiate, based on four key principles:

1. Time off for fertility appointments Including flexible working arrangements and/or paid time off, so members are not forced to misuse sick leave or annual leave.
2. Clear policy and guidance A transparent, accessible workplace fertility policy, developed with union involvement and clearly setting out rights and support.
3. Awareness and peer support The establishment of Fertility Ambassadors or Champions to challenge stigma, raise awareness, and support members.
4. Education and training for managers
Mandatory training to ensure managers understand fertility issues and support members with dignity and respect.

GMB Congress resolves to:

- Campaign for the adoption of the “Fertility Support Pledge” across workplaces and sectors.
- Support reps to negotiate workplace fertility policies that protect members and promote equality.
- Raise awareness of fertility challenges as part of GMB’s wider equality, health, and wellbeing work.
- Stand with members experiencing fertility challenges and ensure their voices are heard at work.

**B10 BARKING BRANCH
LONDON REGION**
(Carried)

DEE WALKER (London): President, Congress, still a first-time delegate and now a second-time speaker (*Applause*), moving Motion 82. I am here to talk about my

daughters, Samantha and Jessica. Fifteen years ago I found myself unable to conceive and following years of weekly trips to my local hospital, to undergo scans and tests, I was told IRF was my only option in my hope to become a mum. This journey continued at Bourn Hall with us having to undergo numerous tests, medication with side effects and uncertainty that it might just work. And I attended all these appointments in secret to avoid being found out. This was an incredibly stressful time both physically and mentally and I managed this by taking annual leave and sick leave to hide my treatment from the employers, partially because I felt a failure that I could not do the one thing I was put on this earth to do - reproduce - but also I didn't want to draw attention to myself in case I was discriminated against for being at childbearing age.

My IVF journey was fairly straightforward, but on my second round of treatment I miscarried Samantha's twin, and how did I cope with it? I took annual leave to recover from that awful experience. But for many couples this is not the case. They can be trying for years before they become parents, or it may not happen at all. The fertility treatment process can be soul destroying as well as having a detrimental effect on a couple's finances, especially now NHS access to fertility treatment has been scaled back significantly. However, I stand here today as a proud mum to my 14 year old IVF daughter Samantha and her sister Jessica, and without this vital treatment I would never have had the chance to be called mum.

This is not just an important issue for women. Listen up men in this hall. It could be your girlfriend, wife, sister, auntie, niece, daughter who will quietly struggle with the emotional, physical and financial pressures of fertility treatment. Congress, we must

recognise the reality that there is still some stigma around absence for fertility treatment, so workers quietly struggle.

The Fertility Support Pledge asks employers to offer time off for fertility appointments, have clear policy and guidance on entitlements and support, raise awareness and peer support and provide education and training for managers. Congress, we are a union that leads so let us show our members that our union stands with them at every stage of life, including the most personal, challenging and important moments. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dee, for sharing that very personal story. I am about to become a granny because of IVF with my daughter, so yes! (*Applause*)

STEVE DAVIES (London): Congress, seconding Motion 82: Supporting Members Experiencing Fertility Challenges - Adoption of the Fertility Support Pledge. Dee spoke about the emotional, physical and financial toll of fertility treatment, the stigma that forces people to hide what they are going through. Her story reminds us that behind statistics there are real people and often a very private struggle in silence. This is not right. One in six people experience fertility challenges yet too many feel that they have to suffer quietly at work.

Colleagues, this is not just a personal issue. When 64% of workers are using sick or annual leave to attend treatment, as Dee did during her IVF experience, with some considering leaving their jobs due to lack support because of no legal right to paid time off and having to hope that their employer is sympathetic, it is a workplace issue. Last

November Alice Macdonald, Norwich North MP started a campaign to raise awareness of the need for workplace fertility support. The Fertility Support Pledge gives us a clear way forward. It is about dignity, giving people time off without, fear, clear policies they can rely on, and workplace cultures where no one feels ashamed to ask for help.

Dee reminded us that the GMB union is a union that leads, and this is our moment to lead again; to stand with our members and to make sure that no one is penalised for trying to start a family. I ask you to go back to your workplaces and ask your employer to sign Fertility Support Pledge and give our member the legal right to paid time off for fertility treatment and help extend GMB policy on IVF, which was established last year, and to campaign for change. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve, for supporting. Mover of Motion 83, please.

INCREASE THE EQUAL PAY DUTY

MOTION 83

83. INCREASE THE EQUAL PAY DUTY

Congress notes that pay inequality remains a persistent issue affecting various groups, including women, individuals with disabilities, young workers, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and Black and global majority workers.

Equal pay is not merely a question of fairness; failing to address it perpetuates discrimination.

Employers are required to commit to complete pay transparency, implement fair promotion practices, and conduct regular mandatory audits.

The Government's "Make Work Pay" initiative is central to the objective of stimulating economic growth, enhancing living standards nationwide, and creating new opportunities. This plan seeks to address low wages, inadequate working conditions, and job insecurity and enable more individuals to remain employed, boost worker productivity, and elevate living standards.

However, efforts to close the pay gap should extend beyond employers with 250 or more employees to include those with 50 or more workers.

We call upon Congress to

1. Consider that the duty applies to those employers with 50 or more employees.
2. Campaign on this issue and continue to highlight the unfairness and potential discriminatory nature, particularly against those groups as set out above.

**E10 EALING BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

ROBERT WHEELER (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, moving Motion

83. Congress notes that the principle of equal pay for equal work is a fundamental right for all workers, and for a fair society. Despite the progress that has been made, pay disparities continue to exist among various groups including women, individuals with disabilities, young workers, members of the LGBTQ+ community, black and global majority workers. This is not just a question of fairness, it is a matter of justice and equity. When employers fail to address pay inequalities, they enable discrimination and hinder the potential of workers. Congress notes that decisive action needs to be taken to extend the Equal Pay Duty to all workers. To achieve this we propose that the employers commit to complete pay transparency, implement fair promotion practices and conduct regular mandatory audits.

These steps are vital in ensuring that every worker is compensated fairly for their contributions. The Government's Make Work Pay initiative is a crucial part of this strategy, aimed at stimulating economic growth, enhancing living standards and creating new opportunities for all. By addressing low wages, inadequate working conditions and job insecurity, we can empower workers to remain employed, boost work productivity and elevate living standards cross the board. However, we cannot

stop at large employers. Our efforts to close the pay gap must extend to those with 50 or more employees, ensuring that all workers benefit from these protections.

Therefore, we call upon Congress to consider expanding the Equal Pay Duty to include these employers by continually campaigning on this issue, highlighting unfairness and the discriminatory nature of pay inequality, particularly against marginalised workers. By increasing the Equal Pay Duty we can create a more equitable society for everyone where every worker, regardless of their background, is valued and compensated fairly for their work. Congress, I move and I urge you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

OMOTAYO OBADINA (London): President, Congress, seconding Motion 83. Today I want to speak briefly about the importance of strengthening and increasing the Equal Pay Duty. Equal pay is not just a workplace issue. It is a matter of fairness, dignity and respect. For far too long many workers - women, black workers and other underrepresented groups - have continued to face pay inequalities despite doing the same work or work of equal. While progress has been made the gap still exists and many families continue to feel the impact every day. Increasing the Equal Pay Duty means hold employers more accountable. It means greater transparency, regular pay audits and ensuring that organisations actively identify and close pay gaps instead of ignoring them. Equal pay should not depend on where you work, your gender or your background. It should be a basic right for every worker. Where workers are paid fairly, the workplace becomes stronger, staff morale improves and our community benefits. Fair pay also helps reduce poverty and creates better opportunities for future generations. As trade unionists and campaigners we must continue to raise our voices and push for stronger action. Equality cannot simply be spoken about; it must be

delivered through real policies, real commitment and real change. Let us continue to stand together and demand fairness, justice and equal pay for all. I second the Motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Omatayo, thank you. I am now going to pause business so we can move on to our political speaker. Last year in Brighton, the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves addressed Congress. I think we all remember her fantastic announcement that day giving the go ahead for Sizewell C nuclear power station. I am delighted to say that we are joined here in Blackpool by another senior member of the Government and importantly to us he is also a longstanding GMB member. *(Applause)*

POLITICAL SPEAKER

ADDRESS BY JOHN HEALEY MP, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, please join me in giving a warm GMB welcome to Rt Hon John Healey MP, Secretary of State for Defence. *(Applause)*

JOHN HEALEY MP (Secretary of State for Defence): Congress, thank you for that warm welcome. Thank you for the warmth of the welcome. Thank you for getting me back to the Winter Gardens. I haven't been to the Winter Gardens for probably two decades and the memories of Blackpool in those days, when we were in the Winter Gardens for conferences and staying in places like the Norbreck Castle, have just come flooding back, so thank you for inviting me to join you this afternoon.

Gary, thank you for your leadership, for showing every day what it means to stand up and to fight for members, and to Barbara, I am so glad Gary has got you and now Sonya standing behind him keeping him in check. (*Applause*) You are part of a long line of great strong GMB women and I am proud to say that I worked for many years alongside your predecessor Mary Turner. I am equally proud to say that the GMB was my first union and it has been my union now for 40 years. (*Applause*) I have been to Congress before, of course, but I can't tell you how proud I am to be the first Defence Secretary to address Congress since 2004.

I feel like that because this union - our union, your union - has for generations stood up for defence workers, stood up for Britain. I happened to be Normandy at the weekend for the 82nd year commemoration of D-Day landings, and, as I was going across, I read an extraordinary story of one of the union's own: a lad called Dennis Donnini. He was an NUGMU member and he was called up for service in 1944. He was the youngest recipient in the Second World War of the Victoria Cross. He rescued a wounded comrade from Nazi fire and then went back into battle. The official citation I was reading speaks volumes for him and the sacrifice that many like him gave. It said, "The dash, determination and magnificent courage of Fusilier Donnini enabled his companions to overcome an entrenched enemy twice its own strength."

It reminded me then and I hope it reminds you as well, if we needed it, that at that midnight hour, of the darkest century, it was working men and women, it was the Labour Movement that stood up, that fought back against tyranny and in the munitions factories worked night and day to supply the front-line. Those women in the factories in the middle of the war, when the very future of Britain was at stake, were also fighting

and winning on fair pay. For me they were fighting for freedom at the same time as they were fighting for fairness. Today the GMB is still here, still doing the same: for ships, for submarines, for radar systems, for missile seekers. What your members do each day is more than building military capability. You are part of making this country stronger, more resilient, better ready to fight and better able to deter any adversaries in this increasingly dangerous and uncertain world.

Congress, you don't normally hear or very often hear me quote Tony Blair, but he was right when he said that the big difference between opposition and government is this, he said, "When you are in opposition you wake up every morning and you think, "What can I say today?" You wake up in government and you think, "What can I do today?" We all remember those 14 long years of opposition. We voted through policy, good Labour ideas, good union ideas but we could never put them into practice. We remember also the words of our founding General Secretary who built this union, when he said, "It is easy to break one stick but when 50 sticks are together in one bundle, it is a much more difficult job." Will Thorne knew, as all of us here in this hall know, that the founding purpose of the Labour Party and the Labour Movement is to win power and change lives, that when we work together, when we stand together we are so much more powerful together.

I have to say the last month since the May elections has been tough. We lost hundreds of really good, committed Labour councillors and Senedd and Scottish Parliament members, but we must not lose sight now of the duty that people gave us in 2024 and the special opportunity of government. Don't let anyone tell you that together we are not making a difference. We are two years into this Labour Government and I know

we are making a difference. Change is under way. Yes, everyone wants more, more quickly, but most fair-minded people recognise and admit that you can't change everything overnight.

We promised to cut NHS waiting lists. We slashed them by half a million. We promised protection for renters. We have ended eviction for no fault and no reason. We have promised the poorest children the best start in life, with new childcare payments, free breakfast clubs, the end of the two-child benefit cap. We are helping hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. In defence, we have taken back into public ownership 36,000 of the homes that our military families live in and we have already upgraded the 1,200 worst.

Every one of those changes, driven by Labour values, done by Labour in Parliament, delivered in less than two years, and every one only possible with Labour in Government. Today of all days I just ask you to pause on that, because today Nigel Farage has invited trade unions to apply for affiliation to Reform. (*Laughter*)

Just reflect for a moment on how different it would be if Reform ever got in. This was the same Nigel Farage that voted against sick pay for the poorest workers at part of our Employment rights Bill, at the same time as arguing for tax breaks for crypto billionaires. This is the same Nigel Farage that has taken into Reform a chorus line of cast-off Conservative politicians. This is the same Nigel Farage who is soft on Putin, weak on NATO and can't be trusted with national security. And Congress, the strongest response to Reform is not what we say about them, but what we do. What we do to help the people that they claim to represent.

And yes, Congress, thanks to you, thanks to the determination of this union and the voices of those care workers speaking up, we have introduced as a Labour Government fair pay agreements for the social care sector. Not a lot people know this, but it is an issue particularly close to my heart. My first real job was a nursing assistant, working with the most vulnerable long-stay psychiatric patients. Thanks to you those care workers will now have a path to better pay, better conditions, better respect. Exactly what they need and deserve. That is who we are in this for, whether it is politics or the trade union movement. That is the difference we can make when we work together.

And Congress, make no mistake, these are serious times. We have to demonstrate by what we do how we will meet this moment. Keir Starmer said at the Security Conference in Munich back in February hard power is the currency of the age. And after the largest spending increase in defence since the end of the Cold War already in place, he said, “We know we must spend more, faster”, and we will, we will go further. But we can’t just spend more, we have got to spend better.

My argument is this, my approach is this, every pound we spend on defence needs to work twice, first for national security, second for British industry and British jobs. And any Defence Secretary must respond to something else, too: low growth and falling living standards have created a profound sense of pessimism and powerlessness. That unease is eroding our politics, it is eroding our communities.

Working-class families are the heart of our country. They are the lifeblood and they are the backbone also of our armed forces. They don’t ask for much: a home they can

afford, a job they can be proud of, wages they can live on, a first-class education for their children and, above all, a story of hope they can tell their kids, their friends, their workmates. I strongly believe, and Gary I know believes this too, that we can use defence as a Labour Government to help turn that round, because rising defence investment under this Government comes with a fundamentally new and Labour approach - making sure that it is a defence dividend that boosts British industry; a big shift from the failed past. We are making defence now an engine for economic growth across the United Kingdom. This doesn't just happen. This is a choice, a Labour choice, that we make. Directing more defence investment to British jobs, British firms, British innovation and British start-ups and at the same time winning record levels of new exports for British business. You know we have signed over 1,400 major contracts since the election and nearly nine in ten have gone to British-based firms. I want this story to be the story for every part of Britain.

Let me put it more plainly. I know he was T&WG but I will trust you will forgive me, 80 years ago when the debate over a British nuclear deterrent was raging, Ernest Bevin slammed his fist on the Cabinet table and he said he wanted "a bloody Union Jack on top of it". Well, Congress, I want a bloody Union Jack on top of every warship, on top of every drone, on top of every missile. (*Applause*) Submarines made in Barrow, armoured vehicles made in Telford, warships made in Glasgow, drones made in Swindon. (*Applause*) And that means going further than any British Government ever has before.

And the Chancellor was right recently when she said we need to buy British. I am proud to follow her as your annual speaker this year from last. But that is why I can

announce new steps as a Government we will be taking now to back British industry and back British innovation. These are measures to change a toothless system so that we develop stronger incentives, stronger requirements, stronger penalties for suppliers to meet their Backing Britain commitments. I want British benefits from every defence contract that the Ministry of Defence signs, delivering more British unionised jobs, apprenticeships and innovation for every pound of defence spent.

We are going to do five things. First, this year, we will introduce the first ever “Back British” offsets policy for defence investment. What this means is that when a defence contract goes overseas, and some must, industry will be required to create jobs, know-how, investment opportunities as part of that contract here in the UK. Make no mistake, this is not an anti-business approach. It had the support of business as part of our Defence Industrial Strategy but it is unashamedly pro Britain.

Secondly, we have ripped up the nonsense rules which have allowed social value, the commitments from defence companies for jobs and training, to qualify if they are benefits delivered abroad.

Thirdly, we will give credit in future to defence contracts and their decisions to British-based companies based on a substantive presence in Britain and long-term commitments that they have made to British communities and British supply chains.

Fourthly, as part of this drive, I can announce I will also look to make greater use of a national security exemption system under the new Procurement Act for defence contracts. This will allow government to require certain capabilities - require certain

capabilities - to be built in Britain. This will support our industrial base. This will support GMB jobs.

And fifthly, we will ensure that in large defence contracts, there will be provisions to require any significant sub-contracts to be placed with UK-based companies or guarantee that UK competitors aren't shut out.

And then something very close to the union's heart I know and mine. Our future lies in the hands of the next generation. So, that is why I am determined to get more British youngsters through the door and into defence. That is why we have created already five defence technical excellence colleges, one here in Blackpool, one in Rotherham, one in Lincoln, one in Yeovil and one in Plymouth. If they prove their worth, we will invest in further elsewhere. Today I can announce we are going one step further. To ensure we have that skilled workforce that we need to meet the rising demands on defence, to ensure that we can offer the skilled, secure proud future that many defence jobs offer to our young people, 24 colleges and universities across UK will now get a share of £80 million in funding to create 2,400 extra student places alongside investment in new teaching facilities and cutting-edge equipment on which they can learn, all designed as investment to support further growth. Defence as an engine for growth in this country. (*Applause*).

So young people from Teesside, to Bournemouth, to Cumbria will now get the opportunity and the skills they need to get a job they can depend on in defence. That is Defence Industrial Strategy in action for Britain. Congress, we will do all this with you, with your members. That is why as a trade unionist before I was a Labour Party

member, I am really proud to have been able to designate trade unions as a part of our defence industrial base, to ensure that our new Defence Industrial Council has places for leading trade unionists, including Gary from your union here. We will continue down that path, not just recognising or paying lip service to the power of trade unions to help boost British skills but backing them. Restoring ideas like the Union Learning Fund for defence, so we can ensure that workers are getting opportunity to take on new training, new techniques, new skills to keep up with the rapidly developing technology that we face in this sector.

Then perhaps just to conclude, the Labour Party, this party I am proud to be a part of, this movement I am proud to be a part of, isn't just a political party. It is a set of values, it is a 120-year mission of bringing prosperity and progress in peacetime, strength and determination in wartime. Yes, we need to go further. Yes, we need to offer people more hope for the future, and that starts with security. It starts with job security for your members. Labour's mission is quite simple, it is to advance the interests of working people. At the heart of defence, military and industrial, has always been the working class. So, like those who came before us, we re-arm now in the face of threats, we strengthen our alliances, we confront dictators, we build our industry and we stand up for Britain. And in the process we can unite our country around a common purpose, security and opportunity: delivering for defence, delivering for Britain. Thank you.

(Applause and standing ovation)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. We will now move to questions from delegates in the hall. First we will hear from Chris Andrew from GMB Scotland, followed by Andrew Hewitt from London Region.

CHRIS ANDREW (GMB Scotland): Support vessels for Royal Naval bases, including the nuclear fleet on the Clyde, are right now being built on the other side of the world, while the nationalised shipyard, Ferguson Marine, just ten miles from Faslane and crying out for work, was not even asked to tender. Can you assure Congress that Project Euston, the £2 billion contract to build floating harbours at Faslane, will be directly awarded to Navantia yards in Fife and Belfast? (*Applause and cheers*)

ANDREW HEWITT (London): The Government recently passed legislation to make it a stand-alone criminal offence to assault retail workers, which was welcomed by thousands of GMB members working in Asda and other supermarkets, but the fact remains aviation workers across GMB London's airports are abused daily. Will the Government support our Airport Workers Against Abuse campaign and ban abusive passengers from the skies? (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Chris and Andrew. John, would you like to respond, please.

JOHN HEALEY: So, to the first point in your first question, we have got to learn from what the GMB helped expose which was a big contract that Circo won with defence, that was started in 2022, in which significant subcontracting went abroad and did not even get a chance to come to British yards, so one of the steps I said this afternoon that we will change.

On the question of the big investment on the Clyde, and you mentioned Project Euston, that is building three big floating docks required for our new submarines, that is part of a really big infrastructure and docks programme on the Clyde, which is probably worth £5.5 billion over the next nine years. The major part of it is infrastructure on the dockside, and that will all be supplied from the UK. On the three docks themselves, I want them to be built in Britain. And I want to make sure that the most critical factor, which is how quickly and the schedule for delivering those docks that we need, can be met.

I will look hard at any bid and bidder in those terms - not just cost but schedule - and from the Government's point of view, we will do our bit to try and make that schedule. We will reduce approval time-lines to speed it up. We will reward in the contract meeting schedule, not just cost, and we will work with suppliers to deliver this programme in line with the new recommendations of something called the Fingleton Review across civil and military nuclear, which has just been published. I hope that gives you the commitment as a union that is indicative of the commitment that this Government has to British shipyards, British union jobs and making sure that we have got them secured for the future.

To be honest, Andrew, I have not come across this campaign, I have to say. I have been a big part of the campaign that Usdaw ran for violence against shop workers. Every year I would meet with our local reps, renew the pressure on the Tory Government to try to put that into place. I am really pleased to say as a Labour Government that is now in place. As far as your airport workers go, there is already quite tough legislation, some tough rules where you have got very disruptive passengers, but I know Heidi

Alexander and the transport team are looking further at what they can do to toughen up the constraints on the few disruptive passengers, whether they are in the air or airport side. Whilst I am sure, like I do, you go to an airport, and it doesn't matter how early in the morning you fancy a pint, and that is one thing, but nobody at work should have to suffer the sort of abuse that some of the reports that you recognise in this. It is work in hand. It has been because of the GMB and the way that you have put this to Ministers in the Labour Government they are taking a hard look in the Transport Department at what can be done.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank, you, John. I am aware that you have got to be away by 4.10, I think.

JOHN HEALEY: What time is it now, Barbara?

THE PRESIDENT: It is two minutes past and we still have a number of questions to get through.

JOHN HEALEY: What she really means is give shorter answers. (*Laughter*)

THE PRESIDENT: Hayley Doyle from North East, Yorkshire & Humber and Jane Hunt from Wales & South West, please.

HAYLEY DOYLE (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Working women all over the country are still being paid less than their male equivalents. I am one of those women.

When will the Government step in to ensure pay justice for all of us? (*Applause and cheers*)

JANE HUNT (Wales & South West): In Plymouth, the Government have invested a record amount in the dockyard for the refurbishment of the nuclear sub fleet. On top of this the Government is investing in the city to upgrade infrastructure for the extra 20,000 jobs that will be created. GMB are keen that we can maximise the benefits for our members in Plymouth by maximising onshore work at the yard and unionising jobs in the infrastructure and local government. But right now we have no voice to do so. Will you work with the GMB to get a seat on the task force so that union voices have a voice at the table? (*Applause*)

JOHN HEALEY: Barbara, let me take these in reverse order, if I may. I talked about building the unions formally into the definition of our defence industrial base with places on the Defence Industrial Joint Council. That is not just a talking shop. That is employers and unions getting down to work out what and how the changes we need can be done. So they worked out a small thing perhaps, but together, what constitutes and what defines a British-based business for us to direct our investment. That principle I want to see and support throughout. And if I can help with questions about the task force, whatever that is in Plymouth, then I am certainly ready to work with the union to do that.

On the question of equal pay, I guess we have all got a mixture of pride and unfulfilled purpose, haven't we, when we recognise that the Equal Pay Act was 1970 and there is still a pay gap. This is a proud union. It has always had a strong campaigning tradition

and record on equal pay, most recently with the campaigns you led particularly in local authorities. I would just make this point not as a union member so much as a Labour politician. We are always more effective when we can get that combination of collective bargaining in place with a national policy or legislative framework that backs it up.

If you think about the School Support Staff Negotiating Body, it was this union that got the previous Labour Government to set up, abolished then as one of the first acts of the new Tories in 2010, now reinstated through the Employment Rights Act, you have there a combination of legislative commitment from a Labour Government, setting up the conditions because we believe in collective bargaining for unions to do their business to close the gap. It is that combination that is needed.

Also in this new Employment Rights Act that has been passed, this year we move from voluntary obligation for large companies annually to report their pay gap, to this autumn mandatory reporting, so we can get the measure of the gap and we can set about together tackling it. There is no easy, simple solution. It is not just a question of collective bargaining, I believe, and it is not just a question of legislation. It is that combination that means we can make more progress in closing the gap, certainly the progress we would want to see.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. Lee Burgess, North West & Irish Region, and Kim Marshall Southern Region.

LEE BURGESS (NWI): The submarines enterprise protects our nation and supports the Armed Forces while also sustaining skilled unionised jobs, supply chains and communities across the UK. What guarantee can you give that it will remain a long-term party commitment to this endeavour and the people who make it possible?

KIM MARSHALL (Southern): Good afternoon, Mr Healey.

JOHN HEALEY: Please call me John.

KIM MARSHALL: John.

JOHN HEALEY: Thank you.

KIM MARSHALL: On 1st May, nearly 1,000 school support staff in Greenwich and Merton went on strike. Their demand is simple. Teachers receive Inner London Weighting while support staff working in the same schools get outer London rates. All sides agree this is unfair, but talks have stalled, as everyone says it is someone else's problem to solve. The GMB is calling on the Department for Education to provide answers around the funding arrangement that may help resolve the dispute. When can we expect the DfE to step in and help resolve this dispute? Thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

JOHN HEALEY: I have learnt over the years to be cautious about stepping in to comment on industrial disputes I do not know anything about. I take what you say. Fundamentally, I believe - and I was giving an answer just a moment ago on the School

Support Staff Negotiating Body and the arrangements for that - when you have that in place, when you establish the principle and demonstrated practice of collective bargaining at a national level, in general terms, it is not specific, that should help create the climate where better collective bargaining and resolution can also be secured at a local level. What I will do, if I may through Gary, is to get some more details, I will talk to Bridget Phillipson about it. If you will forgive me, I think that is as far as I am going to go today.

On the question of the nuclear deterrent the guarantee you have, look at the manifesto, the triple-lock commitment. Look at the 1,400 extra jobs since the election created in the Barrow shipyard. Look at the extra jobs not just in the Barrow shipyard, but because this is a national endeavour, you have got jobs in Derby, in Somerset, in Plymouth, all parts of the big investment that we are making now into nuclear. In the shipyard alone and in ship production, not just the yard, this Parliament £6 billion is going in to improving productivity, expanding production capacity and increasing the pace of the build so that we can meet the security demands but also grow the industrial base and the jobs. I would just say to you, it is not just what we say in our manifesto, but it what we have been doing over nearly two years in government that ought to give you and other GMB members and your workmates that confidence that when we make that commitment, we mean it and we will do it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John. I am getting bits of paper saying that security want to drag John away to wherever he has got to get to next. I am really sorry to Midlands, I know they had two questions and we will get them in writing to John so you will get a response. Again, I apologise. But thank you, John, for making the time

to be with us at GMB Congress. We have just got a few gifts for you. (*Presentation amidst applause*)

JOHN HEALEY: Thank you for your welcome. Good luck with the rest of the Congress. I know I am back in the bosom of the Labour Movement not just because I am in the Winter Gardens but Andrew Wyatt is the photographer here, it brings back memories of 30 and 40 years ago. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Midlands, I am really sorry, but your questions will be put to him in writing, I promise. We are back to the motions. We were at the point where we had had the motions and the speakers on Motions 82 and 83. Did anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (*No response*) In that case, could I ask the CEC speaker Rosemary Cooper to give the CEC response, please? Can you keep the noise down, thank you.

ROSEMARY COOPER (CEC, Midlands): Afternoon Congress, responding on behalf of the CEC to Motions 82 and 83. On Motion 82, the CEC is supporting with qualifications. In 2025, Congress agreed a significant and important policy on IVF, including calls for greater awareness, improving workplace support, paid time off for treatment and for those experiencing losses. This motion builds positively on that work, supporting members facing fertility challenges.

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry, Rose, I know people are going out for a tea or coffee or whatever, but please be quiet as you leave because it is disrespectful to the person speaking, thank you. (*Applause*)

ROSEMARY COOPER: It is an important issue and one which impacts many workers across our union. Our qualification is a practical one. While we support the principle of the motion, it is important that workplace representatives retain flexibility to determine which resources and approaches are most appropriate in their particular workplace. This includes whether the Fertility Support Pledge is the most effective tool to support their members and advance a workplace campaign. Subject to that qualification, the CEC supports Motion 82. (*Applause*)

On Motion 83, the CEC is supporting with a qualification. In principle, we support the aspirations of this motion. Strengthening equal pay provisions and tackling inequality in the workplace remains central to GMB's mission and campaign work. However, our qualification is that the specific changes proposed would require further detailed research and analysis. We would need to fully understand the legal, economic and practical implications before committing to a defined policy position or campaign programme. Ensuring that our approach is evidence based will strengthen our ability to influence actively. Subject to the qualification, the CEC supports Motion 83.

President, in conclusion the CEC supports both motions with the stated qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rosemary. Does London Region accept the qualification for Motion 82? (*Accepted*) Does London Region accept the qualification for Motion 83? (*Accepted*) In that case, I can put both those to the vote. All those in favour please show. Any against. They are both carried.

*MOTION 82 was **CARRIED**.*

*MOTION 83 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I ask the movers of Motions 108, 109, 111 and 112 to please come down to the front and then the mover of 108 to come to the rostrum, please.

PROTECTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS DURING CONTRACT CHANGES (TUPE), INCLUDING PENSIONS AND SICK PAY.

MOTION 108

108. PROTECTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS DURING CONTRACT CHANGES (TUPE), INCLUDING PENSIONS AND SICK PAY

This Congress notes that security officers are repeatedly impacted by contract churn, re-tenders and client changes, creating uncertainty and frequent attempts to reduce terms and conditions, disrupt rostering, and weaken pensions, sick pay and other benefits.

This Congress believes that stable, skilled security work requires stable employment standards, and that repeated “re-badging” and fragmentation undermines safety and continuity, and retention.

This Congress calls on the CEC to:

- Campaign for stronger protections on contract changeovers to prevent erosion of pay, pensions, sick pay and rostering arrangements.
- Produce national guidance for branches on TUPE consultation standards, information requests, and enforcement routes where employers fail to consult properly.
- Push for contract Clauses (especially in public contracts) requiring continuity of conditions and parity improvements over time, not downgrades.
- Support a GMB organising drive focused on sites with frequent re-tenders to lock in recognition, facility time, and minimum standards across contractors.

X70 SCOTTISH SECURITY BRANCH GMB SCOTLAND

(Carried)

JACKIE BALLANTYNE (GMB Scotland): First-time delegate, first-time speaker
(Applause) Moving Motion 108: Protecting Terms and Conditions During Contract Changes (TUPE), Including Pensions and Sick Pay.

Congress, security officers know what “contract term” means. It means doing the same job, in the same building, often for the same client, but suddenly wearing a different name badge on your uniform. It means another transfer, another consultation, another set of promises and another employer saying nothing will change, while workers worry about their pay, their shifts, their pension, their sick pay and whether existing arrangement will be respected. For workers in other sectors a change of employer might be rare but in security can feel like part of the job. Contracts are retendered, clients change providers and people who keep the site safe are expected to absorb uncertainty again and again. This is not stability, this is not fair work and it is no way to treat skilled workers whose job is to protect people, property and the workplace.

Congress, TUPE is supposed to protect workers when contracts change hands. It is supposed to protect progression of employment and stop terms and conditions being stripped away because one contractor replaces another. But our members know the reality. Too often the pressure comes before, during and after the transfer and recognition has to be defended again. Standards that should be locked become vulnerable every time a contract changes. The contract term creates uncertainty where there should be stability, weakens retention and undermines safety in the sector that depends on experienced officers who know the building, the people and the risks.

Congress, public money should never be used to drive down terms and conditions. If a public contract needs security officers, that contract should protect decent employment standards. It should protect pay, sick pay, pensions, rosters, recognition and facility time. It should improve conditions over time, not create another

opportunity to undermine them. Public bodies and major clients cannot wash their hands of this. They set these terms and conditions and award the contracts. They decide whether the priority is the cheapest possible bid or a safe, stable, properly treated workforce.

This motion calls for stronger protection, proper national guidance for branches, better consultation standards and an organising drive in the workplaces, where retendering happens most often. It means branches knowing what information to request, reps knowing what proper consultation looks like, enforcement routes when employers fail to consult and the contract clauses that protect progression and prevent downgrades - because security workers should not have to defend the same rights every time the contract changes hands. They protect our workplaces. Congress, it is time these terms and conditions were protected, too. Congress, I move. (*Applause*).

The Vice-President took the Chair.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the seconder, please. (*Formally seconded*)

Thank you. Can I have the mover of Motion 109, please?

A GMB WORKLOAD AND STAFFING STANDARD TO END UNPAID HOURS AND UNSAFE WORK INTENSIFICATION.

MOTION 109

109. A GMB WORKLOAD AND STAFFING STANDARD TO END UNPAID HOURS AND UNSAFE WORK INTENSIFICATION

Congress notes that:

1. Members across sectors report excessive workloads, unpaid additional hours, chronic understaffing, and “always-on” expectations.

2. Employers increasingly rely on goodwill and unpaid labour to maintain services, leading to burnout, stress-related illness, and high turnover.
3. Workload pressures disproportionately affect women, disabled workers, carers, and racialised workers, worsening inequality at work.

Congress believes that:

1. Excessive workload is a workplace health and safety issue.
2. Employers must properly resource roles rather than relying on unpaid labour.
3. Workers are entitled to safe staffing levels, protected breaks, and enforceable boundaries on working time.

Congress therefore resolves to call on the CEC to:

1. Develop a GMB Workload and Staffing Standard for collective bargaining, including:
 - o workload assessment tools,
 - o minimum staffing principles,
 - o protected rest breaks,
 - o clear action where unpaid overtime becomes routine.
2. Campaign for workplace agreements that enforce compliance with:
 - o Working Time Regulations 1998,
 - o Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (stress and workload risk),
 - o Employment Rights Act 1996 where performance is affected by under-staffing.
3. Report annually to Congress on progress, including negotiated workload protections and case studies across sectors.

N26 NEWHAM APEX BRANCH
LONDON REGION
(Carried)

STELLA IKANIK (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, GRASP Ambassador Cohort 2, London Region, moving Motion 109. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Motion 109: A GMB Workload and Staffing Standard to End Unpaid Hours and Unsafe Work Intensification.

Congress, across every sector our members are telling us the same thing: Too much work, too few staff and not enough hours in the day. Workers are skipping breaks, staying late unpaid, taking work home and living under constant pressure simply to keep services running. Employers are increasingly relying on goodwill instead of

proper staffing and our members are paying the price through, stress, burn-out sickness and poor mental health.

Congress, the reality is this: excessive workload is not just a management issue. It is a workplace health and safety issue. This motion speaks directly to longstanding GMB values of opposition to unpaid labour, safe staffing, dignity, fairness and protection of work.

Congress, workload pressures do not affect everyone equally. Women, carers, disabled workers and racialised workers are often hit hardest because many are carrying additional pressures both inside and outside the workplace. This motion is not asking for the impossible. It is asking for structure, consistency and practical support for our reps and members. We welcome the CEC's support for the aims of this motion and acknowledge the qualification. We accept that staffing levels will differ across sectors and workplaces. A hospital, a school, a warehouse and a local authority office will all have different operational realities. To be candid, this motion is not about imposing a one-size-fits-all staffing model. What we are asking for is a GMB framework, with practical tools and guidance that branches and reps can use in collective bargaining to challenge unsafe workloads and unpaid overtime wherever they occur.

Congress, rights on paper mean little without enforcement in practice. Our members already have protections under working time, health and safety and employment rights legislation, but laws alone do not stop burn-out. Laws alone do not recruit more staff. Laws alone do not stop employers relying on unpaid goodwill. Strong unions do that; equipped reps do that; collective bargaining does that.

Congress, a job should not cost workers their health, their family life or their dignity. Workers deserve safe workloads, workers deserve proper breaks and workers deserve to be paid for the work they do. I urge Congress to support this motion with the CEC's qualification. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*).

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Stella. Can I have the seconder, please?

MATT CHRISP (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) You are all too kind - you don't know me properly! I welcome this motion from Newham APEC Branch London Region. Congress, our members are exhausted, not because they lack commitment but because they are being stretched beyond reasonable limits every single day. Across workplaces, unpaid overtime, understaffing and "always on" expectations have become normalised. Too many employers rely on goodwill, none more so than in public services - and a special shout out to those in the ambulance and wider NHS team. Let's ask ourselves who benefits from all of this unpaid work? Not the workers who skip social events because they are too drained. It is certainly not the workers who have reduced their time with their families and not the workers who miss vital medical appointments. It was only two months ago a member of ours skipped a fertility appointment, skipped their future and skipped planning a future due to fear. Fear of not getting their work done and fear of punitive action from their employer. No worker should have to make this sacrifice to keep a workplace functioning. This is a cost of inaction. We must end this culture and we must force the employers to take ownership of their poor practice.

This motion is rooted firmly in GMB values of fairness, dignity, safety and respect at work. This motion is not asking to impose anything difficult or a rigid model. It does however call for something practical and achievable. With better guidance, shared best practice and better accessible resources, our activists are in a stronger position to protect our members. Workers deserve safe workloads, workers deserve proper staffing and workers deserve paid time for paid work. Congress, we ask you to get behind this motion and protect workers' time. I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Matt. Can I have the mover of Motion 111, please?

IMPROVED SICKNESS POLICIES

MOTION 111

111. IMPROVED SICKNESS POLICIES

This Congress reaffirms its support for the social model of disability and recognises that it is more consistently embedded within the public sector. In contrast, standards across the private sector remain inconsistent and, in many cases, inadequate.

We call upon the government to strengthen legislation to ensure all employers adopt and implement the social model of disability. Too many employers fail to acknowledge the stress, complexity, and wider consequences faced by workers living with terminal illnesses such as cancer. Many rely solely on basic sickness policies with no additional support, leaving employees without the dignity and security they deserve.

Where employers fail to act, the burden is unfairly shifted onto the state. Stronger legal obligations are essential to ensure that every worker receives appropriate protection and support.

**ASDA A56 BRANCH
NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

(Carried)

CLARE EBBRELL (NWI): President, Vice- President, General Secretary, Clare Ebbrell proudly from North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)* First-time speaker.

(Applause) I rise to move Motion 111 on Improved Sickness Policies. This Congress has long supported the social model of disability, the understanding that it is society and the barriers create by employers and institutions that disable people, not simply a medical condition itself. Yet while part of the public sector have come to embed these principles into workplace practice, far too many workers in the private sector are still being failed. The Dying to Work campaign has successfully shone a light on the treatment of workers facing terminal illness. It exposed the fear, insecurity and indignity experienced by people who should focused on their health, their families and their quality of life, not on whether they can afford to pay the rent, or whether their employer sees them as a burden.

Congress, sickness policies are not just HR procedures; they are a reflection of our values. Many private sector employers still lack any form of disability pay for workers awaiting treatment, care or reasonable adjustment. Too often employers provide only a bare legal minimum while claiming to support staff wellbeing.

The reality faced by workers is very different. At my own employer Asda workers are offered just three instances of paid leave per year for medical appointments with only two hours paid per appointment. This is a total of six hours across an entire calendar yeah. Congress, six hours! Six hours for workers dealing with cancer treatment, specialist consultations, scans, chemotherapy appointments or the devastating reality of a terminal diagnosis. No one can seriously argue that this reflects dignity, compassion or meaningful support. Instead many employers place profits before people. They treat sickness absence as a cost to be managed rather than recognising the human beings behind the policy. Workers are pushed into impossible situations, forced to choose

between attending vital medical appointments and maintaining their income. When employers fail to provide adequate support the burden does not disappear. It is simply shifted on to the state, on to the NHS and on to welfare services and on to already struggling families. We know the consequences of this failure are deeply unequal. One in three terminally ill people in deprived areas are not claiming the DWP benefits they are entitled to at the end of life. Many are navigating complex systems while seriously ill, exhausted, frightened, and instead of support they face bureaucracy and financial insecurity. This is why stronger legislation is essential. We cannot continue relying on goodwill or voluntary corporate promises. Every worker deserves protection regardless of where they work. Every employer should have a legal duty to adopt the social model of disability and to provide meaningful sickness and disability support policies. Because when someone receives a terminal diagnosis, the importance of sick leave cannot be overstated. Time away from work is not a luxury, it is about treatment, recovery, dignity and spending precious time with loved ones without the constant fear of financial hardship.

Congress, this motion is about fairness, compassion and basic humanity. I urge Congress to support Motion 111. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Clare. Can I have the seconder, please?

MELISSA JOHNSON (NWI): Good afternoon, President, Vice-President, General Secretary. Back up here again this afternoon (*Applause*) to once again speak for somebody who can't be here to speak for themselves. As a union, we have always proudly championed the social model of disability. We know that people are not

disabled by their conditions but by unaccommodating society and by workplaces that refuse to adapt. In the private sector standards remain completely inconsistent and, in far too many cases, utterly inadequate. Right now, too many employers completely fail to acknowledge the immense stress and profound wider consequences faced by workers with terminal illnesses such as cancer.

When a worker receives a terminal diagnosis, their world is turned upside down in a matter of seconds, yet instead of receiving compassion, security and a tailored support network, many employers simply rely on basic rigid sickness policies, leaving our members facing the fight of their lives without the financial stability and basic security they fundamentally deserve. When bad employers fail to act they are simply shifting the burden on to the state unfairly. They wash their hands of responsibility, exploit the work and leave the public purse to pick up the pieces. This is unacceptable.

Therefore, we call upon Congress to demand that every single worker, no matter who they work for, receives appropriate protection, adjustments and robust support when they need it the most. No disabled worker should be locked out of a career because a private employer refuses to tear down barriers in their way, and no worker should have to fight their employer for basic dignity while fighting a terminal illness. Therefore, I ask you to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the mover for Motion 112, please?

DECISION MAKERS MUST BE AT DISCIPLINARY/GRIEVANCE HEARINGS

MOTION 112

112. DECISION MAKERS MUST BE AT DISCIPLINARY/GRIEVANCE HEARINGS

This Congress notes the growing industry of private HR consultancy firms, such as Peninsula, Pure or Cromer, and many others.

Congress also notes the growing trend among large employers for there to be a central HR case work team.

Congress notes that there are no legal or regulatory requirements for private HR consultants, and registration with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) is optional.

Congress notes that even where private HR consultants are CIPD registered, this is not a guarantee of quality or professionalism.

Congress notes the growing trend, especially involving Small and Medium size Enterprises (SMEs), for external private HR consultants to hear grievances (or even disciplinary hearings) without anyone from the SME itself being involved in the meetings. In such cases the HR consultants hold the hearing meeting, at which GMB may be present, and then pass a report with recommendations to the employer.

Congress also notes the growing trend in large employers for the manager holding a disciplinary or grievance meeting to retire for an adjournment after the meeting, and refer their decision making discretion to the central HR case work team, who are the real decision makers.

Congress notes that while s10 of the Employment Rights Act 1999 entitles a worker to be accompanied by a trade union official at a formal disciplinary or grievance hearing, the act does not require that the decision makers from the employer side should be present at the meeting.

Congress also notes that the ACAS guidance does not explicitly require the employer's decision maker to attend the meeting.

Congress believes that it is implicit in the rights for trade union representation in s10 that the trade union official should have the right to present the worker's case to the decision maker on the employer side.

Congress further believes that many SME businesses are using private HR consultancies to frustrate the intent of s10.

Congress resolves that GMB should make representations to ACAS for an update to the ACAS guidance for disciplinaries and grievances that the employer's decision maker should be in the room for the meetings.

Congress further resolves that where there is a recognition agreement with GMB, guarantees should be sought from employers that the central HR casework teams will not impede the discretion of individual hearing managers.

W15 THREE SHIRES BRANCH SOUTHERN REGION

(Carried)

GERRY HACKETT (Southern): Before I make my speech today I want to make an apology. I want to apologise for not clapping while our last guest speaker was here. I cannot with any conscience applaud a Government Defence Secretary who is a Labour friend of Israel. (*Applause*)

Today we are going to speak about something absolutely fundamental to fairness in the workplace, something so basic, so essential it should never be up for debate. Decision makers must be present at disciplinary and grievance hearings. Not hidden. Not substituted. Not briefed afterwards. Present. Because when a worker walks into a hearing they deserve to know the person who will decide their fight is actually in the room, listening, observing, understanding and talking responsibly. But Congress, we know that this is not what is happening out there. Across large employers a worrying trend is growing where managers holding a hearing nod along, they take notes and they retire for an adjournment and hand the real decision-making power to a central HR casework team. A team the worker never meets, a team that never hears the evidence, a team that never sees the person whose livelihood hangs in the balance. In the small and medium-sized employers we are seeing something just as troubling. External private HR consultants are being brought in to run hearings, often without a single representative of the employer present. They listen, they write their report and then they pass the recommendation back to the employer who signs off without hearing a word of the worker's voice. This is not transparency. This is not justice. Let's be clear, ACAS guidance does not currently require the employer's decision-maker to attend the hearing. Congress, that cannot continue. When a decision-maker is absent, the process becomes hollow, workers feel unheard, representatives feel sidelined and outcomes feel

premeditated. It undermines trust, it undermines confidence and it undermines the very principles that disciplinary and grievance procedures are supposed to protect. If you are making a decision, you must be in the room, not reading a summary, not relying on someone else's interpretation, not rubber stamping a report in the room, because fairness demands it, because accountability requires it and because workers deserve nothing less.

So, Congress resolves:

- GMB will make formal representations to ACAS to update its guidance and require that the employer's actual decisionmaker is present in all disciplinary and grievance hearings.
- That where GMB has recognition agreements, we will seek guarantees that the central HR casework teams will not override or impede the discretion of individual hearing managers
- That we will challenge the growing practice of outsourced hearings to external consultants who have no accountability to the workforce and no stake in the fairness of the outcome.

This is about restoring integrity. This is about restoring trust. This is about ensuring that justice is not only done but seen to be done. Congress, let us be absolutely clear, workers deserve a fair hearing, a real hearing; a hearing where the person making the decision has the courage to sit across from the worker whose lives they are about to affect, because that is what dignity looks like, that is what fairness looks like, and that is what the GMB stands for. I move this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the seconder, please?

SILVESTER IJIEH (Southern): President, Vice-President, once more Congress and welcome to the Congress business, General Secretary and my fellow Congress people here today, my name is Silvester Ijieh, Southern Region - the winning region. I am standing here this afternoon to second Motion 112. I verily oppose the practice of employers hiring external HR consultants to handle grievances that they themselves are not directly in attendance. This scenario raises significant risks regarding fairness, transparency and employee trust. Firstly, involving an external firm in grievance procedures can undermine the integrity of the process. HR consultants are often perceived as advocates for the employer rather than impartial arbiters. Their primary objective is to defend the company's interests which raises the question of whether they can truly be objective when addressing employees' compliance. This can lead to a clear power imbalance whereby employees feel a grievance has not been taken seriously or handled firmly, which can erode workplace trust. Moreover, the lack of direct association with the employee involved creates a discontent that an HR consultant may lack the intimate knowledge of the workplace culture and context necessary to fully establish the nuances of the grievance.

In conclusion, hiring external HR firms to deal with employee grievance is a fundamental flaw. It risks damaging trust, accountability and unfairness in the workplace which are essential components for healthy employee relations and effective organisation. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I second, thank you.
(Applause)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sylvester. Does anyone wish to oppose these motions? (*No response*) Can I please ask for Mary Hutchinson to speak on behalf of the CEC.

MARY HUTCHINSON (CEC, North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Responding on behalf of the CEC to Motion 109. The CEC is supporting this motion with a qualification. We are broadly supportive of the aims of this motion. It is important that the union continues to share best practice and knowledge on issues such as workload, staffing levels, unpaid hours and work intensification, issues that are affecting members across many sectors. We are committed to strengthening the guidance we provide, ensuring that activists and reps have practical tools to challenge poor practice and improve conditions in their workplaces.

Our qualifications are as follows. First, staffing levels and workload standards will vary significantly between sectors and workplaces. It is essential that any minimum standards are determined by member sand reps within their specific industries or workplaces, reflecting the realities they face.

Secondly, we will look to make this information accessible as it is developed, such as through dedicated sections on the GMB website or other resources, ensuring that members can easily access guidance and support outside of Congress. Subject to these qualifications, the CEC supports Motion 109. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mary. The CEC is supporting Motions 108, 111 and 112. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 109? (*Accepted*)

Can we then go to the votes for all of them, 108, 109, 110 and 112, all those in support?

Anyone against? That is carried.

*MOTION 108 was **CARRIED**.*

*MOTION 109 was **CARRIED**.*

*MOTION 111 was **CARRIED**.*

*MOTION 112 was **CARRIED**.*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I please ask for speakers for Motions 114, 115, 116, 117 and 118 to come forward, please.

The President took the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sonya. Mover of 114.

REMOVAL OF FULL NAME ON SAFETY PAPERWORK

MOTION 114

114. REMOVAL OF FULL NAME ON SAFETY PAPERWORK

This Congress condemns the recent increase in stalking and sexual harassment incidents targeting our mobile field workers. Customers are using the first and last names listed on paperwork and correspondence to track down these workers on social media, leading to alarming situations where individuals have been found waiting outside their homes. There have been instances where members of the public have shown up outside Engineers' homes and verbally abusing them after attending their properties.

We urge Congress to support the removal of full names on safety paperwork, including landlord gas safety certificates, EICR Safety & Advisory Notices and instead replace with gas safe numbers, NICEIC numbers or pay ID costs to protect mobile field workers.

**G34 GAS BRANCH WEST
MIDLANDS REGION**

(Carried)

ASHLEY HUGHES (Midlands): Moving Motion 114. (*Applause*) Mobile field workers are increasingly facing serious safety risks, including stalking, sexual harassment and verbal and physical abuse while carrying out their roles. These incidents are not isolated. They reflect a growing and concerning trend. There have been cases where engineers have been targeted outside their homes after customers were able to identify them through paperwork containing their full names. In today's digital environment, where social media presence is widespread and AI-driven search tools can quickly connect pieces of personal information, even minimal data such as a first and last name can expose individuals to significant risk.

While we recognise the concerns raised by the CEC regarding legal requirements and the potential for increased fraud, we must also acknowledge that current policies are no longer aligned with the realities of modern technology. The assumption that a name alone is a safe identifier is outdated. The digital landscape has fundamentally changed how personal information is accessed and used.

To better protect our workforce, policies must evolve. We propose removing the requirements for first and last names on safety and operational paperwork, replacing them with secure unique identifiers issued and managed by governing bodies. This approach would preserve accountability and traceability, reduce the risk of personal identification and targeting, align working practices with modern data security principles. The safety of our mobile fieldworkers must be a priority. By adapting our processes to reflect technological realities, we can significantly reduce the risk while

maintaining compliance and operational integrity. We urge support for this motion to help ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of all mobile fieldworkers. (*Applause*).

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ashley.

JACQUELINE BURNETT-PITT (Midlands): Good afternoon, Congress, President, Vice-President, General Secretary. (*Applause*) Thank you. I am rising to second Motion 114: Protecting Mobile Field Workers Through Safer Identification Practices. I do note that the CEC has requested that this motion is withdrawn due to the risk of fraud but I don't agree with that. Congress. We live in an era where finding out where someone lives is ever too easy - social media - Facebook, Twitter, AI, et cetera. When our members put their name on the safety paper work they are being harassed, bullied and it is not just on social media; sometimes it is outside their own home. This is not acceptable. They are carrying out their everyday work; therefore, they should be doing that in peace and safety.

Congress, we are only asking for the names to be replaced with Gas Safe numbers, NICEIC numbers, or pay ID costs. This will ensure protection for our members. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jacque. Mover of Motion 115, please.

STAFF SAFETY IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION.

MOTION 115

115. STAFF SAFETY IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

This Congress notes that frontline workers delivering temporary accommodation services in Wales continue to face unacceptable risks from violent individuals, including incidents involving serious threats and assaults.

In at least one recent anonymised case, a worker had a knife held to their throat; despite the gravity of the incident, there was no clear statutory mechanism to prevent the perpetrator's immediate return to the accommodation.

The current legislative framework under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 does not provide a reliable, rapid means for local authorities or providers to exclude violent individuals following serious assaults or threats against staff.

Congress believes Employers' duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974—to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees—are in direct conflict with the lack of immediate exclusion powers in these circumstances.

No worker should be compelled to face a foreseeable and ongoing risk of violence as a condition of doing their job, and the absence of swift legal remedies undermines both staff safety and the continuity of vital services.

GMB has a responsibility to secure a clear mandate to campaign for legislative correction to close this gap without delay.

Congress resolves to instruct the CEC to Campaign for legislative change in Wales—working with the Welsh Government, Members of the Senedd, local authorities, and partners—to amend the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 (and/or associated regulations and statutory guidance) to create a clear, immediate and legally robust power of exclusion or emergency barring following serious assaults or threats against staff in temporary accommodation settings.

Seek the introduction of fast-track civil protection measures (e.g., urgent exclusion orders or equivalent) that can be applied swiftly by landlords/service providers, with proportionate due process and safeguards, to protect staff and residents.

Press for mandatory risk assessment and control measures in all temporary accommodation contracts and commissioning frameworks, including lone-working protocols, incident reporting, and escalation pathways aligned to employer duties under health and safety law.

Develop a GMB model policy for local authorities and commissioned providers covering: zero tolerance for violence and threats; immediate post-incident actions; support for affected staff (including paid time off, counselling, and redeployment where necessary); and liaison with police and legal services to pursue sanctions where appropriate.

Publish a briefing for branches and reps summarising the legal gap, member experiences, and the union's campaign asks, and coordinate a member evidence-gathering exercise to support legislative advocacy.

N15 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION
(Carried)

JACQUIE SHORTE (Wales & South West): Good evening, Congress. It has been a long day, hasn't it? Jacquie Shorte -- sorry, beg your pardon, Vice-President, President, General Secretary, top table. Jacquie Shorte, the wonderful Wales & South West, moving Motion 115, to those who are left in the room: Staff Safety in Temporary Accommodation.

Colleagues, I stand today to move this motion on staff safety in temporary accommodation because behind the technical language of legislation, behind the clauses and the regulations, we are workers and members. We go to work every day knowing that violence is not a hypothetical risk but a lived reality. Let me be clear from the outset: no job, no service, and no housing duty is worth a worker's life. Congress has heard of incidents involving threats to staff in all other sectors today. We are just doing our jobs and, in doing so, somebody had a knife held to their throat and at that moment they realised the severity of the situation they found themselves in - a moment no worker going to work should have to face. Despite the severity of that attack, there is no clear legal mechanism to stop the perpetrator returning to the same accommodation. No immediate exclusion, no emergency protection for staff, just silence, just uncertainty, just fear. Congress, that is not a policy failure. That is a moral failure.

We are told rightly that employers have a duty under the Health and Safety Act to protect employees so far as is reasonably practicable. But how can those duties be met when the law ties the hands of employers and service providers? How can managers protect staff when legislation gives greater certainty to perpetrators than to workers that have been attacked? This is not about criminalising homelessness. It is not about

removing support from those in need. It is about balance, safety and justice. Violence is not a symptom to be managed. It is a line that simply never should be crossed. This motion recognises the dangerous legal gap within the Rent and Homes Act (Wales) 2016, a gap that leaves workers exposed, employers conflicted and a service at risk of collapse because staff, understandably, cannot and should not be expected to return to unsafe environments.

Congress, imagine being told to go back to the place where you were threatened with a knife. Imagine being told there is no mechanism to keep you safe. Imagine what that does to your mental health, your family, your confidence, your trust. That is why this motions matters. It demands legislative correction, not today, not tomorrow, not eventually, but urgently. It calls for clear lawful exclusion powers, fast-track civil protections and safeguards to protect workers whilst respecting due process. It insists on a proper risk assessment, loan working protections, escalation routes and post incident support, because surviving an assault should not mean suffering in silence, and, crucially, it places GMB exactly where we need to belong - at the forefront of change: campaigning with evidence, with members' voices and with absolute clarity that violence against any worker - any worker - is not acceptable. Let us send a clear message to employers, to legislators, and, more importantly for me to the Welsh Government in the Senedd - you know who you are - that this Congress stands with front-line workers and we will not tolerate a system that leaves any of us unprotected. I urge Congress to support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jacquie. Perfect. Secunder. *(Formally seconded)*
Thank you. Mover of Motion 117.

MANDATORY BODY CAMS FOR REFUSE WORKERS AND STREET CLEANSING.

MOTION 117

117. MANDATORY BODY CAMS FOR REFUSE WORKERS AND STREET CLEANSING

This Congress calls on GMB to campaign to ensure that it is mandatory for all refuse workers, to be provided with body worn cameras.

Refuse workers are increasingly subject of both verbal and physical abuse from members of the public.

Inpatient road users overtaking the refuse lorries put our members at risk. Yet we have no way of capturing these incidents when they occur.

Ensuring the issuing of body worn cameras would help in internal processes when dealing with complaints or potential disciplinarys against our members.

This would also support Local authorities in dealing with claims and our members if they are injured.

L45 LUTON BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

DAVID CHATTERTON (London): L45 Branch, Luton, London Region, first-time delegate, second-time speaker (*Applause*) Moving Motion 117: Mandatory Body Cams for Refuse Workers.

Congress, I am an HGV driver for Luton Borough Council in the refuse and street cleansing department. More and more we see members of the public shouting abuse at refuse workers while carrying out our day-to-day work. In May 2025, we had two members of crews struck by impatient drivers whilst carrying out their duties. Refuse workers are consistently under surveillance from the public nowadays, from increased use of doorbells, dash cams and mobile phones, yet when we face abuse, threats or

dangerous occurrences, we are very often left with just ourselves as witnesses to report these incidents. The use of body cams is not to replace the employer's duty to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments to identify and remove hazards at source, but for use as evidence when these issues do occur to support us raising these issues so that we are taken seriously and to support us in legal cases. Congress, as a proud refuse worker, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, David, thank you. A seconder for 117, please.

ALLY BLUNDEL (London): President, Vice-President, General Secretary, the rest of the top table and not forgetting the young lady here who is sat on the child's table. (*Applause*) David, thanks for your speech there, it was well said. I am not going to make a speech. I am seconding Motion 117: Mandatory Body Cams for Refuse Workers. I have got two things to say but I will probably run out of time so I will only do the one. About 18 months ago, one of my colleagues who works for the waste enforcement team (they are the people you all probably hate who issue you fines if you drop your litter) was walking along doing his daily job when he was attacked. He never had a body cam. All the council gave him is one of these (*holding up a phone*) a mobile phone. When you get stabbed in the head, which is what happened to him, the knife itself was so big (*indicating*), none of us knew for about 30 minutes that he had been stabbed. It was only when he gave us a call to say, "I am at the hospital." That is why we in the London Region are proposing that body cams become part of issue for refuse workers and anybody who is engaging in this type of work. With that, I will wrap up because there is the red light. I move and ask every delegate in this hall to support this motion. I thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for respecting the red light. That takes us on to 118, the mover, please.

CEASE USE OF X.

MOTION 118

118. CEASE USE OF X

This Congress notes the generation of sexualised images of children via the Grok system on the X platform is of grave concern. This material contributes to a culture that normalises and trivialises child sexual abuse, fuels demand for exploitative content and can cause real harm to children and survivors. It is unacceptable for employers to use, promote or advertise on platforms where there is credible evidence of systemic failures to prevent sexualised imagery of children and to respond effectively when it occurs.

We call on the GMB to lobby for employers to:

- Cease using X as a corporate communications, marketing, customer service or recruitment channel, and to end paid advertising, sponsorship, data sharing or other commercial relationships with X, until robust and independently verified safeguards are in place to prevent the creation and circulation of sexualised images of children and to respond swiftly and transparently to any such incidents.
- Adopt clear policies stating that the organisation will not use or fund platforms or tools that enable or tolerate sexualised images of children, and to embed these policies within procurement, risk, and safeguarding frameworks.
- To provide guidance to staff that no worker will be required, as part of their duties, to maintain an organisational presence on X, and that alternative channels will be provided for any essential communications.

**B33 GMB@BMA/BMJ BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Referred)

JAMIE WALKER (London): M23 Unite Branch moving this motion on behalf of the B33 GMB@BMA/BMJ Branch: Cease Use of X, the platform formally known as Twitter. As a member of GMB and employee of Unite, and further than that, someone who works to support trade union employees, officials and its members in the use of technology, I am asking Congress to help us lobby employers to cease the use of X. From GMB's side, it is vital that we reach our members on all platforms of social media,

but it has become really clear that X is no friend to the trade union movement, democracy, debate, sensible conversation and human interaction and decency. From their Grok AI, enabling people to produce the most degrading pornographic images with just a few clicks, to the many propaganda bots spewing out vile lies and fictional situations, to inventions in our politics, to racists doing their best to show how awful they are, and the increasingly unhinged Elon Musk doing his best to show that even Dr Evil from the Austin Powers movies has a good side, X is no longer a place that our members and our colleagues should support.

Our union has greatly reduced its interaction and engagement on X, mostly using it now as a broadcast point. That is pretty good and that is something that will help us in our situation to move away from it. I am well aware that while I am speaking here on stage, we are going to be featuring bits of business to those who are still viewing our content there. That is good and that is fine and we want to be seen. But I would just like to say, look elsewhere, we are still going to be there, okay. No one ever got anywhere by hanging on to an old process or a dead platform, whether just an old political stance, ideology or technology. We are just prolonging X's agony while we just need to make it stop. So, if it is leaving it until such time as controls are in place, that is great, if it is waiting for it to choke on its own awfulness until it expires, that is also fine. But I think we all know that the people who keep X going have the money and political reach to dodge any type of regulation and guidelines. They want to keep that useful loud angry rhetoric going.

Nothing will divide us more than the echo chamber of their own awful talking points, where you can shout, "Woke" and "Lefty" just to shut down any type of reasonable

debate or sympathy. Other platforms have been deserted before, remember. This isn't an, "Oh we can't stop it, it is too big" situation. A nerd roll call at the end of the day - MySpace, Google Plus, Friends - all were left to wither and die. And yes, that was the vine joke for those nerds amongst us who have been on social media for a long time. Google Plus was only used by three people and a dog.

Just because we use it now and it is the most used thing ever and a very effective way to communicate, doesn't mean we should just shrug our shoulders and say, "Yeah, sorry about the racism and pornography, but here is our latest campaign." Let's just stop it. I understand that by moving away from X both us and encouraging employers and our members to do so, we may be leaving some people out in the wilderness, but, Congress, we will do all we can to signpost where they can find much less toxic content on the internet. It is going to be difficult. For example, in GMB's case we have got over 60,000 followers on X and just over 4,000 on an alternative platform like Bluesky. There is a lot of work we need to do to help people find this content we are producing, without getting people to wander into all the hideousness out there. We are not looking to end cute cat pictures and memes, which I have heard people throw my way and shout, "Censorship!" when it comes to this. We just want to get out from underneath the claw of Elon Musk and use all those other methods where we can effectively communicate with people.

Congress, please support this motion to assist members, activists, employees and workers, and stop us and stop other employers using X and find all the other places where useful content can be found without all that poison. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Brilliant, David. Thank you. Secunder?

DAVE LEVY (London): Seconding Motion 118. It seems I have what I believe to be the rare pleasure of opening and closing Congress. (*Laughter*) The motion highlights the social media platform once known as Twitter's malevolent role in creating and distributing misogynistic and child sexual abuse material. This is much, much worse since Musk's takeover and it is being done for money. Musk has also tuned the algorithms to maximum advertising revenue through rage. The motion calls on the GMB to negotiate with employers to avoid platforms that enable this abuse and to protect those who are asked to use it and wish to refuse. It would help of course if Motion 16/25 which the CEC asked Congress to refer, calling for GMB to abandon Twitter/X, had actually been actioned but the update report we get as part of our conference papers states that no action has been taken. I had best check my branch social media has said so.

It is not just the misogyny, let's also be clear, X's algorithms discriminate against, bully and brutalise progressive views. Leading researchers and commentators argue that Twitter and Facebook are now no longer suitable for anything really, and that includes commercial advertising, since they are so filled with bots spewing rubbish in order to make money for Musk and the authors and originators of the bots. At its heart, though, this motion is about workplace rights. I second the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave, sorry to disappoint you but you are not closing Congress because we have Composite 15 and Composite 16. Could I ask the movers

and seconders of those two composites to come down, please? Sorry, Dave. Anybody wish to speak in opposition? Can you make it clear which motion you are opposing?

SALLY YOUNG (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President, Congress, Gary, here to oppose Motion 118. As a worker at Sheffield Children's Hospital, I spend my days on the front-line of the NHS and yes safeguarding is part of that. I know the damage that sexual imagery and child exploitation does and every single one of us has an absolute duty to do everything we can to fix our broken online systems. But that does not mean we should walk away from one of the most influential and powerful platforms in the world. I am no fan of Elon Musk, his orange mate or any other weirdos they hang around with, but you know what I am a fan of - winning for our workers? Whether we like it or not, X is where the journalists are, it is where the MPs are, and it is where many of our members are. We have a duty to be in these spaces to make our case, to influence and to change people's minds. We are trade unionists. We don't walk away when we see something that needs fixing. We get stuck in and we fight until we change it. Last week, Jess Asato MP announced she was suing Grok and X for allowing images of her to be manipulated to become sexually explicit. Where did she announce it? X - because she knows that to win you have to be where people are and use every tool available to make change.

Congress, this motion is clearly written with the best of intentions, but we are about more than good intentions, we are about winning. Please don't take that away from us. Please vote against this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sarah. The mover of 118 has a right of reply.

JAMIE WALKER: I did speak too soon, didn't I? But thank you, Sarah. When I was raising the motion, I did point out that we need to educate and help people move on, and I totally understand. Over social media's life, in such a short time really, other places have slowly closed and vanished and we have moved on. My main point in supporting this motion is it is to protect workers from the awful content they will see there while also educating people to move on from it well. It is upsetting when people think they will be left out there. I pointed out that people are watching us now and seeing content and clips posted on X as well, but it is clear from the stuff that is going on there and, as Dave said, the bots and posts and stuff, when the regulation comes in, Elon Musk won't follow it. He will just ignore it. We know that is what is going to happen. So, let's use this time before we finish using X to make certain everyone knows where we are, where the GMB is, where your employer is, where your personal feed is. You can all speak to people without being at the beck and call of any little algorithm that might turn around and suddenly pop up something new. Interestingly for myself on X, I deleted my original account because I actually found out it was making me angry. I was arguing rather than contributing. I think that is the real point. We need a place where we can contribute away from the rage, away from the hate. We are not leaving people out in the cold, but we are wanting to make certain we can say this platform is no friend to us, and no friend to anyone any more. Let's show people where they can go to have sensible, useful debate and show where we are and show them our support there as well. Thank you, everyone. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jamie. Could I ask Nathaniel Tetteh from the CEC to respond, please.

NATHANIEL TETTEH (CEC): Before I start with my response, I missed an opportunity last time I was up here to formally thank you, Gary, thank you, Barbara and thank you, Sonya, for the wonderful support I received and of course my region as well, when I was subject to vile racist abuse that was platformed by a regional paper. I want to say thank you to you. (*Applause*)

I am responding to Motions 114, 117 and 118. President, Congress, I am for the CEC and responding to these motions.

On Motion 114, the CEC is seeking withdrawal. The provision of an engineer's name is a legal requirement in almost every certification and notice scheme. The proposed alternative would increase the potential for fraud and identity theft, reducing confidence in the safety and competence of those schemes in that sense. The CEC is quite sympathetic to members who have experienced such appalling behaviour and would suggest that the requirement is for sustained and well-publicised prosecutions when such incidents do occur. In addition, workers must have the right to put all their social media accounts into locked mode where access and visibility is controlled, and should not have expectations of social media visibility placed on them by their employers.

On Motion 117, the CEC supports this motion with qualifications. The blanket nature of this motion is problematic. While GMB members expect to be safe in their workplaces body cams may not achieve that as they can be cumbersome to wear and heavy and may likely be used to monitor the activities of workers themselves.

On Motion 118, the CEC is seeking to refer the motion. X is not the only social platform we use but it remains a significant communication channel for numerous organisations, employers, media, opinion formers and decision-makers. There is a clear reduction in engagement on X. We are posting less content on it. In common with sister unions, there have been occasions where our posts have received racist responses. The platform has also seen concerning developments with the use of AI, Grok and the manipulation and display of explicit images. In response we no longer post images from the national X account and have issued guidance to GMB regional teams. We continue to monitor the situation.

The Government has introduced a new law making it a crime to create non-consensual intimate images using AI. This follows reports that Grok has been used to generate non-consensual sexual images of individuals including children. Ofcom has launched a formal investigation into X under the Online Safety Act and the Information Commissioner's Office has also launched an investigation into X and the Grok system. It is important to understand the findings of both investigations and the Government's response before proceeding with action in that sense from a union perspective.

Therefore Congress, the CEC is asking that Motion 114 be withdrawn. We are supporting Motion 117 with qualification and we are asking that Motion 118 be referred. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathaniel. I am going to take this quite slowly so that I get this right and you can understand what is happening. Does Midland Region agree to withdraw Motion 114? (*Not agreed*) I did not think you would! (*Call for card vote*)

You can't have a card vote yet. The CEC is supporting 115 from Wales & South West Region. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 117? (*Accepted*) Does London Region agree to refer Motion 118? You had agreed to refer but I still have to put it to the vote because there has been opposition. The CEC is asking you to vote in favour because London Region have agreed to refer. Let's take those in order. All those in favour, and can you put your hands up really clearly so Sonya and I can have a good look, of Motion 114, please show. Thank you. All those against. That is carried. (*Applause and cheers*) I know you always enjoy overturning the CEC. All those in favour of, 115, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of 117, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. On 118, as I say London Region has accepted the reference back all those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That will be referenced back. Thank you.

*Motion 114 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 115 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 117 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 118 was **REFERRED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: We are nearly there. Mover of Composite 15, please.

TRANS GENDER RIGHTS

COMPOSITE 15

C15: TRANS RIGHTS FOLLOWING THE UPDATED EHRC GUIDANCE ON THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

The GMB, as part of our long-standing policy, believes that trans, non-binary and gender diverse people are entitled to be treated with equal dignity at home, at work and in wider society. These rights are human rights.

On 21 May 2026, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) released updated guidance on their draft Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions and Associations, following the April 2025 Supreme Court ruling that, for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, "sex" means biological sex.

The Minister for Women and Equalities, Bridget Phillipson, has laid the Equality and Human Rights Commission's draft updated Code of Practice for Services, Public Functions and Associations 2026 in Parliament.

Described as "clear and workable guidance", this motion contends that it is neither. The guidance fails to provide definitive answers for employees or employers alike, remaining open to the interpretation of the reader. As guidance rather than legislation, it offers insufficient certainty to those it is intended to protect.

The new guidance is discriminatory, unworkable and effectively excludes trans, non-binary and gender diverse people from swathes of public life including working life. The law must be changed.

Congress notes that on the 2nd June 2026 a motion was placed before Parliament, as the only mechanism through which Parliament can reject the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission) Code of Practice issued on the 21st May 2026.

The motion asks for a debate and Parliamentary scrutiny of the recent guidance to be heard before the 40 day window, after which it becomes statutory guidance.

The Guidance does not give clarity and confidence to workers in those spaces that want to be trans inclusive. Its impact also extends beyond the rights of trans people. The Government own Equality Impact Assessment warns that women who are considered masculine may face greater scrutiny" and that disabled people could face adverse impact.

Congress notes that the recent EHRC guidance/code will exclude trans+ workers from services and facilities that they have long used without issue, putting them at increased risk of harassment and violence and effectively pushing them out of public life.

This means that the policing of Trans+ people will be outsourced to service providers, including business, charities and public bodies- this burden being placed on workers in these sectors to act as "border security" against Trans+ workers in the workplaces that provide services, public functions and Associations.

Congress notes that many frontline workers, managers, or provider of services maybe feeling pressure to implement transphobic policies or practices and they will be concerned about the safety, legality, or ethical implications of decisions. There is a real concern that many workers may find themselves in very challenging positions in their workplaces, causing stress and anxiety.

If the motion, put forward by the MP, asking for a debate and Parliament scrutiny of the code is heard before the 30th June 2026 there is a high possibility that it can be rejected and the Government should withdraw it and instead legislate to clarify and protect trans + people rights privacy and inclusion.

If Parliament does not reject the motion, by 30th June 2026 it becomes statutory guidance.

This Congress thanks the GMB for its continued support of our Trans, Non Binary and Gender Diverse members.

This Congress calls upon the GMB to:

4. Consider working alongside MPs to get behind this call for parliamentary debate/scrutiny before the 30th June 2026.
5. Campaign on Trans+ inclusion in the workplace.
6. Ensure that Reps in the workplace have access to the appropriate updated resources, in light of the EHRC updated guidance, to support Trans+ workers.
7. Lobby the Government to provide legislative clarity on this matter
8. Use its public platform to actively voice the GMB's Trans-inclusive stance
9. Encourage and reiterate that the Equality Act 2010 must continue to afford protection to all, including Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse people.
10. launch a campaign to introduce a process of gender self-declaration in the UK so trans, non-binary and gender diverse people have equal civil rights and justice in the workplace.
11. Continue existing campaigning to recognise the right of our trans, non-binary and gender diverse colleagues within the workplace and wider society to be treated equally and equitably.

Moving Region: Wales & South West

Seconding Region: GMB Scotland

SUSAN KELLY (Wales & South West): President, Vice-President, General Secretary, nice to see you on the stage when I am speaking this time! I am back with another rather emotive issue. Hopefully, you will be nice and patient. This is Composite 15. It is our motion on trans, non-binary and gender-diverse people being treated with equality and dignity, at home, at work and in wider society. You have all had a copy of the motion and this judgment treats biological sex as a being a straight A/B. I regret to inform you all, it ain't. Science over many years has proven it is a very wide curve. This guidance is discriminatory, it is unworkable, it excludes people from everyday life and it has got so many exceptions and contradictions in it, you can't use it. I have read it five times and I still don't understand all of it. And on top of that, it only applies in some situations, so sometimes you apply it and then the next person doesn't apply it. Please tell me how that works.

I don't know if any of you have been aware there but in the last few days there are two reps who have stated publicly that in their branches, their trans, non-binary or gender-diverse staff cannot use gendered toilets or they have to use the gendered toilets of their birth sex. Do you know how degrading that is to someone? Taking it from a personal perspective, my ex is trans, one of my best friends is trans. I phoned my best friend before I got here and she said to me, "If I walked into a male toilet I am going to get thumped. Not only that, it's really going to damage my mental health. And I have only just got off the anti-depressants I was on before my surgery." JK Rowling has just come out and said she is going to use all her millions to support anti-trans legislation in action. By the way, they have already starting applying this judgment in Parliament. So, not only is it outing people, not only is it putting people at risk of physical and mental harm, what is it doing to their families? What is it doing to our members? What position is it putting our members in? Instead of going on, I am going to leave you with this:

"First they came for the Communists.

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Communist

Then they came for the Socialists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Socialist

Then they came for the trade unionists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a trade unionist

Then they came for the Jews

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for me

And there was no one left

If we do not speak for our colleagues now, there will be no one left to speak for us.

Conference, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Susan. GMB Scotland.

CIORSTADH REICHLE (GMB Scotland): Seconding Composite 15. So, as I said, and I will stand here again, we are asking for clarity for my brothers and sisters who just want to live their lives. I stand here as an ally to our trans, non-binary, intersex and gender-diverse siblings. Because I am someone who cares, who believes in equality and, quite frankly, is damn enraged. Trans' voices are not heard in the union because of the fear experienced from putting yourself forward, and this is tenfold for our trans members.

So, I am here to say you have friends and we want to hear you. We want to hear your voices. The LGBT+ community and GMB will stand together. When one of us is attacked, we are all attacked. Historically, we owe a lot to our trans siblings. In 1969, two trans women stood up at great risk to themselves and defended an entire community. Their names were Martha P Johnson and Sylvia Riveria. I refer of course to the Stonewall Riots and Pride as a protest. I am sure if they were here today they would do the same but, unfortunately, they are not. But Congress, we are. So let's do the right thing. We call on GMB to lobby government for clarity whilst promoting the

positive GMB trans-inclusive stance. Please support the motion and let people live their lives in peace. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ciorstaidh. London Region.

TARANJIT CHANA (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, supporting Composite 15. Congress, as trade unionists we cannot support the EHRC Code of Practice. We have a responsibility to our trans community to resist it. The majority of front-line workers in workplaces offering support in areas of homelessness, domestic abuse, sexual violence have always been trans inclusive. An Early Day Motion was tabled by a Minister on 2 June. It is the only mechanism through which Parliament can reject the EHRC Code of Practice. If it is passed and debated within 40 days (on 30 June) it could prevent the Code from being issued by the EHRC and coming into force.

Congress, the Code as it stands will exclude trans+ people, workers, our members, from the services and facilities that they have long used, putting them at increased risk of harassment and violence and effectively pushing them out of work spaces and public life. The guidance does not give clarity and confidence. The Government's own equality impact assessment warns that women who are considered masculine may face greater scrutiny and disabled people could face adverse impacts. Congress, this guidance must not become statutory. The Government should withdraw it and instead legislate for clarity and protect trans+ people's rights, privacy and inclusion. Please support the Composite. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Taranjit. Does anybody wish to speak in opposition?

(No response) Then can I ask Kevin Jones from the CEC to respond, please.

KEVIN JONES (CEC): President, Vice-President, Congress, responding on behalf of the CEC on Composite 15. The CEC is supporting the emergency composite which rightly calls on the GMB to continue our campaigning on trans+ inclusion in the workplace and focus on continuing our campaigning to get the Government to legislate to clarify the EHRC guidance and ensure that the intention of the current Parliament is not what is set out in the Supreme Court decision. We must ensure that the Equality Act 2010 continues to afford protection to all, including trans, non-binary and gender-diverse people in the light of the recent development. The Composite calls and is also a helpful reminder of the longstanding GMB policy in the movement's leading statement to Congress 2018 on Trans Rights, which made clear GMB's commitment that trans members should be able to participate in our structures and in wider society on the basis of self-definition of their gender. The CEC's small qualification is that, while GMB rightly already works to promote gender self-definition in the UK, this composite demonstrates that we must continue to focus on our campaigning and getting legislative clarity from government on the draft EHRC Guidance and Supreme Court judgment.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking you to support Composite 15 with the qualification I have outlined. Thank you very much, Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kevin. Do Wales & South West, GMB Scotland and London Region accept the qualification on Composite 15? *(Accepted)* Thank you. I

will put that to the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

COMPOSITE 15 was CARRIED.

THE PRESIDENT: You will be pleased to know we will move on to debate the last motion of business for today Composite 16, which has incorporated Emergency Motions 8 and 9. Can I call the mover of Composite 16 to the rostrum, please?

PROTECT THE WORKERS' RIGHTS OF OUR LIFE-SAVING COASTGUARD VOLUNTEERS

COMPOSITE 16

C16: PROTECT THE WORKERS' RIGHTS OF OUR LIFE-SAVING COASTGUARD VOLUNTEERS

This Congress notes with concern the Maritime Coastguard Agency's sudden proposal to halt payments to volunteer coastguards. 8

These volunteers, whose selfless work saves lives around our coastline, were informed of the decision last week just months after a landmark legal ruling, won by GMB, secured them worker status.

This Congress believes the MCA's proposal to end hourly remuneration for volunteers attending emergency callouts and training is a clear and reprehensible attempt to avoid its new employment responsibilities to our members. It comes just months after the Court of Appeal backed an Employment Tribunal won by Coastguard Rescue Officer Martin Groom, supported by GMB, that confirmed volunteers have worker status.

This Congress opposes attempts by the MCA to weaken or avoid the implications of the Court of Appeal ruling and believes it risks sabotaging an emergency service saving lives around Britain. Volunteer coastguards provide an essential emergency service in communities around the UK's coastline, carrying out skilled, demanding and often dangerous work, protecting and saving lives at risk on our cliffs, beaches, harbours, and coastlines.

Congress considers removing remuneration for callouts and training will threaten to undermine the rights delivered by that judgment, weaken the rights of CROs, and damaging the operational resilience of this lifeline Rescue Service.

The coastguard volunteers do not undertake this crucial work for the money but the money enables them to do it. Their expertise, experience and commitment cannot be overestimated but must not be taken for granted.

Congress calls on the CEC to:

Oppose any attempt by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to remove paid remuneration for emergency callouts and training.

Support urgent engagement with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to ensure these proposals are paused to allow proper consultation with CROs and GMB, their trade union.

Support GMB Regions in organising and representing Coastguard Rescue Officers across the UK.

Back political and public campaigning to defend the Coastguard Rescue Service and highlight the risk these proposals pose to public safety.

Engage politically with UK Government ministers, and politicians representing coastal communities to support the fair treatment of Coastguard Rescue Officers.

Moving Region: GMB Scotland

Seconding Region: Wales & South West

(Carried)

LYNSAY MACKAY (GMB Scotland): Moving the Emergency Motion: Protect the Workers' Rights Of Our Life-Saving Coastguard Volunteers. Congress, around Scotland's coasts and across coastal communities throughout the UK we all know the same truth: the sea, the mountains, the cliffs, they are beautiful but they are never harmless. All can look calm one minute and turn the next. I see that at home in the Highlands and I see that here in Blackpool. They do not forgive mistakes, and when something goes wrong the people who answer that call are everything. Those people are our neighbours, our workmates, our friends. The person who stands next to you in the shop is the one heading out into the dark, in the wind, in the rain because somebody needs help. Coastguard rescue officers leave their homes, their jobs and their families when others are in danger. They support the search for missing people, those who are

stranded, injured or at risk. They do it in difficult conditions, often at short notice and they do it with incredible skill.

Let me be clear about that, Congress, because that matters. These are not skills you can pick up overnight. They take years to build, experience, judgment, knowing your coastline, knowing your community. You cannot replace that overnight if people leave. In coastal communities, that is not an abstract risk, it is a very real and tangible threat to emergency response capacity. Just months ago GMB won a landmark legal victory supporting coastguard rescue officer Martin Groom. It confirmed what we have always known, that these officers had worker status when carrying out roles they have a right to be paid for it. It recognised the reality of the job, the responsibility, the training, the fact that when the calls come, they are expected to be there. Now, instead of respecting that ruling the MCA wants to remove hourly pay for call-outs and training.

Congress, I do not think anyone joins the Coastguard thinking it will make them rich. They do it because they care. They do it out of duty to their community but the reality is the small amount of pay that they receive is what makes it possible. It allows them to take time off to attend training, to stay available and to keep showing up. Take that away and you are asking people to shoulder all of the responsibility, all of the risk, all of the commitment, while giving less in return. What that really means is this: we are asking people to choose between their livelihood and their community. That is not fair and it is not sustainable, because if people cannot afford to stay some will leave, and when they go, they take those years of skills and experience with them. The result is a weaker service, stretched teams and increased pressures on the people who remain. In

costal and remote communities, where help is already further away, that matters. That can make the difference in an emergency.

This motion is very clear. It calls on us to oppose the removal of pay for call-outs and training, to push for urgent engagement and to stand with coastguard rescue officers through organising and campaigning, because this is about more than pay. It is about respect. It is about protecting a service that people rely on, often on the worst day of their lives. Congress, when someone is lost, injured or in danger on our coastline, nobody asks whether the person coming to help is a volunteer or a worker. They ask, “Is someone coming?” For generations rescues officers have made sure the answer to that question is a resounding “Yes”. If we want strong resilient coastguards for the future we must make sure that those who step forward are supported and not penalised. If you save lives, you deserve respect. If you carry out work, you deserve rights, and when those rights are threatened, GMB stands with you. Congress I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lynsay. Secunder from GMB Scotland.

MIRANDA ORTEGA (Wales & South West): President, Congress, first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I second Composite 16. Congress, you have already heard the powerful case of why this matters and I won’t repeat it, but I do want to underline one simple truth: you cannot run a life-saving service on goodwill alone. Our coastguard rescue officers are volunteers, but they are also highly skilled trained professional responders, who put themselves in danger and save others. They respond in darkness, in storms, on unstable cliffs and treacherous coastlines. That responsibility doesn’t disappear simply because the word “volunteer” is used, and yet they are being

asked to do more, risk more, give more, for less. Removing payments for call-outs and training might sound like a technical change but in reality, it sends a damaging message that the time, commitment and the sacrifice of these workers can be taken for granted, and we know where this leads: fewer people able to respond, less resilience in the service and greater risk to the public.

Congress, we must also be clear about what is at stake legally. The Court of Appeal ruling won by our member, Martin Groom, with GMB support confirmed that these workers have rights. This was a hard-fought victory and it must not now be undermined through the back door. If we allow this we weaken not only the rights of coastguard rescue officers, we weaken the principle that all workers deserve fairness, respect and protection. This is not about doing the job for the money. It is about being able to do the job at all. Because without proper support many simply won't be able to respond and when this happens someone in danger may be left waiting.

Congress, this is a risk we cannot accept. So, we second this motion because it does exactly what a trade union should do: it stands up clearly and unapologetically for those who protect others. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. (*Applause and cheers*).

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Miranda. It is not easy being a first-time speaker at the end of the day but a good note to end on, and on my count, you are the 22nd first-time speaker today. (*Applause*). Does anybody want to speak in opposition? No. The CEC is supporting Composite 16 so all those in favour, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

*Composite 16 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: That does conclude our business. We are back at 9 o'clock. We have that demo in the afternoon for school support staff so please wear comfy shoes and bring some waterproofs if the weather forecast is to be believed. Have a good evening.

Congress adjourned.