



CONGRESS EXPLAINED

Delegate's Essential Guide to GMB Congress 2014

March 2014

Dear GMB Congress Delegate

Congratulations on your election or appointment as a delegate to GMB Congress, the principal policy-making body of the union. You have the important and responsible task of representing your Region and voting on motions which will determine GMB policy.

Our annual Congress has an excellent reputation for its high standard of debate, often passionate, but conducted in a positive and comradely fashion.

Congress is governed by rules and procedures which may be confusing for less experienced delegates, and this guide has been designed to assist delegates through:

- the machinery at regional and national level which goes into the making of Congress
- the workings of Congress and;
- the processes that take place afterwards to progress Congress decisions.

I hope you find the guide helpful. Whether you are a new or experienced Congress delegate I know you will have the support and encouragement of your region to help you contribute to Congress and continue to build our organising, campaigning union.

Together with the President and Vice-President I look forward to welcoming you to Congress.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our union.



Paul Kenny
General Secretary

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What is GMB Congress?

Congress is the supreme policy making authority of the GMB trade union. It deals with motions from GMB branches, regional committees and the Central Executive Council (CEC). It also deals with other issues such as CEC special reports and financial statements.



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It is governed by GMB rules and is the arena where GMB members can set or change GMB policy, find out what is happening in the union as a whole, participate in debates, listen to guest speakers, attend fringe meetings, and of course, enjoy the social side of getting together with members from your region and the union as a whole.

Congress is where the general secretary, regional secretaries and national officials report back to the members on the national and regional work of the union over a year and the policies and actions taken by the union as set out in the General Secretary's Report.

Congress is more than just speeches; it's also a great opportunity to network with others, share ideas about organising and campaigning and to find out more about key issues in depth.

GMB Congress is a national media event and by agreeing to attend you also agree to be filmed, photographed and recorded.

Every GMB Congress session is filmed and broadcast live from the GMB website on Congress TV so that all GMB members who are unable to attend Congress can watch live feeds. During GMB Congress Week, Congress TV can be accessed from the GMB Home Page www.gmb.org.uk

As Congress is broadcast throughout the week as a 'live' event, the Press Office would like to capture local stories in their Congress Press Releases.

If you have a noteworthy story or issue for the media, please discuss this with the Press Office who are based in the Congress venue or contact them by email: press.office@gmb.org.uk or by phone: 07974 251823 (Rose Conroy) / 07921 289880 (Steve Pryle).

How often does it take place?

Congress meets in June each year. The venue for each Congress is decided two to three years in advance by the Central Executive Council (CEC) which takes into consideration the costs, facilities and accessibility offered by a range of proposed venues.

What happens at Congress?

Through their branches, lay delegates put forward issues in the form of motions for the union to debate and develop its future policy on union organisation, economic, political and social matters. Congress does not deal with industrial matters related to negotiations as these are the remit of Section Conferences which take place every two years.

From 2008 and in alternate years thereafter in line with the Rulebook, Section Conferences have been incorporated into Congress week, but remain separate from the Congress programme.

From 2009 and in alternate years Rules Revision Congresses take place. It is only in these Congress years that GMB rules can be changed by rule amendments submitted by GMB branches and regional committees. However, the CEC may present rule amendments in any Congress year.

Following the adoption of RA323 by Congress 2013, the National Equalities Conference will agree a motion to be debated at Congress and this will be included in the Preliminary Agenda.

Who attends Congress?

Delegates

Delegates from the nine GMB regions attend to represent their members on the basis of 1 delegate per 1,500 members of the region's membership at the end of the previous September. From 2011, 90% of delegates are elected by branches and the region's remaining 10% of delegates will be appointed by the regional committee to ensure that the regional delegation properly reflects the balance of the regional membership in respect of industry, geographic spread, ethnicity, gender, disability, youth and sexual orientation.

To be a delegate, you will have been nominated by your branch and your name put forward to your region for election or appointment. In line with the Rulebook, nominations from branches close on 31 December and lists of candidates are distributed by regional offices to branches during the third week in January and branches' votes must reach the regional office by 28 February.

The President, Vice-president and General Secretary

The President chairs Congress and is assisted by the Vice President. The General Secretary has the right to speak on any Congress business.

The Central Executive Council (CEC)

The CEC attend Congress and can speak to give the union's position on motions.

GMB officials

All regional secretaries and national officials attend Congress, as well as some regional officials.

Guests and speakers

Invited politicians, campaigners, international speakers, as well as media, press and invited visitors attend Congress.

GMB staff

National Office staff involved in Congress preparations attend Congress to provide support for the platform and Congress delegates via the Press Office, Congress Office and Information Desk.

PA's to regional secretaries attend to support their regional secretary and regional delegation. They are your first point of contact.

How does Congress work?

Preparation at regional and national level

The Congress year starts in October through to September the following year.

October

In late October, the executive officer at National Office circulates guidance to regional secretaries and national secretaries setting out the arrangements for Congress, including deadlines for the provision of information, including text for inclusion in the General Secretary's Report, and requirements for disabled access and sign language interpretation.

Regional offices send branches nomination forms for election and appointment of congress delegates and request motions from branches.

November

In November the Congress Working Party meets to discuss initial arrangements, possible special reports, and guest speakers and agrees the timetable of tasks.

December

31 December is the deadline for branches to send delegate nominations to Regions.

January

Any branch or any regional committee or the Central Executive Council may submit motions for inclusion in the agenda for Congress.

GMB Rules state that Branch motions must be forwarded to regional secretaries by 31 January and regions must send these to the General Secretary by 7 February.

February

At National Office, from 7 February onwards, the General Secretary's Office categorises and numbers the motions and rule amendments (in a rules revision Congress year) submitted and prepares the Preliminary Agenda. The General Secretary's Office co-ordinates draft policy positions on all motions and rule amendments for the CEC to consider at its March meeting.

28 February is the closing date for branch voting in the election of congress delegates.

March

The March CEC meeting decides upon its position on all the motions and rule amendments in the Preliminary Agenda; this is the way that the CEC recommends delegates to vote on each motion.

In some cases, the CEC is unable to take a position without more information about the motion or its intent, and asks the region for an explanation. The regional secretary will ask the branch for an explanation and send this to National Office where advice will be prepared to assist the CEC to reach its decision on a position at the April CEC meeting.

The Preliminary Agenda, Congress Explained and delegate expenses claim forms are sent to regions in March for copying and distributing to delegates prior to the pre-Congress delegation meetings.

April

Regions hold their pre-Congress delegation meetings in late March/early April on dates set by the Congress Working Party. Regional delegates decide upon the region's position on the

motions and rule amendments in the Preliminary Agenda. Regions then advise the General Secretary's Office of all decisions reached by the delegation on all of the motions and rule amendments in the Preliminary Agenda. The regions also advise the General Secretary's Office of any regional motions or rule amendments that they are withdrawing and are not to be included in the Final Agenda. Regional pre-Congress delegation meetings also elect the region's Standing Orders Committee member and the region's Teller from amongst their delegates and advise any accessibility issues.

In accordance with Motion 2 carried at Congress 2012, following regional delegation meetings that take place prior to Congress, all branches should be supplied with a list of the motions that have been submitted from their region and the regional delegation meeting decisions taken regarding said motions.

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) meets in April to recommend to Congress which motions are in order for Congress business, and if any motions are out of order. Following recommendations from the CEC and advice from the General Secretary's Office, they recommend which motions are existing policy and therefore will not be debated at Congress and prepare Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 which is printed in the Final Agenda.

The Standing Orders Committee, with the assistance of the General Secretary's Office, prepares draft composites and seeks the agreement of the regions involved. Once composites have been agreed, the General Secretary's Office commences the preparation of the Final Agenda.

The April CEC meeting agrees positions on any motions outstanding; sometimes, if explanations are unclear or unsatisfactory, or matters underway mean a decision cannot yet be made, the CEC defers its decision and reconsiders at the pre-Congress CEC meeting.

The General Secretary's Office co-ordinates the contributions from GMB regions, sections and National Office departments for the General Secretary's Report.

May

In May, the General Secretary invites members of the CEC to speak at Congress. CEC members speak in response to motions where the CEC position is other than support.

The General Secretary's Report and CEC special reports are sent to regions in May for copying and distribution to delegates prior to the eve of Congress delegation meetings together with credentials and other regional documentation.

June

Regional delegations meet on the eve of Congress to discuss Congress business. The CEC also meets on the eve of Congress to finalise its position on all Congress motions in the Final Agenda and any emergency motions agreed by the Standing Orders Committee as in order for debate.

September

The September CEC meeting agrees actions on decisions of Congress which allocates responsibility for carrying out the policies agreed by Congress.

Guidance for delegates

Preparation of motions

Congress is the GMB's democratic decision making body. It makes decisions through votes on motions proposed to it by branches and regional committees. If you have an issue you feel passionate about, contact your branch. Your issue doesn't have to be about the workplace, it can be about the wider political and social issues that affect you and your family. You can help GMB shape a better future and make a real difference!

Think through what you want to achieve. Do you want the union to take a particular position on the issue, lobby government or launch a campaign for instance. GMB cannot change legislation but can influence government. Motions do not need to be essays, the detailed arguments can be made when moving the motion. Keep the wording clear and concise

Here are some tips to help you write a motion for Congress:

- Give your motion a clear title i.e. 'Attacks on the Welfare State' rather than 'Taking money from people'.
- There is no word limit to motions for GMB Congress, but generally it is better for motions to set out clearly in a few paragraphs the problem, proposed solution and the action to be taken.
- Check that the motion is not existing union policy, against union rules, asking for unlawful action or seeking a rule change at a non-rules revision Congress.
- If your motion contains statistics or facts, remember to include the source so that these can be verified.
- Motions and particularly rule amendments should be written in plain English and make sense (check it with someone who knows nothing about the subject to see if they understand it – sometimes when you are close to a subject it is difficult to judge).
- Rule amendments should refer to the current Rulebook (which can be found on www.gmb.org.uk/rulebook)

If the branch agrees the motion, it must reach the regional secretary by 31 January.

All motions from a region are considered at the Congress delegates meetings to determine whether or not the region will support the motion. Motions then go to Congress for the elected lay representatives of the whole union to consider.

Until it is voted on at Congress, your motion remains the property of the region. It's important to make sure your motion is clear, and can be understood by the people you are asking to support it.

IMPORTANT: Motions are not edited or changed in any way by National Office before they appear in the Preliminary or Final Agenda, so please check the spelling and grammar.

Further help

For information about the Plain English Campaign please go to www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html where there are a number of guides to help you.

Congress Final Agendas can provide you with examples of motion wording. Congress documents dating back to 2005 can be accessed from www.gmb.org.uk/congress

Understanding CEC Positions

At the pre-Congress delegation meetings and at Congress, the CEC advises delegates to Congress on its position on each motion debated as follows:

Existing policy: The CEC has advised the SOC that a motion is in line with existing policy. This is in accordance with Recommendation 14 of the 'Framework for the Future of the GMB: Moving Forward CEC Special Report' endorsed by Congress 2007. A detailed explanation of the reasons for the existing policy position can be found in the Final Agenda.

Support: The president will advise Congress where the CEC is supporting a motion. If Congress votes in favour of a motion, that motion is carried.

Support with Statement: If the CEC position is support with statement a CEC speaker will set out the statement in a speech. Where an issue is important or newsworthy, a separate written CEC statement will be given.

Support with Qualification: If the CEC position on the motion is support with qualification, a CEC speaker will set out the qualification in a speech. The president asks the region/mover submitting the motion 'Do you wish to accept the qualification?' Subject to the region's agreement, the motion is carried subject to the CEC's qualification.

Refer: If the CEC position on the motion is refer, a CEC speaker will set out the reason for referral in a speech. The president asks the region/mover submitting the motion 'Do you wish to accept reference?' Subject to the region's agreement the motion is referred.

Seek Withdrawal: If the CEC position is seek withdrawal and the region has not yet withdrawn the motion the president will asks the region/mover if they agree to withdraw the motion. If the region/mover does not agree to withdraw a motion, then the CEC position is oppose.

Oppose: Where the CEC opposes a motion, a CEC speaker will set out the reason for opposition in a speech. The CEC will ask Congress to vote against the motion, unless the region withdraws the motion.

Preparation of speeches

Some helpful points:

- Always start your speech by stating your name and region clearly and whether you are moving, seconding, supporting or opposing the motion and whether you are a first time speaker.
- Best to keep to short sentences and short paragraphs.
- A short speech can make as much impact as a long one, and can be less demanding on new or less confident speakers.
- Make sure that it is easy for you to read, your choice of vocabulary and what you are comfortable saying.
- Deal with key points - it's better not to go into great detail or quote lots of statistics.
- If it is a seconding speech, pick out one or two specific points different to the points addressed in the moving speech.
- Once written, time your speech and stay within the maximum time limit (4 minutes for moving, 2 minutes for seconding/other speakers).

As a guideline when writing speeches, you can allow approximately 100 words per minute.

Being called to the rostrum

Speaking at Congress may seem nerve-racking, but the main thing is to remember to be yourself, prepare your speech thoroughly and keep to the time limits. Everyone, even old hands, gets nervous; this shows you care about the issue.

The president takes motions and composites in groups as set out in the Delegate Session Programme and calls speakers forward.

Speakers and seconders should be ready to speak once their motion is called. Seats are provided at the front of the hall for speakers awaiting their turn.

What to expect:

1. The president will call the motion mover to the rostrum
2. At the rostrum you must say your name and region, stating that you are moving the motion, and then deliver your speech to move the motion.
3. The president will then call for the motion seconder.
4. At the rostrum you must say your name and region, stating that you are seconding the motion, and then deliver your speech to second the motion.
5. The president will then ask 'Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?' (This allows for other regions to come in on the debate and Delegates may take the rostrum to support or oppose the motion).

Tips

- Stand about a foot from the microphone – you don't need to shout, the microphone will amplify your voice
- Put your notes or written speech on the rostrum, take a deep breath.

Please note: The rostrum is height adjustable and wheelchair accessible.

IMPORTANT: Variations in the Congress programme may alter the scheduling of your speech, therefore you will need to listen carefully to the SOC Reports or announcements by the president. We recommend that you have a copy of your speech with you at all times if you are moving or seconding a motion, or intend to speak in a debate. If a delegate is not in the hall to move or second a motion then the motion will fall.

The Speaker Lights on the rostrum help speakers to keep to times. The lights work as follows:

- Green** - delegate is speaking, time is being measured
- Amber** - delegate has one minute left
- Red** - delegate must stop speaking

IMPORTANT: Delegates are required to keep to the timings, so that everyone who wants to speak in a debate gets an opportunity to do so. It is inconsiderate towards other delegates who want to speak if the president has to curtail the debate because other people have over-run.

Speaking without the support of the region

Occasionally a regional delegation can take a position on a motion which the mover of the motion may not agree with. If the region does not withdraw the motion the mover or a branch speaker may decide to move the motion without the support of the region. If so, the mover and seconder must make it clear by stating to Congress that he/she is 'Speaking without the support of the region'.

Right to reply

No speaker may speak more than once in any debate except a mover who can reply to a debate. This is known as the 'Right of reply'. You can only reply to points raised in opposition to your motion in that debate. You will hear the president ask 'Would the mover like the right to reply?' if the mover wishes to exercise his/her right to reply they will take the rostrum again before the vote. (The president will call for a vote of any motion that is opposed during the debate).

Composite motions

After composite motions have been moved and seconded, other regions involved in the composite are given priority in debate. The composite motions are set out in the Final Agenda.

Congress is transmitted live on Congress TV so if you are speaking, you may view your speech after Congress through the National GMB Website.

Times for speakers

The Standing Orders Committee recommends the following time limits for speakers in their SOC Report No 1 which can be found in the Final Agenda.

General motions and rule amendments:

Movers up to	4 Minutes
Seconders up to	2 Minutes
Other speakers up to	2 Minutes

Special reports and CEC statements:

Mover up to	6 Minutes
Secunder up to	3 Minutes
Other speakers up to	3 Minutes

Officers' Reports:

General Secretary up to	10 Minutes
Section National Secretary up to	5 Minutes
Questions up to	1 Minute

These timings are at the discretion of the SOC and may change during Congress week.

Voting procedure

At the end of a group of motions the president asks the CEC speaker to set out the position on the motions where the CEC position is anything other than support and then asks Congress to vote accordingly. Motions opposed in debate will also be put to the vote.

Only elected or appointed lay delegates seated in the Congress hall can vote at Congress.

Those on the list below are **not** eligible to vote. (If you are in doubt, please speak to your regional secretary)

- Visitors
- Guests
- Auditors
- Full-time officials, regional secretaries, national officers, section secretaries
- GMB staff
- Members of the CEC



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Votes at Congress are taken by a show of hands.

A teller vote or card vote is taken when the president believes the show of hands vote is too close to call.

It shall be within the discretion of the president to determine the manner of voting, whether by a show of hands, a tellers vote or a card vote.

Teller vote

When the president calls for a teller vote:

- (a) Tellers will collect tear off papers to record votes for and against from the general member auditors who will be at the front of the hall. Note on the tear off paper the number of the motion/composite/report etc.
- (b) Tellers should go and stand beside the region they have been asked to count.
- (c) The president then asks 'All those in favour?' Tellers count the hands, write down the number of yes votes on the votes for tear-off, and give this information to the general member auditors.
- (d) Tellers then go back and stand beside the region they have been asked to count.
- (e) The president then asks 'All those against?' Again, each teller counts the hands, writes down the number of no votes on the votes against tear-off, and gives the information to the general member auditors.
- (f) A teller may add his/her own vote (for or against) to the votes of the region he/she is counting.
- (g) Tellers then return to their own regional delegation.

Once it is signalled to the president that all tellers have reported to the general member auditors, the president can move to the next business.

The general member auditors total the votes recorded by the nine tellers and the result is announced to Congress by the president.

Card vote

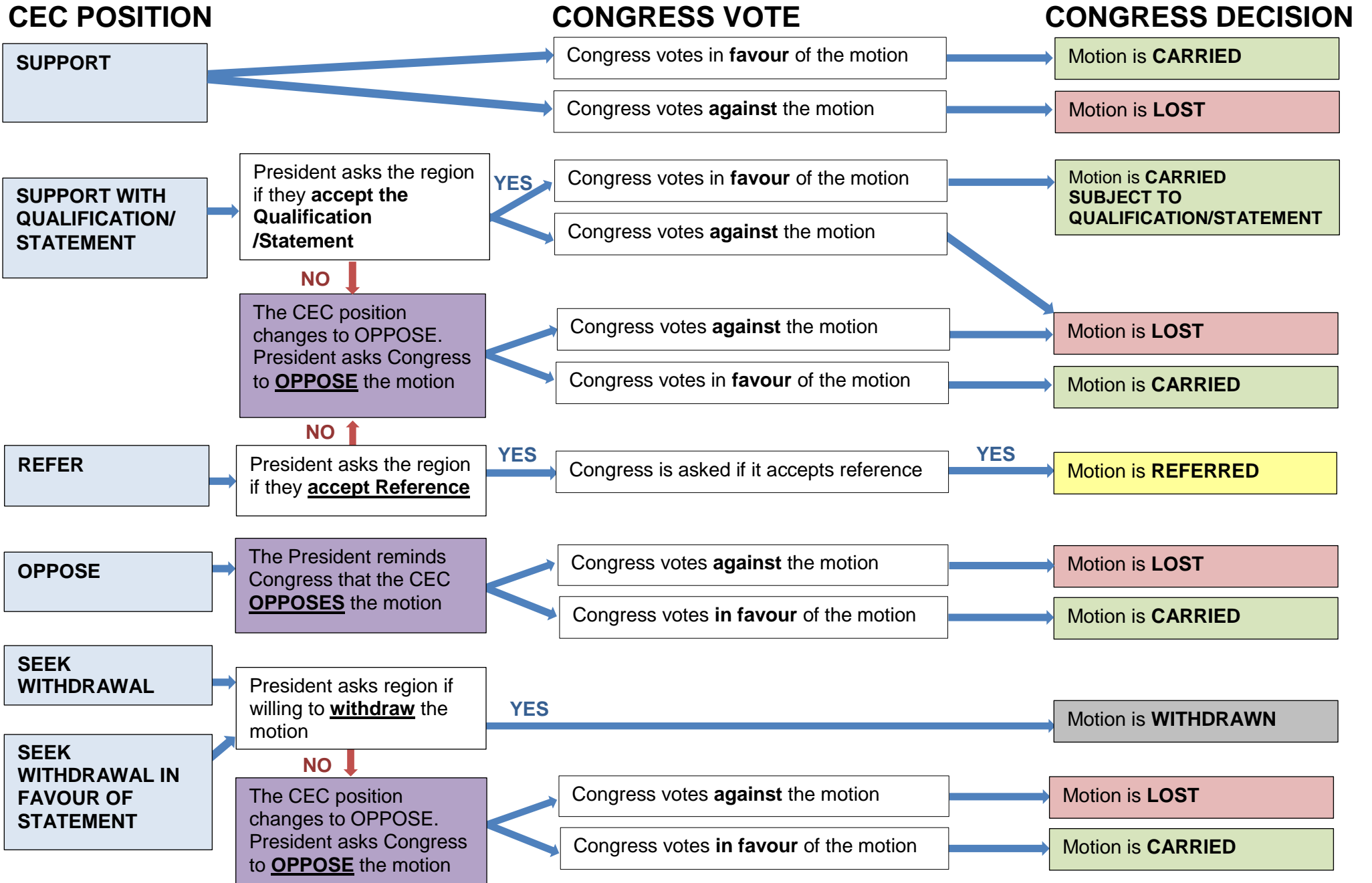
A book of voting cards will be issued to each delegate. Each book will contain numbered cards marked for, and cards marked against. The number on each card is to identify the number of the vote, and **cannot** be used to identify individual voting. The appropriate voting card will be selected and used by the delegate to vote either for or against. The card must not be marked in any way, but placed in the ballot box provided by the teller.

When the president has decided that a card vote is necessary:

- (a) Tellers will provide a ballot box for each regional delegation.
- (b) The president will announce the number of the card to be used – for example: 'Card Vote number 1'.
- (c) Delegates will choose the appropriate numbered card, marked either for or against from their booklet of voting cards and place it into the ballot box provided.
- (d) Once the president has announced 'Card vote completed' tellers will take the ballot boxes to the general member auditors.
- (e) The general member auditors will count the votes, and notify the president of the result.

The president of Congress shall have no vote. If there is a tied vote, then the motion shall fall.

The following diagram shows the voting paths for each CEC Position on motions



The Congress week

What you need to know

Credentials, wallets and accommodation

Regional offices arrange accommodation for their regional delegation and issue delegates with their Congress wallets at an eve of Congress delegation meeting. This will include a number of Congress related documents including:

- Final Agenda and Congress Guide (a document which contains the motions and rule amendments for debate at Congress, information on fringe events and exhibitors)
- 1-page Delegate Outline Programme
- Financial accounts
- Report of award winners
- Delegate's questionnaire
- Equality monitoring form
- Other Congress related information



Your Congress credential indicates your name, region and section and must be worn at all times in the Congress venue, they are required for access to the Congress hall. If you are a visitor to Congress, you would normally be seated in a separate viewing area.

IMPORTANT: Lost your credential? Need another wallet or a replacement document? In the first instance report this to your regional secretary's PA or delegation leader who will make arrangements for a replacement.

Conduct

The GMB is committed to the participation of all our delegates at Congress. No-one should be put off from participating because of the actions, attitudes or language of others at Congress.

It is essential that all those at Congress are treated with respect, politeness and civility. The GMB expects all those attending Congress to work within these principles. Language and behaviour that is unacceptable to other delegates, venue and GMB staff, the CEC, guests and visitors will not be tolerated.

Please remember that every GMB Congress session is filmed and broadcast live from the GMB website - please avoid using bad language.

Time keeping

Delegates are responsible for their own timekeeping. It is very important both for the smooth running of Congress business and politeness that you are punctual.

Mobile phones

If mobile phones are brought into the Congress hall, they must be switched off at all times when Congress is in session.

Congress Business

Order of debate

It is important that Congress is conducted courteously and in accordance with GMB rules.

The order of Congress debates is set out in a one-page document, namely the Delegate Outline Programme, please see example below.

SUNDAY 2 nd JUNE	MONDAY 3 rd JUNE	TUESDAY 4 th JUNE	WEDNESDAY 5 th JUNE	THURSDAY 6 th JUNE
Video Message		Father Events Leader Plenary (C)	Montpelier Primary School Show Band	
Opening: Banner F&I, Roll Call, Obsequies, Tables, SOC Report No 1 President's Address Vote of Thanks (YC)	POLITICAL: Democracy & Constitutional Reform (247, 248, 249, 249)	Dave Smith Budget Support Group EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (C3, 86)	UNION ORG: Recruitment & Organisation (19, 20) UNION ORG: Education & Training (62, 64) SOCIAL POLICY: Housing (C19, 293, 294, 295)	EMP. POLICY: Pensions (X66, 89, C2)
CEC Rule Amendments (CORA) 5	Working People & Politics Video	IND. & ECONOMIC: Taxation & General (209, 213, 214, 216)	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (128)	Monica Smith, BMA
Rule Amendments RA227, XRA327, XRA328, RA330, RA336		IND. & ECONOMIC: Social Justice (C17, 218)	SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights & Services (308, 309, 310)	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (100, 101, 102, 104, 105)
UNION ORG: Rep & Accountability (X34, X35, X16, 38)	POLITICAL: Labour Party (225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, X241)	SOCIAL POLICY: General (C17, 218)	SOCIAL POLICY: Education & Training (C19)	SOCIAL POLICY: General (1265, 266)
UNION ORG: Equality & Inclusion (71)		SOCIAL POLICY: General (C19, 266)	SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights & Services (C21, C22, 301, 302, 384, 305, 307)	IND. & ECONOMIC: Public Services (205, 206, 207)
CEC Special Report GMB Branches		IND. & ECONOMIC: Public Services (X159, 160, 161, C8, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 178, 181, 182, 183)		SOCIAL POLICY: Transport (C10, 298, 299, 292, 293)
Deval Evans The Campaign Company CEC Special Report GMB Business Update	POLITICAL: Labour Party & Constitutional Reform (241, C15, 246)	Paul Watney General Secretary's Report & Address	Alan Gerrard Child Poverty Action Group Congress Local GR GMB	SOCIAL POLICY: General (C21, 262, 267)
UNION ORG: Congress (5)	Devo Joshi			Any Remaining Congress Business
UNION ORG: General (C1)				Closing Conibus Vote of Thanks (S.O.) and Closing Sidestep
UNION ORG: Equality & Inclusion (67)				
12:45-1:48 LUNCH TIME FRINGES: Please refer to the Final Agenda & Congress Guide for details				
UNION ORG: Congress (X1, 2, 3, 4)	IND. & ECONOMIC: Public Services (C9, C10, 93)	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134)	Rule Amendments RA330, RA336	GMB CONGRESS 2013 Delegate Outline Programme Session times: 9:30-12:30 and 2:00-5:30  Please note: This Programme may be subject to change. Updated session programmes will be provided daily. (1) Motion numbers in brackets & denotes 'Out of Order' (2) (S.O.) & (S.O.) motion numbers denotes Existing Policy
UNION ORG: General (9, 11, 12, 13, 35, 37)	Andy Barnham, MP		UNION ORG: Finance & Contributions (40, 52, X54, X55, X56, X57, 59, 60)	
UNION ORG: Rep & Accountability (38)	IND. & ECONOMIC: Public Services (C11, 191, 192, 195, 196, 197, C12, X200, 201)	IND. & ECONOMIC: Commercial Services (137, 138, 139, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147)	UNION ORG: Union Benefits & Services (61)	
UNION ORG: Equality & Inclusion (56, 70, 72, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80)	SOCIAL POLICY: Welfare Rights & Services (211, 212, 213)	SOCIAL POLICY: General (C18, 266)	UNION ORG: Equality & Inclusion (X89)	
President's Leadership Awards for Equality	POLITICAL: General (219, C14, 222, 223, 224)	Special Congress Award	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (X122)	
EMP. POLICY: Health, Safety & Environment (81, 82, 84, C2, 67)	POLITICAL: Honours (251)	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (C4, 110, C5, 118)	Rule Amendments RA332, RA354, RA355, RA356, XRA357	
Daniel Dennis Health & Safety Awards	POLITICAL: Russian & Ukraine (252)	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (C14, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219)	Annual Accounts	
SOCIAL POLICY: Justice (269, 270, 271, 274, C17)	POLITICAL: European Union (253, 254)	INTERNATIONAL (314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319)	CEC Finance Report	
		EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (120, 121, C6, 126, 127)	EMP. POLICY: Rights at Work (113, 115, 138)	
Margaret Aspinall Hillsborough Family Support Group	Stephen Hughes, MEP	IND. & ECONOMIC: Public Services (222, C12)	IND. & ECONOMIC: Manufacturing (154, 155, 156, 157, 158, C7, 153)	
Post Congress Fringe Event	Post Congress Film: The Birth of GMB		President's Night	

Motions marked

- With a large **X** have been ruled out of order by the SOC
- With **EP** have been determined to be existing policy by the SOC

These are reported to Congress in SOC Report No 1

Motions marked with **Cxx** are composite motions agreed by the relevant regions and are listed in the Final Agenda.

A detailed delegate Session programme will be provided to delegates at the start of each morning and afternoon session. This lists the grouping of motions and will show any changes e.g. scheduling of Emergency Motions.

GMB Congress 2013		Delegate Session Programme	
TUESDAY 4 JUNE 2013		MORNING SESSION TO BEGIN 9:30AM	
1.	Peter Smith, Labour Deputy Leader of Plymouth City Council to Welcome Delegates		
2.	Dave Smith, Blacklist Support Group to Address Congress		
3.	EMPLOYMENT POLICY: Rights at Work Composite 3 Blacklisting (Motions 16, 97, 98) Motion 99 - Carillon	NW, YO, LO, NO	SO
4.	INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: Taxation & General Motion 216 - UK Industrial Policy		NW
5.	INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: Social Justice Motion 217 - Company Failures Motion 218 - Directors' Pay	YO	YO
6.	SOCIAL POLICY: General Motion 256 - Call for an End to Enticing Loan Company Advertising		LD
7.	INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: Public Services Motion 160 - Public Sector Cuts Motion 161 - Labour Party Composite 8 - Local Government Funding (Motions 162, 163) Motion 164 - Substituting Council Reserves for Treasury Funding Motion 166 - Public Sector Motion 167 - National Lay Rugs Task Force Motion 168 - Local Government Strategy Motion 169 - Public Funded Initiative Motion 172 - Resourcing not Outsourcing Motion 173 - Public Services Motion 174 - Bogus Self-Employment and Payroll Companies	SW NW NO, LD LD M LD LD LD M NO YO	
8.	EM2 - GMB Refutes the Coalition Government Attack on Teaching Assistants and Vives to defend them		SO
9.	INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: Public Services Motion 175 - School Support Staff National Agreement Motion 179 - Abolish or remove Academy Status from Discriminating Schools Motion 181 - Independent Hearings for School Support Staff Motion 183 - Breakfasts in Schools	YO M YO YO	
10.	General Secretary Paul Kenny to move the General Secretary's Report and to Address Congress		

As you leave the Hall there will be a bucket Collection in aid of the National Tidy Mags Scheme, organised by London Region.

END OF MORNING BUSINESS - ADJOURN TO 2:00 PM
SEE CONGRESS GUIDE FOR DETAILS OF LUNCHTIME FRINGES

Congress opening

The president calls Congress to order for the opening ceremony with the words:



© Andrew Wiard

'I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. Congress please stand to greet the national banner.'

Banner ceremony: Regions take it in turn each year to form the Banner Party which brings the GMB national banner to the platform.

Video montage: A montage of photos and videos is shown highlighting GMB work during the previous year.

Roll call: The president asks regions to notify the Congress Office of any changes to their delegation.

Obituaries: The president asks Congress to stand in silence while the obituary list is scrolled on the screen. A copy of the list is printed in the Congress Guide.

Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1: The chair of the Standing Orders Committee moves SOC Report No.1. Any delegate can challenge the recommendations in SOC Report No. 1 by calling for 'Reference back' on a SOC decision e.g. that a motion has been ruled out of order. Delegates can indicate that they wish to challenge the Report and once they have spoken, the SOC Chair will respond. Following debate Congress will be asked to vote on the individual references back, then on the whole SOC Report No. 1.

President's address: The president addresses Congress; printed copies of the president's address are circulated to Congress later the same day.

Vote of thanks: Regions take it in turn each year for a member of the CEC to give the vote of thanks to the president.

The order of debate

The procedure for debating motions and rule amendments shall normally be at the discretion of the president who will indicate to Congress wherever appropriate, the procedure or procedures he/she intends to adopt. In determining the procedure for debating motions and rule amendments, the president shall have regard to the following points:

- no motion can be amended, rescinded or negated by a subsequent motion, at that Congress;
- precedence in debates shall be given to a motion of the Central Executive Council;
- Rule amendments take precedence in debate over general motions;
- personal attacks on colleagues should not take place.

CEC special reports: These are in-depth reports on important issues relating to GMB democracy, governance, finances, structures and social and political matters and are moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. The president then invites regions to speak, and after the CEC mover has been asked if s/he wishes to exercise the right to reply, the report is put to the vote. Once CEC special reports are carried they become union policy.

CEC Statements: These set out the union's position on issues that are of special importance to the union or are relevant to matters being debated at Congress. They are circulated to delegates in advance.

Guests and speakers: Invited Politicians, campaigners and international speakers may speak at Congress. Details of which can be found on the one-page Delegate Outline Programme.

Congress awards: Congress awards for Leadership in Equality, and Health & Safety Reps are presented at Congress selected from nominations submitted by regions.

Congress local gift: In turn at each Congress, a region will select a local charity from within their region to receive the Congress local gift, which is funded 50% by National Office, and 50% by GMB regions.

DVDs and visual presentations: DVD's and visual presentations are often shown during Congress. They must be agreed in advance by the Standing Orders Committee.

Emergency motions: Emergency motions may be submitted to the SOC on matters that have arisen after the Rulebook closing date for submission of motions to regions (i.e. 31st January) on a pro-forma form issued by the SOC, and signed by the Regional Secretary and Regional President. If the SOC decides that the motion is in order for debate it reports this to Congress and the CEC decides its position on the motion. In the relevant SOC Report, the Chair will indicate when the Emergency Motion is likely to be scheduled. Emergency motions are distributed to delegates prior to debate.

Questions on accounts: As detailed in SOC Report No. 1 which is part of the Final Agenda, delegates may ask questions on GMB's financial accounts (balance sheet and auditors' report) and these questions must be submitted in writing to the Congress Office no later than 5.30 pm on the Monday of Congress week.

Question and answer (Q&A) sessions at Congress: Where Congress holds a Q&A session with a guest speaker any delegate can submit a question for the guest speaker to their regional secretary. Questions are agreed by regions and National Office so that the same question is not asked twice. Each region is treated equally in terms of the number of questions they can ask.

Congress closing

On the final day of Congress, when all business has been completed, the closing procedures take place.

Omnibus vote of thanks: Regions take it in turn each year for a member of the CEC to give the omnibus vote of thanks to Congress

General secretary's closing speech: The general secretary makes a closing speech to Congress, including reviewing the week's events and highlights.

Closing ceremony: This is in two parts:

1. Slideshow: A selection of photos is shown showing highlights of the week set to music
2. All stand for the singing of 'The Red Flag'

Facilities and additional Congress information

Information Desk

A Congress information desk is located at the entrance to the Congress venue, and is staffed by GMB National Office personnel.

Stewards

Stewards will direct any Congress attendee without a credential to the information desk where the staff will make the necessary arrangements to issue a credential. The desk also holds useful telephone numbers and addresses for local amenities e.g. train station, emergency doctor, taxi's etc

Exhibition

The Final Agenda and Congress Guide contains the exhibition guide giving details of all exhibitors and the location of the exhibition stands. The exhibition enables delegates to find out more about the interesting range of campaigning, social, and political organisations involved with the GMB, as well as those providing various services to GMB members. There are also GMB stands within the exhibition specifically dealing with information and guidance on a range of issues including health and safety, and equality.

The exhibition also contains an internet café which is free of charge to credential holders.

Please make sure that you do not forget to visit the exhibition to collect your Congress gift (further details in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide).

Fringe events

Throughout Congress week, delegates have the opportunity to attend a range of fringe meetings where social, policy and political issues are discussed in depth with keynote speakers. These take place at lunchtime and in the evenings and details are set out in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide.

Literature

No literature or leaflets – other than official GMB literature - may be distributed inside the Congress building without the prior permission of the Standing Orders Committee.

Literature, wherever distributed, which is intended to influence the voting intentions of delegates to Congress, should be brought to the attention of the Standing Orders Committee.

Accessibility

All Congress venues are fully accessible. If you require any of the following:

- Wheelchair access
- infra-red headphones / hearing loop (availability depends on the system in use at the venue)
- sign language interpretation
- large print documentation

Please inform your regional office in advance of Congress or at the pre-Congress delegation meeting. This information will be passed to the executive officer at National Office to act upon.

Documents may be produced in other specific formats but this will be the responsibility of your regional office.

Bucket collections

Requests for permission to hold bucket collections should be submitted in writing to the SOC by 11 am on the first Sunday morning session of Congress. Requests must be submitted in writing by the regional secretary, and must have the support of the regional delegation.

Priority will be given to requests for bucket collections which concern trade union or related issues. The SOC limits consideration of requests for bucket collections to a maximum of one per Region, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. The SOC limits the total number of bucket collections at Congress to three, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances at the discretion of the president. Bucket collections are normally scheduled at the end of the morning or afternoon session and the total money amount is reported in an SOC Report.

By agreement reached at Congress 1996, regional committees will each contribute a further sum to the Congress local gift. So permission will not be granted for a collection to augment the Congress gift.

Refreshments

Whilst Congress has a break for lunch, there are no set tea breaks during Congress morning/afternoon sessions. However, there is a refreshment outlet within the exhibition hall where tea and coffee is provided free of charge to all Congress credential holders throughout the day. Where possible all refreshments will be FairTrade

Equal opportunities monitoring

The GMB is committed to equality auditing. We aim to ensure that Congress is fully representative of its membership. Please complete the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form supplied in your Congress wallet.

Delegates questionnaire

We value your comments and your evaluation of your Congress experience, without evaluation monitoring we cannot measure how well we have organised Congress. It is very useful information for us in the planning and organising of future Congresses. By submitting your evaluation form you are also in with a chance of winning a prize!

Congress documents from previous Congresses

Congress documents dating back to 2005 can be accessed from the Congress area on the GMB National website: www.gmb.org.uk/congress.

Following through the decisions of Congress

Following Congress, the General Secretary's Office prepares a record of all the decisions of Congress and sends this document to all the regional offices. A copy is also put onto the GMB National website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

In accordance with Motion 2 carried at Congress 2012, following Congress, regions should circulate to their branches the decisions reached by Congress regarding the motions from their region.

The Central Executive Council meeting in September agrees actions on decisions of Congress which allocates responsibility for carrying out the policies agreed by Congress.

Progress on carrying out these decisions is reported in the General Secretary's Report to the next GMB Congress.

GMB CONGRESS 2013
Report of Decisions made by Congress on Rule Amendments, Motions, Reports and Statements

REPORTS AND STATEMENTS CARRIED/APPROVED

- Annual Accounts and Auditor's Report
- General Secretary's Report

CEC REPORTS, SPECIAL REPORTS AND OTHER REPORTS TO CONGRESS

- GMB Branches – A Future That Works
- GMB Women's Project
- CEC Finance Report: Financial Proposals to Congress 2013 (Containing CEC RAs 6, 7 & 8)

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (SOC) REPORTS

Standing Orders Report 1	Carried
Standing Orders Report 2	Carried
Standing Orders Report 3	Carried
Standing Orders Report 4	Carried
Standing Orders Report 5	Carried
Standing Orders Report 6	Carried
Standing Orders Report 7	Carried

BUCKET COLLECTIONS (as reported in SOC Report No 2)

Antislavery Heritage Society	Midland & East Coast Region
National Ugly Mugs Scheme	London Region
Zoe's Place	North West & Irish Region

CEC RULE AMENDMENTS CARRIED BY CONGRESS

CECRA1	Rule 29	Audits
CECRA2	Rule 35	Branches
CECRA3	Rule 52	Victimisation Benefit
CECRA4	Re-number Rules 53 to 67 as 52 to 66	
CECRA5	Rule 8	Qualifying for office, and the definition of officers

Decisions of GMB Congress 2013

1

Example of Report of Decisions of Congress

Glossary of terms

Carried

A motion is carried when the majority of delegates vote in favour.

CEC

The Central Executive Council which runs the union between Congresses, consists of fifty-four elected members from each of the nine regions elected in general, section and women's reserved seats, including five national race reserved seat members, plus the general secretary

CEC Special reports

CEC special reports are in-depth reports on important issues relating to GMB democracy, governance, finances, structures and social and political matters. They are approved by and moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. The president then calls on regions to speak in debate, and after the CEC mover has been asked if s/he wishes to exercise the right to reply, the report is put to the vote. Once CEC special reports are carried they become union policy. Special reports are printed and distributed to delegates by regional offices. Reports from previous Congresses are available on GMB National Website: www.gmb.org.uk/congress

CEC Position

A Central Executive Council agreed position on any motion or rule amendments e.g. support or oppose.

CEC Statement

This sets out the union's position on issues that are of special importance to the union or are relevant to matters being debated at Congress. They are circulated to delegates in advance and moved and seconded by CEC members. If accepted, they become union policy.

Chair

Congress is chaired by the president, whose role is to ensure that all the business of Congress is properly carried out. When the president is absent from the platform, the vice-president chairs Congress.

Composites

Composite motions are made up of more than one motion grouped together and treated as a single motion. This is done when there are a number of motions which have a similar purpose.

The text of the composites and the motions making up the composite are set out in full in the Final Agenda, prefixed with the composite number, e.g. C1. Regions involved in the composite agree which regions will move and second the composite and have priority in debate.

Congress local gift

In turn at each Congress a region will select a local charity to receive the Congress local gift, which is funded 50% by National Office, and 50% by the regions. A formal announcement of the recipient(s) is made during Congress. The presentation of the gift is made by the region after Congress.

Congress Office

This is located backstage and is responsible for all administration and organisation work during Congress.

Congress Working Party

The Congress Working Party consists of specialist staff from National Office, the NAU and section secretaries. It is chaired by the general secretary and meets regularly to plan all arrangements for annual Congress.

Credentials

These are the badges which permit access to Congress. They are issued in advance of Congress by the executive officer at National Office to regional secretaries who distribute them to their delegates and visitors. The type of credential differs depending upon voting status:

- Voting Delegates
- CEC Members
- GMB National or Regional Officer and Staff
- GMB Visitors (GMB members)
- Visitors (non-members)
- Exhibitor
- Steward

Credentials must be worn at all times in the Congress venue, and are required for access to the Congress hall. Lost or damaged credentials can be replaced at Congress by your region.

Defer

If explanations to motions are unclear or unsatisfactory, or matters underway mean a decision cannot yet be made, the CEC defers its decision and reconsiders at the pre-Congress CEC meeting.

Delegate Outline Programme

The one-page Delegate Outline Congress Programme lists the weekly timetable for the order of debate of motions and is provided in delegate wallets.

Emergency motion

Emergency motions may be submitted to the SOC on matters that have arisen after the Rulebook closing date for submission of motions to regions (i.e. 31st January) on a pro-forma form issued by the SOC, and signed by the Regional Secretary and Regional President. If the SOC decides that the motion is in order for debate it reports this to Congress. The CEC then decides its position on the motion. Emergency motions are distributed to delegates prior to debate.

Existing policy

A position which identifies a motion that is the same or similar to a motion already adopted by Congress.

Explanation

In some cases, the CEC is unable to take a position without more information about the motion or its intent, and asks the region for an explanation.

Falls

A motion programmed for debate which is not moved or not seconded, therefore cannot be carried by Congress.

Final Agenda & Congress Guide

This document contains motions, rule amendments, composites and CEC rule amendments to be debated by Congress, following withdrawal of motions or rule amendments from the Preliminary Agenda.

It also lists fringe events and details of the Congress exhibition and contains a Representation Statement for delegates attending Congress.

General Secretary's Report

Reports from the general secretary, National Office departments, European Office, GMB sections and regions on activity, particularly in respect of GMB@WORK, from 1 May of the preceding year to 30 April of the Congress year e.g. General Secretary's report to Congress 2014 covers activities during 1 May 2013 – 30 April 2014. These are printed and distributed to delegates by regional offices in May in advance of pre-Congress delegation meetings. Reports from previous Congresses are available on GMB Website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

Motion

A formal proposal put to Congress by a GMB branch, regional committee or the CEC. This is normally moved and seconded by a delegate but can be formally moved and/or seconded.

Mover

The delegate who proposes the motion to Congress – either formally or with a supporting speech. If a motion is not moved that motion falls.

Out of order

Motions ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee are reported in SOC Report No. 1 in the Final Agenda and presented at the start of Congress. The reasons that a motion may be ruled out of order are set out in the Final Agenda in 'Guidelines for Congress Business'.

Point of order

A point of order may be raised by a delegate if s/he wishes to bring a breach of standing orders or Congress procedures to the attention of the president.

Preliminary Agenda

Categorised list of all motions and rule amendments submitted by branches to Congress.

President's address

The President's speech to Congress, usually part of the opening ceremony. Delegates will receive a copy of this after the address is delivered.

President's running order

This is the detailed order of debate for each Congress session for use by regional secretaries and the platform only.

Refer

Where the factual background of a motion needs to be examined or where a more developed/ rounded statement of union policy than the motion would provide needs to be prepared. A report of action on motions referred from the previous Congress can be found in the Executive Policy Section of the General Secretary's Report.

Right of reply

When a motion or CEC special report has been debated and points made in opposition to the proposals in the motion, the Chair will ask the mover whether s/he wishes to exercise the right to reply. Only the mover of a motion or a CEC special report has the right to make this second contribution from the rostrum in the same debate and must use the right to reply to answer points made in opposition during the debate, not to restate the case.

Rule amendment

A proposed change to the GMB Rulebook submitted by a branch or a Regional Committee in a Rules Revision Congress year or by the Central Executive Council in any Congress year.

Rule book

GMB is governed by its Rule book and every member of GMB is bound by the rules. GMB rules are made by GMB members and determine the structure, democracy and constitution of the union. The Rule Book also details arrangements for GMB's full time Officials, regions, finance, branches and contributions and benefits. Following a decision made at GMB Congress 2008, this is now available in electronic form only on the GMB National Website:
www.gmb.org.uk/rulebook

Rules Revision Congress

Each alternate Congress (2013, 2015 etc) is a Rules Revision Congress where branches and regional committees can submit amendments to the GMB Rule Book as well as general motions. Note: Central Executive Council can submit amendments to the Rule Book in any Congress year.

Secunder

A delegate who endorses a motion that has been moved. If the motion is not seconded, the motion falls.

Section conferences

Biennial industrial conferences of the three GMB sections (Commercial Services, Manufacturing and Public Services) held during Congress week every other year (2012, 2014 etc) in line with the Rule Book

Session Programme

The detailed programme issued to all delegates at the start of each session. It is important to follow this as the programme is often subject to change on a session by session basis.

Standing Orders Committee

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) is a Committee of elected or appointed Congress delegates, one from each region, who oversee all aspects of Congress business. They are elected at the pre-Congress regional delegation meetings in April each year. They make recommendations to Congress for the handling of the agenda and the Committee remains in session throughout Congress. The SOC determines whether each motion submitted to Congress is in order for debate at Congress. The criteria are outlined in the Congress Guidelines in the Final Agenda.

SOC Report No. 1

The first SOC Report is included in the Final Agenda. It lists the composites, out of order motions, and any withdrawn or existing policy motions. The chair of the SOC then makes additional verbal reports to Congress as appropriate during the Congress week.

Stewards

Stewards are local branch members and activists who volunteer to steward the Congress venue, under the direction of the Congress Office. They will check credentials and generally assist delegates and visitors as required. They will also assist the venue staff with security of the venue.

Tellers

Every year each GMB region appoints a delegate as a 'Teller' to count the votes of another region. Teller's names and the region they are responsible for counting are listed in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide.

Withdrawal

A motion or rule amendment removed from the Preliminary Agenda usually by the agreement of a regional delegation meeting. The SOC must be notified by the region of withdrawn motions which it then reports to Congress. Motions can be withdrawn at any time up to and including during Congress right up to the point of debate.

Glossary of abbreviations

BFR	Branch Financial Return	LO	London Region
BI	Birmingham & West Midlands Region	LP	Labour Party
CAC	(Labour Party) Conference Arrangements Committee	LPC	Labour Party Conference
CAC	Central Arbitration Committee	LRD	Labour Research Department
CEC	Central Executive Council	DO	Membership Development Officer
CO	Certification Officer	MF or MANF	Manufacturing Section
CS	Commercial Services Section	MI	Midland & East Coast Region
ERS	Electoral Reform Services	MPO	Managerial and Professional Officers
F&GPC	Finance & General Purposes Committee	NAT SEC	National Secretary
GC	(TUC) General Council	NAT OFF	National Officer
GMA	General Member Auditor	NAU	National Administration Unit
GPC	(TUC) General Purposes Committee	NEC	National Equalities Conference
GS	General Secretary	NEC	(Labour Party) National Executive Committee
GS&T	General Secretary & Treasurer	NEF	National Equality Forum
HSE	Health & Safety Executive		
IST	Initial Support Training		

NO	Northern Region	SW	GMB Wales & South West Region
NOD	National Organising Department	TUC	Trades Union Congress
NOT	National Organising Team	TULO	Trade Union and Labour Party Liaison Organisation
NRO	National Returning Officer	ULF	Union Learning Fund
NW	North West & Irish Region	ULR	Union Learning Rep.
ORG SUB	Organisation Committee	YO	Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region
PEI	Political, European & International Committee		
PF	Political Fund		
PFB	Political Fund Ballot		
PS	Public Services Section		
REF	Regional Equality Forum		
RMA	Retired Members Association		
REO	Regional Education Officer		
RO	Regional Organiser		
ROT	Regional Organising Team		
RPO	Regional Political Officer		
RRO	Regional Returning Officer		
RS	Regional Secretary		
SC	GMB Scotland		
SMT	Senior Management Team		
SNC	Section National Committee		
SNS	Section National Secretary		
SO	Southern Region		
SO	Senior Organiser		
SOC	Standing Orders Committee		

Comments from first time delegates to Congress 2013

"It was a shot in the arm. First time delegates and speakers were supported and encouraged to speak and contribute"

"As a new delegate I was made to feel welcome right from the start"

"I thought I was motivated before Congress and my motivation for the movement has now trebled. The support from everyone has been overwhelming and it is an honour to be part of this movement"

"I enjoyed being a first time delegate – I received a lot of support which made my first speech easier"

"An excellent experience to be part of the democracy of a great Union"

"For a first time delegate daunting to begin with, also nervous and unsure what to expect, but as it progressed, with help from fellow activists became more confident"

"I'm more aware of issues nationally, have more passion and feel valued"

"Excellent organisation, good friendly reception and a very enjoyable experience"

"Very enjoyable, illuminating and plenty to think about to take back and discuss with shop stewards and members"

"Educational and inspirational"

"Really enlightening"

"Enjoyable and inspiring"

"Uplifting"

"I have made a lot of new friends and learnt a great deal on how the Union works"

"The fringe meetings were varied, interesting and informative"

"This was my first Congress and I found the organisation helpful and the stalls very interesting. The debates and motions I found very useful and will enable me to take some fresh ideas back to our branch meetings. There were several points that provided a rallying of hope that inspired me and gave the confidence needed to return home for a continued fight"

"First time at Congress, at first confusing but with help from others understanding then leading to a very interesting and enjoyable experience. I will try to attend next Congress, and take a more active part in this. "