

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, 7th June 2026
Monday, 8th June 2026
Tuesday, 9th June 2026
Wednesday, 10th June 2026
-and-
Thursday, 11th June 2026

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PROCEEDINGS

DAY TWO
(Monday, 8th June 2026)

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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY 8TH JUNE 2026

MORNING SESSION

(Conference assembled at 9.00 a.m)

Call to Order

THE PRESIDENT: Delegates, it is 9 o'clock. Can I call Congress to order, please. Welcome back to day two. Thank you for yesterday, for a great first day. I hope you all had good evenings last night and I hope those people who came to the welcome event here had a really good time.

Congress, before we start, can I just ask please, that when delegates or CEC speakers come up to the lectern you do not touch the mics. T5 will adjust the height of the lectern and therefore the mics will be at the right position, so please can I ask you not to touch any of the mics. As a reminder for everybody, questions on the Financial Proposals and Annual Accounts need to be submitted to the platform here in writing by no later than 5.30 today. This was laid out in SOC Report No. 1 that was agreed yesterday.

We have bucket collections for charities chosen by North West & Irish, so please, do make sure to contribute to them at lunchtime. Also, colleagues we had some good debates yesterday and maybe I was a bit generous on the red light, but please can we make sure we keep to time as much as possible because it will really help with the agenda today. Thank you. Can I ask Karen Dudley, Chair of SOC to please move SOC Report No. 3.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress, moving SOC Report No. 3. President, with your indulgence could we wish Lindsay England a happy 60th birthday today. (*Applause*) On to Report No. 3

Withdrawn motions

We have a withdrawn motion from the Midlands:

Motion 237 : Branch Political Backing.

Emergency motions

The SOC has accepted two further emergency motions so far being in order for debate.

They are from Southern: Increase in Mileage Rates.

And from London: Reject the EHRC 21 May 2026 Guidance. The SOC recommends that this motion is composited with similar emergency motions from Scotland and Wales & South West.

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

Bucket collections

By mutual agreement, GMB Scotland and London have swapped days for their respective bucket collections. Scotland's bucket collections will now take place on Wednesday and London's will be on Tuesday. President, Congress I formally move adoption of SOC Report No. 3.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Just to say Lindsay is up in the Standing Orders Committee so she is spending her whole 60th birthday up there, (*Applause and Congress sang "Happy Birthday"*) It is like royalty up there! Can I put Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3 to the vote. All those in favour, please show. All those against. That is carried.

*Standing Orders Committee Report No. 3 was **ADOPTED**.*

Local Gift

THE PRESIDENT: This year's local gift will be split between two charities, those being: the Jigsaw Cancer Unit at Bournemouth Hospital and North West Children's Support Group, which is based up here in Blackpool. Thank you, Southern, for choosing those charities.

POLITICAL: IMMIGRATION & MIGRATION

THE PRESIDENT: We are carrying on from motions debated yesterday under Political: Immigration & Migration. Please could the movers and seconders for Motions 248 and 249 come down to the front. Those are the ones that were moved

from yesterday. Then also if the movers and seconders of 250 and 251 can also come down.

A FAIRER AND MORE HUMANE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

MOTION 248

248. A FAIRER AND MORE HUMANE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Congress notes according to the United Nations, 122 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, with 8 million asylum seekers overall.

The refugees' charity RAMFEL reported that up to now, refugees claiming asylum in Britain could be granted a 5-year visa and qualify for indefinite leave on completion. Now, the Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood is introducing the principle of an expensive 2.5-year Visa, to be subsequently renewed 4 times, so that indefinite leave may only be granted in 20 years' time. And throughout the 20 years, the government will keep reviewing whether it is safe to deport the person.

Congress notes in the estimation of the British Refugee Council, the extra costs of this change be 872 million, adding an enormous burden of work on a government that already takes a year to process the more straightforward applications of people in the UK on Family Visas.

Congress notes that the right of refugees to family reunion was severely curtailed by Yvette Cooper in September, with family reunification being denied to anyone "not earning enough". Now, the government takes its cue from the "Danish model", a highly restrictive policy aimed at 'zero asylum seeker'. The practice of 'offshoring' is now in force in Britain and 4 other countries, and the 'pushbacks at sea' were only dropped due to objections and opposition.

Congress also notes that in these matters, Nigel Farage accused Shabana Mahmood of stealing the policies of his Reform Party; and that Stephen Yaxley-Lennon sees in them "common sense plans to restore control and order to our borders".

Congress believes that, as migrants flee wars, persecution, famine and climate shocks, the desperate people will not be deterred by the growing cruelty and brutality against them in Europe or the UK. The pain inflicted on them will not make the refugees disappear.

Congress believes that these reforms (those already in force and the proposed new ones) are not only shocking and draconian, but self-defeating and prejudicial to the social cohesion of the country.

Above all, we believe that the 'Danish model' that inspires these new attacks on refugees, has shown that cruel policies do not placate the anti-migrant politicians and the racist elements in society. Far from it, these will shift to meet the rotten ground opened by our present government's proposals. And then, there will always be another step to take us down deeper into the abyss where Tommy Robinson, Farage and international Finance capital are taking us.

Congress calls on the CEC to stand not only against the growing attacks on immigrants, but also against the nazifying forces – national and international – that want us to believe the working class has no policy other than theirs.

The GMB can bring its considerable weight behind the forces that want to defend a fairer and more humane immigration system. And help organise activities among the population, up and down Britain.

**X59 NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

MARK LIVINGSTONE (London): I live in Tottenham, in north London, an area that has been enriched by waves of migration over the centuries, from Ireland, from Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America, Asia, and there are a few Scottish people there too, I think. It is one of the most diverse areas of the country and we celebrate that diversity, just as we celebrate it within our movement, and the contribution that migration has made to our culture, to our politics and to our movement. Despite this, that is not reflected in the public discourse on immigration and the hard right have continued to be allowed to set the terms of the debate and shift it ever more rightward. When Enoch Powell made his “Rivers of Blood” speech in 1968, Ted Heath sacked him from the Cabinet because it was seen as so extreme. Sadly today, we have got a whole party of Enoch Powells in Reform, and we are even hearing echoes of that speech from Labour Politicians.

Congress, we are not going to defeat the far right by conceding more and more ground to them, and I am afraid that is what we have seen in some of the policies that the Home Secretary has been promoting, which, as the motion states, both Farage and Stephen Yaxley-Lennon have praised.

Congress, the motion is not calling for open borders or the abolition of migration controls. It is simply calling for a fairer and more humane policy and that the GMB uses its influence within the Labour Party to shape policy on this basis. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mark. Secunder.

JONATHAN COLES (London): President, Congress, seconding Motion 248: A Fairer and More Humane Immigration System. This motion may be strongly worded but I speak as someone who has had the experience of both navigating it and as part of my day job in supporting refugees and asylum seekers. Many refugees and asylum seekers have been through some horrendous experiences and they end up in this country and are treated with hostility, not care or compassion. We live in a global world yet we don't want to respect the fact people can meet and fall in love anywhere. We set policies that say you can only have a spouse if you earn well over the average wage. So, does that mean love depends on your bank balance and not your heart? Is a system fair system that tells people that their asylum is refused and they couldn't be in any danger from the country they escaped because they got out alive?

We should have a system that is based on respect and understanding, not pandering to those who say we are a Christian country but don't love thy neighbour. I support anybody that is in need. My workplace has been recognised by central Government for our multi-agency working, including working with charities from many faiths, but now the Government wants to move refugees away from London to somewhere allegedly cheaper, away from the joined-up support available, mostly at no cost to the

Government, for example moving someone 100 miles away from the only type of church they can attend in the country, where they can receive a lot more than spiritual help. We must not have a system that leaves a person for up to 20 years without a future. They could be three when they come and asked to leave when they are 23. So I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Mover of Motion 249, please.

MOTION 249

WELCOMING AND SOLIDARITY WITH IMMIGRANTS

249. WELCOMING AND SOLIDARITY WITH IMMIGRANTS

Congress notes the white paper and the November announcement on immigration and citizenship.

Congress believes that this is an intensification of the hostile environment done for reasons of appearance rather than policy effectiveness.

Congress reiterates its belief that immigrants for the purpose of work do not negatively impact wages levels.

Congress believes that both the White Paper and the November announcement conflict with the need for an immigration policy based on dignity and welcome.

In particular the prohibition of families for researchers, the extending of the time required before obtaining indefinite leave to remain, the residence longevity before access to citizenship, and the visa costs are discriminatory, cruel and counterproductive.

Congress believes that it is in the best interests of all citizens that immigrants become citizens as soon as possible so that they can act in solidarity without fear of deportation.

Congress believes that the movement cannot outperform Reform UK and that we and the Labour Party must stand for an immigration and refugee policy based on dignity and welcome.

X58 LONDON CENTRAL GENERAL BRANCH LONDON REGION

(*Carried*)

DAVE LEVY (London): Moving Motion 249. Over the last few years, as a union we have been developing a stronger policy and a better policy on immigration centred around the rights of immigrants, decent treatment for all citizens and the inclusion of new arrivals, in a relationship of solidarity, in our communities and in our workplaces. Last year, we also explicitly opposed the suspension of Syrian refugee routes of entry as unacceptable and wrong. We also called for the repeal of Tory immigration legislation, for a guarantee of safe and legal routes for asylum seekers, day one rights to work, education and social security for asylum seekers, and a right to family reunion for asylum seekers and citizens. Our Labour Government's response seems to have been the exact opposite. It seems in this case being in the room is not enough.

Over the autumn, the newly appointed Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood made two announcements called "Restoring Order and Control: A Statement on Government Asylum Returns Policy" which was supplemented by a paper called "A Fairer Pathway to Settlement". The latter extends the time required to obtain indefinite leave to remain and to be eligible for citizenship. The worst of these proposals include measures to prohibit the entry of the families of researchers, extending the time required before obtaining indefinite leave to remain and residence longevity before access to citizenship, and recurring visa costs which the extensions will incur, which are discriminatory, cruel and counter-productive.

We should welcome migrants and refugees and extend them the solidarity on which our movement is based. People without rights will find it harder to build a secure life, to join unions and offer us the solidarity that we need. These measures, in particular the proposal to make refugee entry subject to review, is a fundamental attack on refugees'

ability to re-build their lives, having fled from the fear of death, torture or other forms of persecution. It would seem the intellectual driver, if you can call it that, of these proposals is the current Labour Party strategy of triangulating against Reform, pursuing the failed strategy of courting hero voters. When will they learn that Labour can never win racist votes through the pursuit of racism? Reform voters are not going to vote Labour. The movement cannot fight Reform by copying them. All that does is legitimise their politics. The union needs to say no, as it has done for many years, and to seek to persuade the Labour Government this is the wrong way to build a better society.

The CEC might also like to consider an action plan, as it would seem our previous one which they reported on, in the update reports in the conference documents, has not been effective. I believe the movement cannot out-perform Reform UK through racism and that we in the Labour Party must stand for an immigration and refugees policy based on dignity and welcome. I echo the comments of the previous two speakers who I believe have humanised this issue in a way I have not done so, but I would ask you to vote for this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Secunder.

FUNMI NWAGAGBO (London): Good morning, Congress. Second-time delegate, I enjoyed last year's and I am back today. I rise to second this motion with pride as an immigrant myself. We immigrants don't come to take from this country. We come to build it with you. We work in your hospitals, in your schools, farms and businesses. We pay taxes. We raise families. And we raise our hands to say we want to contribute.

But welcoming is not just about what we give: it is about who we are as a society. A strong society doesn't fear difference; it uses it. When people feel they belong, they give more, they try harder, they stay committed. Solidarity means rejecting the idea that anyone's worth depends on where they were born. It means saying clearly, if you work hard and play by the rules, you have a place here. So let's pass this motion. Let's choose a message of inclusion over division, solidarity over suspicion, because when we welcome each other, we all move forward. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Funmi. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to the motions? (*No response*) Can I ask then Dave Flanagan to respond on behalf of the CEC.

DAVE FLANAGAN (CEC): Blackpool, a warm welcome, and where it never rains! President, Congress, responding for the CEC on Motions 248 and 249. On Motion 248, the CEC supports the motion with qualification. The CEC recognises the importance of a fair, humane and effective immigration and asylum system, and acknowledges the significant contribution that migrant workers make to the UK economy, to public services and to our union.

GMB has long opposed the exploitation of migrant labour and has consistently campaigned for equal rights, fair treatment and dignity for all workers, regardless of nationality or immigration status. Migrant workers must never be used to undercut wages and conditions or to divide working people. GMB engages regularly with the Home Office and other Ministers to emphasise our established policy in this area. We are clear that any Labour Government's immigration and asylum policy must be rooted

in our values while reducing the impact of irregular immigration. We also recognise that global displacement is rising due to conflict, persecution, economic instability and climate change. These trends create significant humanitarian challenges that require international co-operation and responsible government policy.

Therefore, our qualifications are as follows. The motion includes assertions about specific government policies and individuals that are contested and expressed in a language that may not support the union's ability to influence the policy effectively. The CEC believes our advocacy should be framed to strengthen constructive engagement with government, parliamentarians and wider stakeholders. The union's policy should remain on defending the rights of migrant workers, opposing racism and discrimination and promoting immigration and asylum policies that are fair, humane and workable. Subject to these qualifications, the CEC supports the principle that the UK should maintain an immigration and asylum system that respects human rights, protects vulnerable people, promotes social cohesion and ensures all workers are protected from exploitation.

The CEC will continue working with sister unions, community organisations and policy makers to promote fair immigration policies and defend the rights and dignity of migrant workers.

On Motion 249, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. The CEC is concerned about the changes to the immigration system, which will have an effect on key sectors such as adult social care and the gig economy, where we are likely to have the most affected members. In line with the motion, we will engage with processes

which limit the impact of the workforces most at risk. Naturally, we agree with the motion that immigrants coming to the UK to work and build a life here should be treated with dignity and that pathways to settled status should be honoured.

Our qualification is on the line that, “Congress believes that it is in the best interests of all citizens and immigrants to become citizens as soon as possible so they can act in solidarity without fear of deportation”. As this is not a practicable request to have as a policy of the union, therefore, Congress, the CEC is supporting with qualifications Motions 248 and 249, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dave. Does London agree with the qualification on Motion 248? (*Agreed*) And on 249? (*Agreed*) I shall put that to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 248, please show. Any against? All those in favour of 249, please show. All those against? That is also carries. Can I just say to the speakers who had to wait from yesterday to today thank you for your patience. I am sure you thought you were going to be relaxing last night and then you had to worry about making your speeches this morning but you have all been brilliant.

*Motion 248 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 249 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Mover and seconder of Motion 250, please.

POLITICAL: RACISM AND FASCISM

ANTI-FAR RIGHT

MOTION 250

250. ANTI-FAR RIGHT

Our Branch believes:

On 13 September 2025 we experienced a watershed moment when a demonstration organised by fascists such as ‘Tommy Robinson’ (aka Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) and with the support of Elon Musk was able to bring 150,000 onto the streets of London on a racist, hate filled and violent mobilisation. This was the largest mobilisation achieved by fascists in British history.

While the anti-racist movement was able to bring out 20,000 on the streets to send a message that the fascists will not take our streets without challenge, it is clear that we need a much greater level of mobilisation.

Our Branch notes:

- The launch of the TOGETHER alliance - www.togetheralliance.org will call for major “TOGETHER AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT” unity mobilisations
- That this initiative is backed by a number of celebrities: Lenny Henry, Paloma Faith, Fontaines DC, Kneecap, Paul Weller and many others.
- That this initiative is backed by several major trade unions and campaign organisations and Stand Up to Racism.
- That the TUC and Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) will co-host an annual 2026 trade union conference in February: “Workers Against The Far Right”

Our Branch resolves to:

- Publicise and promote all future demonstrations by all means possible.
- Fund members to attend any such demonstration and ensure they use our union banner.
- Support “Stand Up To Racism” and any future mobilisations
- Affiliate to “Stand Up to Racism”.

We call on Regions and the CEC to publicise any Together demonstration and SUTR & TUC trade union conference to all branches

C35 ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

CATHY HOLLAND (London): Moving Motion 250: Anti-Far Right. Well, it started here in Blackpool 21 years ago and thanks to Dave Powell, who was my officer at the time, who thought I might be quite good at the job, has had a lot of thoughts that I would be good but here we go. It is full circle. This is a very sad motion that we are still

talking about racism in 2026. If 10% of the population support fascism, as happened in Germany under Adolf Hitler, then they draw other people in who have issues with the way the present Government are managing local issues. People I have spoken to are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs and believe Reform is the way forward. Are they? No. Farage comes from the school of Trump and Elon Musk. There is a core of racism in this party although they will dress it up in language which appeals to the undecided, which for now may be 10% but over time it can become, 20, 40, 60 and so on. The recent attack on a white citizen could further add flames to the fire. I urge Congress to seriously consider the implication of allowing groups with a fascist ideology thrive, as previously happened in Europe and ask the Labour Government to be mindful of the risk.

Also, as a long-time activist, I support the Gold Badge for us people who have been around a long time like I have. Thank you for your patience. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cathy and well done for getting that in as well. Seconded please. *(Formally seconded)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, London.

JOINING NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT.

MOTION 251

251. JOINING NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE FAR-RIGHT

This Congress acknowledges with deep concern the continuing rise of the far-right, with Reform UK currently topping the polls and far-right led marches mobilising in growing numbers.

This Congress notes that:

- it is an ongoing GMB priority to oppose these attacks on employment rights, union rights and public services, with Reform UK seen as a direct threat (GMB National Policy 2025)

- the GMB is committed to playing “a leading and visible role opposing the far-right in our communities alongside other trade unions, anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations” (GMB’s CEC Special Report: Anti Racism and Combatting Hate), yet the GMB has fallen behind over 120 civil society organisations and trade unions (including Trade Union Congress, UNISON, Unite the Union and Stand up to Racism) uniting against the far-right in joining the Together Alliance.

This Congress believes that:

- The GMB’s absence as a member of the Together Alliance, or other future national campaigns alliances and initiatives, compared to other major trade unions risks casting doubt in our solidarity against the far-right and commitment to anti-racism.

This Congress resolves to:

- Take a proactive role in joining national alliances, campaigns and initiatives with shared goals against the rise of the far-right, immediately starting with the Together Alliance (if this has not been actioned by the time of debating the motion)
- Notify its members on the decision to join such national demonstrations, campaigns and initiatives against the far right in alignment with GMB’s policies
- Provide members with an explanation if the decision has been taken not to join such national demonstrations, campaigns and initiatives that members have requested the GMB to join

**B33 GMB@BMA/BMJ BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

MOHAMMAD ALI (London): Morning, President, Vice-President, Congress
Mohammad Ali first-time delegate, second-time speaker. *(Applause)* Moving Motion
251: Joining Campaigns Against the Far-Right. This motion is, essentially, what it says
on the tin: calling on the GMB to continue to stand shoulder to shoulder in solidarity
with our brothers and sisters across the country from other trade unions and anti-racist
organisations I welcome the qualifications from the CEC and I am delighted that since
this motion was passed at my branch way back when, the GMB took part in the
Together Alliance March through London, on 28 March. I was lucky enough to attend
this demonstration and was filled with pride at seeing the GMB flag fly high over the

hundreds and thousands of true patriots who came together to reject fascism, hatred and division in all its forms. (*Applause*)

Congress, please support our call for the GMB to continue to take a proactive approach in line with the 2025 Special Report to engage in initiatives which present a united front against the far right, and against the politicians and billionaires who seek to turn workers against each other and make them vote against their own class interests. Thank you and please support Motion 251. (*Applause*)

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

KOLA OLALEKAN (London): President, Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, I rise this morning to formally second Motion 251: Joining National Campaigns Against The Far Right. Congress, we must not allow the far right to divide us as a nation by spreading fear, hatred and intolerance, and that is why the GMB must commit to joining any nationwide marches against their agenda. GMB is committed to playing a leading and visible role to opposing the far right in our communities alongside other trade unionists, against anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations according to the GMB's Special Report: Anti Racism and Combatting Hate and yet the GMB has fallen behind over 120 other civil society organisations in joining the Together Alliance. It is therefore right that the GMB have subsequently joined the Alliance and acted with it actively on the 28 March 2026 rally in London, which is commendable.

Joining national campaigns connects our efforts with broader anti-fascist coalitions because local branches cannot fight this co-ordinated threat in isolation and alone. Collaboration provides our members with vital educational tools and counterprotest strategies. Solidarity and equality define the very foundation of our trade union movement. Joining these campaigns is not just about opposing something; it is about standing up for positive values. Congress, this is the United Kingdom and not the United States of Donald Trump which Reform UK is aligning with. We must stop the far right in their tracks. Congress, we must send a clear and unmistakable message that hate has home in our workplaces and our communities. I urge you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Kola. Perfectly timed. Anybody want to speak in opposition to those motions? (*No response*) In that case, can I ask the CEC speaker, Nathaniel Tetteh to come up?

NATHANIAL TETTEH (CEC) I just want to say we have come very far as a trade union. Nathaniel Tetteh of the CEC responding to Motions 250 and 251. On Motion 250, the CEC supports the motion with qualifications in that its call for the GMB to affiliate to Stand Up to Racism and support any future mobilisations, will need to follow the existing approach the union takes, which is set out in the Congress 2025 Special Report, namely that the GMB regions will therefore be best able to lead on how we respond, including which external groups GMB regions wish to affiliate or partner with in this work.

This approach has been successful with GMB regions recently mobilising to ensure our members attended the Together Alliance demonstrations in London on 28 March, marched with the union's national banner, as well as promoting the demonstration on our social media channels and be visible on the Together Alliance website in our support, which is what this motion has called for.

On Motion 251, the CEC supports the motion's call for GMB to take an active role in joining national alliances, campaigns and initiatives with shared goals against the rise of the far right with the qualification that we continue to do so in line with the approach set out in the Congress Special Report 2025, as I stated in the response to Motion 250.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is asking that Motions 250 and 251 be supported fully with qualifications. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathaniel. Does London agree to the qualification on Motion 250? (*Agreed*) And on 251? (*Agreed*) All those in favour of Motion 250, please show? Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 251, please show. Anyone against? That is also carried. Brilliant.

*MOTION 250 was **CARRIED**.*

*MOTION 251 was **CARRIED**.*

CEC SPECIAL REPORT: ORGANISING IN A CHANGING ECONOMY

CEC Special Report: Organising In A Changing Economy Summary of policy adopted

To make the most of new workers' rights, union freedoms and continue the fight to make work pay, GMB will:

- Build on our union density in our workplaces
- Build on our collective agreements to account for increased statutory rights
- Build on new access rights and lower statutory union recognition thresholds to secure new collective agreements that give facility time for our representatives
- Urge Labour deliver its Make Work Pay Manifesto commitments in-full

Collective bargaining on AI and other technology at work

- GMB will develop and signpost to resources to empower GMB Reps to scrutinise, organise around and collectively bargain over the introduction of AI and new technology in their workplace.
- GMB will develop our own Model Agreement on introduction of AI and new workplace technology at work, learning from good practice in our union and unions internationally
- GMB will not be afraid to stand up and take action to oppose imposition of AI and new technology or its unethical use where there is collective will from our members

GMB's "Jobs First" Demands of Government and Policymakers on AI

- A statutory right to consultation when employers wish to transfer tasks from workers to automatic processes
- Mandate private sector employers to secure prior union agreement before introducing new technology and guarantee paid retraining or redeployment for workers.
- Place stricter regulation for using AI in the public sector to guarantee that AI will not replace staff or affect the public without human oversight.
- Greater transparency and protection for workers and the public from AI bias and the use of their data by new technology.
- Help workers whose roles are displaced or replaced by Automated Vehicle (AV) technology through a "Just Transition Fund," financed by a levy or tax on AV operators.

GMB's "Jobs First" demands of Government and Policymakers on industrial skills:

- A statutory right to paid time off for workers to attend learning or training where jobs are at risk from technological change or meeting Net-Zero commitments
- Sectoral Job Plans that identify current and future skills needs and ensures accessible routes into new jobs
- Ensure employers in receipt of public money guarantee job retention or redeployment opportunities before cutting jobs
- A UCAS-style clearing house for UK-wide apprenticeships
- The 'reindustrialisation' of apprenticeships through increased learning time spent on practical workplace-based learning, increased government and employer funding and working with unions to align curriculums to skills that are in economic demand and strategy.

The full Special Report can be accessed at:

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

THE PRESIDENT: That moves us on to the CEC Special Report: Organising in a Changing Economy. I will ask Mat Williams and Linda Carr-Pollock to move and second the report on behalf of the CEC. After they have finished speaking I will call the regions up in alphabetical order, starting with London Region, so please could the speakers from each region be ready and come down the front to speak after the report has been moved.

MAT WILLIAMS (CEC): President, Congress, I am moving the Special Report on behalf of the CEC. I am a proud construction worker, I am a fabricator and welder by trade and I am a GMB convenor at Sizewell C Power Station. (*Cheers*) Members in my branch have built a nuclear power station and have also built the union. In eight years, my GMB branch has grown to over 4,000 members and we have a 50% density without the construction employers on site. Because we are organised, we negotiated with EDF around 1,000 apprenticeships which are now beginning and underway in the construction phase. We now have 1,700 apprenticeships across the tools on the site and recruiting from the region and around the site area. When the work is done in Hinckley, they will take their skills and build Sizewell C Power Station.

Congress, it is not perfect. We still have our fights with all the employers. I want every worker in our economy to have union that got their back and fights for workers' power over their future. If employers can work with unions in a nuclear power station, one of the most safety conscious workplaces in the world, why can't the so-called tech giants? If harnessing nuclear power relies on many good skilled unionised jobs, then why can't we do the same harnessing the power of AI?

This Special Report shows what a mountain we have got to climb. Over 80% of jobs in the private sector are not covered under union agreements. Thanks to the hard work of unions like the GMB we have a real opportunity ahead of us. The Employment Rights Act will now allow unions to rebalance the power in the workplace by removing Tory restrictions on recruiting, organising and taking strike action. Labour must now deliver its plan to make work pay in full before bad bosses get the upper hand once again. New technology like AI is not necessarily an enemy of the worker. It is how it can be used by bad bosses when there are no laws to stop them, because, in the end, the interests of capital are always different from the interests of our members. This is why our union was founded in the red heat of the London gasworks.

GMB will grow stronger in changing this economy. We have done it before and we are often the first, too. The first to win equal pay for equal value for women workers. The first to win workers' rights to holiday pay in the gig economy. The workplaces where work is better. The first to strike in Amazon in the UK. But our members must be able to decide their future. So, our message to the Government today is clear and simple: put jobs first. We need job plans for every sector with our GMB members' voices driving the future of the industry and the skills we need. We need proper reindustrialised apprenticeships so that learning time is spent in the workplace for the skills young people need in their workplaces. And if new technology at work affects jobs, then nothing is agreed until our members agree. That is power in the union: workers powering their future.

Congress, we know what that means. It means building a GMB in our workplaces every day, day in, day out. Being organised for action when the employers won't listen.

Understanding that the employers have different interests to us and knowing that our members are strongest as they organise themselves. That is GMB at its best. That is GMB@Work. Please support this Special Report. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mat. Linda Carr-Pollock to second.

LINDA CARR-POLLOCK (CEC): Congress, Linda Carr-Pollock for the CEC, seconding this Special Report. This report matters because it speaks directly to what our members are facing: services under pressure, staffing stretched and change without organisation. New rights only matter if we use them and in our sectors that means turning rights on paper into something staff feel in the workplace. That means stronger workplace organisation, confident reps and unions involved in decisions before they are made, not after the damage is done. The report also speaks to one of the biggest issues facing our members now. AI and new technology is affecting every industry and sector. Nearly 50% of GMB workers surveyed about AI this month think that AI will take away their job and nearly 50% have also already had theirs or their colleagues' activity at work tracked by their employer using AI. Everywhere workers are being asked to adapt to systems they did not design and which were introduced without trust, transparency or proper consultation. That is why NHS staff are refusing to work with systems like Palantir over serious ethical concerns. Politicians have warned about giving access to identifiable patient data. In public services that is not just a workplace issue, it is a public trust issue. We need greater protection over the use of our data by AI firms and from AI bias against those with protected characteristics. We also need regulation so that AI cannot make decisions that affect the public without human accountability and oversight.

This is why the report's Jobs First approach matters so much. Technology should improve work, not destroy jobs, deskill staff or undermine professional judgment. It should reduce pressure, not increase it. It should create opportunity, not insecurity. Whenever AI is introduced, whether in hospitals, call centres, factories or council services, workers and their unions must have a real say.

We need a statutory right to consultation for workers and unions, with clear transparency on how technology is used, guarantees on retraining and redeployment, and firm limits on surveillance and monitoring.

The report also sets out Jobs First demands on skills. In NHS Scotland, we secured protected learning time through pay negotiations, but implementation is still a challenge. That tells us everything. Winning something on paper is the first step but it has to be delivered practice. Without real investment in proper workplace-based training and a right to paid time off to retrain, there is no fair transition to ways of working under new technology.

Congress, this report gives us a clear direction on how to organise around new rights; shape how new technology is introduced, fight for jobs and skills and keep workers and the public at the centre of change. Across every sector our task is the same: make sure innovation is not done to workers but shaped with them. If we build strong workplace organisation, we can shape that change. If we don't, others will be shaping that for us. Please support the report. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Could I have the speaker from London region, please, and then it will be Midlands and then North East Yorkshire & Humber.

DAVE LEVY (London): President, Congress, speaking in support of the Special Report. Work is changing around us and it is changing fast. New rights on paper will only matter if we can turn them into real workplace power through strong organisation and updated agreements that reflect the modern economy. We need to use the new freedoms in the Employment Rights Act to win better recognition, better agreements, otherwise workers will be left to navigate an underfunded tribunal system while employers bank the benefits. AI is already in our members' workplaces and on our desk tops not as a distant threat but as a daily reality. The report is honest that AI is not necessarily the enemy. It is the bosses' intentions that matter and this has always been true, possibly specifically more so with the AI of big tech companies than previous incarnations of capitalism. Used with workers, AI can cut drudgery and improve services but imposed on workers, it risks discrimination, surveillance, deskilling and displacement. We demand consultation when tasks are automated, guarantees of redeployment and paid retraining and stronger legal protections on data, bias and automated decision making, building on the rights established by the EU's GDPR and its UK implementations. Our existing agreements are written for an analogue world, not one of algorithms, data centres, continuous surveillance and automated vehicles. We need new agreements that say no dismissal or disciplinary decisions should be taken based solely on algorithms. AI should not be introduced without genuine consultation and risk assessments that cover health and safety, equality and data protection before anything goes live. We need to engage with the GDPR privacy impact assessments. As a union we need to link AI to the wider fight on skills and industrial strategy. The

report reminds us that rights are meaningless without jobs, and that without serious investment in skills, technological change will deepen regional inequality and dehumanisation. The report is clear we should treat AI as another organising issue.

I do have concerns that maybe it is not the next big thing and we should be arguing politically for greater regulation and a cautious planning approach to the data centres, but let's leave Blackpool determined to organise harder and smarter bargaining and go back to every employer we deal with and say that our agreements must change because the world of work has changed and workers deserve protection, power and a say in every decision that shapes their working lives. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dave, spot on. Midlands please.

CHRIS ROCHE: (Midlands): Hello, everyone. I am from the great and wonderful Midlands Region, speaking in support of the CEC report. (*Applause*) President, Congress, artificial intelligence is here and increasingly rooted in our daily lives at home and particularly at work. Whilst it can be a supportive and helpful tool, unless harnessed in the right way, it also poses a significant and real threat. Members and reps' increasingly use AI to help articulate grievances and negotiations. Also HR department increasingly use AI in their responses. We need training and awareness to ensure use of the application of AI is best placed. We support. It was not a big speech but we support! (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Succinct and to the point. What more do you want? North East, Yorkshire & Humber.

JAMES TATE (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Good morning, Congress. I am a proud member of the North East, Yorkshire and Humber Region. (*Cheers*) I am speaking in support of this Special Report as essential to the future of work. Working as a gardener most of my life, I am not the most knowledgeable when it comes to technology, but I am no Luddite. I know we can't stop the progress of technology and it can bring many positives for the working people of our country, across all industries. But as the working class have seen time and time again, technology that should help us to do our jobs and improve our lives are instead used to distract us, exploit us, oppress us and replace us. We know many employers will always put profits over people. Whenever the introduction of new technologies and AI are discussed at work, we must always fight to make sure our members have a leading voice in that conversation, that they have strong protections from surveillance and monitoring, to fight against all exploitative use of AI and ensure that jobs do not disappear without people in those roles being consulted, retrained and kept in work.

Whether you think that AI is the next industrial revolution or just a passing trend, we cannot ignore its potential to reshape the economy and the potential for further exploitation and oppression of the working class. GMB reps and officers need support, training and education to give us the knowledge and tools to understand these technologies, and to best protect our members and their jobs, making sure they always have a voice and are not left at the exploitative will of bad employers.

Over the years, many of our communities have already seen drastic shifts to local work and industry leading to huge economic decline and struggle and with many more

changes on the horizon, we have a responsibility as a movement to grab this next challenge, to shape it and deliver a better future for working people. Let's make sure we are not left behind. Congress, support this report, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Dave, well done. North West & Irish Region.

KELVIN ENABULELE (NORTH WEST & IRISH): President, Vice-President, Gary, proudly North West and Irish Region. (*Applause*) Congress, we are living through a changing economy not in theory but in reality. Across our nation, in logistics, in social care, in outsourced workplaces, change is happening right now. And our members are feeling it. Too many workers are stuck in insecure work, zero hours, agency: gig roles. No certainty, no security, no real voice. It is often the same people - young workers, migrant workers - doing tough jobs with the least protection. Congress, that is not right and it not what our union stands for, because we believe something different. We believe every worker deserves dignity, every worker deserves protection, every worker deserves a voice: our union voice. But if we are honest, if the economy is changing, we must change too. We cannot organise today with yesterday's tools for tomorrow's workplace. The Employment Rights Bill gives us an opportunity to assess workplaces, to win recognition and to break down barriers in the private sector, because right now 80% of workers are outside of collective bargaining. And we know what that means. Collective bargaining is how we redistribute wealth. It is how we tackle inequality in our workplaces and in our communities.

So this Special Report is clear. We need to be in the sectors where workers are. Not waiting but organising. We need modern methods - digital tools, new approaches - to

reach workers who have never been reached before and we must back our lay reps because there are not just part of this union, they are the backbone of it. Let me be clear organising does not stop at the work gate. It happens in our communities, on our streets, in the lives people are living every day. Congress, it is about wanting to make sure no worker is left behind. Because when we organise, we don't just recruit, we lift people. When we organise, we don't just recruit, we build power. And when we organise we don't just change workplaces, we change lives. So I say to Congress let's meet this changing economy head on organising, growing and standing together because when we reach the worker, we build the union and when we build the union, we change the world. Congress. Please support this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kelvin I should have stopped you but it was such a passionate speech. Scotland and then Wales & South West.

ROBERT GRAHAM (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, speaking in support of the Special Report on behalf of GMB Scotland. Congress, work is changing fast. The next decade will shape the future for our members, but let us be clear, we do not fear change, we organise around, it we shape it, and it is through that lens we must consider the role of technology. Technology is not the problem. AI is not the problem. The issue is how it is used. We will not accept change being done to workers. We demand that change is done with workers. And that means consultation before jobs are replaced, union agreements before new tech comes in and training and protection for every worker. That is a fair transition. No job losses, no deskilling, no constant surveillance, but better jobs, safer jobs, higher skills. And in GMB that is our opportunity, in energy and renewables and the shift from oil and gas. We can build a strong low-carbon

economy with good jobs. We do not choose between fairness and progress. We demand both.

This challenge is not abstract. It is already being felt across every part of the community and the GMB. The change is already here. Our members see it every day, in the NHS, in councils, in logistics, retail and transport. Different sectors but the same challenge. So we respond with one voice, one union, one message: technology must come in on union terms.

And our ability to deliver that message depends on one thing above all else: our strength as an organised union because this is who we are. Rights on paper are not enough. They only matter when we use them. If we organise, if we stand together, if we organise in tough workplaces, we win where others don't. We fight for dignity and we fight for fairness. The workplace is where we build our power. Making Work Better is not just a goal. It is our very purpose. That purpose which now must shape our wider economy we want to build. We reject the idea that technology means few jobs, that efficiency means lower pay and innovation means inequality. We say if productivity rises, workers must benefit. Skills must be funded. Public money must create jobs. Industry must serve communities. Because when industry works, communities thrive. When we organise, the benefits are shared.

So with that vision in mind we are clear about the commitment we must make as a union. So this is our commitment. We stand united, we stand with strength, we stand with dignity; we stand with one voice. Our union is strong, proud and organised. But change does not just happen, it is won, so let's face the future with confidence. We

will shape it and we will make it work, for working people. Congress, I urge you to support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Southern Region.

JOHN WRAY: President, Vice-President, Congress, I am speaking in support of the Special Report for Southern Region. This is my first time as delegate at Congress and my first time speaking. (*Applause*) Southern Region wholeheartedly endorses everything in this report, but I am going to focus my comments on the second section, artificial intelligence at work. I am sure over the last couple of years you will all have heard a lot about the latest developments in AI and I am sure a lot of you are aware that it divides opinion. Some people are very impressed by it, they are excited by it, they love it, and some people are wary of it, afraid of it and hate it.

Congress, when it comes to using AI at work, I would argue that most of the people who love it are people who have been able to decide for themselves how and when to use it and have chosen to use it in a way that supports their work and develops their skills, and most of the people who hate it are people who had no choice and had it imposed on them.

When modern AI works well, it can be very impressive, but it does not always work well, and in either case, we should always ask ourselves whose interests it is working in? We can accept AI in our workplaces when it genuinely makes our job better. We need to oppose it when it is used as surveillance to control us or to increase our workloads to unmanageable levels, or to make our jobs worse. This statement affirms

how we can do that at every level, from campaigns in individual workplaces, right up to national policy. Congress, I urge you to support it. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, John. Wales & South West, please.

JEFF SUTTON (Wales & South West): President, Congress, Jeff Sutton from the magnificent Wales & South West Region. Congress, I stand before you today to speak about a fundamental issue that goes to the heart of dignity, fairness and opportunity in our society, the rights of working people and the future of work itself. The report before us is not abstract, it is grounded in the lived experience of workers across our country. People who expect not only employment but fairness, security and a voice at work. We must act now to ensure that progress benefits workers not just markets.

First, the report emphasises the need to build the union's strength, where it matters most, within the workplaces themselves. By increasing union density and expanding collective agreements, we can ensure that new statutory rights are not just written in law but realised in practice because rights on paper mean little without the power to enforce them. The report also points to an important opportunity: new access rights and lower thresholds for union recognition. These are not technical changes, they are transformational. They give unions the ability to reach more workers, secure more agreements, provide facility time for representatives. The report calls on Labour to deliver fully on its Make Work Pay manifesto commitments. This is a promise not just of economic policy but of fairness. It is about secure work, decent wages, stronger employment rights, and we must be clear partial delivery is not enough. Working

people deserve the full benefits of what has been promised. Technology has the power to transform productivity but must not come at the expense of workers' rights or dignity.

The report makes three critical commitments. First, to equip union representatives with the tools and resources they need to understand the challenge of how AI is introduced. Secondly, developing model agreements on AI and workplace technology, learning from best practices both here and internationally. Thirdly, and most importantly, it affirms a principle we must all stand behind. This is not opposition to progress. This is insistence on responsible progress. It is a call to action. Congress, this report does not simply describe the future. It challenges us to shape it. We have a choice to allow change to happen to workers, or to ensure workers are central to shaping that change. We must strength collective bargaining, support union organisation, deliver fully on commitments made and ensure that new technology serves people rather than replaces or undermines them. Let us remember work is more than a contract: it is a source of dignity, stability and identity. When we protect workers, we strengthen our economies, our communities and our country. So let us act, not cautiously, not partially but decisively and together to make work truly pay now and for the future. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you to all the speakers. I put that to the vote. All those in favour of the Special Report please show? Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried.

*The CEC Special Report: Organising in a Changing Economy was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: We are now really fortunate to have a couple of our own activist speakers address us this morning, the first of which this morning is Robert Battell, who works for Nestle. We wanted to invite Robert to talk about the changing landscape of the manufacturing sector particularly with how AI is being implemented. Robert, please come to the rostrum. Please welcome Robert to the rostrum. (*Applause*)

ROBERT BATTELL (London): President, Congress, my name is Robert Battell and I am from the London Region. I am proud to be the GMB convenor at Nestlé Farhina and I am speaking in support of the Special Report. Congress, it is heartbreaking to see colleagues and friends you have worked with for years lose their jobs and be replaced by robots. That cannot be right but that is what is happening at Nestlé and any other businesses around the UK. It is a terrifying version of the future but it does not have to be this way. AI and robotics will change the world of work just as much as the Industrial Revolution did. We can't stand in the way of progress and AI is not the enemy: it genuinely can make work better. It opens incredible opportunities but also carries huge risks. We cannot leave it to companies to do the right thing because we all know their priority will be the bottom line. The Government must legislate to protect workers' jobs and guarantee retraining and redeployment when it is possible. That is what needs to happen now at Nestlé, before hundreds of workers are left behind.

We need to be honest about something else as well. Workers and reps are already finding practical ways of using new technology in the workplace every single day, not to replace people but to strengthen their voice, improve communication and make sure concerns are heard clearly. That tells you everything about the choice in front of us. This technology can be used to cut jobs and silence workers, or it can be used to support

people, improve safety and help working people do their jobs better. The difference is not the technology itself but who controls it, who benefits from it and whether workers have a real say in how it is introduced. In solidarity! Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Robert. It is really good to hear your first-hand experience.

Can I just remind you about the chairs. I know it is really tight between the tables but when people get up and move their chairs, if they could try to lift them, otherwise that noise echoes around the hall. Thank you.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: Private Section

THE PRESIDENT: We move on to Industrial & Economic Policy. Can I have the movers of Motions 130, 132, 133 and 134 all down the front, please. Can I have the mover of Motion 130 to the rostrum? That is Southern Region, I think.

MOTION 130

JUDGES - NEITHER PUNCHBAGS NOR PUPPETS

MOTION 130

130. JUDGES - NEITHER PUNCHBAGS NOR PUPPETS

This Congress condemns the increasing tendency of politicians, the media and others to unfairly criticise judges and decisions they make on behalf of Society (“judges” include all members of the judiciary). In everyone’s interest, judges must be free to make decisions according to the law and the evidence, free from outside pressure.

Congress notes the Lady Chief Justice’s growing concerns about judicial safety. These concerns are shared by members of GMB Judicial Branch.

Congress finds it unacceptable for politicians, the media or anyone else to promote their political agendas by making unfair and inflammatory comments about judges. Sometimes people who hear these comments take matters into their own hands.

Congress reiterates the right of judges, like other GMB members, to be free from threats to them and their families because of the work they do. Congress resolves to campaign against harassment of, and attempts to intimidate, judges.

Congress expects an effective response from the Ministry of Justice and Secretary of State to such unfair criticism, in accordance with the Nauru Declaration on the physical and mental well-being of judges. It instructs national GMB staff in contact with Ministers and MPs to lobby them accordingly.

J25 GMB JUDGES BRANCH SOUTHERN REGION

(Carried)

GERRY HACKETT (Southern): Madam President, Congress, today I want to speak to you about something, something that sits at the very heart of the functioning of democracy: judges. Not the abstract idea of the judiciary but real people who carry out one of the most difficult and essential jobs in public life. Judges are entrusted with a simple but profound responsibility, and that is to uphold the law. Not to bend it, not to interpret it according to the mood of the day, not to satisfy the demands of politicians, the press or the public. Their duty is to apply the law as it is written without fear or favour and without being swayed by who stands before them or who shouts the loudest outside the courtroom. And yet in recent years we have seen something deeply troubling: judges, who should be protected from political pressure, becoming targets. Targets of politicians who should know better. Targets of commentators who should act responsibly. Targets of members of the public, who have been encouraged directly or indirectly, to believe that judges are fair game for abuse and whatever decisions do not align with their personal views. This has become prevalent recently in cases of protest and immigration.

We have reached the point where the Lady Chief Justice herself has felt compelled to speak out, expressing how deeply troubled she is by criticism from both the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and others, over judicial remarks and case outcomes. When the most senior judge in the country feels the need to publicly defend the independence of the judiciary, that should have alarm bells ringing for all of us. This is not normal, it is not healthy, and it is not how mature democracy behaves. Judges are now being doorstepped, followed, filmed and harassed. Their families have been confronted in the street. They have been threatened simply for doing their job: a job that ironically protects the very freedoms that allow people to criticise them in the first place.

Let's be absolutely clear, this is intimidation, and intimidation of the judiciary is a direct challenge to the rule of law. When politicians from all sides treat judges as convenient punch bags, when they attack them for decisions they don't like, rather than using the appropriate legislative channels to change the law, they undermine public confidence in the judicial system. They create an environment where judges are expected to look over their shoulders before delivering a judgment. Once that happens the rule of law begins to erode. Our union has always stood for fairness, integrity and respect for public service. We must use our voice loudly and consistently to remind politicians, the media and the public that judges are not political actors. They are not there to deliver the outcomes that suit the Government of the day or the Opposition of the day. They are there to deliver justice.

We must say without hesitation that judges deserve to do their job free from intimidation, free from harassment and free from political interference because when judges can't do their jobs safely and independently, none of us is safe. None of our rights is secure. None of our freedoms is guaranteed. So let us stand firmly behind the judiciary, let us defend the rule of law and let us make it clear in this country we do not allow those who uphold justice to become targets of those who seek to undermine it. I move this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Gerry, just on time. Secunder, please.

ROB BORLAND (Southern): I am seconding Motion 130. Madam President, Congress, judges are workers. They are people doing a job just like everyone sitting in this hall today. It is a job that carries real responsibility, real pressure and, at times, very difficult decisions. As a trade union, we are clear about something: our purpose is to make work better. That means standing up for workers, defending people from unfair treatment and making sure people are safe at work because every worker deserves that.

We have all seen what happens when people are targeted simply for doing their job. What starts as criticism can quickly turn personal and once that line is crossed, it creates a climate where people feel exposed and under pressure just for doing what they are meant to do. That is the risk here because judges are not politicians, they don't make law or set policy. Their role is to interpret the law and apply it to the facts in front of them. That is what they are there to do. And yet we are seeing them being targeted for

doing exactly that. When that kind of targeting takes hold, it undermines safety and undermines confidence not just for those doing the role but in the system itself.

As a trade union we should be absolutely clear, all workers deserve safety, whether that is in a workplace, on a picket line or in a courtroom. No worker should face intimidation and abuse for doing their job. This matters for our members as well. When people rely on the justice system, whether that is taking a case to tribunal or challenging unfair treatment, they need confidence that decisions are being made properly. If that confidence is weakened, the consequences are real. That is why this motion matters. It draws a clear line. Judges are not punchbags for frustration. Congress, we should stand up for that and this motion calls for our national union to do just that. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Rob. Mover of Motion 31.

ONE PARLIAMENT, ONE EMPLOYER.

MOTION 131

131. ONE PARLIAMENT, ONE EMPLOYER

This Congress calls upon Parliament and the Speaker of the House of Commons to end the outdated employment model under which individual Members of Parliament act as 650 separate employers of their own staff.

Congress believes this system is not fit for purpose. It entrenches inequality by subjecting parliamentary staff to inconsistent contracts, terms, protections and treatment based solely on which MP they work for, while placing employer responsibilities on MPs that they did not seek election for and are not equipped to manage.

Congress notes that Parliament operates as a single institution but functions as hundreds of separate workplaces with no effective central accountability, allowing unfairness, insecurity and inequality to persist across a large national workforce.

This Congress adopts the principle of One Parliament, One Employer, under which Parliament should become the legal employer of MPs' staff, while MPs retain control over recruitment and the day-to-day management of their teams.

This Congress therefore calls upon GMB at all levels to campaign for this reform and to press Parliament and the Speaker to establish a single, fair and accountable employment system worthy of a modern democracy.

This Congress also calls for the end of this model in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd. Across GMB's nations and regions, we believe in fairness and the end to bogus employment models.

**ML1 MP AND PEERS STAFF BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

LISA GILLMORE (London): I am moving Motion 131 on behalf of London Region. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, should working for a Member of Parliament mean falling through the cracks of employment law? In the MPs and Peers Staff Branch we have grown from a few hundred members to over 1,500, with over 50 active reps and a ten-person executive. *(Applause)* We see first-hand the barriers that stop too many staff from progressing on merit alone. I worked as a parliamentary researcher for MPs for almost half a decade and I have seen the inequality entrenched in our system, with inconsistent contracts, terms, protections and treatment based solely on which MP you work for, while placing employer responsibilities on MPs that they did not stand for election for and are not equipped to manage.

If you tour the Houses of Parliament, you will hear a great deal about the building itself, its architecture and its rich history. I should know as I am very often giving these tours. But Congress, parliamentary staff are not in Parliament's history. Parliament never intentionally designed a system to employ staff. Instead, a system evolved as Parliament was forced to modernise. What began as small personal offices has grown into a workforce of nearly 5,000 people, with employment structures that belong to another era. The institution itself however does not recognise a body of thousands of

staff. Instead, staff are legally employed in small teams of on average six people, encouraging all manner of poor employment practices to occur. You may have voted for your MP to represent your area, to stand up for constituents and to make laws. What you may not have voted your MP for, I would be very surprised if you did, is to manage payroll, handle grievances and interpret employment law for their small office team. Yet they are expected to do all of these things, taking time away from bettering the lives of all of us.

Without central accountability, unfairness, insecurity and inequality persists across a large national workforce. Equality officers in our branch produced a report that revealed systemic inequalities in Parliament. It showed gaps between pay based on gender, ethnicity, disability and age, and that is not acceptable, Congress. The home of our democracy needs to lead by example and have fair pay for all.

What we are calling for - one employer - we know is a system that works. We look to Australia, New Zealand and the European Parliament as examples of this system, working better for parliamentarians and their staff. We don't want to plaster around the cracks of a defunct structure because an organisation is only as good as its employees, and we firmly believe that professionalising the job of working for a MP would lead to a better Parliament, better democracy and, ultimately, a better service to the country.

Fundamentally, Parliament should live up to the values it legislates for others. We ask Congress if you believe everyone should have an equal opportunity to progress in their career then you should vote to call upon Parliament and the Speaker of the House of

Commons to end the outdated employment model. We ask Congress to vote to improve the working lives of all staff working for Members of Parliament and vote for Motion 131. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Lisa, great first speech. Secunder.

CATHLEEN CLARKE (London): First-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) The Houses of Parliament is the home of our democracy and the workplace of 1,500 fantastic GMB members. These members serve their country in very challenging conditions. Challenging because the buildings in Westminster are crumbling all around them but, more accurately, because of the ancient working practices they are forced to endure. You will be surprised to hear that of the 650 MPs sitting in Parliament today, there are 650 individual employers. To put it simply, Congress, there are 650 cooks and the broth is being spoilt.

For many of these MPs it is a role they have never had before. While they sit in the House of Commons and they debate workers' rights, some are just not good bosses when comes to their own staff. Let me now be specific. Due process is not always followed or understood. Attempts to change working practices and even sack staff without consultation is common place. It is just not what we want from our Members of Parliament.

I have worked in Parliament for three years and I know from personal experience how tough it is when a boss tries to circumvent the law for their own benefit. Congress, One

Parliament, One Employer puts a stop to that. We need your support. Please support this motion, Motion 131, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done Cathleen. Mover of 132.

TRADE UNION ACCESS

MOTION 132

132. TRADE UNION ACCESS

This Congress notes that currently the law allows Amazon to bar our Regional Organisers and Activists from access inside Amazon to talk to workers about joining the GMB.

We are only able to access workers on their way to work (though due to harsh sanctions for lateness, many will not engage) and on their way back from work (when feeling extremely exhausted and depleted from their long day).

This Congress believes that because it failed to protect Union activity inside non-union workplaces, the law up until the ERA 2025 helped the employers. Denying unions access to the workplace is a deliberate means of encouraging union busting by exploitative organisations like Amazon. By failing to protect workers and organisers inside the workplace the law has allowed non-union companies to falsely present the GMB as a 'Third Party' from outside the workplace. This in turn has allowed them to reinforce the message to workers that they are more powerful than the collective.

This Congress resolves to use the access provisions that we gain in the new Employment Rights Act 2025 to prioritise an organising drive in Amazon Warehouses across all regions and nations. We further resolve to ensure that access is on a level playing field and Amazon are not able to run ten 'captive audience' anti-union meetings with the workforce for everyone meeting the GMB is allowed. This happened during the recognition battle at Coventry in 2024 and should not be allowed to be repeated.

A25 AMAZON WORKERS' BRANCH MIDLANDS REGION

(*Carried*)

RUWEIDA BARKHADLE (Midlands): Moving Motion 132. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) We have all seen the reality of trying to organise at Amazon. For years the law hasn't just been inadequate it has actively taken the side of

the employer. As it stands, Amazon is legally allowed to bar our regional organisers and activists from setting foot inside their warehouses. We are left standing outside the gates trying to catch workers on their way into a shift, but they are terrified to stop because Amazon's harsh attendance sanctions mean a two-minute delay could cost them their livelihood. So we try to catch them on their way out, but after a brutal, exhausting, soul-destroying shift on the warehouse floor, those workers are depleted; they aren't looking for a leaflet, they are looking for their beds. By locking us out the law has allowed exploitative employers like Amazon to build a fortress of union busting. It has allowed them to pedal the corporate lie that the GMB is a third party, some outside force trying to disrupt their family. Let's be clear, we are not a third party, we are the workers organised, but when Amazon controls the entire physical space they reinforce the ultimate anti-union message that they are all powerful and the collective is weak.

But the tide is turning. With the Employment Rights Act, the ground is shifting beneath their feet. We are finally gaining statutory access provisions to enter these workplaces, but winning the law is only half the battle. Now we have to weaponise it. We must learn the brutal lessons of the past. Look at what happened during the recognition ballot at Coventry in 2024, Amazon didn't just have unparalleled access to the workplace, they used it to wage psychological warfare. For every single meeting the GMB was allowed, Amazon forced workers into ten captive-audience anti-union meetings. They deliberately deployed managers from the same ethnic backgrounds as the workers, weaponising cultural trust to spread corporate lies about our union. They flooded the bargaining unit by mass employing vulnerable migrant workers just to dilute our numbers. And they resorted to the oldest, dirtiest trick in the book, spreading malicious

rumours that they would shut down the entire site if the GMB won recognition. That is what unparalleled access looks like in the hands of an exploitative giant. They use their total control of the building to intimidate, divide and conquer. Never again.

This motion resolves that the GMB will use our new access rights under the Employment Rights Act to launch a co-ordinated, prioritised organising drive across every Amazon warehouse and every region. But we are further resolving to ensure that access means a level playing field. Amazon cannot be allowed to drown out our voice with forced corporate propaganda and psychological manipulation. Amazon's wealth is built on the backs of our members. It is time we take our place inside their walls. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, another powerful speech from a first-time delegate. Our first-time delegates are doing really well. Secunder.

JOHN-PAUL WESTWOOD (Midlands): President, Congress, I am seconding Motion 132. (*Applause*) Congress, the underhanded tactics used at Amazon in Coventry show the struggles that we face as a union when trying to organise in workplaces that have deep pockets. We all welcome the new access rights for trade unions gained through the Employment Rights Bill and call on GMB to use those rights to take the fight to Amazon and all bad employers so that our members' voices are heard irrespective of the wealth of that business. We must ensure that these laws are used so that the playing field is levelled for employees when standing up for their terms and conditions, fighting for recognition and fair pay. Never again can we allow for companies to use nefarious means to silence our workers. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, John-Paul. Mover of 133.

TB OUTBREAK AT AMAZON COVENTRY

MOTION 133

133. TB OUTBREAK AT AMAZON COVENTRY

This Congress notes that towards the end of 2025, Amazon BHX4 in Coventry faced a Tuberculosis outbreak.

During the busiest and most profitable period of the year, Amazon exposed its workforce to a serious and preventable infection by failing to act promptly and carefully. The workforce at Amazon BHX4 is made up largely of ethnic workers who commute from Birmingham, the Black Country, Leicester and surrounding areas.

This Congress believes that there are two issues at hand: one element being the cynical exploitation of migrant workers using methods verging on modern slavery; and the other being Amazon's blatant disregard for the Health and Safety of their workers and the wider community.

Further, Congress believes that the issue of ruthless companies like Amazon putting profits over the health, safety and welfare of workers needs to be dealt with.

The handling of the TB outbreak demonstrates a serious failure of duty of care.

There is a racist element to Amazon's employment practices, with ethnic minority and migrant workers disproportionately exposed to unsafe conditions. The exploitation by Amazon of workers on visas and marginalised communities is unacceptable and needs to be challenged.

Since GMB started organising in Amazon Coventry, the company have deliberately switched their recruitment practices to recruiting mainly from outside of the UK. They seek to find workers who are not fully aware of their rights and can be easily exploited. Many of the workers at Amazon are insecure migrants on temporary visas living in cramped accommodation such as Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs), exactly the kind of environment where TB can flourish. Yet at the same time, Amazon's punitive attendance policy and refusal to pay full sick pay from day one forces these workers (many of whom are GMB members) into work even though they are unwell.

To make this situation worse, many of the workers are from countries where there is a higher level of TB in the population than in the UK. This created the situation where Coventry Amazon became the engine room for a TB outbreak that risked spreading across the whole Midlands area.

This Congress resolves to press for the creation of a direct and formal channel of communication between trade unions and the Health and Safety Executive, allowing us to directly raise urgent and genuine concerns for workers – like a workplace TB outbreak - to ensure that inspections can be done as soon as a matter arises. This would put pressure on Amazon to end its reckless treatment of workers and ensure that they are properly investigated.

This Congress also resolves to demand that the Fair Work Agency launches an enquiry into Amazon's exploitative use of migrant workers as it verges on modern day slavery.

**A25 AMAZON WORKERS' BRANCH
MIDLANDS REGION**

(Carried)

RUWEIDA BARKHADLE (Midlands): Moving Motion 133. I stand before you today not just as a delegate and not just a GMB member. I stand before you as someone who is incredibly lucky to be standing here at all. Late last year, as the peak period approached, Amazon BHX4 in Coventry was preparing for its most profitable time of the year. But whilst bosses were counting their projected billions a deadly crisis was brewing on the warehouse floor. Members started reaching out to GMB with growing terrified concerns. They were hearing whispers from colleagues that tuberculosis was spreading through the site. Amazon knew. We now know they had been aware of the risk since 2024 but they chose silence, they close to keep the lines moving and because of their criminal negligence, I was exposed. By October, I was admitted to hospital. I spent weeks fighting for my life. That is the human cost of Amazon's greed. They are putting workers' lives on the line.

We are supposed to be working in the 21st century, but walk into an Amazon warehouse and it feels like we are being dragged straight back to the 18th century. We are looking at a complete lack of basic protections for human beings on the shop floor. In the eyes of this multi-billion pound corporation, workers are not human. They are treated as mere worthless disposable objects to be used up and thrown away.

This outbreak did not happen in a vacuum. It thrived because of a cynical, racist and systemic employment strategy. Ever since the GMB started successfully organising in Coventry, Amazon deliberately shifted their recruitment practices. They began aggressively hiring migrant workers from outside of the UK, workers on temporary visas, who may not fully know their rights, do not speak English and who are easier for a corporation to intimidate. Because of low pay and insecure status, many live in cramped houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), the exact environment where TB flourishes. And what does Amazon do? They implement a punitive attendance policy. They refuse to pay full sick pay from day one. They effectively hold a gun to these workers' heads, forcing them to choose between coming to work with a deadly infectious Victorian disease or losing their livelihood. Many of these workers are not vaccinated against TB. Amazon knew this and they chose to use them as disposable fuel for their profit machine. This isn't just bad management. It is methods verging on modern-day slavery. And what did Amazon do when the truth started to come out? They did the most despicable thing a ruthless employer would do. They weaponised prejudice. They played on ugly public perceptions that through their silence allowed the idea of the migrant workforce being the cause of the TB outbreak to thrive. They tried to scapegoat a vulnerable marginalised community to deflect blame from their own criminal negligence. Let's be clear, the migrant workforce did not bring this crisis to the BHX4: Amazon's greed did. They created a perfect breeding ground for the disease. They forced sick people to work and then tried to use racism as a shield to absolve themselves of responsibility. It is a disgusting and divisive tactic. This is not just an Amazon issue. This is a public health emergency. By forcing infectious workers on to the shopfloor, Amazon created a ticking time bomb for the wider community. They exposed visitors, delivery drivers, trade union reps and the families of their staff.

They failed in their duty of care to the workforce and they showed a blatant arrogant disregard for the safety of the public. When this crisis broke, the workers did not sit back, they stood up. Through the GMB, members came forward with clear, reasonable, life-saving demands. It was a blueprint and what did Amazon do? They ignored them. They looked at the workers' safety, they looked at the community's health and they looked at their peak season profit margins and they chose the money. They silenced workers, ignored the union and kept the lines moving. And that is why we can't just ask Amazon nicely any more. That is why this motion is so vital. We need structural change to hold these rogue employers to account.

This motion resolves to press for a direct formal channel of communication between trade unions and the Health and Safety Executive. When a deadly outbreak occurs, we shouldn't have to wait for Amazon's permission to investigate. We need the power to trigger immediate independent inspection the moment a matter arises. Furthermore, we demand that a Fair Work Agency once established, launches a full inquiry into Amazon's exploitative use of migrant workers which verges on modern day slavery. TB is still thriving in BHX4 ---

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry but can you wind up, please.

RUWEIDA BARKHADLE: Fellow members and the wider community are still at risk. Amazon think they are above the law and they think our members are numbers on a spreadsheet, and I am here to tell them we are human beings, we are a union and we will fight back. Thank you. (*Applause and standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Ruweida, that was another really powerful speech and I am really pleased you are here now with us at Congress. Thank you for that. Secunder.

MAGGIE PALMER (Midlands): I am here to speak in support of this motion. We heard very tellingly of Ruweida's ordeal and it is brave of her to get up. Amazon's callous behaviour towards their hard-pressed staff comes as no surprise to anyone in this hall today, does it? But the front needed for an organisation to release a statement painting a legally enforced mandated tracing-and-treatment exercise conducted by the UK Health Security Agency on that site as "an abundance of caution" - that really takes the biscuit. Without that exercise, ten other individuals with latent TB (so it was in their system but they weren't infectious) might have gone on to become infectious and experience what Ruweida did, likely severely affecting their health and that of others in their households and in the wider community. It is time to let our GMB health and safety reps provide for the welfare of their colleagues in the workplace because Amazon certainly wouldn't. Please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Maggie. Mover of Motion 134.

MAXIMUM 10-HOUR WORKING DAY IN MULTI-DROP TRANSPORT.

MOTION 134

134. MAXIMUM 10-HOUR WORKING DAY IN MULTI-DROP TRANSPORT

This Congress calls for the adoption of a maximum 10-hour working day (including all work, driving, waiting, and paperwork) in the multi-drop transport and logistics sector, with no loss of pay. This proposal is grounded in health and safety, and long-term sustainability.

Why This Matters

Excessive working days of 12–15 hours have become normalised across multi-drop logistics. These long days increase fatigue, injury risk, stress, and road danger. Workers are routinely expected to absorb delays caused by poor planning and customer waiting times.

Waiting Time Is the Real Issue

The length of the working day is driven less by driving time and more by inefficiency. Drivers routinely lose hours waiting to load, waiting to tip, or dealing with unrealistic route plans. A 10-hour working day forces accountability onto employers to fix broken systems rather than exploiting labour.

Our proposal will:

- Set a clear national GMB policy position.
- Strengthen collective bargaining at workplace level.
- Protect earnings by insisting on no loss of pay.
- Focus on workload and planning, not individual overtime choice.

Congress, this motion will not be looking to:

- Ban voluntary overtime.
- Dictate local negotiations.
- Reduce jobs or earnings.
- Ignore sector differences.

Congress notes some common Objections and Union Responses

“Drivers want the overtime” -Drivers want decent pay. Excessive hours hide low rates and poor planning.

“This will cost jobs” -Long hours drive workers out. Shorter days improve retention and recruitment.

“Customers demand it” -Safety and health must come first. Customers adapt to clear standards.

“We already have Working Time Regulations” -WTRs are minimum legal limits, not best practice.

L56 LONDON LOGISTICS BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

FLAVIU ANDREA (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Moving Motion 134. I rise to speak in support of this motion because fatigue is one of the most serious and most ignored safety risks in transport and warehousing. Across our industry, workers are routinely scheduled for 1- hour shifts and systemically exceeding them, under the false argument that a driver can work up to a 15-hour day, with start times at 2 am, 3 am and 4 am. These are not occasional

exceptions, they are built into work rotas as standard practice, and yet when accidents happen, when vehicles are damaged, when workers are injured, fatigue is treated as an individual failing rather than an industrial responsibility. Fatigue and excessive work hours contribute to roughly one in five crashes overall but in delivery and multi-drop work that figure rises with accident risks almost 70% higher where drivers have to work a 12 to 15-hour day, often for unpaid overtime: exactly the pressure we are talking about today.

Congress, fatigue is not a choice. It is a predictable outcome of long hours, night work and inadequate rest. The scientific evidence is clear, working through the night or in the early hours significantly reduces reaction time, decision-making ability and concentration. Fatigue impairs judgment in the same way as alcohol, yet we would never allow somebody to drive a vehicle or operate machinery under the influence. In transport and warehousing the consequences are severe. Increased road traffic collisions, higher rates of workplace injuries and near misses, long-term health conditions including cardiovascular disease, sleep disorders and mental health. Employers cannot continue to demand maximum availability while ignoring minimum safety. When overtime is unpaid or poorly paid, workers are pressured to work longer hours to make a living. When night work carries no proper premium, it becomes normalised regardless of the risk.

Congress, this motion calls for recognition of fatigue as an industrial hazard. It must be controlled, not ignored. That means safer shift lengths and start times, proper rest and recovery periods, mandatory premium payments for night work and overtime,

meaningful consultation with workers and unions on shift planning. This is about saving lives on the road, in the yard, in the warehouse.

I strongly encourage Congress to support this motion and send a clear message: safety must come before profit and fatigue must never be treated as acceptable collateral. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Flaviu, another great speech. Secunder of 134.

PAUL McCARNEY (London): Still a first-time delegate but a second-time speaker. (*Applause*) Seconding Motion 134: A Maximum 10-Hour Working Day in Multi-Drop Transport. What seems to be common practice by many transport employers is the need to work up to 15 hours per day, every day, to maximise profit in a struggling industry. Rates of some experienced HGV Class 1 drivers are in line with minimum wage, meaning there is a need to work as many hours as possible to get a Living Wage. Many of these long hours are caused by inefficient planning teams and customers not showing up for their delivery. Drivers are forced to wait around in weather as hot as we have just seen, sweltering in truck cabs, and in many cases their second home for five nights each week.

Imagine a tired driver in charge of a 44-tonne piece of metal moving at approximately 56 miles an hour on the motorway. During Covid delivery drivers were called heroes but not anymore and many are leaving the industry. This is why a maximum 10-hour day in multi-drop transport is necessary. Let's help rebuild this industry and support Motion 134. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Does anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (No response) In that case, may I ask Dave Flanagan to respond on behalf of the CEC.

DAVE FLANAGAN (CEC): President, Congress, Blackpool, the cloud has cleared and it is sunny outside for lunch. Responding to Motions 130, 131 and 134 on behalf of the CEC.

Firstly, on Motion 130, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. The motion call could be interpreted as calling on Congress to direct national staff to lobby on this issue on every occasion they engage with MPs and Ministers. Instead, the CEC believes that the call of this motion can be best actioned as part of the GMB's political advocacy, which is led by regional and national GMB political teams.

On Motion 131, the CEC believes that this motion could be supported with a qualification as it is calling for greater employment rights rather than specific measures that can be addressed by a relevant joint industrial committee, of which there is none for our members in this sector. The branch has explained that the motion is calling for an Act of Parliament which is needed to create a single employer model found in other Parliaments around the world so that GMB members working for MPs in the Westminster Houses of Parliament can bargain and agree standardised pay and conditions with one responsible body, rather than currently where staff are employed by 650 individual MPs with separate contracts, HR practices and office cultures. It is the same CEC's qualification that the motion should not bind the hands of members

working in other Parliaments to campaign for the same employment model if they do not wish to.

On Motion 134, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. In principle we are supportive of a reduction of hours with no loss of pay for those in logistics. Our qualification is that it will be down to local negotiations to determine the hours if they wish to take up this campaign.

Therefore, Congress, the CEC is supporting with qualifications Motions 130, 131 and 134. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Before I go to the vote, can I have the movers and seconders of the 135, 136, 138 and 140 down to the front, please. Does Southern Region accept the qualification on 130. (*Accepted*) Do London accept the qualifications on 131 and 134? (*Accepted*) I will go to vote. All those in favour of Motion 130, please show. All those against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 131, please show. All those against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 132, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 133, please show. Thank you. Anybody against? That is also carried. All those in favour of Motion 134, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 130 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 131 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 132 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 133 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 134 was **CARRIED**.*

The Vice-President took the Chair.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PRIVATE SECTION.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the speaker for Motion 135, please.

MANDATORY MINIMUM PREMIUM PAY FOR UNSOCIABLE HOURS AND OVERTIME.

MOTION 135

135. MANDATORY MINIMUM PREMIUM PAY FOR UNSOCIABLE HOURS AND OVERTIME

This Congress Notes:

1. Transport and warehousing workers keep the UK economy functioning and are routinely required to work nights, Sundays, bank holidays and excessive overtime.
2. Employers increasingly rely on unsociable hours as standard working time while failing to pay fair premium rates.
3. Fatigue caused by long hours and night work is a recognised contributor to workplace accidents, road traffic incidents, and serious ill health.
4. The absence of mandatory national standards enables bad employers to undercut union agreements and drive down pay and conditions.

Congress Believes:

1. Unsociable hours must never be treated as normal working hours.
2. Overtime must always attract enhanced pay and must not be disguised within flat or annualised salaries.
3. Proper premium payments are essential to protecting health, safety, and work-life balance.
4. National minimum standards strengthen collective bargaining and defend union-negotiated agreements.

Congress Resolves:

1. To campaign for mandatory minimum premium payments across transport and warehousing as follows:
 - Night work: time plus 33%
 - Sunday working: time plus 50%
 - Night work on Sundays: time plus 50%

- Bank holidays: double time
- Overtime beyond contracted hours: time plus 50%
- 2. To oppose unpaid overtime and any contractual arrangements that normalise excessive working hours.
- 3. To support GMB regions and branches in negotiating, enforcing, and defending these standards in all agreements.
- 4. To campaign for UK legislation establishing these rates as legally enforceable minimum standards.
- 5. To challenge and expose employers who profit from fatigue, insecurity, and unsafe working practices.

**L56 LONDON LOGISTICS BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

FLAVIU ANDREA (London): I am moving Motion 135. This motion exists because employers are cheating legally, deliberately and systematically. Across transport and logistics, night work has not been removed, it has been repackaged to dodge the law. Workers are starting at 2 am and 3 am doing physically demanding, safety critical jobs, driving heavy vehicles, unloading stock, meeting impossible deadlines. Everybody knows this is night work. But companies design shifts to stop just before three hours of night work, three, five, 15 minutes short - not by accident but by design. At three hours employers would have to accept responsibility. At three hours the law kicks in. Instead they shave off minutes and deny workers night worker status, health protection and premium pay. This is not compliant. This is exploitation through technicality.

Let's be clear, fatigue doesn't follow HR policies. The human body does not re-set at 6 am and risk does not disappear because the brief sheet says it should. Yet those workers are kept on shift for 12 or 13 hours and more, overtime is standard but because of this loophole there is no night premium, no recognition of the damage being done and no fair pay.

Congress, the law was written to protect workers, not to be used as a weapon against them. This motion demands that night work be recognised by the reality of the job, not a stopwatch. It demands mandatory premium pay for unsociable hours and over time. It demands that the loophole be closed so workers cannot be robbed of their rights by clever scheduling. Because dignity at work should never depend on missing a legal threshold by three minutes.

Congress, if we believe in fairness, safety and respect, then we must back this motion.
Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Flaviu. Can we have the seconder, please.

ANNE-LOUISE HILLYER (London): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Seconding Motion 135. Workers whose contracts require them to work unsociable hours are being ripped off. Long-term night shift work is associated with reduced life expectancy and accelerated biological ageing, with some studies suggesting a potential reduction in life-span or increased early death risk. It is linked to higher risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes, often driven by sleep disorder. A fair financial reward for the risks that are linked to night work should not be a requirement to be offered or fought for; it should be a given law. Working on Sundays and bank holidays has a huge impact on family time and should be paid accordingly. We call for it to be mandatory for night work to be paid at time plus 33%, Sunday working time plus 50%, working bank holidays double time and overtime contractual pay plus 50%. I second. Please support.

(Applause)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done Anne-Louise. Can I have the speaker for Motion 136, please?

MOTION 136

SAFETY FOR THE “SELF-EMPLOYED”: ENDING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY LOTTERY

136. SAFETY FOR THE "SELF-EMPLOYED": ENDING THE HEALTH & SAFETY LOTTERY

Many companies operating in the delivery market operate a model that relies almost exclusively on self-employed delivery drivers and sorting staff. By utilising this model, the often huge employers systematically abdicate their Health and Safety responsibilities, claiming that because these workers are "not employees," the company is not responsible for their basic safety.

GMB members at companies such as Evri are expected to handle hazardous and dangerous goods daily - including hydrochloric acid, industrial cleaning products, butane gas, car batteries, sharp items and 17kg parcels - without being provided with the most basic safety equipment. It is a disgrace that in a multi-million-pound company, workers are forced to provide their own safety boots and eye protection while handling substances that could cause life-altering injuries.

A parcel does not care about the employment status of the person carrying it. A chemical spill or a crush injury is just as devastating to a self-employed contractor as it is to a direct employee. "Self-employed" must not be used as a legal loophole to bypass the Health and Safety at Work Act.

The GMB should:

1. Directly challenge companies like Evri to demand that they provide training and full PPE (including safety boots and glasses) to all workers handling hazardous or heavy goods, regardless of their employment status;
2. Launch a "Safety First" campaign within the delivery industry to document and publicise the dangerous items being carried without adequate training or equipment;
3. Work with the TUC to lobby the government for a "Worker" status that automatically triggers full Health and Safety protections, ending the bogus "self-employment" excuse;
4. Support GMB members in pursuing legal claims against delivery companies where the failure to provide equipment and training has resulted in injury.

H36 EVRI COURIERS BRANCH NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION

(Carried)

NATHAN BELL (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President, Congress, North East, Yorkshire and the “Humble” Region, moving Motion 136. Brothers and sisters, I want you to close your eyes for a second and imagine a magical shield, a shield so powerful it deflects falling boxes, an armour so thick it repels leaking battery acid, a mystical forcefield that protects you from spinal injuries when lifting heavy loads. What’s that? Where can you get one of these miraculous magical armours? You don’t. You get one free the moment a multi-million pound delivery giant hands you a self-employed contractor agreement. According to the bosses at companies like Evri, the moment you sign that piece of paper, your bones become titanium, your eyes become shatter proof and your back is suddenly immune to manual handling injuries. But I know the truth. The words “self-employed” are not armour. They are a legal loophole used by greedy employers to systematically abdicate their basic responsibilities.

Every single day, GMB members are out there sorting and delivering parcels, and what are they handling? It is not just clothes and birthday presents. It is industrial cleaning products, butane gas, car batteries, hydrochloric acid, 17-kilo parcels, and they are doing it in their own trainers without eye protection, without a single minute of proper manual handling training provided by a company that is making millions of pounds off their backs. It is a disgrace. As my motion says, a parcel does not care about the employment status of the person carrying it. A bottle of hydrochloric acid leaking in your vehicle doesn’t check your tax status before it burns through your skin. A crush injury is actually more devastating to a contractor than to a direct employee. As a direct employee, you will at least get sick pay and a UnionLine claim.

Comrades, we are witnessing a health and safety lottery and currently the house is always winning. By passing this motion we are telling these companies, “The game is up.” Our members are asking, no demanding that the GMB:

1. Challenges these employers directly: if you profit from the labour, you provide the boots.
2. Launches a safety campaign to drag these dangerous conditions out of the dark and into the public’s eye.
3. Works with other unions to lobby the Government for a worker status that automatically triggers full health and safety protections. We have got to end this bogus self-employment once and for all.
4. Supports legal claims against any company that lets a self-employed worker or contractor get injured just to save a few quid on a pair of safety glasses.

Health and safety should be a fundamental right for anyone who breaks a sweat to make a living. It should not be a corporate luxury reserved only for those with the right contract. The CEC will say that some of this motion was covered by Motion 114, adopted at Congress 2025, but nothing has happened since then in the self-employed delivery sector, which is why it’s so important to support this motion. Let’s end a loophole. Let’s protect our people. Thank you, Congress. I move.

(Applause)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the seconder for Motion 136, please.

NEIL REILLY (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Good morning, Congress. I am from the Beverley Branch in the great North East, Yorkshire and Humber. *(Applause)*

First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) First of all, I feel it may be important to tell you this is my first performance since I played third shepherd from the left in the school nativity play in 1974.

I am standing to second Motion 136. I have spent my whole life as a professional driver driving HGVs, buses, coaches, and at this moment in time I take children to school who need that little extra help to get through the door and I also drive SEND children to and from hospitals and hospices and care. (*Applause*)

In all of these jobs, I have worked within a set of rules: rules in place to keep me and the wider public safe at all times. I have to limit my driving hours, my vehicle is licensed and regulated and I am regulated but also protected. But when I compare this to my brother-in-law, who works delivering packages for Evri, Amazon and so forth, it seems a bit of a lottery for him. He tells me stories of pressure on his driving hours, on his ability to perform his daily routine. I am going a bit off script here by the way. I apologise. (*Applause*) What is really obvious to me is his mental health and wellbeing for himself and his family. The pressure to carry out these simple tasks should be a human right for everybody. When I need to reduce the pressure, I can stop driving overseas or reduce my hours, and so on and so forth, but my brother-in-law just does not have this at all, which means bad bosses can exploit them and effectively stop them raising health and concerns to keep their job.

Congress, health and safety is a cornerstone of our environment. Every worker regardless of being employed or self-employed needs help and needs Congress to

support them. That is why today I am seconding this motion, so please support the motion for me and Nathan. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

MOTION 138

THOSE WORKING IN THE GIG ECONOMY SHOULD HAVE APPROPRIATE REST FACILITIES FOR USE WHILE WORKING

138. THOSE WORKING IN THE GIG ECONOMY SHOULD HAVE APPROPRIATE REST FACILITIES FOR USE WHILE WORKING

This Congress believes that it is fundamentally unfair that those working in the Gig Economy are deprived of rest facilities. GMB Gig Economy Members are often working long hours with no guaranteed income, and they are not provided with toilets, prayer facilities, seating, shelter from the weather, or a secure place to leave their tools for the job e.g., bikes, phones, etc.

Congress notes that this issue stems from appalling conditions for drivers at the Uber waiting area run by NCP at Birmingham Airport, as well as thefts and attacks on food delivery couriers working in Midlands' city centres. Members report being followed because their bikes and phones are targeted by groups of thieves. At Birmingham Airport, Uber drivers: have to pay NCP to wait for hours for jobs; they are having to pray on cold, wet, and dirty floors; there is no seating or security; and the condition of the toilets is disgusting.

Congress adopts, as policy, to campaign for the relevant authorities to provide necessary facilities suitable to our Gig Economy Members' needs. This would include all airports where taxi and private hire drivers work; and councils to provide hubs for food delivery couriers in city centres. This would improve the safety and wellbeing of our members while at work.

P42 PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS' BRANCH MIDLANDS REGION

(*Carried*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Neil. Can I have the seconder for Motion 138, please?

KHUSHI MUHAMMED (Midlands): I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker.

(*Applause*) Thank you. I am an Uber Eats driver and I am here on behalf of every member who works on an app which demands a day's labour but denies any responsibility for their welfare and wellbeing. This Congress believes that the health and support of gig economy workers matters. Anyone working on an app deserves

protection. Food delivery drivers are denied access to restaurants when we are collecting the food. The restaurants make us stand outside in all weathers, denying us access to the toilet or getting a drink of water. In city centres when we are working, so many times we get robbed and attack by thieves trying to steal our bikes and food. We are attacked, robbed and degraded and the companies who are profiting from our labour do not care.

Congress, it does not have to be this way. The Uber taxi drivers at Birmingham Airport were having to wait for work in squalid conditions in the NCP-operated car park. Workers deserve to be paid for being deprived of private facilities and they also have to be paid for the freezing drops under 13. This demand we are seeking for members who are praying on the floor for Eid. Comrades, this is unacceptable. Our members declined for [something] they are campaigning. They want clean toilets and are set on further improvement.

We are calling upon Congress to adopt this policy and to campaign for the necessary facilities for gig economy workers, to keep us safe, and to provide hubs in the city centres where food delivery drivers congregate so we can safely wait for work. Gig economy platforms must also be held to account for the health and safety of their workers. I urge Congress to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause and cheering*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Khushi. Can I have the seconder for Motion 138, please.

MEL SANDERSON (Midlands): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am seconding Motion 138. I would like to bring to your attention the ongoing issue that is occurring across our region on a daily basis for outside workers. Let me start by telling you a story. Imagine you are at work and you are about to take a break, and you need to use the rest room, when you notice it is pouring it down with rain, the wind is blowing and you think, “I am so glad I am not out there.” Now imagine you are us, soaking wet and the nearest facility is 15 minutes away by driving and when you get there they are closed. So, let me ask you, how would you feel if that was your relative who is soaked to the skin and the nearest facility is either locked because of staff shortages, or not available to you because you don’t work there?

Let me explain why what I mean and here is a view. Emergency services that are not allowed to use it because they are not based there. Refuse workers who are out in rural villages that don’t even have a shop, might have a GP surgery, but are refused because we don’t work there. Another example, care in the community, refused at a Costa coffee shop because they wouldn’t buy a coffee first. In this day and age, shouldn’t we be making sure in this society we all have a right to use dry, clean facilities whether we work there or not? Isn’t this just basic human rights?

I could go on and on but the message I want to get across is, no matter whether you work outside and do not work in an office-based environment, you should have the right to facilities and, although this isn’t a legal requirement in some places, it is about dignity and basic human rights. It is not just a maybe but a must.

Congress, I ask you to support this motion and campaign to help all non-office-based workers to have access to a radar key, which is this. (*indicating*) This would mean they could access appropriate facilities even if they are closed. The key could be signed for in and out every day. Please support this Motion 138. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESENT: Another fantastic speech from a first-time speaker, well done, Melanie. Can we have the seconder, please?

A SPEAKER: That was the seconder.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: It was, apologies. London Region, do you support with qualification? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Can I have the speakers for Motion 140, please.

PROTECT DRIVERS FROM JOB LOSSES DUE TO DRIVERLESS TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE.

MOTION 140

140. PROTECT DRIVERS FROM JOB LOSSES DUE TO DRIVERLESS TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE

This Congress notes that driverless taxis and private hire services are being tested and rolled out in London. While this technology may have future benefits, it poses a serious threat to the jobs and earnings of taxi and private hire drivers.

This Congress resolves to:

- Call on the government to introduce laws and measures to protect taxi and private hire drivers from job losses or reductions in earnings caused by the rollout of driverless vehicles.
- Ensure support schemes are in place, including retraining, financial safeguards, or compensation, to help drivers adapt to changes in the industry.
- Require the government to engage with the GMB Union and its members to monitor the impact of driverless services and actively advocate for workers protections.

Balanced Outcome:

Any rollout of driverless services in London and across the UK must be properly planned and regulated, with full engagement with the GMB Union and its members, and must include

clear safeguards to protect taxi and private hire drivers' jobs, pay, and conditions, ensuring no worker is unfairly disadvantaged or forced out of the industry.

**S37 SOUTHAMPTON BRANCH
SOUTHERN REGION**

(Carried)

ALI HAYDOR (Southern): President, Congress moving Motion 140: Protect Drivers From Job Losses Due to Driverless Taxis and Private Hire. Congress, over 300,000 jobs nationally are at risk yet there is very little in place to protect these workers during this transition. There are currently no meaningful laws to protect or safeguard against job losses and loss of earnings. Driverless rides will soon be operating in London. The impact on our members cannot be ignored.

Congress, we hear lots from politicians on the right about people not working or relying on benefits yet they are the ones happy to collect millions from crypto billionaires. They rarely point fingers at Silicon Valley. They don't talk about the tech bros or the rich, yet large firms are driving the rapid expansion of AI and driverless services, replacing human workers and potentially pushing thousands into unemployment and poverty.

Congress, the gig economy firms present driverless taxis as progress. They tell us this technology will increase efficiency, reduce costs and benefit society, but Congress, progress for whom? For our members, it could mean reduced earnings, fewer jobs and workers being pushed out of an industry they helped to build, with little protection and no guarantee of its future. We also have serious concerns about safety and the wider consequences of introducing driverless vehicles on our roads. Congress, the Transport

Minister recently welcomed the idea of a driverless service, but there was very little mention of workers whose livelihoods are on the line. That is what concerns our members: the lack of care and urgency from this Government.

Congress, technology will continue to develop but workers should not be expected to carry all the risk while companies take all the rewards. Innovation must not come at the expense of jobs, pay and security. It must not leave working people, our members, behind, facing financial hardship while fat cats profit. Congress, this motion calls on the Government to act now to put proper safeguards in place to protect jobs, protect pay and ensure that workers are not left behind by AI. Congress, no human jobs means no union members, means no unions. Congress, please support the motion and fight back against this hard drive. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Secunder, please.

MICHAEL FERGUSON (Southern): President, Vice-President Congress, I second Motion 140. Congress, this Motion is more than technology; it is more about people, jobs and fairness. We are constantly told that technology is inevitable and we should simply accept it, but workers should not be expected to carry all the risks and companies take all the rewards. Our members have spent years, in some cases decades, working in the private hire and taxi industries. They have paid taxes, supported their families and provided essential services to the public. Now they are being told that driverless technology is the future. Yet there is no clear plan for their workers and their livelihoods are at risk. Over 300,000 paid jobs could be affected but there is no proper strategy for what is going to happen to protect those workers. This means protecting

jobs, protecting earnings and ensuring workers are not left behind. The Government have been quick to welcome driverless vehicles, but it must also recognise its responsibilities for the workers who keep our transport moving.

Congress, we cannot allow a situation where workers are pushed out of their industries with no support. This is why this motion matters. I urge Congress to stand with our members, support this motion and send a clear message. Thank you, Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. London Region have already agreed you support with qualification? (*Agreed*) Brilliant, thank you. North East, Yorkshire & Humber, do you support with qualification? (*Agreed*) Can I ask Carol to speak on behalf of the CEC, please.

CAROL CLARKSON (CEC): Vice-President, Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 135, 136 and 138, which we are supporting with qualification. Motion 135 proposes new parameters in the working day for those in the logistics sector. The motion also ensures that this would not override local negotiations, which is helpful. Our small qualification is that to make it effective we would need decent membership levels before that campaigning and members should be able to determine the right working day for them. In principle, we support a reduction in hours.

On Motion 136, much of this motion has been covered by Motion 144, adopted at Congress in 2025, which we are campaigning on with the membership who are affected. We also will also, naturally, on cases where our members have been hurt through no

fault of their own while working, where appropriate. Our qualification is that there needs to be a wider consultation with our members over worker status to weigh up a position which satisfies the breadth of views before engaging with lobbying.

Motion 138, this is a great motion for regions to campaign on local issues and engage with their own relevant authorities. The small qualification is that this will need to be a regional or branch level campaign as there is no national lobby to engage with.

To sum up, Congress please support these motions with qualifications, Motion 135, 136 and 138. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I ask the speakers for Motion 142, 143, 145, 146 and 147 to please come up? Does London accept qualification on Motion 135? (*Agreed*) Does North East, Yorkshire & Humber accept qualification on 136? (*Agreed*) Does Midlands accept qualification on 138? (*Agreed*) CEC is supporting 140 from Southern. All those in favour of Motion 135? Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 136? Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 138? Anyone against? That is carried. CEC is supporting 140 so we will move on. Okay, all those in favour of Motion 140. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

Motion 135 was **CARRIED**.

Motion 136 was **CARRIED**.

Motion 138 was **CARRIED**.

Motion 140 was **CARRIED**.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the speaker of Motion 142, please.

PROTECTING RETAIL WORKERS AND THE PUBLIC BLEED KITS AND TRAINING IN ALL PUBLIC-FACING WORKPLACES

MOTION 142

142. PROTECTING RETAIL WORKERS AND THE PUBLIC BLEED KITS AND TRAINING IN ALL PUBLIC-FACING WORKPLACES

This Congress notes that violence and abuse against retail workers in the UK has reached record levels, with more than 2,000 incidents of violence and abuse reported every day, and an average of 70 weapon related incidents daily, according to the British Retail Consortium.

Retail workers are increasingly exposed to serious violent incidents involving knives and other weapons, often linked to organised retail crime, placing workers and members of the public at risk of life threatening injuries.

Immediate access to bleed control equipment, combined with the correct training, can be the difference between life and death in incidents involving catastrophic bleeding. A GMB representative in ASDA Whitchurch successfully secured the introduction of bleed kits as a workplace safety measure. Through fundraising and donations.

Through the work of Brenda Wright, GMB Representative at Whitchurch ASDA, this initiative has now been expanded across ASDA stores throughout the UK, demonstrating how union action can deliver improved safety even in workplaces without formal recognition.

Congress believes that protecting our members from harm is a core trade union responsibility, particularly in sectors where violence is a foreseeable and escalating risk. No member of GMB should attend work without their employer taking all reasonable steps to mitigate the risk of serious injury or death.

The provision of bleed kits without proper, employer funded training places undue responsibility and risk on workers and is therefore unacceptable. Employers have a clear duty of care to anticipate and prepare for violent incidents, including through life saving emergency equipment and training.

The success of GMB reps in ASDA demonstrates that collective union pressure saves lives and must be built into a wider, national workplace safety approach.

Congress resolves to commit GMB to campaigning for the mandatory provision of bleed kits in:

- retail stores,
- other public facing workplaces,
- and high footfall public spaces.

Demand that the introduction of bleed kits is always accompanied by:

- proper, accredited and employer funded training,
- regular refresher training,
- and clear emergency protocols that prioritise the safety of our members.

Use GMB's industrial and political influence to lobby for national standards on bleed kits and haemorrhage control training in public facing workplaces. Support GMB reps and health and safety officers to negotiate bleed kits and training as a core part of protecting members from workplace violence, regardless of recognition status. Publicly promote and share best practice, including the work of Brenda Wright and GMB ASDA representative, as evidence of the union delivering real, life saving protections for its members and the wider public.

A50 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

GAVIN NORCROSS (Wales & South West): President, Congress, moving Motion 142. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Every single day in the UK more than 2,000 incidents of violence and abuse are reported in retail. Every day around 70 of those incidents involve weapons. These are not statistics, these are our members, our colleagues: people who went to work that morning expected to come home safely and didn't know if they would. Retail workers are being placed on the front-line of a growing crisis, organised retail crime, escalating aggression and increases in life-threatening violence involving knives and other weapons and when the worst happens, when someone is bleeding heavily, seconds matters, not minutes. Seconds because in those critical moments before emergency services can arrive, the difference between life and death often comes down to one thing: do we have the right equipment and do we know how to use it?

Congress, bleed kits save lives. That is not opinion, that is a fact, but a bleed kit locked in a cupboard without training, without confidence, without a plan, that is not safety, that is responsibility pushed on to workers without support, and that is unacceptable. This is where our union shows what it stands for.

Let me tell you about Brenda Wright, a GMB representative at Asda in Whitchurch. Brenda didn't wait for policy to catch up. She didn't accept that violence was just part of the job. She organised, she fought, she fund-raised and she secured bleed kits in her workplace as a vital safety measure and because of that determination, because of the union action, this initiative didn't stop at one store, it spread across Asda stores throughout the UK. Lives are safer today because one GMB rep said, "Enough is enough." That is what collective strength looks like. That is what a union does. Let me be clear we should not have to rely on fundraising to keep workers safe. So, we say this clearly, if there is a risk of serious violence, and there is, then workplaces must have bleed kits, and if there are bleed kits then workers must have proper training, not as a tick box exercise but with regular refreshers and clear emergency protocols that put the safety of workers first.

Congress, this is bigger than one company, bigger than one workplace. This is about national standards. This is about using our initiative and political strength, demanding change, not tomorrow, not eventually but now. We must campaign for bleed kits in every retail store and public-facing workplace and we must proudly share the story of Brenda Wright and others like her, not as an exception but as proof of what we can achieve when we stand together. Because at the heart of this motion is the simple truth: every worker deserves to go home safe, every member deserves protection and every life is worth saving.

Congress, let us lead, let us act and let us make workplaces safer for our members and for the public we serve. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Gavin. Can we have a seconder, please?

(Formally seconded) Thank you.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the speaker for Motion 143, please. *(Formally moved)* Any seconder? *(Formally seconded)*

TRAINING, PROGRESSION AND DEVALUATION OF YOUNG RETAIL WORKERS.

MOTION 143

143. TRAINING, PROGRESSION AND DEVALUATION OF YOUNG RETAIL WORKERS

This Congress notes that large retail employers, including ASDA, employ significant numbers of young workers, many of whom enter retail as their first job.

In workplaces where unions operate without formal recognition and rely on partnership arrangements, decisions on training, grading and progression remain largely employer controlled.

Young retail workers are frequently described as “unskilled” despite regularly carrying out work requiring:

- cash handling and financial responsibility,
- conflict management and customer safety,
- regulatory compliance, including age restricted sales.

Many young retail workers experience minimal training and limited or unclear progression routes and are treated as temporary or disposable labour rather than workers to be developed.

Congress believes that retail work is skilled work, and the continued misclassification of retail roles devalues workers, suppresses pay and restricts progression. The lack of structured training and transparent progression entrenches inequality, particularly for young workers from working class and marginalised backgrounds. Partnership only arrangements are insufficient to guarantee fair access to training, skills recognition and career development.

Congress resolves to campaign for national retail training standards that recognise the skills required in retail work. Press major retail employers, including ASDA, to provide:

- paid, structured training,
- clear and age neutral progression pathways,
- transparent criteria for development opportunities.
- Promote the recognition of retail skills within pay frameworks and grading structures.

- Resource GMB to organise young retail workers around training, skills and progression, and to use these issues to strengthen the case for collective bargaining rights in the retail sector.

A50 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION
(Referred)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the speaker for Motion 145, please?

MOTION 145

REMINDER OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ABUSE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES/MEMBERS IN AVIATION

145. REMINDER OF THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ABUSE TOWARDS EMPLOYEES/ MEMBERS IN AVIATION

We welcome the support from Congress last year supporting the aviation sector against Abuse to Airport Workers. This was a national campaign leading to a meeting with a Labour Minister at Westminster.

Unfortunately, a year later our members are still suffering from violence and abuse which continues daily. We have recently reported 6 physical assaults on staff working for Ryanair Stansted.

Congress, London Region calls for much stronger punishment when physical assaults take place.

We believe police prosecution should be mandatory resulting in a lifetime ban across all UK airports rather than a community order.

We note that the Crime and Policing Bill going through Parliament protects retail and emergency workers. It seeks to introduce a new standalone offence of assaulting a retail worker which will have a maximum penalty of 6 months in prison and/or an unlimited fine and upon first conviction and the courts can impose a Criminal behaviour order (CBO)

We need GMB to fight for parity for all our customer-facing members across the Union.

S71 STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH
LONDON REGION

(Carried)

MIKE REYNOLDS (London): President, Congress and GMB family, London Region S71 aviation sector. Mike Reynolds, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) We welcome the support given by Congress last year supporting the aviation sector in its campaign against abuse of airport workers. Following a national campaign, a delegation visited Westminster for a meeting with a Labour Minister last year. One year on we continue to see members suffering from violence and abuse directed at them by disruptive passengers. We recently reported six physical assaults at London Stansted Airport alone. I won't go into details because they are quite distressing. We welcome the Crime and Policing Bill going through Parliament, which protects retail and emergency workers, and includes a specific offence of assaulting retail workers. Offenders could face six months in prison and/or an unlimited fine and courts could impose a criminal behaviour order. We would like to see a common banning list introduced across all airports and operators. We believe that police prosecution should be mandatory, with a lifetime ban across all UK airports.

Congress, we call for the use of body-worn cameras for all of our personnel at airports around the region so that footage can be used as evidence to secure prosecution and also it would act as a deterrent on a daily basis.

Congress, we need your support to help to bring to an end the suffering of our hard-working members in the aviation sector. As our colleagues said earlier, nobody deserves to go to work to get assaulted. I move this, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Secunder, please.

ANDREW HEWITT (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, seconding Motion 145. I represent workers at Heathrow Airport, so I was glad when I found out that Stansted Branch was moving a motion on this ongoing campaign because my branch had considered putting a similar motion forward. Since this campaign was launched in Parliament in late March 2025, I am sure that all individuals, MPs and representatives that were there and participated were keen to see progress on this issue of abuse and violence within the aviation sector, as it would seem that abuse and violence has become so prevalent across society. As retail workers are getting increased protections, to put it simply all this campaign demands is parity of prosecution. All we ask for is equality under the law. Please support this motion.

(Applause)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the speaker for Motion 146, please?

HIDDEN DANGERS TO HEALTH IN AVIATION SECTOR

MOTION 146

146. HIDDEN DANGERS TO HEALTH IN AVIATION SECTOR

This Congress notes that our members nationwide in UK airports are risking their health and wellbeing on a daily basis providing underwing services to airlines, many are doing this unaware of the risk of cancer.

Working outside in all weathers throughout the year for up to six hours or longer has a consequence from UV radiation and constant aviation fuel fumes in the air.

Our own employers do not recognise the dangers from their own vehicles which emit various diesel particles whilst members are working next to the equipment. All this is a cocktail of chemicals and carcinogens by ingestion as well as taking in fine particles via skin contact.

We urge GMB to work with the HSE and employers on ways to safeguard workers and campaign to make our members aware of these dangers to their health.

**S71 STANSTED AIRPORT BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

MIKE REYNOLDS (London): It is only me! Mike Reynolds, first-time delegate, second-time speaker. *(Applause)* I am sure many of you have jetted away around the globe without a second thought for how the flight is prepared for departure so quickly and the dangers that it involves. Our members are risking their health and wellbeing on a daily basis to provide underwing services to airlines. Many are doing so with cancer without even knowing it. Working outside on highly reflective concrete surfaces next to metallic and glass buildings, and with reflections from aircraft surfaces and vehicles, they are exposed to much higher than average levels of UV radiation. The airport authorities don't even allow them to take more than 100 mls of sun block to work with them, and not many people would pay airport prices to protect themselves with it due to low wages. Employers use the excuse if they supply any people may have skin allergies.

When the aircraft taxis in, the engines will be sending exhaust vapours over a very wide area. Many regional airports don't even have glass fences to contain any glass. On shutdown, cooling engines emit vapours and cooling brakes do the same. Add to this the diesel fumes from ground service equipment, the fuel for the aircraft, hydraulic fluid, de-icer in winter, and our members are being exposed to a cocktail of chemicals and carcinogens by ingestion as well as fine particles via skin contact.

Civil aviation ground crews are largely a transient workforce given the heavy workload and gruelling shift work it involves, but it is becoming more important that there is a large number of long-service staff and ex-workers who have to battle cancer. In fact

we have one with us today with about 30 years of service who has just won his personal battle. Good luck there, Wayne. (*Applause*)

We call on the Government to produce a detailed study on mitigating carcinogenic risk within civil aviation and make routine screening of aviation ground handling workers compulsory after five years' service. As most blood cancers show up after 10 to 20 years, routine screening will allow quicker, more effective intervention and compulsory time for employees to attend cancer-related appointments. GMB is leading the way with its register on cases regarding this and also on dust exposure.

Congress, I urge you to support this motion in order to safeguard our members from this killer which is very much going under the radar. Support Motion 146. Thank you. I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Do we have a seconder for 146, please?

JOHN MORRIS(?) (London): Good afternoon, Congress. I join you as a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) When passengers look out of their cabin windows filled with excitement as they are about to begin their holiday, they will look out and they will see some of the tens of thousands of workers who make their journeys possible. What they don't see is the invisible toxic fumes being breathed in by those workers. Our members are the backbone of the aviation sector in this country. Keeping planes moving in all weathers, our aviation crews are exposed to a cocktail of aviation fuels and particulate matter. They are also exposed to prolonged exposure to solar radiation, increasing the risk of cancer. Some studies even show that aviation crews

are ten times at risk compared to other workers. Even now the MoD is doing a study on the impact of diesel fumes on MoD workers.

Congress, this is unacceptable. No worker should be poisoned for simply earning a living. They deserve to go home after their shifts just as healthy as they started them. Therefore I urge Congress to support this Motion 146, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the speaker for Motion 147, please.

FAIRER FUNDING OF STAFF CAR PARKING.

MOTION 147

147. FAIRER FUNDING OF STAFF CAR PARKING

This Congress notes that on the 14th of December 2023, one week before Christmas, with only two weeks' notice, GMB Members were informed by Heathrow Airport that Staff car park charges would increase by 198%.

At the 2024 GMB Congress, we passed a motion to petition, lobby, and campaign to have this reversed, via Heathrow, the Civil Aviation Authority, and Parliament.

After 2 years of petitioning, lobbying, and campaigning charges have reduced by less than 20%.

- Critics of our union say that this is both a poor result, and absolutely nothing to do with our campaign.
- It has become clear that significant change can only be achieved from the top-down; from Government and CAA regulations. Heathrow can otherwise always claim that the charges are out of their control.

We call on GMB to lobby the government and CAA to change the funding formula for staff carparking to a fairer model; from an extortionate monthly charge that pays no regard to part-time workers, the sick, or those on leave, to a daily/per hour charge based on usage.

A37 AVIATION SECURITY BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

ANDREW HEWITT (London): Moving Motion 147. On 14 December 2023 with only two weeks' notice, GMB members were informed by Heathrow Airport that staff car park charges were increasing by 200%. In June 2024 at Congress, I moved a motion that passed calling on the GMB to lobby Heathrow and the Civil Aviation Authority and Parliament to reverse this injustice. I warned you we were losing members over this, and we did lose quite a few. After two years of campaigning and lobbying, the have been reduced by less than 20% and it has become clear that significant change can only be achieved from the top down. Airport authorities can otherwise always claim it is "out of their control".

Congress, I ask that we continue to press for fair and proportionate car park charges and charging models based on actual use, avoiding disproportionate impacts on part-time, sick or parental leave workers within aviation. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the seconder for Motion 147, please?

EDDY ELUM-SMITH (London): President, Vice-President, Congress, I think the last time I was a delegate was in 2009 in Blackpool. Congress, today I stand before you to shed light on an urgent issue affecting thousands of hard-working individuals at Heathrow Airport; an issue that strikes at the very heart of fairness and dignity in the workplace. Heathrow is one of the busiest aviation hubs in the world. It continues to break passenger records yet behind the surface many of the airport's essential workers - security officers, cleaners, baggage handlers and support staff - face a great financial burden. This recent increase in staff parking fees is not just a minor inconvenience, it is a direct threat to the livelihoods of those who are keeping Heathrow

running smoothly. For many of these workers public transport is not an option, due to irregular shifts, early or late hours, and the car is the only viable means of travelling. Therefore, I urge this Congress to support the motion calling on government and the Civil Aviation Authority to interfere. We must ensure that Heathrow's financial success does not translate into financial hardship for its workers. Reversing an unjust parking fees increase will provide immediate relief and demonstrate respect for workers. Let us stand together, and fight for fairness, respect and basic economic dignity. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Is anyone opposing any of these motions? (*No response*)
Ruth on behalf of the CEC.

RUTH PITCHFORD (CEC): Responding to Motions 143, 145 and 147 for the CEC. Turning first to Motion 143, whilst we have significant retail membership, it is concentrated the most in Asda. We would need to assess whether the membership density of young workers across the sector to help campaign nationally. There will be some natural limitations where there are existing recognition agreements with sister trade unions. This is why we are asking that this motion be referred so that the relevant industrial committees can make that assessment.

On Motion 145, the CEC supports the motion but with a qualification. We have long campaigned against violence and abuse directed at aviation and airport workers. As referenced, we are running an ongoing Airport Workers Against Abuse campaign. The qualification is our Airport Workers Against Abuse campaign was established by a cross-region national rep and organiser, the Campaign Group, and we believe that

specific examples of campaign demands and strategy should be run through and closely aligned with that existing group so that we have a consistent message and strategy.

Finally, on Motion 147, the CEC shares the motion's concerns about the escalating cost of staff car parking at UK airports and supports the call for a fairer model. Charges of the kind imposed at Heathrow have a direct impact on low-paid shift workers, who often have no feasible alternative to driving due to the unsociable hours required by aviation rules. The qualification is, the motion calls on GMB to lobby the Government and CAA to change the funding formula for airport car parks. While GMB can and will lobby for fair charging structures and regulatory oversight, we cannot commit to a specific statutory or regulated redesign of the funding formula, as this may involve wider questions of transport policy, planning and airport governance. Therefore Congress, we can asking that Motion 143 be referred and motions 145 and 147 be supported with the qualifications I have set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ruth. Do Wales & South West agree to refer Motion 143? (*Agreed*) Does London Region accept qualification on 145? (*Accepted*) And 147? (*Accepted*) And the CEC is supporting Motions 142 and 146. Before I continue, can I ask the speakers for Motions 151, 154, 156, 157, 158 to please come up the front. Can I also take your vote on Motion 142. All those in support? Anyone against? That is carried. Motion 145, all of those of you in support? Anyone against? That is carried. Motion 167 all those of you in support? Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. Motion 147, all of those of you in support? And anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 142 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 143 was **REFERRED**.*

*Motion 145 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 146 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 147 was **CARRIED**.*

The President took the Chair.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PRIVATE SECTION

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sonya. Can I have the mover of Motion 151, please?

We are on to Industrial & Economic Policy: Private Section.

SECTOR PAY, REAL LIVING WAGE, AND FAIR RECOGNITION FOR SECURITY WORK.

MOTION 151

151. SECTOR PAY, REAL LIVING WAGE, AND FAIR RECOGNITION FOR SECURITY WORK

This Congress notes that security officers are frequently paid at or near the minimum rates despite performing safety-critical work, managing conflict, protecting high-value assets, and supporting public safety often on unsociable hours

This Congress believes security work should be treated as a skilled occupation with pay structures that reflect the risk, responsibility and professionalism, and that poverty pay drives high turnover, skills loss, and poorer safety outcomes.

This Congress calls on the CEC to pursue:

- A GMB-wide campaign for Real Living Wage (and above) rates across security contracts, including enhancements for nights, weekends and public holidays.
- National guidance for branches on building pay claims using comparators (risk, responsibility, contract value, inflation, retention).
- A push for sectorial bargaining/fair pay agreements in the security industry, bringing unions, employers, and major clients to the table.
- Procurement rules in public-sector and publicly funded contracts that require fair pay, union access, and decent sick pay as a minimum conditions.

**X70 SCOTTISH SECURITY BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

MICHAEL CHARLTON (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 151. President, with your indulgence before I begin, I would like to make you aware of industrial action taking place today in Scotland. GMB members employed by GXO Logistics are on strike at BAE Systems shipyards in Govan, Scotstoun, with further action planned at Linwood and Eurocentral later this week. *(Applause)*

Congress, these workers supply the tools, materials and equipment that keep shipbuilding moving on the Clyde. They are fighting for fair pay recognition for the value of their work and action to close a longstanding gap between outsourced support staff and workers directly employed by BAE. GMB asks delegate from every region of our union to send solidarity to those members. Congress, their fight is our fight and they have the full solidarity of all GMB. *(Applause)*

I have cut down a bit on my speech. President, Congress, security officers are too often treated as though they are low skilled, low value and easy to replace. That is not the reality of the job. Security officers protect workplaces, they protect staff, they protect the public. They manage conflict, they deal with abuse. They work nights, weekends and public holidays. They are often the first person called when something goes wrong and the last person left on the line when a situation becomes dangerous. Congress, that is skilled work. Too often the pay does not reflect the risk, the responsibility or the professionalism of their role. Across the industry workers are still being paid at or near

minimum rates. It drives turnover, it pushes experienced officers out of the sector, weakening retention, leaving sites less safe, less stable and less prepared.

Congress, you cannot build a safe workplace on poverty pay and you cannot keep experienced security officers if every contract is awarded on the basis of who can do it the cheapest. If a worker is trusted to protect the workforce, that worker should be paid properly. If a worker is expected to manage conflict, deal with abuse, work unsociable hours, their pay should recognise that responsibility. Congress, if a contract is valuable enough for suppliers and contractors to profit from it, it is valuable enough to provide decent wages and decent conditions for the people doing the work.

The real Living Wage should be the floor and not the ceiling. Security workers should be paid at least the real Living Wage, with proper enhancements for nights, weekends and public holidays. They should have decent sick pay. Naturally, they should have access to unions and they should have fair treatment written into their contract, especially Congress, where public money is involved.

This motion calls for a GMB-wide campaign for decent pay and security. It calls for national guidance to help branches build stronger pay claims, using comparators which show the real value of the job. It calls for sectoral bargaining of fair pay agreements bringing unions to the table. This industry will not be fixed site by site, contract by contract. Security work needs fair recognition. Security officers need fair pay. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael, and solidarity to those workers in Scotland taking strike action. Secunder. (*Formally seconded*) Thank you, Scotland. Mover of 154.

PROTECTING GAS INDUSTRY JOBS AND SECURING A FAIR, AFFORDABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

MOTION 154

154. PROTECTING GAS INDUSTRY JOBS AND SECURING A FAIR, AFFORDABLE ENERGY TRANSITION

This Congress notes the vital role that gas and hydrogen will play in the UK's future energy mix, and that thousands of GMB members rely on secure employment in the gas industry.

Congress believes that the transition to cleaner energy must protect skilled jobs, maintain energy security, and ensure all households can heat their homes affordably and adequately. Congress is concerned that current policies risk job losses, fuel poverty, and underinvestment in hydrogen and essential gas infrastructure.

Congress resolves to campaign for:

1. A national commitment to hydrogen ready boilers for all future installations.
2. Ongoing investment to maintain and prepare the gas network for hydrogen and blended fuels.
3. Accelerated approval and funding for hydrogen trials in Scotland and across the UK.
4. Responsible use of domestic oil and gas resources to ensure UK energy security during the transition.
5. A national affordable heating guarantee, protecting households from rising energy costs.
6. A clear job security and skills plan for gas workers in the transition to hydrogen and cleaner energy.

Congress instructs the GMB to lobby government and industry to embed hydrogen and gas in future energy planning, protect skilled jobs, and campaign for realistic, affordable home heating solutions.

U11 SCOTTISH GAS BRANCH GMB SCOTLAND

(Carried)

MICHAEL DAVIDSON (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, GMB Scotland moving Motion 154. The climate crisis is not something to worry about in ten years. It is here now, and gas workers know it. They know that the energy system has to

change. They know the country needs cleaner energy. They know emissions have to come down. They know that the way we heat our homes and power our economy will look different in the years ahead. But they also know something else: homes will still need to be heated, bills will still need to be paid and they know the gas network still matters. They know that a transition that destroys skilled jobs before new work is ready is not a just transition; it is merely managed decline. Across the gas industry, GMB workers have the skills this country needs. They maintain the network, they keep homes warm, they respond when things go wrong. They do safety-critical work in every part of the country, in difficult conditions, when households are already under pressure and often, when failure would have serious consequences.

Those workers should not be treated as yesterday's workforce. Rather, they should be central to the next stage of the energy transition, because the skills in the gas industry are not obsolete; they are essential. The workers who understand networks, safety, installation, maintenance, emergency response, and domestic heating are exactly the workers we will need if the transition is to be delivered safely, affordably and at scale. This means serious investment in hydrogen. It means preparing the gas network for hydrogen and blended fuels and it means supporting hydrogen-ready boilers, keeping options open for households in the future. It means proper trials, proper funding and a serious skills plan for workers who will deliver the transition in practice.

Congress, we cannot build a future energy system by writing off the workers who keep the system running now. Politicians cannot talk about hydrogen while failing to invest in the infrastructure that it would actually need. They cannot fob off workers by telling them that new jobs are coming while giving them no means to get them. And Congress,

affordability matters, too. My members see it every day when they speak to energy customers. Millions are already struggling with rising energy costs.

For many families, the question is not whether their heating system sounds impressive in a government strategy document. The question is whether they can even afford to turn it on. A heating policy that offers ordinary families something they cannot afford will fail. A transition that leaves a vulnerable household colder will fail. And a transition that puts costs on to working people while offering them no security in return will not command public support.

Energy security matters as well. We cannot pretend that the UK can just switch off all oil and gas overnight while relying on gas for years to come. Importing more from elsewhere does not protect jobs, does not lower bills, and does not make the transition fairer. It simply exports responsibility, exports work and leaves this country more dependent on hostile state actors, at exactly the point when energy security should be treated as a national priority.

Congress, this motion calls for a realistic energy plan, cleaner energy, secure jobs, affordable heating, investment in hydrogen and a future for a skilled gas workforce. This is not resistance to change. This is the only the way that change will work. Congress, our members can help build a green future for Britain, but they need a plan, not slogans, investment, not uncertainty. Workers deserve a transition that protect jobs, keeps homes warm and tackles the climate crisis. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Michael, just in time before I asked you to stop.
Seconder of 154, please.

DYLAN ROSS (GMB Scotland): First-time delegate first-time speaker. (*Applause*)
Seconding Motion 154. Congress, I am pleased to second this motion because workers must not be made collateral damage in the energy transition. I am a youth officer with my branch and a member of GMB Scotland's Young Workers' Network, and I want to speak about what this energy transition means for young workers.

Our members in the gas industry are skilled workers. They keep homes warm, maintain the network, respond to emergencies and do safety critical work every day. Their work matters now and their skills will matter in the future. For generations, this sector has provided skilled, secure, unionised jobs. It has given workers a trade, a livelihood and a future. Congress, we should be building on that, not abandoning it. Across the UK, 13.5% of 16 to 24 year-olds are not in education, employment or training. At a time like this, closing down routes into skilled industrial work without real replacement jobs is reckless. Congress, we all know the energy system has to change, but change cannot be delivered by slogans, vague promises, or asking workers to accept uncertainty while the politicians talk about jobs that do not yet exist. A fair transition has to be planned, funded and realistic. It has to include hydrogen, the gas network, domestic energy security and affordable heating. It has to include investment in infrastructure, proper training, apprenticeships and training and a clear route for gas workers into the work of the future. It has to be fair to households. Families are already struggling with bills. They cannot be asked to pay the price for heating policies that have not been thought through.

Congress, our members have helped build a clear energy future---

THE PRESIDENT: Dylan, can you wrap up, please.

DYLAN ROSS: Congress, this motion is not about resisting change. It is about making sure change works for working people including young workers who deserve skilled jobs, not empty promises. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dylan. Can I have the mover of Motion 156, please.

MAKE IN BRITAIN FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND SECURITY.

MOTION 156

156. MAKE IN BRITAIN FOR JOBS, GROWTH AND SECURITY

This Congress believes the recent offshoring of contracts to build the Royal Navy's support fleet exposes everything that is wrong with British procurement policies and urges the UK and Scottish Governments to work together to deliver industrial strategies for jobs, growth and security.

Nationalised Ferguson Marine is the last remaining commercial shipyard on the Clyde and has, for more than a century, successfully built small, specialist ships. These are exactly the kind of tugs, barges and pilot ships needed to support operations at UK navy bases at Devonport, Portsmouth and Faslane, home to our country's nuclear submarines and just eight miles from Ferguson Marine.

Why, when there is a shipyard owned by British taxpayers a few miles from Faslane, will the Defence Maritime Services Vessel Replacement Programme be completed in Vietnam, Poland, Romania, anywhere but here? Why were UK yards not informed of the work never mind asked to tender? Why was Serco, the private contractor being paid £1billion to supply naval port services, allowed to award this contract to Damen, a Dutch defence giant under investigation for alleged corruption and sanction-busting, without, reportedly, having to discuss it with ministers never mind secure their approval?

This contract exposes a fatally flawed procurement system that needlessly allows the offshoring of contracts without supervision or strategic consideration. In an uncertain world, we can no longer rely on others for our security or manufacturing firepower. We must build a new industrial strategy on ambition, support and workers' experience, commitment and skills.

This Congress urges governments on both sides of the border to stress test procurement rules to ensure they do not needlessly drive contracts out of the UK. This Congress wants Scotland to make again.

**PORT GLASGOW NO 4 ENGINEERING BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

JOHN DOLAN (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, John Dolan, GMB Scotland moving Motion 156, long-time speaker and last-time speaker this time, so enjoy it! *(Applause)* Make in Britain For Jobs, Growth and Security. Congress, this motion is about a simple question: why are we sending work around the world when it should be done here and could be done here? Late last year, we heard that a contract worth around £200 million to build 24 Royal Navy support vessels had been awarded to Damen, a Dutch defence giant: tugs, barges and boat pilots that will support operations in Devonport, Portsmouth, Faslane. Faslane is the home of the UK's nuclear submarines and just miles away at Port Glasgow sits Ferguson Marine, the last commercial shipyard on the Clyde. A publicly owned shipyard. A shipyard owned by Scottish taxpayers. A shipyard with workers, apprentices, skills and a proud history of building small specialist vessels. And yet UK yards were not even properly in the running for these ships. Congress, this beggars belief. What kind of procurement system allows public money to leave the country without asking whether the work can support jobs, skills and industrial capacity here at home?

What kind of industrial strategy lets the last commercial shipyard in the Clyde look for work while naval support vessels for Faslane are built elsewhere? And this is not the only test. Programme Euston, working to deliver new docking capability for Royal Navy submarines, should be another opportunity to back Scottish industry, including

the growing workforce at Methil in Fife, but again the delays and uncertainty risk weakening the very skills and capacity the Government says it wants to protect.

Congress, in a more dangerous world, Britain cannot outsource its industrial strength. We cannot rely on other vessels, docks, skills and manufacturing capacities that security depends on. Public contracts should be awarded for their public value. They should support jobs, apprenticeships, supply chains and communities in this country. That is why this motion calls for Governments on both sides of the border to test procurement rules and stop needlessly driving contracts out of the UK.

Congress, Scotland should make Britain great again. Sorry, a Trump word here. Scotland should make again, Britain should build again. Congress, I move. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, John, lovely to see you up at the rostrum. Secunder, please.

CIORSTAI DH REICHL E (GMB SCOTLAND): Seconding Motion 156. Congress, I come from a town that produces ships for around the world. When the yard's siren sounded, you couldn't walk through the streets without seeing loads of men in oily boiler suits, where sweat and pride filled our streets. My family were among them. I am descended from engineers, pattern makers and boiler makers. It was their skills and expertise that built those ships and held their community together.

I am going to swear now. Thatcher and her cronies destroyed the shipbuilding industry in this country. They closed the yards and today, as John says, only one remains on the Lower Clyde, Ferguson Marine in Port Glasgow. This yard is constantly under threat due to fraud and an unfair procurement system. UK yards should have the right to build and manufacture our own ships and be part of the tender process. I feel passionately about this because Ferguson Marine, as John says, is owned by taxpayers: you and me, us. Earlier I mentioned my historical connection to ship building in its prime. The next generation of my family is now learning skills and knowledge in this trade. Where? Ferguson Marine. So let's keep these skills alive, improve this procurement system and let's support Ferguson Marine to build a UK for the future. And if you will indulge me, thank you Alex Logan for everything you have done for our town. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ciorstaidh. Mover of Motion 157.

CONNECT THE HIGHLANDS TO SUPPORT WHISKY WORKERS

MOTION 157

157. CONNECT THE HIGHLANDS TO SUPPORT WHISKY WORKERS

This Congress believes urgently improving the transport infrastructure across the Highlands and Islands is essential to support one of the Britain's most essential industries, Scotch whisky.

The "water of life" supports around 11,000 jobs in the region, 50,000 more across the UK, and adds £7billion to the British economy every year. Meanwhile, two million tourists travel to 150 distilleries every year making them Scotland's top attraction.

Like any successful industry, whisky depends on swift and efficient routes to suppliers and markets but, with so many important distilleries in the north, that presents particular challenges and demands priority support. That has been sadly lacking for decades when communities and businesses across the Highlands and Islands have been failed by old and failing ferries and glacial progress towards upgrading the most important roads.

Almost unbelievably, it has taken more than a decade to dual just 11 miles of the A9, the busiest and most important road to the Highlands, with optimistic estimates now

suggesting the work will not be completed for another ten years. That is not only a national embarrassment but an epic act of economic self-harm.

Communities and businesses across the Highlands and Islands, including all our members working in the whisky industry across the region, deserve more than empty promises and platitudes. The upgrading of strategic transport infrastructure is an economic necessity and must become a political priority.

This Congress urges the Scottish and UK Governments to work together to ensure improvements to roads, railways, ferries and ports across the Highlands and Islands secure every possible support and delivered as a matter of urgency.

**CLYDE BONDING BRANCH
GMB SCOTLAND**

(Carried)

LYNSAY MACKAY: President, Congress, moving Motion 157. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Scotch whisky is one of Britain's great success stories. It supports tens of thousands of jobs across the UK, including thousands in Scotland, add billions to our economy and brings visitors from across the world to distilleries and communities across the Highlands and Islands. I move this motion not just as a delegate but as a Highlander. I live and work in the Highlands. I use these roads and rely on these connections and I see every day what happens when they fail. So when I speak about infrastructure I am not talking in theory; I am talking about lived experience. I left my home in the Black Isle at 5 am on Saturday to get here for a 3 pm meeting. A taxi and four trains over nine hours for a 350-mile trip. Whisky like me does not move by magic. It depend on workers. It depends on supplies coming in and products going out. It depends on road, rail, ferries and ports connecting our communities to the rest of the country and the world. Too often the Highlands are treated as a place to visit, not a place to invest in. We have been expected to make do with ageing ferries, unreliable routes, slow rail links and roads that have not been upgraded in years. Then there is the main road to the Highlands. It took ten years to dual 11 miles of the A9 and

completion has now been pushed back to 2035. Congress, this is simply not good enough. Not for communities, not for businesses and not for GMB workers: workers in whisky, transport, logistics and manufacturing. Whisky takes time to mature and the way things are going, the whisky bottle today will be ready before we have reliable roads to move it on.

Scotch whisky is not a side story. It is a £7 billion industry that supports tens of thousands of jobs and attracts millions of visitors, yet the infrastructure that purports to support it is holding it back. It is not just roads. It is ferries that do not run when they should, connections that break down. There are over 2,000 bridges in Highland. Forty currently have weight restrictions and are classified as substandard, with a number of those being put into managed decline due to budget constraints. Routes that workers depend on and are simply not reliable. When infrastructure fails, it hits workers hardest. Longer and less safe journeys, missed shifts, disrupted lives, communities cut off instead of connected, industries constrained whilst being told how vital they are. Improving transport across the Highlands and Islands is not a local extra. It is an economic necessity. If governments are serious about supporting whisky, supporting growth and supporting workers, they must invest in the infrastructure that makes it possible.

This motion is about fairness. It is about good jobs. It is about making sure that the wealth created in the Highlands is properly supported by those in power. That means both the Scottish and UK Governments stepping up and working together, with urgency. The Highlands are not an afterthought. They are not a postcard. They are

home to workers, industry and communities, who deserve the same standard of infrastructure as everywhere else.

Congress, our members help make Scotland's national drink: they deserve national support. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Lynsay. I can see Gary was nodding in support of the whisky industry there. The seconder.

NATHAN HENNEBRY (GMB Scotland): President, Congress, Secretary for Shieldhall SO4 Branch in the whisky and spirits industry from future World Cup Winners Region, Scotland. (*Applause*) Custodians of the finest brands in Scotland and the world - that is what our members in the whisky and spirits industry are often referred to as. However, these custodians - our members - are not supported to the full extent by the Scottish and British Governments in order to carry out their roles and fulfil such a title. This comes as a result of decades of underdevelopment of rural transport infrastructure, correlating very sharply with decades of austerity measures: measures that the SNP and Labour Governments have chosen to continue. If either of these Governments want to get serious about saving and growing the whisky industry, then a dramatic and expansive revitalisation of the Highlands and Islands must occur. These Governments must improve the roads. They must improve the railways. They must improve the ferries, and they must improve the ports. That is our cry. I won't hold my breath on them acting any time soon, not before we drag them to the table to do so.

I second this motion and call on Congress to keep whisky, the water of life, flowing, so that when we win our struggles, when we celebrate our victories, our members in the

whisky industry have plenty of bottles to pass about in celebration. I second.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Nathan. Mover of 158.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNISING THE SKILLS OF CERAMIC WORKERS

MOTION 158

158. THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNISING THE SKILLS OF CERAMIC WORKERS

This Congress acknowledges that the ceramic industry is going through extremely difficult times with a number of issues.

Members that work within the industry are highly skilled but over the years many Ceramic Workers have continued to be deskilled. This leads to unfairness and low pay as they only have a job title as a production operative and not the job for example, a guildler, a lithographer or a cup handler.

We need to change this and reinstate the job titles that they deserve and to gain equality within the workplace. The pottery industry is known around the world for its highly skilled jobs so our members should be recognised for this on their job title.

Please support.

S75 STOKE UNITY BRANCH MIDLANDS REGION

(Carried)

SHARON YATES (Midlands): President, Congress, Stoke Unity S75 Branch, GMB Midlands moving Motion 158 Skills in Ceramics. *(Applause)* The ceramics industry is the world's centre of ceramics, known as the Potteries. The people who work within the industry are born and bred in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and Derbyshire, and are highly skilled working-class people. But over the years due to greed, cheap imports and fakewear, our workers have lost their identity and their job titles have been lost.

On our contracts of employment we were known as cup handlers, kiln placers, dippers, casters, spongers, lithographers, gilders and had high skills to do this precision work.

I am a highly skilled worker sticking precision handles on mugs by hand every four seconds, handling over 20,000 mugs a week. In my working life so far I have handled over 50 million mugs. Martin Allen, Regional Secretary, and Gary Smith, our General Secretary, have both handled a mug and on both occasions the handles have fell off!
(Laughter)

We have other skills as well but this allows our employers to get away with saying we are multi-skilled, so we are known now as production operatives. This is wrong. It devalues who we are and it rips our skills away from us. This leads to lower-paid jobs, job insecurity and low morale. In addition to this it puts off the young and the future generations taking up employment in the Pots. We want our job titles back. We deserve to be recognised for who we are. We are not machines. We are people with beating hearts and a long proud history. We are proud to be Potters. I am proud to be a Potter. Congress, please support. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sharon. I hope you will treasure that cup you got as a Congress gift that was made in the Potteries, it is really special. Thank you. Secunder.

PAUL PICKERILL (Midlands): Seconding Motion 158: Skills of Ceramics Workers. Pottery workers should be recognised as skilled workers, not just for the products they create but for the depth of knowledge, precision and artistry their craft demand. To the untrained eye, shaping clay may look simple but in reality, pottery requires years of

practice to master. A skilled potter must understand the properties of different clays, control the speed and pressure of their hands with incredible precision and anticipate how a piece will change through drying and firing. One small mistake, at any stage, can ruin hours or even days of work.

Beyond technique, pottery also requires scientific understanding. Workers must carefully manage kiln temperatures, timing and chemical reactions in glazes to achieve the desired strength, colour and finish. The blend of art and science is no less complex than in professions already recognised as skilled. Pottery is deeply tied to culture and heritage. Skilled pottery workers preserve traditional methods that have been passed down through generations while also innovating with new styles and techniques. Their work contributes not only to the economy but to our identity, history and creativity.

Despite all this, pottery workers are often undervalued and under-recognised. Classifying them as skilled workers would acknowledge their expertise, improve access to fair wages and protections and help sustain an important craft for the future generations. In recognising pottery workers as skilled, we are not just reclassifying a job, we are respecting a craft, honouring dedication and investing in culture and economic value that benefits all. Can I just say Sharon is doing a brilliant job fighting for all pottery workers and deserves a Gold Badge. I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. Does anybody wish to speak in opposition to any of those motions? I would be surprised if you did. I call on the CEC speaker Dave Clements to respond.

DAVE CLEMENTS (CEC): Responding to Motion 151. We have a qualification on this motion that we hope the region will accept. We support the aims of this motion but £15 an hour and sectoral bargaining and fair pay agreements are already our policy. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Short and sweet. Thank you. Does Scotland accept that qualification? (*Accepted*) Thank you, then I shall put that one to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 151, please show. Thank you. Any against? That is carried. The CEC are supporting all the other motions so I can take them all as one group. All those in favour of motions 154, 156, 157 and 158 please show. Any against? They are carried. That is the end of the motions this morning. Again, I have counted 15 first-time speakers. (*Applause*)

*Motion 151 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 154 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 156 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 157 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 158 was **CARRIED**.*

SPEAKER DEBBIE FERRIS - SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF CAMPAIGN SANDWELL MIDLANDS

THE PRESIDENT: We now have another activist speaker for our School Support Staff campaign. Debbie Ferris a GMB rep at The Orchard School in Sandwell and after months of being ignored by school bosses over serious breaches of health and safety,

last week she and 90 other GMB members walked out on strike. (*Applause*) Deborah has not only led a strike that gained huge press attention and is pressuring the school to take action, but also grown the union in her school by over 50% in the last six months. (*Applause*)

DEBBIE FERRIS (Midlands): Thank you, President, Congress, I am a first-time nervous speaker from Midlands Region and Sandwell Branch. (*Applause*) I am a workplace organiser at a special educational needs school that supports children with profound and complex needs and disabilities. In early March, a bombshell was dropped on our staff team. During a meeting that lasted less than a minute, our head teacher informed us of a restructure to our working hours and then left the room. Those 60 seconds changed everything. Staff were left shocked, confused and fearful about the future and what this would hold for them. This was a school already facing significant challenges and instead of reassurance we were left with uncertainty. It quickly became clear that there had been little meaningful consultation and colleagues turned to me for support, answers and guidance. Wanting to ensure that everybody felt heard and connected, we created a group chat where members could share information and support each other. This was open to all staff to build our union.

What followed was heartbreaking. Messages flooded in from staff who were scared and exhausted. People spoke about feeling undervalued, unheard and unsupported. These were dedicated professionals who have devoted their careers to supporting some of most vulnerable children in all our communities. Yet despite all of these concerns and being among the lowest-paid workers, they continued to show up every single day. They continued to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment. They supported

children through moments of crisis and celebrated every achievement, no matter how small. Because alongside the challenges, there were also some incredible moments.

But there were serious concerns that could no longer be ignored. We were facing increasing accidents and injuries with incidents often going unreported. Staff were covering teachers without receiving the appropriate pay. Additional pupils were being admitted despite growing pressure on staff and resources. There was no consultation with the unions on the proposed restructure and there were significant concerns around leadership. So, I organised. As the membership grew, so did our confidence. Together we set up a health and safety committee, submitted collective grievances, which were progressed into the dispute with the local authority, secured a pause in all proposed restructures and achieved a halt to further pupil admissions.

We then took our next step. We balloted for industrial action and last Tuesday more than 90 members stood loud and proud outside Sandwell Council House (*Applause*) in solidarity with parents, pupils and the teachers' union, with our second day of industrial action taking place tomorrow. (Positive vibes welcome, send them our way!) That moment showed the true power of collective action. This experience taught me that a union is far more than an organisation. It is people standing together, finding their voice and refusing to accept that things can't change. It is an extended family, that big brother or that big sister that will always have your back.

And I am incredibly proud of my members; I am proud of their resilience, their compassion and their determination to continue putting children first, even during the

most difficult times, because we when stand together, we are stronger together. Thank you. *(Applause and standing ovation)*

THE PRESIDENT: What an inspirational way to end the morning session. Debbie, we are proud of your members and we will take your solidarity back with us. Just before we break for lunch, I have just got two announcements. First, can I thank all the individuals and regions who are keeping the top table supplied with packets of sweets.

On a more serious note, Professor Alison Birtle, one of the leading experts on bladder cancer will be at the Bladder Cancer UK stand - stand 13 in the exhibition area - all afternoon today, so if anyone wants to speak to her or to seek advice she is obviously there, please go and see her. Enjoy lunch, you have got a bit of extra time to go to the stalls and look at the fringes, but be back a 2 o'clock please, thank you.

Congress adjourned for lunch.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Congress assembled at 2.03 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Could I call Congress to order. Sorry for that delay, it was a technical issue with the printer. I hope you all had a good lunch, whether you went outside, to the stalls or the fringes. Just for everyone's information, printed copies of the CEC reports are available at the information desk, so if you want printed copies, please go there. Can I ask Karen Dudley of the SOC to move SOC Report No. 4, please.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 4

KAREN DUDLEY (Chair, Standing Orders Committee): President, Congress,
Standing Orders Committee Chair moving SOC Report No. 4.

Withdrawn Motions

There have been no further withdrawn motions at this time.

Emergency Motions

The SOC has accepted three further emergency motions so far as being in order for debate. Two of these motions have the same title. From Scotland: Protect the Rights of our Lifesaving Coastguard Volunteers and from Wales & South West the same as above. The SOC recommends that these two motions are composited.

From North East, Yorkshire & Humber: Cost of Living Crisis. The SOC recommends this motion is composited with a similar emergency motion from Southern Region.

Congress, please note that there are three emergency motions on the EHRC and will be composited and debated tomorrow afternoon.

The Congress timetable will be updated and 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. 4.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. (*Applause*) That's nice. Anybody want to speak in opposition to the report? (*No response*) In that case, all those in favour of SOC Report No. 4 please show. Anyone against? That is carried.

*SOC Report No. 4 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Karen. Colleagues, we have two regional success videos to play this afternoon. It is always a nice way to start the afternoon with inspirational videos. They are from London and Southern Regions.

Success Video - London Region

(Video shown to Congress)

Success Video - Southern Region

(Video shown to Congress)

THE PRESIDENT: Another two brilliant videos showcasing everything that is going on in GMB and all the campaigns. Fantastic, thank you.

ELEANOR MARX AWARD (ALEXANDRA FINDLAY, SOUTHERN REGION)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it is my great pleasure to announce that the winner of this year's Eleanor Marx award is Alexandra Findlay from Southern Region. Alex is our rep in APCOA - the civil enforcement wardens in Bromley, South London - and was instrumental in leading members in a pay dispute this year, which eventually won them an 11% pay rise. (*Applause and cheers*) We will now play our award winner video.

Video played to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: A worthy winner of the Eleanor Marx Award but, unfortunately, Alex cannot be here in person to collect the award, so we will give it to the region and they will pass it on to her with our thanks and our congratulations. (*Applause*)

Before I move on to the motions - and I will ask the movers and seconders of Motions 293, 294 and 295 to come down to the front, please - I did have a message at lunch time that if people are going out to smoke, it is fine but can they stand away from the entrance door because apparently the smoke is coming in and stall holders are finding it gets to them, so if you could just stand a bit further away from the entrance door, please.

We do have a packed afternoon of motions, so please again keep to your speech time and do make sure you are ready to speak. The mover of Motion 193, please.

SOCIAL POLICY: CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE/JUST TRANSITION

MOTION 293

293. CLIMATE CHANGE/JUST TRANSITION

This Congress recognises the threat posed by climate change. To supplement GMB policies and campaigns on the issue, Congress agrees the following:

The CEC is instructed to consult with branches, regions and young member groups on the setting up of a network of GMB reps interested in campaigning on the issue of climate change. The network of reps to be open to accredited GMB reps. This would not have any formal decision-making powers but could act as an advisory body to the CEC or Regions. The network would supplement the work of GMB structures in the energy and manufacturing sector.

The CEC is instructed to produce proposals for consideration at Congress 2027.

PRESTON P42 BRANCH NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

(Carried)

CHRIS BOUGH (NORTH WEST & IRISH): P42, Preston Branch, North West & Irish Region, and like Dave Flanagan, a proud Seaside, to move Motion 293: Climate Change/Just Transition. The branch welcomes the fact that the subject has been allocated its own section and the CEC is supporting the motion. It is a motion which recognises the existential threat posed by the burning of fossil fuels since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, and recognises the irrefutable scientific evidence on the urgent need to cut greenhouse emissions in both the UK and globally, to minimise the risk of catastrophic increases to the earth's temperature, in defiance of the giant energy corporations, and the despotic Gulf petro-states, who use their enormous wealth and power to sabotage climate initiatives, pedal misinformation, buy the politicians and fund the climate deniers in Reform and those like the grotesque Farage, Trump and Blair, who all believe we should "drill, baby, drill", displaying utter contempt for future generations.

The motion asks the CEC to consult branches, regions and young members as to the best way to set up a network of accredited GMB reps interested in campaigning on the issue of climate change. This is not about replacing any other structures. This could help us engage with young members, supplement the union's work in the energy sector and act as an advisory body to both regions and the CEC. It could also consider various practical ways of making climate change more relevant, taking it up at a workplace level, for example, talking about workplace environmental audits based on best practice in the public and the private sector, and lobbying for statutory provision for workplace environmental reps akin to health and safety reps.

As trade unionists, there can be no compromise to a determined defence of the pay, jobs, conditions and livelihoods of every GMB member, and I think that is something that unites everybody in this hall, but there is no fundamental conflict between this, and for GMB to use its technical expertise, collective industrial power and political influence to develop our own industrial agenda. Not Miliband's, not the Labour Party's empty rhetoric that offers no new jobs, as the General Secretary rightly pointed out yesterday, but one that creates skilled unionised jobs in manufacturing and in the new sustainable industries of the future. A just transition of real substance must guarantee the pay, jobs and conditions of every worker in the gas industry and energy-intensive industries, and we know it will take trade union power if we are going to deliver this guarantee. As Dave Douglas said yesterday, we need a jobs first transition.

Congress, in that spirit, let's set up a GMB network of reps interested in climate change, and continue a balanced and pragmatic discussion on how we as a trade union can both

protect the interests of our own members and the interests of the planet on which we live. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

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

WILLIAM BENNETT (NORTH WEST & IRISH): William Bennett from Preston P42 Branch, a first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Climate change is a challenge for everyone in this hall, for our members and for our future generations, but alongside the climate crisis, comes another challenge - how do we deliver just transition? How do we protect jobs, industries and communities by responding to the changes ahead? We cannot have those conversations properly unless we listen to our members. We need to understand their views, concerns and experiences. That is what this motion does. It asks the CEC to consult branches, regions and our members on creating a network: a network of representatives interested in campaigning on climate change so that we can learn, share our knowledge and have informed discussions about the issues our members face. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. Let's start that conversation. I second, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, William. The mover of Motion 294, please. Can I ask the movers and seconders of 311, Composite 13 and 292 to be ready to come down to the front, please.

CLIMATE SERVICE

MOTION 294

294. CLIMATE SERVICE

This Congress recognises that over the years there has been extensive criticism of Trade Unions defending “dirty jobs” like GMB’s promotion of the fracking industry and defence of North Sea Oil sector in Scotland. The problem is not the Trade Unions promote and prioritise jobs per se, but that they have failed to identify and articulate broader long-term interests of workers and how jobs can be sustainable. To achieve this, workers need to have a say over the nature and type of work that they do and play a role in determining the future of their industry.

The recent growth and utilisation of AI technologies across many industries comes with additional environmental challenges that need to be considered. AI requires powerful computer processors to operate, and these require cooling and temperature regulation which takes a lot of energy resource which will impact on climate change.

GMB have not yet made climate change a major area of bargaining and negotiation on behalf of its members. GMB has approached climate and environmental issues as non-adversarial and separate from core industrial relation issues. British labour law does not allow for workplace climate action i.e. the right to strike is limited to a narrow range of employment issues. However, GMB can challenge these constraints through building campaigns which link climate and employment demands together.

Therefore, this Congress calls on the GMB to:

- Build climate campaigns and bargaining models that embed employment security as a key climate and sustainability demand.
- Include, where applicable, the impact of the use of AI on climate change as part of those models, and ways to mitigate such impact.
- Build further understanding through Workers’ political education as a crucial step in developing a climate bargaining approach.
- Ensure that development of the political education programme develops concrete understanding of the ways in which workers, firms and sectors are exposed to present and future climate impacts and the development of worker-led strategies.
- Put climate bargaining at the Centre of everything GMB does including channeling greater resources to research climate impacts on sectors, members, and to climate campaigning.

**X34 GMB@PCS BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Referred)

VALERIE BROOKS (London): Good afternoon, President, Vice-President, Congress.

I am moving Motion 194. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker.

(Applause) Conference, the transition to a green economy must be led by the trade union movement. For too long unions have been criticised for defending so-called dirty jobs, whether that is support for fracking or the defence of the North Sea oil sector in Scotland. But the problem is not that GMB promotes and prioritises jobs, the problem is that too often it has failed to identify and accommodate the broader long-term

interests of workers and to show how these jobs can also be sustainable. GMB must now ask what sustainable jobs really look like, how workers can have a real say over the work they do and how they can help shape the future of their industries. There is a direct relationship between insecurity of jobs, unsustainable labour practices and unsustainable production models on which our economy is built. If we are serious about transitioning away from a carbon-based economy, then workers and their unions must be able to take collective action to challenge an economic system that seeks to extract maximum value at any cost. That is why GMB must work collectively within and across the sectors to build climate organising at workplace and sector level, because employers exploit both workers and the environment across all these spaces at once.

We recognise that GMB has taken steps to work more closely with worker-led campaigns such as Workers Power the Future and Climate Jobs UK, but we need to do more to harness our labour power, to transform the world, because nobody else is going to do this for us. The quality of working life is inseparable from the quality of social, family and community lives. That means demand sustainable work must also be demands for sustainable living. In the absence of any serious proposals for a transitional industrial strategy in the political mainstream, it falls to the trade union movement to show what the future can look like and to organise for it.

So, if we are serious about this, these are the priorities GMB must take forward as we assert our role in shaping and taking control of the transition from a high-carbon economy. Members must be empowered to put climate change on an industrial footing. Climate bargaining needs to be integrated into GMB campaigns for employment rights. GMB needs to channel greater resources to climate campaigning. GMB needs to put

climate bargaining at the centre of everything we do. As workers and trade unionists, we must use our collective power and our strength to ensure that the goods we produce and the services we provide are socially useful and sustainable, not simply whatever makes profit for someone else. Conference, I urge you to support Motion 294.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Val, that was perfect timing. And I like the colour of your blouse! Secunder please. *(Formally seconded)* Thank you. Mover of Motion 295.

SAVE OUR COASTLINE.

MOTION 295

295. SAVE OUR COASTLINE

This Congress calls for a campaign through its GMB MP's to bring weight to the Government to invest URGENTLY to save our Norfolk Coastline and compensate the Residents that have had to evict their homes due to the corrosion of the cliffs.

E12 EAST DEREHAM BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

JAN SMITH (RMA, London): Afternoon, colleagues, President, Vice-President, General Secretary. Moving Motion 295: Save Our Coastline. Colleagues, this affects me deeply. What I am talking about is what is happening in East Anglia, where I come from, and it could also happen to some of you who live along a coastline. Within my own region I have grown up seeing the coastlines of Hemsby, Happisburgh and Trimingham. Dunstan has already gone under the water. Our cliff lines are falling badly. No money is being put in to save our coastline. One member of the public put

his own money in and brought in rocks and things to help to secure it, to save homes falling into the sea. Sadly, he got told he would be prosecuted and he had to take it all down.

On Saturday 31st (?) of this year, this picture shows how close our sea is and how these cliffs have eroded (*indicating newspaper article*). Since that time, the cliffs have eroded even more and at that time there were 18 homes put at risk. I can tell you a lot of those homes have already been demolished. It is sad for those residents because they had bought those homes as their last living abode. They had to move out they have sadly had to watch their homes being demolished completely. Plus they are not getting any compensation for that. The government do not give compensation for the demolition of their homes. We need to campaign to support our coastline because before long these villages will become under water. We are also in danger of losing our Broads. The Broads are very important and a lot of you people probably come down to Norfolk and holiday there, so you know what they are like.

Please support this motion. As I say, it is dear to my heart. There are a lot of our members who work in these areas so I am not only speaking of my own views, I am speaking on their behalf as well. Colleagues, please support. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jan. Secunder.

ALAN LAW (London): Seconding Motion 295: Save Our Coastline. Congress, Norfolk coastline is one of the fastest eroding in Europe. This rapid erosion is caused by the North Sea striking glacial sands and clay cliffs, made worse by climate change

and more frequent storms. Happisburgh is constantly under rapid retreat and the village has lost over 250 metres of land. All of north Norfolk coastlines have the same issue. Hemsby has lost over 300 metres of coastline, resulting in homes and infrastructure disappearing.

The Government is mapping out a long-term approach to the entire Norfolk coastline. The policy generally falls into three categories. The first category is to hold the line, maintain defence; secondly, to manage realignment, move the defence inland to create a natural buffer; and thirdly, no action/intervention. Unfortunately, letting nature take its course seems to be the only option because it is the cheapest. Apart from family, one of the most precious things we have in our lives is our homes. We need to lobby government for more funding to look after our coastline, for the sake of the people that live there and the sake of the people who want to carry on living there. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Alan, thank you. Anybody want to speak in opposition to any of those motions? (*No response*) Then can I ask CEC speaker Steve McCue to come up, please.

STEVE McCUE (CEC): Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 294 and 295. Turning first to Motion 294, CEC is seeking to defer this motion to explore further workings of our worker-led Workers Power the Future Campaign and Climate for Jobs UK, which was a consolidation of trade unions representing tens of thousands of energy workers campaigning for jobs and a jobs first clean energy transition that delivers high-paid, high skilled work here in the UK. The CEC does not agree with the motion's

assertion that GMB has failed to identify and articulate the broader long-term interests of workers and how jobs can be sustainable given the longstanding work with the above two initiatives, which have precisely empowered our members to have their say in the type of work they do, and to play a role in determining the future of their industries. It remains the GMB's belief that these are paths for all GMB-organised industries to play their parts in meeting net zero emissions. It must be recognised, however, that some industries will find it difficult to decarbonise and while every effort should be made to achieve carbon reduction within individual industries, it is the overall balance across the UK that counts. Any decarbonisation plans should also be subject to a full genuine consultation with workers who are most affected by the industrial change.

Motion 295: Save Our Coastlines - the CEC is supporting this motion, however, with a qualification. We reserve the support for whether the issue requires a full campaign or instead this can be part of the advocacy work in the year ahead led by London Region and the national GMB political teams.

Therefore, Congress, please refer Motion 294 and support 295 with qualifications.
Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does London agree to defer Motion 294? (*Agreed*) Thank you, that means there is no vote needed. Does London Region accept the qualification on 295. (*Accepted*) Thank you. I will go to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 293, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 195, please show. Anyone against? That is also carried.

*Motion 294 was **DEFERRED**.*

*Motion 295 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover of Motion 311.

CONSTANTLY EXPLOITED

MOTION 311

311. CONSTANTLY EXPLOITED

Conference says that I and many other good people of all ages have tried to highlight all the issues within our Water Companies constantly polluting our waterways and the number of days there is good clean water running down the road after a burst water main is a serious problem getting nowhere.

It is now time to take a different approach as we cannot keep letting these Water Companies increase our water bills only to give it away to big Corporate investors and not spending on stopping clean water escaping and sewage polluting our waterways.

Ofwat are not helping or looking after our Members. Residents/our Members struggle to pay their heavy water bills it needs to be remembered there is no form of competition within this industry. "Water is free it comes from the sky".

There are 260 GMB MP's within the Government Conference calls on the GMB for a Campaign to get the Law changed to stop the exploitation of unfit for purpose Water Companies.

Following any Legal Prosecutions following pollution and flooding a percentage of the yearly extortionate increases must be reduced accordingly.

RMA CONFERENCE LONDON

(Carried)

JAN SMITH (RMA, London): Sorry colleagues, it is me again! It gives me great pleasure to move the motion which was passed at our national RMA Conference, Motion 311: Constantly Exploited, regarding water. Things have not changes much over past few centuries. Back in the late 1850s, there was the "Great Stink" of London

which sadly caused people to become very ill, unfortunately, taking loved ones away from their families. The problem has been mounting for many years. We have an ageing and inadequate sewage system that empties directly into the Thames. The Government of the day gave the go-ahead for civil engineer Joseph Bazalgette to move the sewage eastwards along a series of interconnecting sewers that sloped towards an outfall. This was the start of the sewer systems that changed the way sewage was looked at in the UK within villages, towns and cities.

Since privatisation in 1989, it came about that water companies have taken it back to those dark days of the 1850s, tragically still causing loss of life and, in some cases, severe illnesses. The Channel 4 docudrama series “Dirty Business” has proven that water companies had caused these issues, with sewage-related spills into waterways, whether they be streams, rivers or sea outfalls. It has become very clear that water companies are not interested in looking after our clean water unless the cost is little or nothing. You only need to ask South West Water. As for sewerage, there has been little or no real investment in any water companies’ infrastructure since privatisation. Water companies have sucked the life and financial value out of every water company. Not only did they drain the money out of the water industry, they borrowed against their company assets. It is believed they have deceived Ofwat with the end of the AMP period figures.

So, colleagues, it is time we the GMB sat down with Emma Reynolds, the Secretary of State for the Environment, and persuade her that there have to be big changes in how water companies do their business (or not!) We, the GMB must work with this MP in changing the law. Whatever profits are made by water companies, a percentage must

be deducted every time they are fined in court. These deductions should then be passed back to the customers so they don't have such a big percentage increase in the next financial year's bill. Hopefully, this will make the water companies invest money into improving their extremely ancient infrastructure. This means money will not be paid out to shareholders in big bonuses and this will keep the monies in the infrastructure as expected.

On 7 March 2026, 1,073 hours of sewage was going in our streams. Following that, on 10 March, officials decided to investigate it, but still nothing has happened. Colleagues, we have all talked the talk so now let's walk the walk and Take Back the Tap and put water back into public hands. I move. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Jan, thank you for that, and you don't have to apologise, it is always nice to see you at the rostrum.

JAN SMITH: Could I say something when the seconder has finished? It is related to this.

THE PRESIDENT: You might be pushing your luck there, Jan. Secunder please.

CLIFF RONEY (London): Good afternoon, President, Congress, brothers, sisters, Cliff Roney, London Region. firstly, I would like to say what a privilege it is to be seconding one of the first motions of the RMA. They got there in the end and I think that deserves a round of applause. (*Applause*)

Citizens Advice has recently released a statement saying the following: “More people are forced to cut back on groceries to keep up with the cost of water bills. More than a fifth of those who struggle with their water bills find themselves falling into debt with their suppliers. Last year Thames Water managed to pay £67.6 million legal fees when trying to fight off bankruptcy.” I would argue that this is acting against the interests of their own customers and their own bill payers. The hike in charges in 2025, the increase, means the average bill is now £600 when it was £500. This is disgusting. This year, it has increased by 4.5%; however, households have been particularly hard hit since April 2025. The coming years will only bring more and more and more increases so when we get to 27/28 we are going to be 30% above where we were.

In the King’s Speech, Bills were put forward planning to improve critical infrastructure with legislation to clean up the water industry. Let’s hope these are not just words and they become actions. We the GMB need to be part of this. We can work closely with the Government and we can work with other industries, given the knowledge and using the staff we have and you the members and all our stewards, to work together. Like my colleague just mentioned, water companies have to be brought back in line. Congress, I second Take Back The Tap! (*Applause and cheers*)

JAN SMITH: Colleagues, thank you to Cliff and it was an excellent fringe meeting this lunch time. Colleagues, regarding Motion 311, which you have heard me speak about, can I tell you that London Region RMA are taking this even further. On 28 July of this year we are doing a campaign about it outside the Houses of Parliament. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: That was worth it, Jan! Anyone speaking in opposition to that motion? Dare they speak in opposition to that motion? (*No response*) Could I ask Sonya to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SONYA DAVIS (CEC, The Vice-President): Congress, President, Sonya Davis of the CEC responding to Motion 311, which we are supporting with a qualification. We agree that polluting waterways is unacceptable and that water companies should be held responsible. The qualification is that fines are not enough and they don't seem to be enough of a deterrent plus in turn, they attack our members' terms and conditions. We are in this mess because our water companies are privatised and we have longstanding Congress policy that we return the sector to public hands, with proper investment to fix the system. Please support with this qualification. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Does London accept the qualification on Motion 131? (*Accepted*) I will take the vote. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Thank you.

*Motion 331 was **CARRIED**.*

SOCIAL POLICY: THE ENERGY & UTILITIES MARKET

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Composite 13 and Motion 292. As agreed by SOC 1, Composite 13 will have three regions speaking. It will be moved by London, seconded by Wales & South West with Midlands to come in as a third speaker. Could I have the mover from London Region, please.

PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING, GMB SEAT ON NEW WATER SUPER REGULATOR, AND TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION ON WATER COMPANY BOARDS.

COMPOSITE 13

C13. PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING, GMB SEAT ON NEW WATER SUPER REGULATOR, AND TRADE UNION REPRESENTATION ON WATER COMPANY BOARDS

This Congress recognises 37 years of total ineptitude and failure of OFWAT to regulate the water industry across the UK. Failing to take responsibility and act on huge bonuses for CEOs and Directors has cost billpayers hundreds of thousands of pounds over the years.

GMB has been instrumental in calling for the abolition of OFWAT so that a new single powerful super regulator can be established. Now this is in progress, it is vital that the GMB Union, as the biggest Union in the water sector, has a permanent worker seat on the board to safeguard from future failures, in particular, CEO and Director bonuses, funding for infrastructure and to protect customers who have been let down year after year.

GMB has had a trade union seat on other government regulators or independent industry bodies such as the HSE and the Low Pay Commission, so this continuity will ensure that the workers' voice will never be silenced. One of the most recent terrible failures is Southeast Water where over the Christmas period and early in the new year they failed to supply thousands of customers safe drinking water, causing school & nursery closures and cancelled hospital appointments. This is just one case of which there have been many and sadly there will be many more major ones to come.

This Congress notes with the Water Industry in England and Wales due to soon be regulated by a new Water Commission 'Super Regulator', the time is right for us to seek a reporting line for our Water Workers and other interested parties, to securely report pollutions and incidents which are in the public interest. All too often, our Water Workers are put under pressure to put their health and safety and employment at risk in order to manipulate reporting methodology.

This Congress instructs the CEC to campaign to ensure the new Super Regulator provides a safe means for reporting incidents which might otherwise slip under the radar through coercion and manipulation.

This Congress notes I speak in support of this motion because the findings of the Sir John Cullcliffe Report could not be clearer: governance within water companies is failing. These failures have led to environmental damage, declining public trust, and decisions that put profit before people.

But let's be honest—when decisions are made behind closed doors, without the voice of workers, accountability suffers. The people who keep these companies running—the

engineers, the maintenance teams, the frontline staff— are completely absent from the boardroom. And yet, they are the ones who understand the real challenges, the risks, and the solutions. Trade union representation on water company boards is not just a matter of fairness—it’s a matter of public interest. Workers’ voices bring practical insight, ethical oversight, and a commitment to safety and sustainability. Without that voice, we get short-term thinking, cost-cutting, and, ultimately, crises that harm communities and the environment.

This Congress must send a clear message: we will not stand by while governance fails and workers are ignored. We will lobby the government to legislate for mandatory trade union representation on water company boards. Because accountability should not be optional. Transparency should not be negotiable. And workers should never be silenced.

Colleagues, this is our chance to lead the fight for better governance, stronger accountability, and a future where workers have a seat at the table—not just a voice from the sidelines.

Congress, please support this motion. We have over 10,000 members in the water sector who now more than ever need our 100% support.

Moving Region: London

Seconding Region: Wales & South West

(Carried)

CLIFF RONEY (London): Heads up! Right, good afternoon, President, Congress, brothers, sisters, Cliff Roney moving Composite 13 - unlucky for some perhaps! This Congress recognises 37 years of total ineptitude and failure of Ofwat to regulate the water industry across the UK: failing to take responsibility and act on huge bonuses for CEOs and fat cats and directors and bill payers, costing thousands of pounds to the bill payers. This is nothing short of criminal! You are going to hear that again.

GMB has been instrumental in calling for the abolition of Ofwat so that a new “Super Regulator” can be established. Now it is in progress, it is vital that the GMB union, as the biggest union in the water sector (with over 10,000 members) has a permanent seat to safeguard from future failings. We need to protect customers. We have been let down year after year. This is criminal! *(Cheers)* GMB already has union seats on

other government regulatory bodies such as the HSC and the Low Pay Commission, so we now demand a seat on the Super Regulator. We demand it, we don't just want it - we demand it! We will not be silenced. The workers will not be silenced.

One of the most recent failures in in South East Water was over the Christmas and New Year period, where thousands of customers went without water, causing school closures, cancelling hospital appointments. There will be many more incidents and failures like this. My own relatives were affected by this. Little children, Oscar, Rose and Lucas, couldn't go to nursery, couldn't have a wash, had to move out, had to go elsewhere to get drinking water. This is criminal!

This Congress instructs the CEC to campaign for a new Super Regulator to be created to undertake the task of reportable incidents, including pollution, which will sometimes go under the radar and be manipulated.

Congress, I support this motion because Sir Jon Cunliff's report actually says that the failures have led to damaging decisions and ruined trust in decisions. Everybody has completely lost faith in the water companies, as was highlighted by Channel 4's fantastic "Dirty Business" programme. I was privileged to meet and spend time with the families who were directly affected by these water company failures. The tragic loss of Heather, an eight year-old child, from e.Coli 157 should never be repeated! I want my grandchildren to be able to play on the beach. I want the sandcastles not the poocastles. Come on, let's hear it! Let's be honest, running water companies and not giving the employees a voice is wrong. The people who keep the taps running - the engineers, the maintenance teams, the front-line people - they need to be listened to.

This trade union and its representation needs to get interest and get people on the board of directors. Let's get the people in there who know the industry and know what they are doing.

This Congress sends a clear message: we will not stand by and see it fail. We will lobby the Government for legislation and mandatory representation on water company boards. Our workers shall never be silenced! The workers shall never be silenced!

Brothers, sisters, that is the scripted part of this composite, but, as you know, I like to leave you with a bit of a personal slant. After 47 years of involvement with the water industry, and watching them pollute our rivers, lakes and beaches, broken promises and failures to build new reservoirs, it is now clear that successive Governments continue to fail the public. I call on everyone to sign the petition for a referendum as 82% of the British public want this brought back. The Government needs to listen to the people. Can everyone who can stand, please stand. Up you get. Just in case we will have that on there. (*Places hat over light*) Congress, with me: Take Back The Tap! Take Back the Tap! Take Back The Tap! Take Back The Tap! Congress, thank you very much. Thank you, GMB. (*Applause and cheers*) Thank you, all the stewards, the Water Forum, all the members, but most of all, thank you to you, the GMB. I am not done yet. I will be back. God bless. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: I knew you were going to do that with your hat. I just knew it. Can I have the seconder from Wales & South West, please?

ANDY MILLS (Wales & South West): Seconding Composite 13. (*Applause*) Congress, I support this composite motion on public interest reporting, on union representation and accountability in the water industry. For 37 years we have witnessed the failure of Ofwat to properly regulate this vital public service. That failure is not abstractive(?): it has been paid for by ordinary bill payers, by families who expect safe, affordable water, and by workers who have been left without a voice, while executives reward themselves with lovely eye-watering bonuses. That is not regulation. That is neglect. Colleagues, the truth is simple: when there is no accountability, people and the environment suffer. Let's be fair those of us who work in the water industry like myself, we have suffered.

We all remember, as Cliff has said, the recent crisis with South East Water, thousands left without safe drinking water over Christmas and into the New Year. That was not an isolated incident. We see these incidents happening on a regular basis. It is part of a pattern, one that tells us that the current system is broken. That is why the creation of a new water Super Regulator matters but changing the structure without the voices within it will not deliver the change people need. The GMB must have a permanent seat at that table. We represent over 10,000 workers in this sector - the engineers, the technicians, our front-line staff who keep the systems running day in, day out. They see the cracks forming long before the crisis hits the headlines. They understand the risks to the infrastructure and safety and the environment, and yet too often they are ignored and of course pressured into silence. Without that protection long term, it does not disappear. Trade union representation on the water board is not a luxury, it is not a "nice to have", it is totally essential.

THE PRESIDENT: You have a red light, Andy.

ANDY MILLS: We already have successful models on the Health and Safety Executive and on the Low Pay Commission where worker representation improves outcomes and strengthens accountability, and there is no reason water should be any different, so today Congress, let's send that message. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. The third speaker from the Midlands, please.

JASON EVANS (Midlands): President, Congress, 2006 was my first Congress here at Blackpool and I remember then I was too terrified to make a speech. I did not think I would be here in 20 years making speeches on the water sector. At that time I would estimate there were five or six people in the room from the water sector of the GMB. Last night we met as the Water Forum, and with the visitors to the Water Forum, there were easily over 30 people in the room this year. In that time we have grown and the membership has more than doubled, from under 5,000 members to now over 10,000 members, (*Applause*) We are recognised as the union in the water sector, as in our members have a voice. Over the last 18 months, Ofwat has been keen to hear our voice more, in particular over the debacle of Thames Water exposé and demise. We need to grow that.

We signed the Charter here in 2019 with Jeremy Corbyn to Take Back The Tap. It is still here. It is on Mr Roney's shirt over there. We need to pursue that. I think Cliff was very modest in his reference to the "Dirty Business" docudrama. It was a fantastic piece of work and it exposed the lack of investment, obviously particularly in Thames,

but in other areas and that has been endemic and it needs to change. The ownership models of the industry rumble on and on but our members have to have a voice on the board on the water companies. We have just had the fringe meeting over lunch. It was a very healthy and well-attended fringe. We had one of the directors from the local water company here on the panel and she openly recognised the importance of being held accountable by the GMB reps in that company and she welcomed that ongoing accountability. I think all the water companies - some are better than others - but all of them have to have that accountability to the trade unions, in particular the GMB, and the workers.

The Super Regulator is still in the melting pot as to how it will work. It looks like it will be three more years until it is actually in place and functioning, but we need a seat on that board of that Super Regulator, to ensure that our members' voices are heard and they are kept safe and our customers, or all of us who pay for water we haven't got any option where we get it from, all of us have a decent service and the assets that are in the ground and above the ground are fit for purpose. There is no justification for the situation over the last few months in South East Water. That sort of situation is deplorable and people should not be expected to go without water for many days. It just is not acceptable in this day and age. There are very simple remedies for that but the investment has to be there. So, we need that voice in the Super Regulator.

I would just like to thank all the members on the National Forum for their help and support over the years. Gary was a stalwart at the start of that forum, Anna Barnes, who is also on the top table, was also involved, Stuart Fagin is in the room and other

people and we have grown it to be that voice of the water industry. So, please support.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jason. Mover of 290.

FREE SOLAR POWER PANELS FOR PENSIONERS - CUT BILLS, DEFEND LIVES

MOTION 292

292. FREE SOLAR POWER PANELS FOR PENSIONERS — CUT BILLS, DEFEND LIVES

Congress notes that pensioners are particularly vulnerable to rising energy costs, with average household bills remaining unaffordable for many and over 1.36 million pensioner households in Great Britain reliant on Pension Credit as an indicator of low income.

While rooftop solar panels could reduce energy bills by up to £440–£500 per year for low-use households, high upfront installation costs place this beyond the reach of most pensioners.

Congress therefore resolves to call on GMB to campaign for a nationally funded programme to provide free solar power, and where necessary battery storage, to low-income pensioner households—prioritising those on Pension Credit, fixed incomes, and in social housing—and to demand that this programme is publicly funded, supported by employer contributions and green levies, and delivered through accredited, non-profit installers.

B22 BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

ROBERT BATTELL (London): Moving Motion 292. I welcome the CEC qualification. As trade unionists, we should never support supply chains linked to forced labour. Of course, solar panels must be part of a balanced and sustainable energy system, but, Congress, the issue before us today is much simpler: too many pensioners are being forced to choose between heating and eating. We know cold homes can bring devastating consequences. During the winter of 2024/25, more than 2,500 people died

due to cold-related deaths. These are not just numbers: they are our parents, our grandparents, our neighbours and our friends. People who have worked all their lives, paid their taxes, raised families and helped build this country we live in today, yet many now live in fear when opening their energy bill.

Congress, this motion is about giving those people hope. We know solar technology can reduce household energy costs year after year. The problem is the people who would benefit most are often the least able to afford the up-front costs. That is why this motion matters. This is not about replacing the support that pensioners need today. It is about creating a long-term solution that reduces bills tomorrow. As technology improves and low-cost solar options become available, including new plug-in systems, there are now opportunities to help pensioners reduce their energy costs in ways we were not able to do before.

Congress, this motion is about fairness, it is about dignity, it is about protecting vulnerable people from fuel poverty. It is about recognising that the generation who built this country should not be left struggling to heat their homes in retirement. Congress, let's support a practical solution, let's support our pensioners, let's support Motion 292. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Robert. And the seconder.

SUNIL DSOUZA (London): President, Congress, first-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Free Solar Panels for Pensioners - Cut Bills, Defend Lives. For eligible pensioners, free solar panels can do both: cut energy bills and help protect life

during extreme heat or cold. Here is how it works - right now, the main programme is by the Eco4 energy company. What do you get? Fully funded solar panels plus installation, boiler upgrades covering up to 100% of installation costs from £4,500 to £8,000. Pensioners qualify if you get pension credit or are on a low income under £31,000 per year, or if you live in a home with an EPC rating D-G. Pensioners are a priority group. Bill impact - solar PV can reduce electricity bills significantly eradicated with a battery, UK grants estimate up to a 70% cut. Defend lives - warmer homes in winter and cooler homes in summer. Less risk from heat or cold-related illnesses. Eco4 targets vulnerable households for that reason. NSW Solar for low-income households, free (*unclear*) instruction if you get a low-income household rebate and a pensioner Gold Card worth up to £600 a year. Energy-efficient homes and the ability to run heating or cooling without fear (*unclear*). I second this motion. Please support me. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Sunil. I have to ask, does anybody want to speak in opposition? (*No response*) Can I ask for Kamran Ali to speak on behalf of the CEC.

KAMRAN ALI (CEC): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC. On Motion 292, the CEC is supporting this motion with qualifications. Firstly, until there is a breakthrough in large-scale, economically viable and reliable storage technology, solar will need to be part of a sensible mix of renewables, low-carbon sources and gas, to heat homes and keep the lights on.

Secondly, the aims of this motion can only be enacted in good conscience once Uyghur forced labour has been eliminated from the supply chain for solar panels, which can be

traced in almost all solar modules that are sold in Europe. Congress, please support this motion with these qualifications. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Kamran. The CEC are supporting Composite 13. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 192? (*Accepted*) Thank you. I will put those to the vote. All those in favour of Composite 13, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 292, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is also carried.

*COMPOSITE MOTION 13 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 292 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, you might have clocked how we rearranged business this afternoon to lead us very nicely into the next guest speaker. We are absolutely delighted that Feargal Sharkey has joined us at Congress. (*Applause*) Last year he spoke at a fringe meeting in Brighton and this year we are fortunate enough to have him address the whole of Congress. As you know, Feargal has been a dogged campaigner to clean up our broken water sector. I would also like to welcome Cliff Roney to the platform, our most outspoken activist from the water sector and London Region member, who has been working alongside Feargal in these campaigns. So Congress, please welcome Feargal to the rostrum. (*Applause*)

CLIFF RONEY: Good afternoon, Congress. It gives me nothing but pleasure to introduce Feargal to you. As you know, over many, many years he has been campaigning, you the members have been campaigning, you the stewards have been

campaigning. From the bottom of my heart, I really sincerely mean this, thank you to every single one of you. Please give yourselves a round of applause for the work you do. (*Applause*)

I am going to hand you over to Feargal and I think at the end of the day we all know what he has been doing, but seldom have I had the pleasure to meet someone along my journey of life who is so sincere and so kind with his words and so helpful in campaigns, so, please over to you, Feargal. I have warmed ‘em up! (*Applause*)

FEARGAL SHARKEY: Congress, Congress, Congress, I cannot begin to tell you how proud my dad would be to hear me say those very words from this platform. You see James my dad was the Chairman of the Labour Party in Derry, branch secretary of his local union, the Electricians’ Union, and I can still vividly recall the day he showed me a tattered old copy of the “Morning Star” where he appeared on the front cover in a photograph of delegates leaving the TUC Conference, Blackpool Winter Gardens 1962. (*Applause*) The idea that one of his sons would be standing on this very stage in this very building, addressing the GMB union would have tinkled him pink and I have no doubt he would have been immensely proud.

But don’t think for one second it was only my dad. Like all good Irish matriarchal families, it wasn’t dad who dominated politics in my house, it was mum. It was mum who on the morning of Sunday 7 April 1996 ordered everyone into the car, drove us all to the other side of Ireland, where as a family we took part in the People’s Democracy civil rights march, demonstrating against injustices in Northern Ireland, where we marched down the middle of the main road between Belfast and Dublin. It is there,

Congress, as a ten year-old boy, brazenly marching down the middle of the main road between Belfast and Dublin, waving what I later discovered was an anarchist flag. It is there I learned my politics. It was the politics of rights: the right to vote, the right to a job, the right to a wage, the right to housing, the right to an education, the right to dream, the right to hope. The right simply to live and not just exist.

And what an extraordinary, no actually, what an obscenity it is that 57 years later, working-class people, their unions, their representatives are still having to fight for and defend those rights, to fight for the same recognition, defend those principles, make the same arguments, demanding the same things for working people: the right simply to live and not just exist. For a ten year-old boy I learned a very big lesson that day: do not be afraid of authority and do not be afraid to fight injustice. You see, injustice extends not only to the societies we build, the nations we create. It permeates and pollutes everything we touch.

As I speak, there is one brutal example of an injustice that instantly springs to mind. Privatised by Margaret Thatcher and presided over by 37 years of consecutive Governments, all of them seemingly drunk on a complacency founded on indifference, propped up by a regulatory system infused by failure and exploited by shareholders and industry fat cats, all of them corrupted by the fragrant of greed. I speak of course of the water industry. The brutal reality is that, as employees, bill payers, customers, we have been lied to, we have been misled, we have been extorted, we, have been cheated. For the last 37 years, we have been subject to nothing more than the greatest act of organised criminality perpetrated against the British people. And in return we have got nothing, apart from corporate greed, profiteering, financial engineering, political failure

and regulatory incompetence. In short, we have been had. Thirty-seven years after we were promised a utopian market-driven vision of greatness, a future so edifying we would all glory in the delights of an unlimited supply of clean water, where our sewage would be quietly and efficiently collected, treated and disposed of, while our rivers, lakes and seas would teem with an abundant diverse array of flora and fauna, and to top it all off, we would have the cheapest water bills on earth.

But in reality, this Thatcherite-envisaged theme park has delivered nothing but pain, sorrow and anger. Water bills have already gone up by 40% since privatisation, and this year alone, for some customers they have increased again by a breathtakingly unbelievable 54%. Today every river in England is polluted and in recent months a whole town in Devon has been poisoned, and since 2020, water companies in England and Wales have spent 23,905,000 million hours dumping sewage into our rivers and on to our beaches.

And helping guide this trail of tragedy is a regulatory system, so dysfunctional, so deeply fractured it has become indifferent to its own failure and incompetence. A system so infested by that other great pandemic of the 20th century, the Chicago School of Economics. Regulations distort the operation of free markets, I am told. The regulations we speak of, by the way, are the minimum wage, holiday pay, sick pay, maternity pay, employer pension contributions. The markets will provide I am told. Tell that to the two and a half million children in the United Kingdom currently living in poverty, 1 million of them currently destitute, with no security for where the next meal is coming from and don't even own a bed. And all of that despite this cult, like many senior figures within Ofwat the water industry regulator, they have blinkered,

blinded, nay obsessed by what they all see is the highest altar of intellectual thinking. Ofwat truly believes that instead of regulating, and regulating properly, that simply naming and shaming fat cat industry bosses will somehow trigger a sense of human decency and accountability buried within even the darkest souls of the vulture capitalists currently running the water industry, who themselves are driven by nothing more than the same greed, the same salaries, the same bonuses, self-interest and shareholder value. Don't forget that what has been going on in the water industry and companies these last 37 years is they have ramraided our bank accounts for the £85 billion they paid out to shareholders and the £112 million they have paid to executives, in the last ten years alone. Think about this: how many apprenticeships, skills programmes and retraining and upskilling would £112 million deliver for this industry and this union? I can assure you do not have to be that clever to run a monopoly supplying drinking water to captive customers.

In recent days we have seen yet more examples. South West Water fined £1.85 million for poisoning the town of Brixham in Devon. And that, by the way, was the 164th guilty offence that South West Water have been judged and have been convicted of. South East Water last weekend deliberately cut off water supplies to towns and villages in Kent simply because they have not invested enough in the equipment just to treat enough water to meet demand. This weekend Welsh Water has agreed a £44.7 million enforcement package with Ofwat, which has also now tacitly admitted since the introduction of sewage regulations in 1994, every single sewage company in this country has been acting illegally and it has taken the determination to fight, the absolute drive of people like Cliff and campaigners and community groups to now expose that for 37 years Ofwat did less than nothing, did not monitor, did not enforce, made no attempt to

make those companies comply with the law. And to top it all off, Welsh Water is now in the process of sacking 500 staff. So, not employ 500 people to help fix the networks, to help invest in them, to help secure that company's future, but to sack 500 staff, many of whom are members of this very union. I have no doubt for the remaining employees of Welsh Water it will come as little comfort to discover that that tyrant Chief Executive of the Environment Agency heavily featured in "Dirty Business", Sir James Bevan, has recently joined the board of Welsh Water.

In an ideal world, if the boards of Ofwat and the Environment Agency understood anything about honour, chivalry or principle, they would have already resigned, and certainly should do so today en masse. At the polarised opposite end of all this, despite everything they have to deal with, there are people in this audience and this union and throughout the country that day after day, week after week, with pride, diligence and dedication turn up for work in the water industry and commit themselves to keeping our taps running, to maintaining those systems and providing customers with the service that for too long now has been exploited and underinvested in, that for too long now has been corrupted and exploited, simply for the benefit of shareholders.

I am going to take a little tip from Cliff. I don't normally do this. Those people in this room that work in the water industry, can I ask you please to stand. Just trust me for a second. Those involved, please stand up, anybody in this room who works for the industry, please get to your feet. Ladies and gentlemen, can I ask the rest of us to provide a thunderous round of applause to lift the roof off this building. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your dedication, your professionalism. You have our admiration and our respect, (*Applause*)

As a result of all of this turmoil, there can only be, will only be, should only ever be one answer to this calamity: nationalisation. It is time that we the bill payers, the workers, the employees, the customers take the water industry back into our control. It is the time to breach that dam and release water from the shackles of the industrialists, the claws of the venture capitalists and from those who choose to exploit rather than enhance. And I hope this conference fully applauds Andy Burnham's recent announcement to nationalise Thames Water. It was a bold, much-needed progressive step, but let's face it, there are many, many other names we need to add to that list, for in reality we must go further, harder, faster. (*Applause*)

We all now live in a world where simply preening around the political edges of a problem are no longer acceptable. What is needed, more than ever, is brave, insightful judgment coupled with the vision and determination to succeed and deliver. What is needed in this quagmire of sewage corruption is a complete overhaul of an industry that has spectacularly failed customers, employees and the environment. What we need and what we should demand, not only for this industry but the nation and the Labour Movement is leadership and urgency. How a very good friend mine puts it: when the public demand change, leaders need to do much more than simply mirror back the word "change". The response needs to a defined shape, an agenda, sharp-edged pledges, all supported by a spine of philosophy with a view of the world that the public wants. It is now time that we stop that spiralling circle of pointlessness. It is now time to take control. It is time to take action. It is time that we flood the streets. It is time that we flood the streets with our rage, our anger, our frustration, our disappointment. It is time

to say, “It stops, it stops here, it stops now and it stops today.” (*Applause and standing ovation*)

Congress, as a nation, in coming weeks we will be faced with a choice. When The Government delivers its Clean Water Bill, my challenge to you is: Do we dare, do we dare become the ten year-old boy standing in the middle of the road between Belfast and Dublin? Do we dare to dream, do we dare to believe, do we dare to challenge, do we dare to deliver, do we dare to hope?

In the words of my fellow Irishman Seamus Heaney: “History says, Don’t Hope on this side of the grave, but then, once in a lifetime that longed for tidal wave Of justice can rise up. And Hope and History rhyme.”

My name is Feargal Sharkey. May your God go with you. Dúlúthpháirtíocht! Thank you, Congress. Be brave! (*Applause and standing ovation and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you so much. That was such a powerful, powerful speech. Cliff, thank you for everything you do as well.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: We are back to moving and seconding motions. We are now on to Industrial & Economic Policy: General. Can I have the movers and seconders of 119, 120, 121 and 122 down to the front, please. And mover of 119 come up to the rostrum, please.

MANDATORY TRADE UNION RECOGNITION IN SECURITY, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, AND OUTSOURCED SERVICES.

MOTION 119

119. MANDATORY TRADE UNION RECOGNITION IN SECURITY, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT, AND OUTSOURCED SERVICES

This Congress believes that:

1. Workers in security, facilities management, cleaning, maintenance, concierge, and other outsourced services are among the most vulnerable to poor employment practices, despite providing essential frontline services.
2. These sectors are characterised by outsourcing, subcontracting, TUPE transfers, and short-term contracts, which are routinely used to weaken collective bargaining and deny workers a meaningful voice at work.
3. Union recognition is too often limited to public-sector employers, while private contractors delivering the same services are able to operate without recognising a trade union.
4. The lack of mandatory union recognition in these sectors results in:
 - Insecure contracts and excessive use of zero-hours arrangements
 - Erosion of pay, holidays, pensions, and other terms and conditions
 - Inconsistent application of health and safety standards
 - Increased workplace stress, bullying, and unfair disciplinary practices
5. Workers performing identical roles on the same site can be subject to different rights and protections purely because they are employed by different contractors.

This Congress notes that:

1. Security and facilities workers are often employed by large multinational companies operating across multiple sites, yet these companies frequently refuse to recognise trade unions.
2. Public bodies, landlords, managing agents, and corporate clients benefit from outsourced services without being held accountable for employment standards within their supply chains.
3. TUPE regulations alone do not protect workers where union recognition is not secured and maintained following contract transfers.
4. International labour standards, including ILO conventions, uphold the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining across all sectors, including private and outsourced employment.

This Congress resolves to:

1. Campaign for legislation requiring mandatory trade union recognition in the security, facilities management, and outsourced services sectors, where workers choose to be represented.
2. Demand that any company:
 - a. Providing security or facilities management services, and/or
 - b. Operating under outsourcing or subcontracting arrangements, and/or
 - c. Holding public-sector, local authority, or major commercial contracts must recognise an independent trade union chosen by its workforce.
3. Call for union recognition to be a mandatory condition of contracts, including procurement frameworks and service-level agreements.

4. Press for stronger protections to ensure that union recognition and collective bargaining rights transfer automatically under TUPE.

Instruct the GMB to:

- Prioritise organising and recognition campaigns in security and facilities management
- Challenge anti-union practices by major contractors and managing agents
- Work with the TUC and other unions to coordinate sector-wide organising strategies

This Congress further calls on the GMB to:

- Hold employers and clients jointly accountable for employment standards in outsourced contracts
- Support members seeking recognition through statutory and non-statutory routes
- Make union recognition a core demand in negotiations, disputes, and political campaigning across the sector

X19 CAMDEN BRANCH LONDON REGION

(Carried)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER (London): President, Congress moving Motion 119.

This Congress notes that outsourcing is now widespread across commercial estates, corporation buildings and public-facing environments, where essential workers, including security officers, cleaners, facilities staff and retail workers keep workplaces running and keep people safe. These workers often carry out the same responsibilities and face the same risks as directly employed staff yet do not enjoy the same rights, protection or pay. That outsourced workers are routinely paid less, are less secure and too often ignored. That outsourcing is frequently used to weaken workers' rights, avoid accountability and divide the workforce creating a two-tier system where some workers are protected and the others are left behind.

This Congress further notes that while TUPE legislation is intended to protect terms and conditions during transfer, in practice, contracts are retendered, organisational structures are changed and protections are diluted and undermined; that under current

trade union law, workers have a route to recognition but employers routinely avoid it by delaying statutory processes and exploiting loopholes to deny workers a collective voice.

This Congress believes that outsourced workers perform highly responsible roles protecting buildings, managing incidents and ensuring public safety yet face uncertainty about their pay, conditions and rights. Without recognised union representation, speaking up is difficult and unsafe for many other outsourced workers. Mandatory recognition is essential to ensure no avoidance, no loopholes, no hiding behind outsourcing. All workers regardless of their employment model deserve a collective voice, fair negotiation, real accountability.

This Congress therefore calls on GMB:

- To campaign for mandatory trade union recognition for outsourced workers all over the sectors.
- Lobby for legislative reform to prevent employers from using outsourcing to avoid recognition obligations.
- Strengthen enforcement of TUPE protection and challenge practices that undermine the transfer of workers' rights.
- Ensure that outsourced workers who keep workplaces running and keep people safe are no longer treated as second-class workers.

Congress, rights delayed are rights denied. Representation blocked is democracy denied. Please support Motion 119 and give outsourced workers the voice they deserve.

I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. And the seconder. (*Formally seconded*) Thank you, London. Then the mover of Motion 120.

REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL INDUSTRY COMMITTEES.

MOTION 120

120. REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL INDUSTRY COMMITTEES

This Congress reaffirms its support for national wage negotiations across all industries as the most effective way to protect pay, terms and conditions for GMB members.

Congress recognises that the existence of devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland means that industrial, economic and employment policies are increasingly shaped at both national and devolved levels.

Congress believes that GMB members in the devolved nations must have a clear and effective voice with a national bargaining and decision-making structures.

Congress therefore instructs the CEC to ensure that GMB representation on all national industrial committees, including appropriate representation from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting the devolved nature of government and safeguarding the interests of their members across the UK.

A21 EVRI BRANCH GMB SCOTLAND

(*Carried*)

MARGARET BOYD (GMB Scotland): Moving Motion 120: Representation on National Industry Committees. I am asking this Congress to reaffirm its support for national wage negotiations across all industries as the most effective way to protect pay, terms and conditions for GMB members.

Congress, we must however recognise the existence of devolved Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which means that industrial, economic and employment policies are increasingly shaped both at a national and devolved level.

Congress, I therefore believe that GMB members in the devolved nations must have a clear and effective voice within national bargaining and decision-making structures.

Congress, I therefore ask the CEC to ensure that GMB representation in all national and industrial committees includes appropriate representation from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting the devolved nature of government and safeguarding the interests of their members across the United Kingdom. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Margaret. Secunder. (*Formally seconded*) Could I ask for a bit of hush? If you are going to have a conversation, you need to move it outside the hall, please. The mover of 121.

LOBBY TO END TAX PAYER SUBSIDISATION OF EXPLOITATIVE WORK

MOTION 121

121. LOBBY TO END TAX PAYER SUBSIDISATION OF EXPLOITATIVE WORK

This Congress moves to advance measures and campaigns aimed at ending in-work tax-payer subsidised wages by fighting for good jobs with proper conditions, worthwhile hours and meaningful benefits.

The current system leaves many workers choosing between exploitative conditions or dependency on Universal Credit and other in-work benefits. Some are forced to take multiple part-time jobs with unpredictable hours, shifts as short as four hours, unpaid breaks, and no benefits, perpetuating a cycle of insecurity, precarity, and financial dependence.

Congress notes that this issue is a direct consequence of systemic acceptance of low-wage insecure employment, and an under-regulated labor market that fails to prioritize worker well-being.

Congress should be aware of the human cost of this tragedy. Workers are stretched thin, juggling multiple jobs, gruelling hours, which leads to burnout, loss of family time, and diminished life quality. Tax-payer subsidised wages ultimately shift the moral obligation of fair employment away from businesses and burden the tax payer. Without meaningful intervention, this cycle will continue to disadvantage the most vulnerable workers and line the pockets of businesses, ultimately eroding the value of labor.

This Congress recognises that pushing for jobs with fair pay, sufficient hours, and meaningful benefits will reduce reliance on tax-payer subsidies and create a more equitable and sustainable workforce. By supporting policies that hold employers accountable for providing fair wages and conditions, we can ensure that workers are not forced to choose between exploitation and survival.

We therefore ask that Congress adopts as policy to fight for:

1. Ending reliance on in-work tax-payer subsidies.
2. Campaigns that promote good jobs with fair pay, guaranteed hours, and comprehensive benefits.
3. Undertake legislative and lobbying efforts to ensure employers take responsibility for providing sustainable, equitable employment practices.

**Y10 YORK GENERAL
NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION**

(Carried)

JONATHAN GREGSON (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Bradford Public Services Branch B30. I am not a first-time delegate, it is not my first speech but it is the first time I have done one for a motion instead of against it. I am from the noisy and political region of North East, Yorkshire & Humber. *(Applause)* I am wearing a t-shirt for a noisy political band from Middlesbrough. Why am I telling you this? Because they are called Benefits, appropriately enough, because that is what I do for a living for the last 20 years for Bradford Council. I have worked for over 20 years in housing benefit. Before that I did all those part-time jobs that we are talking about in the motion today: 121: Lobby to End Taxpayer Subsidisation of Exploitative Work. So, I really do know what I am talking about when it comes to both sides of this.

The motion touches on employment, pay, wages and benefits. It is not about taking away part-time working. It is not about taking away benefits from people. Part of it is this, what is the effective top rate of tax in the UK? Most people would say it is 45% and paid by people who earn more than one £125,000 a year. That is wrong. It is effectively 55%, which is done to the lowest-paid workers, those people who are getting

what we call in-work benefits. They get 55% taken off their income for every pound that they earn. So I ask you, is it right somebody on £125,000 a year if you get an extra tenner on your income you get £5.50 to spend, but if you earn £125 a week, you get £4.50 to spend? That is one of the things that is really, really wrong with the benefits system. The lowest paid lose out more than the richest. There needs to be an overhaul of the benefits system. Here we are, it is eight years on from the motion that was done in 2018 at Congress to request that, and the system is still not fit for purpose.

Employers benefit from part-time workers on eight hours a week and that gets you round those pesky zero-hours contract laws that we just brought in. They ask for extra hours and are not paid overtime rates, holiday pay is minimal as well, as the state subsidising the worker's income and therefore, indirectly, the benefits system is subsidising the employer's profits. If you are work in part-time jobs, there is nothing full time, you are constantly juggling your time getting from one job to the next, checking rotas and getting by. That is what it is like. You are getting by. I am not going to cover the motion. All I am going to say is it is about getting employers to provide full-time work instead of using part-time workers to undermine rates and wages. It is about a benefits system that should be fit for purpose and bout fighting for dignity in full-time work instead of scrabbling around exhausted from working two or three jobs just to keep a roof over your head. Congress, I ask you to support this motion.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Jonathan. Secunder, please. Could I have the movers and seconders of Motions 212, 214, 217 and Emergency Motion 1 ready down the front, please.

CHRISTIAN SANTA BARBARA (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President, Congress, I am from the shy and humble North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region there in the middle. (*Applause*)

Congress, to me this is a very straightforward issue that I have seen too many loved ones, friends and colleagues fall victim of. Many in this room will know the struggle of finding decent, well-paying and secure work. If you look at the jobs market today, the work is highly precarious, often limited to less than full-time hours and I have seen loved ones face juggling two or three part-time jobs to get a 35-hour week that makes ends meet. This causes immense strain on the person and a poor work/life balance and many, many headaches.

Why is it like this? I think it is partly because employers have learned that they face no consequences when they butcher jobs, creating terms and conditions that minimise employment contributions, knowing full well that universal credit and other in-work credit will pick up the rest. Some 21% - yes 21% - of total benefits claimed in the February 2025 ONS data were from people in work: people with jobs that needed to subsidise exploitative pay and conditions with state support. We cannot let this continue. Our movement should be relentlessly campaigning for better jobs and conditions. This invisible plight and scourge of employers cannot continue to thrive: we must address it.

Congress, I was expecting opposition from the CEC on this motion this afternoon because the stance the CEC originally provided was sent unfinished. Congress, I

appreciate that mistakes happen, I have made plenty myself, but I did ask for clarification several times and I only got the clarification before lunch today. Do you know what, it is fine, but what this does highlight is a bigger factor in how we debate our motions. Us as delegates -- I will leave it there. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for respecting the red light. (*Applause*) The mover of 122, please.

EXCESSIVE VEHICLE SURVEILLANCE.

MOTION 122

122. EXCESSIVE VEHICLE SURVEILLANCE

This Congress calls on GMB to:

1. To oppose the use of inward facing cameras and voice recording technology in company vehicles across the gas industry, and industry as a whole.
2. To support branches and reps in resisting the introduction of intrusive surveillance systems.
3. To campaign for clear legal protections against video and audio monitoring in workplaces and vehicles.

This motion is about one simple principle:
Workers are entitled to privacy and dignity at work

For gas workers, our vans are not just vehicles.

They are our offices.

They are our rest spaces.

They are often the only place we can make a personal phone call, take a break, or decompress between dangerous and demanding jobs.

We often spend time in the vehicle with colleagues.

Now some employers want to turn those vehicles into mobile surveillance units — recording our voices, listening to our conversations, monitoring everything we say, and do.

Let's be clear:

That is not safety.

That is not protection.

That is control.

Gas engineers already work under intense pressure. We deal with hazardous environments, emergency call-outs, and life-or-death situations every day. We are trusted to work alone in people's homes, to make critical safety decisions, and to keep the public safe. Yet at the same time, management says they don't trust us enough to sit in our own vans without being watched and listened to.

That level of surveillance creates stress.
It destroys morale.
It breaks down trust.
And it treats skilled workers like suspects.
No one should have their private conversations or their actions recorded just because they happen to take place in a company vehicle.

No worker should have to wonder whether every word they say every gesture they make is being stored, analysed, ready to be used against them.

We already have cameras monitoring our driving.
We already have telematics.
We already have vehicle tracking.
Now they want our voices as well.

This is not about safety. This is about power, and control.

This has already happened in some companies, that doesn't mean we sit back and accept it. We must resist the introduction and where it already exists campaign to have it removed. That's why this union must draw a line in the sand.

GMB was built to defend workers from exploitation, intimidation, and unfair treatment. Today, that means standing up to digital surveillance and saying: our members deserve privacy and respect.

Congress, I urge you to support this motion and send a clear message to employers, everywhere.

Hands off our privacy.
Hands off our dignity.
Hands off our voices.

**NORTH-WEST GAS L34 BRANCH
NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

(Carried)

KELVIN ENABULELE (North West & Irish): President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Kelvin Enabulele, proudly North West & Irish Region. Congress, with over eight years in logistics and transport, I don't speak on this lightly. I want to thank the Gas L23 Branch for bringing this motion to Congress and for trusting me to move it. Congress, let's not dress this up. This motion is about privacy, dignity and respect. All three are under attack. Our vans, our cars, our lorries are not just tools for the job. They

are our workplaces, they are our break rooms; they are often the only place we get a moment to breathe. And now employers want to turn them into a rolling surveillance unit, recording our voices, listening to our conversations, monitoring everything we say and do.

Congress, let's be clear, this is not safety, there is not protection: this is control. Because if this was about safety, we already have enough. We already have cameras watching how we drive, telematics tracking everyone movement, systems logging where we are minute by minute. So don't insult our intelligence by pretending this is about safety. It is a step too far. Gas engineers and transport workers already work under relentless pressure. We deal with hazards, we respond to emergencies, we make critical life and death decisions. We are trusted to enter people's homes alone, trusted to protect the public, but we are not trusted to sit in our own vehicles without being listened to. That is just hypocrisy. That is disrespect.

This kind of surveillance doesn't make anyone safe. It creates distress, it destroys morale, it poisons trust and it sends one clear message: we don't trust you. Well Congress, if they don't trust us to do the job, they should not rely on us to keep the public safe. No worker should have their private conversations recorded just because they are in a company vehicle. No worker should have to think twice about every word they say in case it is stored, analysed and used against them. That is not a workplace, that is a surveillance state on wheels.

And once it starts, where does it stop? Today it is voice recording, tomorrow it is constant monitoring. Then it is discipline based on conversations taken out of context.

We know where this leads and we must stop it here. Just because some companies have introduced it does not mean we should accept it. It means we fight it, we resist it where it is coming in and we campaign to remove it where it already exists. Because the GMB was built to push back, to defend working people, to stand up for unfair treatment and to draw a line where enough is enough. Congress, this is that line, so today we send a message, not a polite request a message, back off. Back off our members. Back off our privacy. Back off our dignity and, most importantly, keep your microphones out of our vehicles. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause and cheers*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder.

MARK JONES (North West & Irish): Seconding Motion 122. First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Motion 122: Excessive Vehicle Surveillance - we believe this is a very important motion. Absolutely workers should be entitled to their privacy and have dignity at work. Congress, we have to take a strong stance against the roll-out of these pernicious technologies. Companies right across the UK are pushing to install many types of surveillance technology into their vehicles. These are the same companies, by the way, that say they cannot afford decent pay rises for their employees but they can find money to buy and install surveillance equipment and also pay for the expensive long-term contracts to gather and manage data produced in a useable format. It is worthwhile making the point they don't install this equipment in the company cars they drive, and I wonder why? It couldn't be because it is intrusive and an invasion of their privacy when they are using the vehicles in their own time?

For gas workers, their vehicles are not only for travelling from A to B, they are their offices and their rest spaces. You should be aware that contractually due to court rulings, many of these workers are not being paid at all whilst they drive to their first job or specified locations nor are they paid to drive these company vehicles (which they are contractually responsible for) home at the end of the working day. Always-on surveillance, listening in to any private call or even mutterings that you make during driving and break times, monitoring eye movements, let alone recording everything that you say to your colleagues or members of the public doesn't seem justifiable under the health and safety umbrella. No worker should have to wonder whether every word they say and every gesture they make is being stored and analysed, ready to be used against them. Quite simply, all our GMB members deserve their privacy and respect. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Mark. Does anybody want to speak in opposition?
(*No response*) Then can I ask Donna from the CEC to give the reply, please.

DONNA SPICER (CEC): Responding to Motions 119, 120, 121 and 122.

On Motion 119, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. It is already GMB policy (Congress 2024 - Motion 109) that the UK Government should legislate to outlaw public sector contracts being granted to companies that refuse to recognise independent trade unions which workers are seeking to be represented by. The CEC is therefore interpreting point 1 of this motion as making the same call.

Secondly, the CEC believes that such legislation must require employers, including in the security sector, who do not already recognise an independent trade union, to first ensure unfettered access for independent unions to their workplaces so the workforce can choose their union, as set out in point two of the motion.

Thirdly, GMB rightly supports organising and recognition campaigns in security and facilities management sectors. However, it is not GMB Congress that decides if and what organising campaigns to prioritise. Instead, that decision is for discussion and agreement between GMB regions and their representatives with the union's National Organising Team.

On Motion 120, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. In line with existing Congress policy and organising practice through GMB@Work we absolutely support our members in certain employers or industrial sectors to organise together, formulate common plans and negotiate together beyond individual workplaces and on an enterprise/employer level, or even sectoral level (Congress 2019 - Motion 165) As GMB@Work sets out, the workplace is the building block of GMB and therefore we would wish to see members in all workplaces covered by these structures having a clear and effective voice.

GMB@Work also states that people are strongest when they organise themselves therefore the CEC's qualification is for those members and reps themselves, not GMB Congress or the CEC, to ensure that all workplaces covered by those structures have a clear and effective voice working with the relevant regional and national GMB officials to ensure it.

On Motion 121, the CEC supports the motion with a qualification. The CEC's qualifications are, firstly, that in line with longstanding GMB policy we welcome and rightly defend a number of welfare protections and benefits that make the welfare system a safety net and not a punishment, while noting that specific benefits like universal credit desperately need to be overhauled (Congress 2018/Composite 26).

Secondly, the CEC agrees that we must fight for decent and unionised employment to be in itself a safe way out of poverty. However, we wish to qualify that GMB has already been carrying out the motion's call for legislative and lobbying efforts to ensure that employers take responsibility for providing sustainable, equitable employment practices in GMB's political work in our campaigning for Labour to deliver the Employment Rights Act, which will be the biggest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation by creating the right to guaranteed hours of work, improved statutory sick pay and leave entitlement and improved rights to claim unfair dismissal.

On Motion 122 - that is it - we support it with a qualification. The CEC supports the principles set out in this motion but wishes to qualify how the union responds to the concerning rise in intrusive surveillance in a way that best supports our members in the workplace. Firstly, as set out in the Special Report on the Future of Work carried by Congress 2022, greater awareness and stronger enforcement existing laws and protections is needed as part of GMB's response to the rise of surveillance in the workplace. There are protections under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Information Commissioner Office's Employment Practices Code that information must be collected for a clear and advertised purpose.

In addition, the CEC does not believe that it is the place of Congress to decide a campaign against the use of inward-facing cameras and voice-recording technology across all industries as this motion proposes, but rather, that Congress gives it full support for such campaigns by GMB members in their workplaces and sectors where they have decided that such use of technology is intrusive for them.

This issue, above all, requires an industrial response from our members in these workplaces and GMB's response will naturally differ depending on the nature of our members' work and their views. For example, some GMB members have supported forms of recording when those records can be used as objective evidence following a complaint, particularly in the ambulance service. But we recognise for others, trust in this technology has been undermined when management has misused technology like CCTV recordings in vehicles.

Therefore, Congress the CEC is supporting with qualifications Motions 119, 120, 121 and 122, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Donna, that that was quite a long CEC reply. London Region, do you accept the qualification on 119? (*Accepted*) Scotland, do you accept the qualification on 120? (*Accepted*) Thank you. North East, Yorkshire & Humber, do you accept the qualification on 121. (*Accepted*) That was nice and loud and clear. North West & Irish Region, do you accept the qualification on 122? (*Accepted*) Thank you. I will put those to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 119, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 120, please show.

Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 121, please show.

Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of Motion 122, please show. Thank you. That is also carried.

*Motion 119 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 120 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 121 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 122 was **CARRIED**.*

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: TAXATION, TRADE AND PAY

THE PRESIDENT: We now move on to Industrial & Economic Policy: Taxation, Trade & Pay. Could I have the mover of Motion 212 to the rostrum?

INHERITANCE TAX LOOPHOLES.

MOTION 212

212. INHERITANCE TAX LOOPHOLES

This Congress supports the payment of inheritance tax on assets passing from 'sovereign to sovereign' and instructs the CEC to lobby Government for an urgent change in the law.

W60 WELLINGTON BRANCH MIDLANDS REGION

(Carried)

DAVE SADLER (Midlands): Madam President, Vice-President, R36 Branch, JCB, Midlands Region and Midlands Manufacturing Committee member. *(Applause)* It is a very humbling experience for me this week, not only as a Liverpool fan have I got to

listen to Margaret and to Sue today, but as a reminder of my youth, you have put me just after Feargal Sharkey. How do you follow that?

I stand before you today to speak about an issue that goes to the heart of fairness, responsibility and the kind of society we want to build together: the application of inheritance tax in transfers from sovereign to sovereign. Let's be clear about what we are talking about. Inheritance tax exists for a reason. It is not about punishment, it is about balance. It ensures that wealth, particularly vast and accumulated wealth contributes back into the society that helped create and sustain it. As trade unionists, we fight every day for fairness in the workplace, fair pay, fair conditions and fair treatment, so we must also stand for fairness in the wider system because what message do we send if ordinary working people pay their taxes in full while certain transfers of immense wealth are treated differently?

Supporting Inheritance Tax from Sovereign to Sovereign is about consistency. It is about saying that no institution, no matter how historic or symbolic, sits outside the principles of fairness that apply to everyone else. We respect tradition, of course we do, but respect for tradition must not come at the expense of justice. Institutions evolve, society evolves, and our tax system must evolve with it.

Let's also talk about what this means in practical terms. Revenue raised through fair taxation funds public services, the NHS, social care, local government and education. These are not abstract ideas. These are the services our members rely on every single day. When wealth passes untaxed at the very top, that burden does not disappear, it shifts, and too often it shifts on to the shoulders of working people. That is something

we cannot accept. This is not about targeting individuals. It is about principles. It is about ensuring that everyone, from the shop floor to the very top, plays their part in supporting the society we all depend on.

Let's be honest, public trust matters. People need to believe the system is fair, they need to see that rules apply equally, because when they don't confidence erodes and division grows.

Congress, we have always stood on the side of fairness, equality and accountability. Supporting an inheritance tax in these circumstances is entirely consistent with our values. So, let us be clear, confident and united, fairness does not stop at the gates of privilege, it applies to all. I urge Congress to support this position not only out of ideology but out of a simple and enduring belief in justice. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder.

BRADLEY WALL (Midlands): President, Congress, from the mighty Midlands Region. First-time delegate first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am going to keep this very simple. Nearly every single person in this room works: you work hard and you pay tax. That is a privilege. We pay tax because we are in a society that we want to see thrive. We want good schools, we want good roads, we want good healthcare. These are just a few of the things that matter to the society we need. Some of you will be in a position where you can pass along a little bit of wealth to the next generation. None of you will be in a position where that wealth will mean the next generations to come in perpetuity do not ever need to work, and that is why very simply we should support

this motion. It is a basic fairness. Loopholes should not exist to make it so the very wealthy in this country continue to be wealthy whilst other people struggle to get by. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bradley. The mover of Motion 214.

A NATIONAL FREEPORTS STRATEGY

MOTION 214

214. A NATIONAL FREEPORTS STRATEGY

By establishing a clear and robust Freeports Strategy, GMB can lead the way in shaping future developments that protect workers, strengthen local economies, and ensure public investment delivers public good.

Congress notes:

- The UK Government has expanded the number of Freeports, with many now operating across all nations and regions of the UK.
- Freeports are promoted as drivers of investment, innovation, and job creation, but there are serious concerns about labour standards, trade union recognition, and public accountability within them.
- Many Freeports operate with limited coordination between local authorities, employers, and unions, creating inconsistencies in pay, conditions, and training opportunities.

Congress believes:

- GMB must ensure that Freeports deliver good, secure, and unionised jobs rather than becoming exploitative low-regulation zones.
- There is a vital need for a national industrial framework that places workers' rights and collective bargaining at the heart of Freeport development.
- A coordinated strategy is needed to maximise the potential for decent, Skilled work.

Congress therefore calls on GMB to:

- Develop a Freeports Strategy setting out the union's position, priorities, and engagement approach.
- Demand that UK Government and the devolved administrations embed trade union consultation and recognition in all Freeport governance structures.
- Campaign for all Freeport employers to sign up to negotiated agreements on pay, conditions, apprenticeships, and environmental standards.
- Work with regions and branches to map membership, influence policy within each Freeport, and organise new members across the supply chain.

M58 BRANCH

WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

CHRIS MARSH (Wales & South West): President, Congress, moving Motion 214. Congress, freeports are being rolled out by right across our nation and regions and we are told they will bring investment, innovation and jobs. Let us be clear, we all want job and we all want growth, we all want thriving communities, but, Congress, what kind of jobs, what kind of growth and who truly benefits? Because without strong standards, without a union voice, without accountability, freeports risk becoming something very different. They risk becoming areas where regulation is weaker, where workers are more vulnerable and where public money does not deliver public good. That is why this motion matters. We have already seen warning signs - inconsistencies in pay, gaps in training, a lack of co-ordination between employers, local authorities and too often, trade unions. In some places decisions are being made without workers having a seat at the table. Congress, this is not acceptable. If freeports are to succeed, they must be built on the foundations of fairness. They must create secure, skilled unionised jobs, not precarious work with weakened protections, and that does not happen by accident. It happens because unions like the GMB lead, organise and demand better.

This motion is about leadership. It is about making sure the GMB is not reacting to freeports but shaping them. We are calling for a clear national freeports strategy, one that sets out our priorities and ensures that, wherever freeports exist, GMB members are organised, represented and protected, we are calling for trade union consultation and recognition to be embedded in every freeport governance structure, not as an afterthought but as a basic requirement because workers must not be locked out of

decisions that affect their jobs, their pay and their futures. We are calling for negotiated agreements across all freeport employers, covering pay, conditions, apprenticeships, skills and environmental standards.

Congress, this is about raising the floor, not racing to the bottom. It is about making sure that when public money is used to support these developments, it delivers real value, good jobs, strong communities and sustainable growth. And importantly, this motion puts organising at its heart. We must map where freeports exist, we must understand where workers are and we must go out there and organise across the entire supply chain, because freeports will not shape one workplace, they will shape the whole community.

Congress, if we get this right, freeports could be places of opportunity, places where young people access apprenticeships, where skilled jobs are created and where communities are strengthened, but if we get it wrong, they risk deepening inequality and undermining standards we have fought decades to win.

The question before us is simple: do we stand back or do we step forward? This motion says we step forward, we lead, we organise, we demand better. We make sure freeports work for workers, not the other way around. Congress, I urge you to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

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

ANDY MILLS (Wales & South West): Congress, we have now heard how freeports are being promoted as an engine of growth, but growth alone is not enough. Growth without fairness, without standards, without the workers' voice, means very little to the people we represent, because our members don't just need jobs, they need decent jobs, secure jobs, union jobs.

This motion is about making sure that freeports do not become places where hard-won rights are quietly eroded. It is about making sure wherever public investment goes, strong employment standards go with it.

Congress, GMB has always been at its best when we are organised, visible and unapologetic in standing up for our members. Freeports must be no different. If new industries and supply chains are developing so must our presence within them. If new workplaces are opening, then we must open the door to trade union recognition. This motion gives us a clear plan to do exactly that by mapping where workers are, organising across our supply chains and embedding union influence at every level.

And let's be clear, this is not about opposing development, it is about shaping it. Shaping it so that apprenticeships are real opportunities, not just empty promises. Shaping it so that pay and conditions are negotiated, not dictated. And shaping it so that workers have a genuine voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Congress, freeports will never raise standards but weaken them and the choice will depend in very large part on what we do next. By supporting this motion we are staying

clearly GMB will lead, GMB will organise and GMB will not allow workers in freeports to be left behind. I urge Congress to support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Look at that, perfect timing Andy, well done. Mover of Motion 217, please.

PAYMENT OF NATIONAL LIVING WAGE.

MOTION 217

217. PAYMENT OF NATIONAL LIVING WAGE

This Congress notes that current Government guidance allows employers to delay implementation of the annual Living Wage increase until the beginning of the next pay period, even when the statutory rise takes effect on 1 April.

We are concerned that while this delay has limited impact on weekly-paid workers, it can result in significant financial loss for monthly-paid workers. Where 1 April falls mid-way through a monthly pay period, workers can effectively miss out on up to three and a half weeks of the increase. With a rise of 50p per hour, a full-time worker on a 40-hour week could lose approximately £70 — a substantial amount for those already on the lowest incomes.

Congress believes that this practice is unfair and undermines the purpose of the Living Wage, particularly for those who are least able to absorb such a shortfall.

Congress therefore calls on the union to campaign for the Living Wage increase to be applied to all workers from 1 April, regardless of pay-period start dates, and to press the Government to amend its guidance accordingly.

W71 BRANCH WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

LEON JONES (Wales & South West): Moving Motion 217. Congress, at first glance this issue might seem technical and about pay periods, implementation dates and guidance. However, this is not about administrative convenience. This is about fairness, dignity and whether the lowest-paid workers in our economy actually receive

the pay rise they are promised. Every year on 1 April the National Living Wage is increased. We are told this is about helping working people keep up the with cost of living. We are told it is about ensuring no one is left behind. But for many workers, especially those paid monthly, that simply is not true.

Under current guidance, employers are allowed to delay applying that increase until the next pay cycle. That means if your pay period doesn't begin on 1 April you can sometimes lose out, sometimes by weeks. Think about what that means in real terms. A worker on 40 hours a week, as a minimum, might lose around £70 from that delay. £70 to some people may not seem like much but for the workers that we represent it is the difference between keeping the heating on, topping up the meter, filling the fridge or going without. These are not abstract losses. These are real sacrifices made by people who can least afford them.

Congress, the truth is simple: a pay rise delayed is a pay rise denied. What makes this worse is that it disproportionately affects those already on the edge, those paid monthly, those budgeting week by week, those with no buffer to absorb the shortfall.

The Living Wage is meant to set a minimum standard of decency. It is meant to lift people up, not leave them short because of a quirk in payroll timing. This practice undermines that principle completely. None of us here would accept an employer delaying holiday pay or sick pay because it was inconvenient to process, so why should we accept it that when it comes to the very minimum people are legally entitled to earn?

Colleagues, this is about respect: respect for work, respect for workers, respect for the principle that a legal entitlement should mean exactly that, from the day it comes into force. This motion calls for three simple but important things. Firstly, it calls on our union to campaign, to say loudly and clearly that the Living Wage must be paid from 1 April, in full, for every worker. Secondly, it calls on us to challenge employers who hide behind guidance to short change their staff. Finally, it calls on us to push the Government to close this loophole, once and for all, so that no worker loses out simply because of how their pay date falls.

Congress, if we are serious about tackling low pay then we must be serious about enforcing it because fairness delayed is fairness denied. For the workers that every single one of us stand for that denial is happening right now. I urge Congress to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Leon. Secunder.

ANDY MILLS (Wales & South West): President, Congress, seconding Motion 217. Congress, I second this motion. You have already heard clearly why the change is needed. I want to focus on one simple point: fairness in pay should not depend on how often you are paid. Right now we have a situation where the National Living Wage increases on 1 April, but many employers are allowed to delay that increase until the next pay period. On paper that might sound administrative. In reality, to monthly paid workers, it means something very different. It means that some of the lowest-paid workers in this country, our members, can miss out on weeks of pay that they are legally entitled to. Let's be clear, losing out on £70 might not sound like much to some people,

those at the top, but for someone earning the Living Wage that is not small change. That is food on the table, fuel in the car or just keeping the lights on. It is that difference between coping and struggling.

That is why this matters because the Living Wage was introduced to support those on the lowest incomes. If this implementation allows people to lose out, even temporarily, then its purpose is being undermined. This is not about complexity. It is about consistency and justice. A rise in the Living Wage should mean exactly that: a rise from the date that it is due for everyone, regardless of whether they are paid weekly or monthly, otherwise we are saying some workers deserve less simply because of payroll timing, and that is something this union should never accept.

This motion is practical, it is reasonable and, most importantly, it is necessary. By campaigning for change to government guidance, we are standing up for fairness, for clarity and for our members who can least afford to be left behind. Congress, this is a small change but this will make a real difference to people on the lowest pay. I second.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Andy. Mover of Emergency Motion 1.

THE SUPREME COURT RULING ON SEVERELY DISABLED PEOPLE'S CARE

EMERGENCY MOTION 1

EM1: on the Supreme Court Ruling on Severely Disabled Peoples Care

On 2nd June 2026 the Supreme Court ruled that severely disabled people aged 16 and over will now be able to give consent to their care arrangements, whether or not they have the capacity to do so.

The court ruled that lack of legal capacity is not the same as lack of "valid consent" for the purposes of Article 5 of the Human Rights Act.

This was triggered by a case brought by the attorney general for Northern Ireland. It will now apply across the UK.

The ruling overrules a previous judgement known as Cheshire West where the court established what was known as an "acid test" – if someone was under continuous supervision and control is not free to leave and cannot consent to this they are considered to be deprived of their liberty.

The judgment introduces a regressive legal standard that will fundamentally alter the lives of potentially hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people:

The vast majority of people currently protected by the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) system in the UK will likely see their existing checks and independent inspections cancelled.

- The Court implies that individuals with profound cognitive disabilities cannot be "deprived" of liberty because their condition limits their ability to experience it—a view that devalues their fundamental rights.
- The Court has suggested that in borderline cases, for a deprivation of liberty to exist, a care setting must closely mirror the extreme confinement of a prison cell.
- If a vulnerable person appears passive or does not actively protest their arrangements, the law may recognise this as "consent" — even if they are subjected to routine physical restraint or chemical sedation or have never known a life without a high level of restriction.

Under this new ruling, multiple vulnerable groups will be impacted across social care and healthcare sectors. If an autistic person with high support needs, someone with a serious mental illness, or a person with a severe learning disability is locked in a care setting and sedated, but does not actively protest, they will no longer be considered "confined" by the state. They will lose their automatic right to independent reviews, a legal advocate, and protection from closed care cultures.

For example, in psychiatric and crisis wards, if an individual experiencing a severe psychiatric crisis, acute psychosis, or clinical depression is admitted to a mental health hospital ward as an "informal patient," they frequently lack the mental capacity to consent to their stay and therefore do not have any of the protections of independent reviews.

Similarly in social care and supported living, a person may lack capacity if they have an acquired brain injury, a severe learning disability, or are an autistic person with high support needs is locked in a care setting, subject to blanket restrictions, or kept under 24/7 continuous supervision.

This is going to have a massive impact on our members, past, present and future. Members will need to spend more time advocating for themselves and their families. This will lead to less time in the workplace. It may lead to more members being subjected to these standards should they be voluntarily admitted to a mental health unit and subsequently unable to leave.

This Congress calls on the GMB to:

1. Join with charities such as Mind and The Autistic Society to campaign against these changes.
2. Call on the UK government to urgently issue interim guidance to local authorities and health and care providers.
3. Call on the UK government to bring in new laws and guidance that strengthens protections for some of the people who are most at risk.

Region: Wales & South West

(Referred)

SUSAN KELLY (Wales & South West): President, Congress, I am being supported by Tracey Ashton of the CEC, because, as you can all see, I am not that steady on my feet today. Also, just to give you a heads-up, for some of you this is going to be a very emotive motion. Get the tissues out!

On 2 June, the Supreme Court passed a judgment that overruled something called the Cheshire West ruling. That is all laid out in the motion for you. Basically, what it did was it took away our legal safeguards. It took away the need for an independent assessor to inspect care homes, to inspect independent supported living arrangements and secure units, including childcare units for teenagers, to ensure that the placement is safe, justified and in a person's best interests. The decision, although taken in Northern Ireland, is applicable across the whole of the UK and it tears up those protections.

There are some other protections that are meant to be put in place. They are called the Liberty Protection Safeguards for England and Wales. They are not applicable in Scotland. But it won't be the local authorities that are due to put those in place, it will whichever body is responsible, so it could be the care home provider, it could be the NHS. We don't actually know because nobody is telling us. And by the way, when they do an assessment, it will last for up to three years rather than it being checked every 12 months.

The other thing they are not telling you is that it is a massive backward step because Cheshire West is being classed as the acid test not only in the UK but in other countries as well. You might be thinking, "How does this affect us?" Well, think about your children and your families and the people you work with, or if you work in social care, or you work in caring, what if you have a child in a residential home, or you have a family member in a residential support unit or dementia care? For perfectly valid reasons you may not be able to visit them daily. You are not in charge of their care. They cannot advocate for themselves. You may find that due to their condition, they might be sedated, or that the environment they are in has institutionalised them, to the extent that they don't really know much different from where they are. The new legislation says that you have to actively object. You cannot just passively sit there and someone says, "Is everything okay?" You have to actively tell them, "I do not want to be here". Well, how can you do that if you have gone into a voluntary hold under mental health because you are in crisis? You can't if you are sedated. How do you actively object to your care if you are suffering with dementia or other illnesses that mean you are restrained or under sedation? You can't. There is no right to an

independent review. How do you personally object to that? Your family can't object for you. It doesn't sound fair to me and I hope it doesn't sound fair to you.

Congress, what we are asking for is nothing revolutionary. All we are asking for is that we campaign on this, we look into it and that through our colleagues, our families, our friends, for us now and in the future we don't allow a backward step: We look at what the mental health charities are doing and we don't allow things to happen behind locked doors because someone is not in a position to object. It is unfair, it is unreasonable and it is unjust. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Susan, and Tracey. Secunder please.

JEFF SUTTON (Wales & South West): President, Congress, seconding Emergency Motion 1. Congress, various well-known charities including MIND, Mencap, the National Autistic Society have raised serious concerns over this judgment. That alone should raise cause for concern. We cannot as reasonable people support the removal of independent checks and balances, right to advocacy and certainly not the right to free legal aid. We cannot support the rights of parents, family members and carers to be involved in advocating on someone's conditions of care being removed. Let us be clear, those are some of the things this judgment is potentially removing.

Are the present regulations being adhered to fully? No, they are not. Current NHS statistics shows the number of deprivations of liberty safeguarding applications made in England 2023/24 was 332,455, up more than 300,000 from a decade earlier. There is also a backlog of 123,790 cases. This motion does not dispute this needs to be

resolved but this judgment is not necessarily the right way. We do not want to go backwards as a society. We need to move forwards. The proposal for new Liberty Protection Safeguards have been under consultation on and off since 2022. In October 2025, the Department for Health and Social Care announced a new consultation on the LPS reforms scheduled for the first half of 2026. It is widely considered that the earliest the LPS could come into force in 2027 and may well be pushed back again. How is this possibly serving our disabled members and their loved ones? How is this possibly serving our members who work in the health and care sector? In truth, it is not supporting anyone. Please support this motion. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jeff. Is there anybody who want to speaks in opposition to any of the motions? Please come up and let us know which motion it is you are opposing.

PHIL HARRIS (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Phil Harris, Rotheram Local Authority, North East, Yorkshire & Humber. *(Applause)* That is a better response than last year! Speaking against Motion 212 without support of the region. Now Congress, I know many of you will think I am wrong, but Congress is not about agreeing with everything and everybody. It should be about considering alternative views from different perspectives before rejecting them.

So, let's debate this. I am aware that the whole financing and taxing of the Royal Family needs reviewing, but that is a much bigger issue. I am against this particular motion on principle. Inheritance tax, also known as death duties, has over many years,

resulted in many great houses, estates and businesses being closed and the workers - the gardeners and cleaners and maintenance staff - being put out of work. Inheritance tax on large estates results in them being split up sold off to pay the tax bill. Just look at the farmers. In response to the campaign by the NFU, farmers and widespread public revolt, the Government had to backtrack on their proposal.

So, let's imagine the sovereign gets a tax bill and has to sell off a large proportion of the Royal estate to cover death duties. So he sells off the Royal estate and who buys it? Buckingham Palace sold. Windsor Castle sold. Balmoral sold. The buyers? Rich investors, oligarchs, sheiks, Elon Musk. Imagine Nigel Farage and Reform buy Buckingham Palace. All the royal finances and taxation need reviewing but this is not the right way to do it. Please oppose. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Phil, for winding up when the red light came on. David, you have the right of reply if you wish to use that. (No) That takes me to the CEC speaker, Elaine.

ELAINE DALEY (CEC): President, Congress speaking on behalf of the CEC responding on Motion 217 and Emergency Motion 1. The CEC is supporting Motion 217 with a qualification that resolving the issue that the branch has identified in the way the motion calls for may require a change in the law. This may be more difficult to achieve and we will need to carefully consider any potential consequences of opening up minimum wage legislation to unwanted amendments in Parliament by politicians who want to water down workers' rights. This is because the payment of National

Minimum Wage rates by pay reference periods is set out in the National Minimum Wage Act itself, which government guidance takes from.

However, GMB can certainly raise the issue which the branch has identified with the Government as part of its annual submission to the Low Pay Commission consultation on the National Minimum Wage. Ultimately, the CEC believes that the GMB's industrial ability to adjust pay reference periods for workers through negotiation with the employer may be a more quick and effective way of resolving this issue.

On Emergency Motion 1: The Supreme Court Ruling on Severely Disabled People's Care, the CEC is seeking to refer. The CEC thanks the branch for bringing this motion to the attention of Congress. This is a very new judgment - days old - on a complex piece of case law. We are concerned by what the implications could be, as the motion highlights for both those receiving and delivering care. We believe it responsible to monitor this issue as it is a very new judgment. We also believe it is responsible to canvass our membership who deliver this particular type of care, to understand their views and awareness of the matter, and how their employers are responding to it. We do not disagree with the calls in the motion but further work is needed to know what the best guidance would be for the UK Government to issue.

Therefore Congress, the CEC is asking that Motion 217 be supported with a qualification and that Emergency Motion 1 be referred. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Elaine. Just before I go to the acceptance, can I ask the movers and seconders of 218, 219, 220, 222 and 223 to come down the front, please?

Does Wales & South West accept the qualification on 21&? (*Accepted*) And do you agree to refer back on Emergency Motion 1? Was that a no? Can somebody really shout out. (*Accepted*) Referral accepted, thank you. Sorry, it is the room dynamics and the sound in this room. I will go to the vote on 212. All those in favour, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of 214, please show. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in favour of 217, please show. Anyone against? That is carried. Then Wales & South West you accept the reference back so there is no vote on that.

*Motion 212 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 214 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 217 was **CARRIED**.*

*Emergency Motion 1 was **REFERRED**.*

The Vice-President took the Chair.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. We are moving to motions relating to Industrial & Economic Policy: Investment and Industry Structure. Can the mover of Motion 218 please come to the rostrum.

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE STEEL INDUSTRY

MOTION 218

218. PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE STEEL INDUSTRY

This Congress re-affirms the GMBs support of the British Steel Industry, it condemns the way that, despite being a strategically important industry the Steel Industry has been brought to its knees.

We need to get to the bottom of how this has happened, how to improve the industry and how to prevent collapse.

To this end, Congress calls for a public inquiry into the British Steel Industry. We need to find out who and what caused the collapse of the industry and to ensure it never happens again.

Z22 SOUTH YORKSHIRE BOILERMAKERS NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION

(Carried)

IAN KEMP (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): Proud to be a third generation steel worker and proud to speak on behalf of all steelworkers, moving Motion 218. And to our Welsh colleagues solidarity and best wishes to our brothers and sisters affected by the fire at Tata in Port Talbot. Good wishes to you. *(Applause)*

President, Congress, if Alexander Armstrong gave 100 steelworkers 60 seconds to list as many reasons for the present state of the steel industry, you would get a list as long as your arm, and there would still be some pointless answers. For years they said the steel industries were overmanned, that working practices were outdated, that productivity was too low, so, they sacrificed our jobs, our communities, changed our working practices, and thanks to our hard work productivity increased, and yet even though we are in a period when producing steel should be a licence to print money, production has slumped. In fact, there has been periods where no steel has actually been melt in this country. The melting shops where I work have not been switched on for two years.

Maybe, just maybe, we need to look at the deeper issues affecting the industry. We need, for example, to look at the ownership. In the last 40 years we have had an eclectic bunch of owners of the successor companies to the old British Steel Corporation. Some have been quite so good, some not so good but at least they were honest triers. And then there have been the cowboys, the charlatans and the crooks. That is, privatisation for you - you never know what you are going to get.

Government policies also need examining, not just those specific to the steel industry but things like energy and transport policies. Look at the high cost of bills paid to our foreign-owned private energy firms that subsidise the bills of our competitors. Steel is an ideal commodity to be transported by rail. One of the mills where I work was even set up to enable steel to be transported by the canal system and yet the majority of steel is transported by road, hardly the most efficient, cost effective or greenest option.

Amongst the doom and gloom, however, there is one beacon of hope: Sheffield Forgemasters. They are thriving and the only difference between them and the others - and make of this what you will - is that they have been nationalised. Being a steel worker is not just my job, it is my identity. When they talk about values, it is about having the values of hard work, of comradeship, of community, of looking after your own, by which I mean your work colleagues.

I ask you to support this motion, support having a public inquiry into the steel industry leaving no stone unturned. Let's learn the lessons, let's get back to being the workshop of the world backed by a steel industry. I have said this before and I will keep on saying

it until they start listening; to the politicians and owners: I may have to dress like a Minion at work but don't ever treat me like one! Save our steel! (*Applause and cheers*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Seconder please, for Motion 218.

ROSS BENNETT (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): I am from North Tyne Branch from the North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region. (*Cheers*) Thank you. I would like to second this motion on a public inquiry into safeguarding the steel industry's future. Being born and bred in the North East of England, I know what happens when you let industries die. We have seen the consequences of failure after failure of governments since the 1970s in protecting communities, where they suffer and wither until they no longer exist. As a movement, we have a duty to defend our industrial heritage, both its past and its future, because if we let the furnaces go out on steel, steel won't be on the back burner, it will be gone forever. In the North East, coal and shipbuilding has been decimated and when they collapsed they didn't just take jobs, they took identity, pride and community, and they are still living consequences of those decisions today.

At the turn of the century, the UK produced over 50% of its steel. Today it is around 30%. We have seen what happens when industries disappear, they become extinct like dinosaurs only for their remnants to be found in museums. Let's not that happen to the steel industry and let's support a public inquiry into its safeguarding. If we fail to act the communities may not recover like they haven't in the past. So, I am asking Congress to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you. Can I have the mover of Motion 219, please.

THE ROLE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP AND FINANCIAL MARKETS IN ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

MOTION 219

219. THE ROLE OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP AND FINANCIAL MARKETS IN ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

This Congress calls on GMB to continue to support our long-standing policy towards the full public ownership and nationalisation of essential infrastructure. However, with the refusal of successive governments to implement full public ownership we propose an interim measure which will give some benefits to the country and our people.

Essential infrastructure underpins every aspect of modern life and future prosperity.

By infrastructure we mean:

- Energy generation and distribution
- Water and sewerage
- Communications networks
- Other essential utilities relied upon by citizens and industry

Citizens and businesses have no choice but to pay for these services from privatised monopolies, the costs of which make up a significant proportion of household and business expenditure.

The high cost of infrastructure services means:

- Reduced disposable income for households
- Increase production costs for businesses
- Damage to companies' competitiveness and employment

This motion reinforces our belief: That while full nationalisation remains the correct and necessary long-term objective, the current political conditions mean it may not be immediately achievable.

In the meantime, an interim position is required to protect consumers, workers, and the wider economy. This policy will also provide energy security for the country and importantly affordable energy for all.

Most of the UK infrastructure was originally built using public funding or publicly backed borrowing. Therefore, once infrastructure assets are paid for, logic and fairness dictate that prices should fall to reflect only the cost of running and maintaining the asset.

Instead, private owners are extracting profits by:

- Selling paid-off assets at inflated values based on future profits
- Loading companies with debt to fund dividends
- Paying interest to owners or shareholder-linked lenders
- Holding the nation to ransom through financial and accounting practices that enrich shareholders while harming citizens, workers, and British industry.

Whilst these practices are legal, they are immoral, unjust and economically harmful. Which leads to prices being kept artificially high. This has the effect of...

- Allowing owners to profit multiple times from the same asset

- Leaving workers and consumers paying the price
- Causing poverty and hardship to working people and putting businesses into jeopardy with costs that mean they cannot compete fairly on the international markets

Until full nationalisation is achieved, this Congress calls on GMB to promote a policy whereby:

All future licences for essential infrastructure must include binding conditions that:

- Prevent excessive debt loading
- Prohibit the extraction of value through shareholder loans
- Ensure that once the original construction or upgrade costs are repaid, prices are reduced to reflect only genuine operating and maintenance costs
- Where regulators or other bodies deem it appropriate to increase tariffs or other charges to enable businesses to upgrade, maintain, build infrastructure or any other reason; that the value of such investment, paid for by consumers whether industrial or domestic be wholly owned by the public and treated as if it were an investment by any other venture. The Labour Party has introduced a National Wealth Fund, which is ideally placed to be the vehicle to bank the governments share of the profits whilst, having the control to influence prices and generate wealth for the country.

All existing licences should, within the next five years or at the point of licence renewal, variation, or alteration (whichever is sooner) be brought into line with these same conditions.

Infrastructure pricing must be based on:

- Actual costs
- Long-term maintenance
- Investment in service quality and workforce safety — not financial engineering or speculative returns

The public must directly benefit from infrastructure assets that they have funded.

Essential infrastructure should serve the public interest — not financial institutions and markets.

NORTH-WEST GAS L34 BRANCH NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION

(Carried)

MARK JONES (North West & Irish): Second-time speaker now and moving Motion 219. This Congress calls on GMB to continue to support our longstanding policy towards the full public ownership and nationalisation of essential infrastructure. However, with the refusal of successive Governments to implement full public

ownership, we propose an interim measure which will give some benefits to the country and our people.

Colleagues, essential infrastructure underpins every aspect of modern life and future prosperity. By infrastructure we mean energy generation and distribution, water and sewerage, communication networks and other essential utilities relied upon by citizens and industry. Citizens and businesses have no choice but to pay for these services from privatised monopolies, the costs of which make up a significant proportion of household and business expenditure. The high cost of infrastructure services means reduced disposable incomes for households, increased production costs and damage to companies' competitiveness and employment.

This motion reinforces our belief that while full nationalisation remains the correct and necessary long-term objective, the current political conditions mean it may not be immediately achievable. In the meantime, an interim position is required to protect consumers, workers and the wider economy and this policy will also provide energy security for the country and importantly, affordable energy for all. Most of the UK infrastructure was originally built using public funding and public-backed borrowing. Therefore, once infrastructure assets are paid for, logic and fairness dictate that prices should fall to reflect only the costs of the running and maintaining of the asset. Instead private owners are extracting profits by selling paid-off assets at inflated values based on future profits. They are loading companies with debt to fund dividends, paying interest to owners or shareholders linked to lenders, and they are holding the nation to ransom. Whilst these practices are legal, they are immoral, unjust and economically harmful, which leads to prices being kept artificially high and this has the effect of

allowing owners to profit multiple times for the same asset, leaving workers and consumers paying the price, causing poverty and hardship to working people and putting businesses in jeopardy.

Until full nationalisation is achieved, Congress calls on the GMB to promote a policy whereby all future licences for essential infrastructure must include binding conditions that prevent excessive debt loading, prohibit the extraction of value through shareholder loans, ensure that once the original construction or upgrade costs are repaid, prices are reduced to reflect only genuine operating and maintenance costs. Where regulators or other bodies deem it appropriate to increase tariffs or other charges to enable businesses to upgrade, maintain build infrastructure or any other reason, that the value of such investment paid for by consumers, whether industrial or domestic, be wholly owned by the public and treated as if it was an investment by any other venture.

The Labour Party has introduced a national Wealth Fund, which is ideally placed to be the vehicle to bank the government's share of profits while having the control to influence prices and generate wealth for the country. All existing licences should within the next five years or at the point of licence renewal, variation or alteration (whichever is sooner) be brought into line with the same conditions. Infrastructure pricing must be based on costs, long-term maintenance and investment in service quality and workforce safety, not financial engineering.

I have just seen the red light so I will finish it there. Essential infrastructure should serve the public interest and not financial institutions and markets. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can we have the seconder, please, for Motion 219?

MELISSA JOHNSON (NORTH WEST & IRISH): Good afternoon, Madam President, General Secretary and Congress. Melissa Johnson from the North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)* I stand here to formally second this very important motion. As you just heard from my comrade, the stark reality of private ownership of essential infrastructure is heading towards crisis. Every day, our members look at their bills in disbelief. As the water bill rises, water companies pump filth into our waterways and wealth into their shareholders' pockets. As energy prices rise, the energy companies are burning through their profits, while our members are trying to decide whether to heat their house or put food on the table because their wages cannot stretch to both. We must be clear that our ultimate goal is for essential infrastructure to be nationalised into public ownership. We cannot wait for this perfect world while our communities are being asset stripped piece by piece. This is the time for us to make a stand against private operators and tell them that their days of taking our money are over. If an operator wants to run our energy, our water, our communications or any of our essential networks, they need to accept that they cannot do so if they are going to fund dividends by loading the infrastructure with debt or siphoning money out of services via shareholder deals.

For too long companies have run to their regulators, begged to pay bills to pay for upgrades and claimed the value of this infrastructure for themselves. This is wholly unfair. If the public pay for an upgrade through bills, then the public should own that investment. By utilising the National Wealth Fund to bank the public's share of profits,

we can actively influence pricing, protect consumers and generate real wealth, not just for the speculative financial market.

Congress, essential infrastructure underpins everything we do. It belongs in public hands to serve public interest. We want to send a clear message to those at the top that GMB will always stand up for public interest over private profit. Therefore, I ask you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover of Motion 220, please?

DEFENSIVE AUTARKY

MOTION 220

220. DEFENSIVE AUTARKY

This Congress notes that UK Government spending on Defence is currently 2.4% of GDP, and due to reach 3.5% by 2035, due in no small part to increasing instability and threats from around the world that shake the foundations of the post-World War II international rules-based order that we have sheltered under for so long.

- When Russia invaded Ukraine, Europe exchanged dependency on Russian oil and gas, to dependency on American oil & gas.
- In the UK, our energy mix is increasingly provided by renewables; from wind to nuclear, but our oil & gas industry is still significant.
- The current US administration threatens Europe, NATO, and the economies of allies and foes alike – They are no longer reliable allies, and it is clear the ‘special relationship’ is an abusive one.

We need to invest in and develop a level of ‘Autarky’ in the areas of Defence and Energy; boosting our Defences faster, investing in a diverse and clean Energy mix, and building the industries and creating jobs in Defence and Energy so that we can stand on our own two feet, and remain a beacon of light in a sea of darkness.

We call on GMB to support a faster increase in defence spending, investment in defence jobs and industries, and diversification and growth in the energy sector, so that we may stay strong in the face of any global headwinds.

**A37 AVIATION SECURITY BRANCH
LONDON REGION**

(Carried)

ANDREW HEWITT (London): President, Vice-President, Congress moving Motion 220: Defensive Autarky. We note that UK Government spending on defence is currently 2.4% of GDP and is due to reach 3.5% by 2035. With instability increasing around the world, shaken by global actors like Russia, China and the current US Administration threatening Europe, NATO and other allies, the US is no longer a reliable ally and our so-called special relationship is an abusive one. In light of this, I suggest we need to build our defences faster and develop a greater level of self-sufficiency (or autarky) in the areas of energy supply and defence. We cannot leave ourselves open to global storms not of our making, tossed about by the winds and actions of Putin or Trump. We need to be a strong beacon of light in a sea of darkness, with our own energy and defences protecting our people and jobs, whilst not sacrificing those in need of support through public services and welfare. We cannot free ourselves from the influences of foreign superpowers only to make cuts and impoverish our people. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the seconder for Motion 220, please?

MARTIN DOLAN (London): President, Congress, seconding Motion 220. A country that is largely self-sufficient in its production, supply chain and strategic capabilities with regards to its own defence has a powerful foundation for resilience, sovereignty and long-term security. Self-sufficiency has several benefits. It strengthens national security in an increasingly unpredictable world. It reduces reliance on foreign suppliers for critical military equipment, technology or raw materials. It will stop supply chain

disruptions, whether caused by geopolitical tensions, economic sanctions or global crisis. An autarkic military supports economic growth and technological advancement. It would develop home-grown defence industries, stimulate high-skilled jobs, drive research and development and foster innovation that could spill over into civilian sectors, from advanced engineering to cyber security and artificial intelligence. It would enhance strategic independence.

If we were in control of our own defence capabilities, it would give us greater freedom in defence making the opportunity to act in our own national interests. That independence would be particularly important in times of crisis when swift and decisive action may be required. Finally, an autarkic military would strengthen national confidence and unity. Knowing we have the capability to defend ourselves using our own resources would foster a sense of pride and assurance. It would reinforce the idea that the UK is prepared not just to respond to threats but to shape its own destiny.

In conclusion, while international co-operation remains valuable, building a more self-reliant military ensures that the United Kingdom is secure, innovative and independent in an uncertain world. I second. Please support. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Good timing. Can I have the mover of Motion 222, please?

**PROPOSAL TO DESIGN OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION CONTRACTS IN
THE UK FOR THE BENEFIT OF BRITISH CITIZENS
MOTION 222**

222. PROPOSAL TO DESIGN OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION CONTRACTS IN THE UK FOR THE BENEFIT OF BRITISH CITIZENS

This Congress calls on GMB to continue with our current policy of full nationalisation of the energy industry, however, until the political climate is ready to move towards full public ownership, GMB should be ready to adopt an interim position.

Should the current ban on new licenses for oil and gas exploration in UK waters be subject to review; We call for this done on a full public ownership model, nationalisation. This would maximise any benefits for the peoples of the UK.

Unless and until this is possible, we believe it is imperative that any future licenses for oil and gas exploration and production are designed to ensure that the benefits are equally shared with British citizens. The successful model established by Norway highlights the potential for such arrangements to significantly benefit the UK population.

Individual investors, shareholders, companies and offshore businesses have historically reaped the majority of the rewards from oil and gas operations, rather than reinvesting in infrastructure or supporting the average workers, they have profited higher management and paid high dividends. With what little tax is generated, not significantly benefiting the government or British people.

There exists a pressing need for policies that prioritise ordinary working people and invest in long-term infrastructure that reduces costs for consumers and energy intensive industries alike.

We believe any revenues generated from oil and gas extraction should be directed towards the greater good, focusing on the prosperity of our citizens and fostering businesses, that are responsible employers.

On that basis we ask that GMB congress calls for:

1. Promoting a policy whereby all future licenses for oil and gas exploration mirror or improve upon the fiscal frameworks of Norway, thereby ensuring that substantial benefits are directed to the British people.
2. Further, that with immediate effect this should apply to existing licenses or apply when licenses are renewed or altered.
3. The effective utilization of the National Wealth Fund to administer and maximize profits derived from oil and gas production, with the express purpose of enhancing the welfare of all citizens.
4. A commitment from the government to ensure that a significant portion of the generated revenue is reinvested into energy-intensive industries, thereby securing high-quality, well-paying, and unionised jobs for the workforce.
5. An emphasis on establishing sustainable practices and long-term infrastructural investments that align with the best interests of British citizens, ensuring that they are not left behind as the nation pursues alternative energy resources.

**NORTH-WEST GAS L34 BRANCH
NORTH WEST & IRISH REGION**

(Carried)

ZAK KHAN (North West & Irish): Zak Khan, representing the remarkable North West & Irish Branch. (*Applause*) First-time delegate and first-time speaker (*Applause*) Thank you. Moving Motion 222: Proposal to Design Oil and Gas Exploration Contracts in the UK for the Benefit of British citizens. Congress, this motion calls on GMB to continue with our current policy of full nationalisation of the energy industry. However, until the political climate is ready to move towards full public ownership, GMB should be ready to adopt an interim position.

Congress, should the current ban on new licences for oil and gas exploration in UK waters be subject to review, we call for this to be done on a full public ownership model. This would maximise any benefits for the people of the UK. Unless and until this is possible, we believe it is imperative that any future licences for oil and gas exploration and production are designed to ensure that the benefits are equally shared with British citizens. The successful model established by Norway highlights the potential for such arrangements to significantly benefit the UK population. Individual investors, shareholders, companies and offshore businesses have historically reaped the majority of the rewards from oil and gas operations. Rather than reinvesting in infrastructure or supporting the average workers, they have profited higher management and paid higher dividends with what little taxes are generated, not significantly benefiting the Government or British people. There exists a pressing need for policies that prioritise ordinary working people and invest in long-term infrastructure that reduces costs for consumers and energy intensive industries alike. We believe any revenues generated from oil and gas extraction should be directed towards the greater good, focusing on the prosperity of our citizens and fostering businesses that are responsible employers.

So, on that basis, we ask that GMB Congress calls for:

1. Promoting a policy whereby all future licences for oil and gas exploration mirror or improve upon the fiscal frameworks of Norway, thereby ensuring that substantial benefits are directed to the British people.
2. Secondly, further that, with immediate effect, this should apply to existing licences or apply when licences are renewed or altered.
3. The effective utilisation of the National Wealth Fund to administer and maximise profits derived from oil and gas production with the express purpose of enhancing the welfare of all citizens.
4. A commitment from the Government to ensure that a significant portion of the generated revenue is reinvested into energy-intensive industries, thereby securing high-quality, well-paid and unionised jobs for the workforce.
5. An emphasis on establishing sustainable practices alongside infrastructure investments that align with the best interests of British citizens, ensuring they are not left behind as the nation pursues alternative energy resources.

Congress, thanks for lending me an ear. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Zak. Can we have a seconder for Motion 222?

MARK JONES (NORTH WEST & IRISH): Congress. Mark Jones again, North West & Irish Region. (*Applause*) Seconding Motion 222. Congress, I second the motion to design oil and gas exploration contracts in the UK for the benefit of British citizens. We are asking you to fully support the call for continued commitment to nationalisation of the energy industry while adopting a pragmatic interim position to protect the public

interest. We believe the motion measures aligning UK licensing and fiscal terms with Norway's model or improving on it, applying improved terms to existing and renewed licences effectively utilising the newly created National Wealth Fund. Ring fencing revenue to reinvest in energy-intensive industries and privatising sustainable long-term infrastructure and unionised jobs. This is necessary to ensure that the benefits of UK oil and gas are shared equitably with the British people. Congress, I second. *(Applause)*

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover of Motion 223, please?

PRIORITISING NON-AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

MOTION 223

223. PRIORITISING NON- AGRICULTURAL LAND FOR SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

This Congress notes:

The urgent need to expand the UK's green energy capacity in order to meet climate commitments, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and secure long term energy resilience. Solar power is a key component of this transition.

Congress further notes:

That large scale solar installations are increasingly being proposed on productive agricultural land. This raises concerns about food security, rural employment, biodiversity, and the long term sustainability of farming communities.

Congress believes:

That the UK can significantly expand solar generation without sacrificing farmland. Existing built environments — including commercial and public buildings, warehouses, schools, hospitals, transport hubs, car parks, and brownfield or previously developed sites — offer extensive untapped potential for solar deployment. Prioritising these areas protects agricultural land while still enabling rapid growth in renewable energy.

Congress therefore calls on the GMB

1. To campaign for national and local government policy that prioritises solar installations on rooftops, car parks, brownfield sites, and other non agricultural land before any consideration of productive farmland.
2. To lobby for investment, incentives, and regulatory frameworks that make rooftop and brownfield solar the default option for developers.

3. To work with employers, local authorities, and industry bodies to identify suitable sites within the built environment for solar expansion.
4. To oppose large scale solar developments on high quality agricultural land where viable alternatives exist.

Congress resolves:

That the GMB will champion a green energy transition that protects both the environment and the nation's capacity to produce food, ensuring that renewable energy growth does not come at the expense of workers, communities, or the countryside

A55 BRANCH
WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

JEFF SUTTON (Wales & South West): Prioritising Non-Agricultural Land for Solar Energy Development. President, Congress, Jeff Sutton, WSW, known to you all as “Wales & South West”, known to us as “We Support Workers”.

Congress, we all recognise the urgency of the climate crisis and we know the UK must expand green energy. We know solar power is a vital part of that transition. But we also know something else: we cannot afford to solve one crisis by creating another. Right now too many large-scale solar developments are being pushed on to productive farmland: land that grows our food, land that supports rural jobs, land that communities rely on. Once it is covered in solar panels, it is not feeding anyone. Congress, this is not a choice between green energy and food security. We can and we must have both. Across the UK we have thousands of acres of rooftops, car parks, warehouses, public buildings, industrial estates and brownfield sites sitting there doing nothing, while developers take the easy option of swallowing up farmland. It is lazy planning and it is short sighted. Solar panels belong on built environments first not on the fields that feed our country.

This motion calls on the GMB to push for exactly that: a national policy that prioritises rooftops and brownfield land, investment incentives to make rooftop solar the default and not to position solar farms on high-quality agricultural land where alternatives exist. Congress, this is common sense. It protects jobs, it protects food production and still delivers the renewable energy future we all want. I urge you support this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the seconder please for Motion 223?

PHIL TAYLOR (Wales & South West): First-time delegate, first-time speaker (*Applause*) Congress, the UK is facing a perfect storm: rising energy costs, climate pressures and increasing concerns about food security. Working people are feeling the impact of all three. That is why this motion matters. We all support renewable energy, but we need to get it right, and right now we are not. Developers are targeting farmland because it is cheap and easy but easy doesn't mean sensible, it doesn't mean sustainable and it certainly doesn't mean fair to the communities who depend on that land. Meanwhile the built environment is full of opportunities: Multistorey car parks, logistics centres, supermarkets, council buildings, schools and hospitals, all with huge roof space, all perfect for solar, all underused. This is where solar should go first.

Congress, this motion isn't anti-solar, it is pro-planning, pro-workers and pro-common sense. It says let's use the land we have already developed before we sacrifice the land that feeds us. I urge Congress to back this motion and send a clear message: We want green energy but we don't want to trade away our farmland to get it. I second. (*Applause and cheering*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Well done, Phil. Anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? (*No response*) Brilliant. Rosemary from CEC, can you reply back, please?

ROSEMARY COOPER (CEC): Afternoon, President, afternoon Congress. Speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motions 220 and 223. On Motion 220, the CEC is supporting this motion with two small qualifications. Firstly, we recognise the term “autarky” used in the motion is seeking a level of economic independence and self-sufficiency in the UK and not the esoteric meaning of links to the policies of the Italian Fascists dictatorship in the 1920s and 1930s.

Secondly, the CEC wishes to qualify that while it is GMB’s policy to support an increase in defence spending, the GMB does not believe that these increases should be funded at the expense of cutting government spending on public services or public welfare.

The motion importantly highlights the challenges faced by the UK from not only Russian aggression in Ukraine but USA aggression under the current Administration, both of which are threatening to collapse any remaining rules-based order on the international stage.

On Motion 223, the CEC is supporting this motion with qualifications. It is GMB’s policy to support UK food security and to call on local authorities to not refuse planning permission for solar development too easily. This motion helpfully builds on this policy. The CEC’s first qualification is that until there is a breakthrough in large-scale,

economically viable and reliable storage technology, solar will need to be part of a sensible mix of renewables and low-carbon sources (including nuclear) to power the UK.

Secondly, the aims of the motion can only be implemented in good conscience once Uyghur forced labour has been eliminated from the supply chain for solar panels, which can be traced in almost all solar modules that are sold in Europe.

Therefore, Congress, please support both these motions with the qualifications I have explained, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Thank you, Rosemary. Can I ask for the movers of Composite 10 and Motions 227 and 228 to come to the front, please. The CEC is supporting Motion 218 from North East, Yorkshire & Humber. The CEC is supporting Motion 219 from North West & Irish. And the CEC is supporting 222 from North West & Irish. Does London Region accept the qualification on Motion 220? (*Accepted*) Does Wales & South West Region accept the qualification on Motion 223? (*Accepted*) Thank you. Can we do the votes now? All those in support of Motion 218. Thank you. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in support of Motion 219. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in support of Motion 222. Anyone against? That is carried. All those in support of motion 220. Anyone against? All those in support of Motion 223. Anyone against? There are all carried, thank you.

*Motion 218 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 219 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 220 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 222 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 223 was **CARRIED**.*

THE PRESIDENT: Can I have the speakers for Composite 10, please.

COMPOSITE 10

C10. REDUCING ENERGY COSTS TO REBUILD UK MANUFACTURING AND CREATE QUALITY JOBS AND THE FUTURE OF GLASS MANUFACTURING

Congress notes the findings of the CEC Special Report on Industrial Strategy and Infrastructure, which identifies high and volatile energy costs as a serious threat to UK manufacturing, energy security, and good unionised jobs. Congress further notes GMB's recent campaigning in the ceramics sector, which has shown how uncompetitive energy pricing places energy-intensive industries at risk of contraction, closure, or offshoring. Congress recognises that glass manufacturing is a strategically important and energy-intensive industry, essential to construction, food and pharmaceutical supply chains, and the wider UK economy, and that sustained high energy costs now pose an jobs, skills, and regional manufacturing capacity within the glass sector.

Congress believes that without sector specific action, the risks identified in the CEC Special Report will continue to materialise across energy-intensive industries such as glass manufacturing.

Congress believes that workers in these industries should not be expected to bear the consequences of energy market failures or policy decisions over which they have no control.

Congress further believes that a credible industrial strategy must actively protect existing manufacturing capacity and skilled jobs, while supporting transition and decarbonisation in a way that strengthens, rather than undermines, domestic industry.

Congress resolves to instruct the GMB to explicitly include glass manufacturing within its ongoing industrial strategy and energy-cost campaigning, building on the work already undertaken in the ceramics sector.

Congress further resolves to campaign for fair and predictable industrial energy pricing that enables glass manufacturers to remain viable while protecting jobs and skills.

Congress also resolves to ensure that any transition or decarbonisation measures affecting glass manufacturing are planned with workers and trade unions, do not accelerate job losses or offshoring, and support long-term industrial sustainability in the UK.

This Congress notes:

- That UK manufacturing continues to face some of the highest industrial energy costs in Europe, placing British firms at a competitive disadvantage.
- That rising energy bills have forced many employers to scale back production, delay investment, or reduce staffing levels.
- That high energy costs hit workers twice: first through pressure on wages and job security, and again through the cost of living crisis at home.
- That a strong manufacturing base is essential for national resilience, regional growth, and long term, skilled employment.

This Congress believes:

- That reducing industrial energy costs is essential to revitalising UK manufacturing and securing the next generation of skilled, unionised jobs.
- That a fair, stable, and affordable energy system is a cornerstone of any credible industrial strategy.
- That investment in clean, reliable energy infrastructure—alongside support for energy intensive industries—is vital to protect existing jobs and create new ones.
- That workers must not be asked to pay the price for energy market failures or short term policy decisions.

This Congress resolves to call on the Government to:

- Introduce a long term industrial energy plan that guarantees competitive energy prices for manufacturers.
- Expand support for energy intensive industries, including targeted reliefs and incentives tied to job protection and job creation.
- Accelerate investment in domestic energy generation—renewables, storage, and grid upgrades—to stabilise prices and reduce reliance on volatile global markets.
- Work with unions and employers to ensure that any savings from reduced energy costs are reinvested into skills, apprenticeships, and secure, well paid jobs.
- Embed affordable energy as a core pillar of the UK's industrial strategy, ensuring manufacturing remains a driver of economic growth and regional opportunity. This

Congress further instructs the GMB to:

- Campaign nationally and locally for fair energy pricing for industry.
- Lobby employers to reinvest energy cost savings into workforce development and job creation.

Moving Region: Wales & South West

Seconding Region: North East, Yorkshire & Humber

(Carried)

JEFF SUTTON (Wales & South West): President, Congress, moving Composite 10.

This motion is about more than energy bills: it about jobs, it is about communities and it is about whether we still believe the UK should make things. Across our manufacturing heartlands, workers are facing a reality they did not create. Sky high

and unpredictable energy costs have put entire industries at risk. Nowhere is there more clear than in the energy-intensive sectors like glass. Glass is not some niche product, it is in our homes, our hospitals, our food supply and our infrastructure. It is essential, but the people who make it, the skilled unionised workers, are being pushed to the brink. Factories are not closing because workers have failed or because the skills are not there. They are closing because the system isn't working. When energy costs spiral out of control, companies cut production, investment is delayed, jobs disappear, and once those furnaces go cold they do not just restart overnight, if they restart at all.

Congress, we cannot allow vital industries to quietly slip away because when manufacturing goes, it does not come back easily and the cost is felt far beyond the factory gates. It hits families, it hits local economies and it hits the next generation who lose out on skilled secure careers. And here is the injustice: workers are hit twice, first through the fear of redundancy, pay restraint and deteriorating conditions and then again at home through rising energy bills and the cost-of-living crisis. This is not fair,

Composite 10 sets out a clear alternative. We are saying that Britain needs a real industrial strategy, one that recognises that affordable stable energy is not a luxury: it is the foundation of manufacturing. We are saying government must step in with a long-term plan for competitive industrial energy pricing. We are saying support for energy-intensive industries must be expanded but tied to protecting jobs, investing in skills and creating new opportunities. And we are saying investment in clean energy, renewables, storage and infrastructure must be accelerated, not just for climate goals but to give industry the stability it desperately needs.

But Congress, this motion is also clear about something else. The transition to a low-carbon economy must not be done to workers; it must be done with workers. Too often we have seen decisions taken that sound good on paper but devastate livelihoods and practice. We will not accept a future where decarbonisation means deindustrialisation. We will not accept jobs being exported in the name of progress. Instead, we demand a just transition, one that protects jobs, strengthens industries and keeps skills here in the UK. That means including glass manufacturing explicitly in GMB's campaign matters, because if we do not name these industries, we risk leaving them behind.

Congress, this is about choosing our future. A future where Britain makes, builds and produces; a future where workers have secure, skilled, well-paid jobs; a future where energy policy supports industry, not undermines it. Or a future where more factories close, more skills are lost and more communities are left behind. I know which future we stand for, so I ask you stand with the workers in the glass industry, stand with energy-intensive industries, stand for a fair energy system and a strong manufacturing base. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Good timing, Jeff. Can I have the seconder, please?

CRAIG TUCKER (North East, Yorkshire & Humber): President, Congress, I am from K55 Branch from the great big North East, Yorkshire & Humber Region. Second-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I come from Knottingley in West Yorkshire or Knotley as it is affectionately known by its community, a stone's throw away from the Big K Kellingley Colliery, which was the UK's last deep coal mine. And if you

know anything about my town, you will know that glass to Knottingley is like steel is to Scunthorpe or oil is to Aberdeen. If you drank a beer or cooked with a jar of pasta sauce, slapped on some aftershave, or lost your legs after a few too many whiskeys you, have probably used a product from the town I grew up in.

Like many of my school mates, I left school at 16 and started in the glass house, as we call it, where my dad also worked. I am a dad myself to a rugby mad ten year-old called Zak, or the “Blond Bomber” as his coaches like to call him. He is going to be a professional rugby league player, a future Castleford Tigers and England captain, or so he tells me! But as a back-up plan I always thought there would be a job for him in’t glass house. But with sky high energy costs and EPR (let’s call it for what it is, a glass tax) the reality is there won’t be a glass industry and that will devastate our community. My part of the world has already been completely shafted once, when Thatcher came after our pits, and everyone knows that our coal communities have never recovered. The ripple effect of this is still felt to this day. If action isn’t taken now then the glass industry in Nottingham will be done over once again.

This is far bigger than my job, the jobs of my mates and my family. It is about the whole future of our part of West Yorkshire. If the Government doesn’t step in now, if it doesn’t change its mind on the glass tax, it is abandoning another working-class community again. So Congress, please support this motion. I second. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover of Motion 227, please?

PAID RELEASE FOR WORKERS TO UPSKILL IN CARBON-INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES.

MOTION 227

227. PAID RELEASE FOR WORKERS TO UPSKILL IN CARBON-INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES

Congress recognises the need to deliver a just transition to a low-carbon economy that safeguards the planet and the livelihoods of workers.

Frontline workers in carbon-intensive industries—energy, steel, cement, and manufacturing—possess the skills and expertise essential for the transition to a net-zero future.

Without dedicated support for training and upskilling, these workers risk being left behind.

Congress believes that if GMB members are to benefit from Green jobs, they need to be trained for Green jobs and should have the right to paid time off to retrain and upskill for the green economy.

Congress calls on GMB union to:

1. Campaign for a statutory right to paid release for workers in carbon-intensive sectors to access accredited training and upskilling opportunities.
2. Engage with employers, sector bodies, and trade unions to develop sectoral just transition training plans that identify future skills needs and ensure accessible routes into green jobs.
3. Advocate for the creation of a Green Skills Fund to finance paid release, jointly supported by public and employer contributions.
4. Advocate for the UK government to utilise public procurement to ensure that employers in receipt of public money prioritise training to retain jobs in Wales.
5. Work with affiliated unions to highlight examples of best practice where paid release for skills development supports job security and climate action.

H03 BRANCH

WALES & SOUTH WEST REGION

(Carried)

MARTINA VRAJITORU (Wales & South West): From Wales & South West Region moving Motion 227. *(Applause)* Congress, our members in steel, energy, manufacturing and heavy industry have kept this country running for generations. They worked throughout the economic crisis, through austerity, through a pandemic and now they are being told that industry must change again in the move to Net Zero. Let me

say clearly: GMB supports a just transition, but there is nothing just about workers being abandoned while governments and employers talk about green targets and future jobs. Because our members are asking a simple question: where do we fit into this future?

Congress, workers are not the problem. Our members already have the skills, the experience and the knowledge that this condition needs. The engineers, technicians, production workers and skilled trades people in today's industries are the very people who can build tomorrow's economy, but they cannot do it alone, and they cannot do it in their own unpaid time. A worker on shifts, struggling with the cost of living, cannot simply take unpaid leave to retrain, a parent cannot sacrifice wages to attend courses and communities already hit by industrial decline cannot survive another transition built on empty promises.

That is why this motion matters. We are demanding a statutory right to paid release for accredited training and upskilling. Not charity, not vague promises: a right. Because if employers and governments are serious about the green economy, then they must be serious about investing in the workers who will deliver it. And let us be honest, billions of pounds of public money are being handed to industry in the name of transition. The GMB is right to say that where public money goes, good union jobs, training and job protection must follow.

Our motion also recognises the fundamental that truth workers must have a voice in shaping transition plans. Not consultants, not corporate boardrooms - workers and trade unions. Because the people most affected by industrial transition must also have a say

in shaping it. We cannot allow Net Zero to become another chapter of managed decline in working-class communities. We need a transition that protects jobs, protects skills and protects dignity at work; a transition where workers are not discarded but valued. Congress, the workers who built this country deserve a chance to build its future, too. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

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

JONATHAN STRACHAN-TAYLOR (Wales & South West): From the wonderful Wales & South West Region, seconding Motion 227. (*Cheers*) Congress, I am proud to second this motion because, quite simply, this is about making sure the transition to a green economy works for workers, not against them. We all support the move to net zero, but support alone is not enough. If we want our members to benefit from green jobs we must give them a fair chance to access them, and that starts with something very basic: time. Time to learn, time to train, time to adapt. Without paid release, that time simply does not exist for workers. No one should have to choose between earning a wage today and preparing for a job tomorrow, yet that is exactly the choice many are forced to make.

This motion tackles that head on. It recognises that skills don't appear overnight and they require investment, planning and proper support. That is why the call for a Green Skills Fund and training plans are so important. It also sends a clear message, if employers and governments are serious about a just transition, then they must be willing to invest in the people who will deliver it, because, remember, this transition can't happen without our members. Their experience, their knowledge, their skills is what

will make a low-carbon future possible. Let's do right by them. Let's ensure they are not left behind but move forward with dignity, with security and with opportunity.

Congress, this is a fair, practical and necessary step towards a just transition. Make Work Better! I urge you to support it. (*Applause*)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Can I have the mover for Motion 228, please. Sorry, I can't hear you. (*Referral accepted*) Referred, thank you.

USING EXISTING GMB POLICY TO PROTECT MEMBERS' SECURITY, PAY AND UNION STRENGTH IN A CHANGING ECONOMY

MOTION 228

228. USING EXISTING GMB POLICY TO PROTECT MEMBERS' SECURITY, PAY AND UNION STRENGTH IN A CHANGING ECONOMY

This Congress notes that:

1. The GMB has a long and proud record of defending members' pay, terms and conditions, and providing workplace representation and protection.
2. Congress has already agreed policy on:
 - o worker-led Just Transition
 - o public ownership of essential services
 - o industrial strategy and investment
 - o opposition to unmanaged deindustrialisation
3. Economic change, including automation, restructuring, outsourcing and the energy transition, is reducing labour input in some sectors and shifting where decisions affecting members' jobs, pay and security are made.
4. While the GMB has clear policy positions on these issues, there is currently no consolidated internal framework setting out how this policy is to be used in practice to:
 - o strengthen collective bargaining leverage
 - o protect members during transition and restructuring
 - o Support financial membership growth and retention
5. Rising costs of essentials such as energy, housing and transport continue to undermine members' real pay and security, even where wage increases are achieved.

This Congress believes that:

1. The GMB's primary purpose remains the protection and advancement of members at work, and this must remain central to all union activity.
2. Existing GMB policy on Just Transition, industrial strategy and public ownership is essential to protecting members' long-term security, but must be clearly linked to organising, bargaining and membership outcomes.

3. Strengthening union power in the 21st century requires the GMB to operate effectively both at the workplace and at the system level where key economic decisions are made.

This Congress resolves to instruct the CEC to:

1. Produce a consolidated internal framework, setting out how existing GMB policy on:
 - o Just Transition
 - o workforce transition protections
 - o system-level and sector-wide bargaining
2. is to be used in order to:
 - o strengthen collective bargaining on pay and conditions
 - o protect members facing redundancy, restructuring or transition
 - o improve membership retention and stability of subscription income
3. In developing this framework, draw on the expertise of relevant GMB structures, officers and lay members, and appropriate worker-led expert bodies, including Climate Jobs UK, while retaining CEC ownership, oversight and accountability for the final output.
4. Ensure that this framework:
 - o complements, and does not replace, workplace bargaining and representation
 - o supports organisers and reps in negotiations with employers, regulators and public bodies
 - o reinforces the value of GMB membership to working people
5. Use this approach, where appropriate, within sectors experiencing significant restructuring or transition, including energy, manufacturing and infrastructure.
6. Report back to Congress on:
 - o the effectiveness of this framework in supporting bargaining outcomes
 - o its impact on member security and membership retention
 - o any recommendations for further development

Please support this motion

GMB Energy Branch S15
NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE & HUMBER REGION

(Referred)

THE VICE-PRESIDENT: Anyone wish to oppose any of these motions? (*No response*) Brilliant. Can we have our CEC member, Ian Clarke, to speak, please. We do not need you, sorry, Ian. The CEC is supporting Composite 10 from Wales & South West and North East, Yorkshire & Humber and also supporting Motion 227 from Wales

& South West Region. Can we go to a vote please for Composite 10 and 227. All those in favour? Anyone against? Thank you.

*Composite 10 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 227 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 228 was **REFERRED**.*

The President took the Chair.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sonya. Congress, we are going to move, with my apologies, to the movers and seconders of these motions, Composite 6, 104, 105, 106 to tomorrow morning. So, this is the end of the debate. I have just got a few announcements before you go. We have the second of our International Solidarity Videos to play to you from our sister trade union centre in Colombia, courtesy of Sonya from her trip out there.

Video played to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sonya, for getting that message of solidarity. I know how much you enjoyed your trip to Colombia. Thank you for another great day at Congress. I have just worked out there were 24 first-time speakers the whole day.

(Applause)

I have got a really, really important announcement about tomorrow. Listen carefully. As we prepare for tomorrow's sessions I need to remind you that for tomorrow only

attendees with bags larger than A4 size will not be permitted into the hall. To be clear, your GMB backpacks are fine to be brought in but ideally, nothing larger. Please also be aware that bag checks will be in place tomorrow from the morning. The only liquids that can be brought in will be water. Please note drinks and food are available inside the venue including in the bistro and café, which has a large amount of seating. We kindly ask for your co-operation and understanding to help ensure a smooth and secure experience for everyone. Could I ask people to quieten please because this is a really important announcement for tomorrow. We encourage you to plan accordingly and arrive a little earlier to allow sufficient time for screening. Doors will be open from 8.15. We start Congress business at 9 am. Thank you for your co-operation. We look forward to welcoming you tomorrow. That is the end of Congress. Enjoy your regional function if you have got one tonight and enjoy your evening. Thank you.

Congress adjourned.