



# **Central Executive Council Special Report**

## **GMB WOMEN'S PROJECT**

### **INTERIM REPORT TO ANNUAL CONGRESS 2014 CAPITAL FM ARENA, NOTTINGHAM**

**CONGRESS – SUNDAY 8 JUNE - MONDAY 9 JUNE**

**9.30 am - 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm - 5.30 pm**

**CONGRESS – WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE**

**9.30 am - 12.30 pm, 2.00 pm - 5.30 pm**

**CONGRESS – THURSDAY 12 JUNE**

**9.30 am – close of business**

## **The National Women's Task Force Membership;**

Ann Lafferty	Secretariat to Task Force, National Office
Mary Turner	National President, and Chair of the Task Force
Kathy Abu-Bakir	National Equality Committee member, Southern Region
Sheila Bearcroft	CEC member, GMB Wales & South West Region
Jude Brimble	National Officer, National Office
Ida Clemo	Executive Policy Officer, National Office
Rose Conroy	Head of Communications, National Office
Emma Golding	Head of Human Resources, National Office
Margaret Gregg	CEC member, North West & Irish Region
Sue Hackett	Organiser and Regional Equality Officer, London Region
Sharon Harding	CEC member, Birmingham & W. Midlands Region
Mary Hutchinson	CEC member, Northern Region
June Minnery	CEC member, GMB Scotland
Desiree Risebury	Senior Organiser, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region
Nikki Sharpe	CEC member, Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region
Kath Slater	CEC member, Midland & East Coast Region
Karen Smith	Membership Manager, National Administration Unit
Cath Speight	Head of Political Department, National Office.
Kathleen Walkershaw	European Officer, Brussels Office.

## Executive Summary

This report is produced for endorsement by GMB Congress 2014 and to update Congress about what has happened since the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' was carried by Congress 2013 by the National Women's Task Force which was formed after Congress 2013.

The Task Force will address issues that effect woman's involvement throughout the GMB. There is still a pressing need for GMB to ensure that equality is included in all its organisations negotiations and representations

The report details the work the National Women's Task Force has undertaken within its various sub-groups and makes initial recommendations. These recommendations cover a wide spectrum of issues which were identified by the sub groups such as: data gathering, development and introduction of mentoring systems, introduction of alternative methods of training and ensuring GMB is equality proofed. The recommendations can be found throughout the report.

Our general approach has been to pick up the recommendations identified in the 2013 Report to Congress and look at GMB as a union (Section A) and as an employer (Section B). The report also identifies the five sub groups formed to undertake various elements of their work.

Section A of the report "GMB the union" covers the Task Force work relating to;

- A sample of GMB post holders
- Training provided for GMB post holders
- The proposal of an Annual Women's Conference
- Women at Congress
- Women in Branches

Section B of the report "GMB the Employer" covers the Task Force work relating to;

- Identifying Key principles
- Women's Progression within GMB
- The appointment systems
- Women's progression to the post of Officer
- The assessment and Training of new officers
- GMB Employee Training
- Flexible employment practice
- Internal Staff Communications

The Report concludes with a stated intention of future work.

## Introduction

The CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' endorsed by Congress 2013 contained a number of women's equality based recommendations. Where applicable the Report has been quoted in italics.

The overarching objectives were;

*"There needs to be a full change management programme that embeds the necessary changes at all levels of the organisation. The General Secretary should champion the change and oversee an annual equalities audit (to be included each year in a report to Congress), to ensure that all appointments, procedures, initiatives, services etc. should be accompanied by an equalities impact analysis. This should be replicated within each Region..."*

In order to implement the recommendations to the achievement of a GMB roadmap to equality of opportunity, a Task Force, reporting to the General Secretary, was created.

The Women's Task Force is made up of female GMB Lay Representatives, GMB Regional and National Employees, the National President, Mary Turner is the Chair of the Task Force, and Ann Lafferty the Secretary. Paul McCarthy, Regional Secretary, North West & Irish Region, has been appointed from the Senior Management Team by the General Secretary to act as intermediary and assist the Task Force if necessary.

The Task Force have met regularly since July 2013. Their first achievement was the creation of a set of aims and objectives (Appendix 1) which has been agreed by both the SMT and CEC.

The Women's Task Force will always focus upon their overarching objective in all aspects of its work.

*"The GMB Women's Task Force aims to develop and recommend policies, actions and structures that will ensure the GMB's profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the Union"*

The Task Force formed five sub groups to undertake work in the following key areas pertinent to the Task Force remit:

1. Compilation and evaluation of questionnaires, data and statistics.
2. Lay structures policies and procedures
3. Employee structures policies and procedures
4. Training, support, development and mentoring for employees and lay reps
5. Communications for employees and lay representatives

The Women's Task Force recognises that there are two clear strands to the achievement of a GMB roadmap to equality of opportunity:

- **GMB 'the union'** - The need to address the historical and structural barriers that exist in the lay activist structure to ensure the union is truly an inclusive organisation at every level, that provides equality of opportunity.

**This is contained in Section A**

- **GMB 'the employer'** - The need to address the institutional and historical barriers to equality of opportunity for its entire workforce. To ensure GMB is truly an equal opportunities and inclusive employer.

## **This is contained in Section B**

Whilst full implementation of the Task Force's aims and objectives needs to be achieved within 5 years, this interim report highlights the work undertaken, and makes **recommendations** to Congress.

*"Interventions to tackle representation of women should be applied with consistency across regions"*

In making the recommendations the Task Force recognise that some regions have made progress in these areas already. However, to fulfil the above excerpt from the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' and achieve consistency throughout the union, the Task Force will address issues for national implementation. This document also details Referred Motions from Congress 2013 which the Task Force has addressed.

The Task Force recognises that now is the time to build on the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project', our union has the opportunity to demonstrate to its employees, activists and membership that it is serious in creating an inclusive GMB roadmap to equality of opportunity that addresses the issues of under representation and progression of women within the union, it is essential and recognised that significant progress needs to be made. The key challenges are well versed and understood; the Task Force recognises the problems and are more than willing to provide the solutions. Clearly a high level of commitment and engagement from the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Central Executive Council (CEC) is required in delivering the solutions that the Women's Task Force have set out.

## **Zero Tolerance Statement**

One of the overarching recommendations in the CEC Special Report 'GMB Woman's Project' was for the introduction and communication of a Zero Tolerance Statement which would cover both GMB members and employees.

The Task Force agreed a Zero Tolerance Statement which has been endorsed by the SMT and CEC.

### **GMB Zero Tolerance Statement**

In today's modern society all form of discrimination - including intimidation and behaviour patterns, words and or actions that harm or undermine a person's wellbeing or career is unacceptable.

GMB will not tolerate any form of discrimination and will have no place in its organisation for those who would seek to discriminate.

GMB also hold as core principles the right to equality, dignity, and fairness in industry and society as contained within the Rule book 'Our Purpose' states: 'We will aim to end exploitation, discrimination and injustice.'

GMB policies also state that our union will not tolerate any gestures, verbal or written or electronic communication or physical act that can reasonably be perceived as being discriminatory

Any persons within GMB who are subjected to such unwanted behaviour cannot function properly and are impeded from giving our membership the high quality of service that they deserve.

Harassment and discrimination, even in their most subtle forms, directly conflicts with the law and GMB policy and will not be tolerated at any level throughout the union. No employee or member of the GMB at any level should be fearful of reporting acts of discrimination.

GMB will treat all complaints of discriminatory behaviour seriously and will independently investigate them promptly, efficiently and in confidence.

GMB is furthermore committed to promoting respect and non-discrimination through on-going training, education and awareness-raising programmes at all levels of the union lay and employee structures

This statement applies to;

GMB members

GMB post holders

GMB employees - direct or indirect workers performing functions in relation to GMB

The Task Force **recommend** that this policy is given the widest possible distribution and it is shared with:

- New members via the new starters pack
- New and long standing GMB post holder via GMB@Work training conducted regionally and nationally
- Existing members, activists and post holders via inclusion on GMB web pages and GMB magazines
- All employees via internal communication and inclusion in employment policy.

The Task Force will address issues that effect woman's involvement throughout the GMB. There is still a pressing need for GMB to ensure that equality is included in all its organisations negotiations and representations.

# Section A

## GMB: The Union

### A1. GMB: what our data tells us

*“The gathering of data, to use this to measure progress in areas such as the gender breakdown of workplace reps, GMB@Work training participants, other training undertaken, Branch Officers, Regional Committees, Officers, Senior Officers, CEC, National Officers, Regional and National Secretaries.”*

The Task Force collated national and regional data on the gender of post holders and employees in order to obtain an accurate picture of women’s participation within all aspects of GMB. This information will be used to measure future progress.

The Task Force identified inconsistencies with the inputting of data on the GMB membership system.

The Task Force **recommend** that a robust and consistent approach should be adopted by Regions to ensure that the data is always accurate and up to date.

The Task Force focused on the following key posts: Workplace Contact, Shop Steward / Workplace Organiser and Branch Equality Officer.

### A2. The role of the Workplace Contact

The role of workplace contact whilst informal is an important role for activists and can often be a stepping stone to taking on a formal GMB post. Where these roles are prevalent we need to encourage and support these activists to taking on a more formal role.

The data demonstrates that this group is made up of a disproportionate number of women, part time workers; Over 5,000 GMB members are workplace contacts, of whom nearly 90% are women.

The Task Force **recommends**;

- Recognition of the value of the role of Workplace Contact, and acknowledgement that this should be a stepping stone to becoming a Shop Steward / Workplace Organiser.
- Development of targeted training harnessing regional best practice.

The Task Force has produced and circulated a questionnaire to all workplace contacts in order to better understand their views, thoughts and needs. Once this information is received the Task Force will be better able to formulate further recommendations to encourage workplace contacts to make the move to GMB post holder.

### A3. The role of GMB Representative

*“The culture of the union derives from its history, purpose and operating environment. There are many aspects of it that are seen as strengths. We have explored it only from the perspective of this project. In that regard, the Culture is identified by a large number of women as something that is exclusive and a barrier to fairness. It is often described as, male, working class, and old fashioned.”*

The Task Force in addressing the role of GMB representatives, focussed on the post of Shop Steward / Workplace Organiser. Our data demonstrates that 26% of GMB “Shop Stewards”, 16% of GMB of “Senior Shop Stewards” and 21% of GMB “Convenors” are women.

Whilst the Task Force are not recommending that the duties performed by GMB representatives need changing, they do recognise that the skills and attributes required to be effective GMB representatives can be better communicated in such a way as to encourage more woman to come forward to undertake the role.

**The Task Force recommend**

- the creation of materials, posters etc. explaining why workplaces need GMB representatives, what GMB representatives do and encouraging women to become GMB representatives
- The production of an advisory booklet and a DVD aimed at women giving the positive side of being a GMB Representative.

#### **A4. The role of Branch Equality Officer**

The GMB Rule Book identifies that the role of a Branch Equality Officer is to be responsible for promoting equal rights within the branch’s activities. The Task Force analysed the data gathered and were concerned at the high number of branches who do not have a Branch Equality Officer, less than a third of branches have a Branch Equality Officer in place and of these just over a third are women. The Task Force recognise the importance of this rule book position, and will work with the National Equality Forum to create national guidelines to encourage a greater take up of this position.

For each of the key Rule Book positions identified, the Task Force noted the inconsistent approach by Regions towards identifying and supporting women to take up these roles.

The Task Force **recommend** the development and introduction of mentoring systems to support and encourage more women to take up these posts.

#### **A5. Training for Post holders.**

*“Ensure that effective education, training and/or skills development are integrated into the core programme for the organisation”*

The Task Force requested data from each region on the type and number of educational courses they held, the number of places they had allocated to students on external courses, and the gender of the students, regions were also asked to identify any special arrangements that had been made to promote female participation. The training data was analysed and clearly demonstrates the majority of students attending GMB training events or being allocated places on to external courses are male.

The Task Force identified that women post holders face a number and variety of hurdles when attending training events some of which are:

	Observation	Taskforce Recommendations
Course times and dates	There are more women part time members who are post holders than male. Not all Regions identified a provision of part time or weekend Courses	GMB weekend training to be provided and a trial of courses to suit part time workers should be piloted.
Location of Training	In some instances, the training venue required considerable travelling	Where possible workplace based training should be held (as introduced for British Gas Workplace Organisers)  Greater consideration to be given to the accessibility of venues via public transport.  Link up students and encourage them to share transport where possible.
Childcare	Statistically more women than men have childcare and elderly care responsibilities.  Perception that, neither childcare nor childcare allowances were available for GMB students.	The provision of childcare facilities or payment of childcare facilities be fully promoted throughout all Regions.
Course Content		All GMB courses are equality proofed and cover understanding equality issues.
Course attendees	Feeling uncomfortable attending an event that was male dominated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training organisers strive to achieve student gender balance.</li> <li>• A trial of women only courses</li> <li>• A consistent approach towards the use of dignity and respect guidelines</li> </ul>
	Branch Equality Officers and Workplace Contacts not having the right to paid release to attend GMB training.	Consider development and early implementation of online training.
Non attendance	Numbers of members fail to attend courses. Some regions follow up to determine reasons for non- attendance	More consistent approach to surveying non- attendance. If problems relating to course attendance are raised, assistance should be offered were possible to overcome them.
Training Funds for members and activists	Different provision of funds or bursaries in regions to support members in training or study. Details, provisions and benefits relating to these schemes vary considerably.	Exchange best practice and innovative approaches across GMB with a view to the introduction of a standard scheme which would be promoted and implemented consistently.

Membership Records	<p>Different ways of recording training statistics.</p> <p>Need to achieve and maintain a robust and up to date national data base, containing training related data</p>	<p>Need consistent approach to maintain and update information on the education section of the GMB membership system. Data to include all regional statistics such as courses held, gender of students, action taken to assist post holders declining basic training</p>
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The Task Force recognise that women encounter different problems, therefore a range of mechanisms should be put in place to encourage and enable more women to participate within training events. Once these mechanisms are implemented and established, the Task Force will continue to monitor progress as part of its on-going work.

#### **A6. Annual Women’s Conference**

Motion 67 from Congress 2013 was referred to the Task Force, calling for GMB to;

*“Instigate an Annual Women’s Conference as soon as possible”*

The Task Force noted that various events have been held by self-organised groups and a number of Regions.

Of these events the annual Woman’s two day Conference organised by the North West and Irish Region was recommended as the example of best practice with a proven record of success over a period of nearly 10 years.

A number of the Task Force members have had an input into the North West and Irish Region’s Women’s Conference. Several Task Force members attended the 2013 Conference and witnessed first-hand the way in which the attendee’s confidence was built, their political awareness increased and participation within the union’s democracy encouraged.

The Task Force recognise that the success of this event lay in a number of factors; the enthusiastic way in which the event was organised, the fact that it is not motions based. That it deals with issues of interest to women through the careful selection of subjects and speakers, throughout the event tactics are used to encourage the participation of those attending. This creates an opportunity for the region to spot, nurture and encourage new activists.

The Task Force **recommend;**

- An Annual Women’s **issues based** Conference be held by within each region.
- The funds required to organise these Conferences should be budgeted for, and sponsorship gained were appropriate.
- The success of these events should be subject to a review and discussions with the Task Force before moving to a national conference.

## A7. Women at Congress

GMB rule 8; *“Congress (Ordinary or Special), made up of representatives from the regions of the union, **holds supreme authority**”*

The Task Force believe that GMB can do more to ensure that Congress becomes truly representative of its membership with all regions having the required gender balance to reflect its membership makeup.

The Task Force recognise there has been a rise in the ratio of women delegates to Congress and are mindful of the top up arrangements introduced in 2011 to allow Congress to be more inclusive and more representational of the membership as a whole. However this has not fully addressed the gender imbalance that still exists. For example Congress 2013, still only comprised 31.5% of women.

The Task Force believe that further work still needs to be done to improve the gender balance if their overarching objective is to be met;

*“Ensure that, the GMB’s profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the Union.”*

The Task Force **recommend**;

- That a requirement is placed on each region to ensure the gender balance of their delegation reflects their membership.
- A wider promotion of GMB Congress detailing who attends, how it works, how delegates are elected to it and a greater focus be placed on this in training for new shop stewards
- Guidance be sent to Branches on creating a greater awareness and transparency in their dealings with Congress nominations
- The organisation and promotion of a pairing system, allocating new Congress delegates to experienced ones who can offer support and assistance.
- The organisation and promotion of a reception at Congress for new delegates

## A8. Women in Branches

The Task Force recognise that the gender balance of Congress delegates, Regional Councils, Regional Committees and the Central Executive Council cannot be addressed in isolation without looking at the role of the Branch. The increase of women’s participation within GMB democracy is dependant upon their participation in the Branch. The Task Force acknowledge that attendance at Branch meetings is extremely low and focused upon identifying barriers faced by women in particular, these were identified as.

- GMB not communicating sufficiently the importance of the branch and its functions within our democracy.
- Branch meetings being held at inconvenient times and places
- Branch agendas perceived as not relevant
- The over use of trade union jargon
- Branches not welcoming new attendees
- The absence of Branch Equality Officers

The Task Force recognise that these issues are not relevant in all branches but are aware that some or all of these issues relate to the majority of our unions Branches.

The Task Force acknowledge that there are some excellent examples of Branch and Regional good practice:

- Branches working hard to create a vibrant atmosphere and using equality and inclusion to increase the level of Branch activity.
- Regions holding Branch weekend schools with an equal number male and female attendees and ensuring GMB Officers work closely with Branches.

Branches have the potential to try new ideas to encourage branch participation this could include, moving the meetings around their patch or holding meetings in the workplace or having interesting agendas to generate greater branch participation and create opportunities to spot, nurture and encourage new activists.

The Task Force acknowledge the importance of the work currently being undertaken by the Branch Review Working Party and would welcome a joint approach in areas of mutual interest.

## Section B

### GMB: The Employer

#### B1. Key principles

This section of the report focuses on GMB 'The employer'. The Task Force believe that the road map to equality of opportunity can only become a reality if and only when a number of key principles can be agreed. The agreed principles will underpin and map out short, medium and long term objectives. These will be the objectives that will create the conditions and structures that will underpin a culture that will allow all GMB employees to progress on their merits.

It is without doubt confidence is needed in the current proceedings and it's critical that progress is made to demonstrate that the issue of under representation of women at senior levels within the union is being taken seriously and that there is a determined commitment to drive and manage the change and practical steps required to achieve the shared objectives and goals that were adopted at Congress 2013.

It is crucial therefore that the key principles that will sculpt the short, medium and long term objectives are agreed. This will enable the union's workforce to have confidence in the process and the on-going work that will be required to deliver equality of opportunity as a priority within in a realistic and acceptable time frame.

The Task Force believes that an agreed strategic plan and timetable has to be in place. With each identified objective and goal being assessed and monitored so that employees have confidence that GMB 'the employer' is serious in delivering and responding to the report tabled at Congress last year.

By adopting agreed key principles and objectives this will ensure that a strategic work plan can be demonstrated that will drive the delivery of those objectives and goals.

The Task Force recognise that without this road map for equality of opportunity for employees there is a real danger GMB 'The employer' will continue to expose itself to potential risk and potential challenges by employees who feel they have not been treated fairly and with dignity, equality and respect.

So how do we create the conditions to allow individuals to achieve 'real' equal access of opportunity to progress to senior levels within the union?

The Task Force in focusing on what GMB 'The employer' is doing to ensure that any institutional and historical barriers that prevent and hinder women progressing to senior levels in the organisation are eliminated, and that all policies, procedures and practices that effect employees and appointment procedures are equality proofed and stand up to scrutiny.

The Task Force, SMT and CEC have already addressed the adoption a robust stance to ensure any institutional sexism is rooted out of the organisation, through the zero tolerance policy, The Task Force believe GMB must now put the practical steps in place to drive and implement change.

The Task Force **recommend** that five key principles and objectives are adopted and developed, these will form the 'spring board' needed to effect change.

### **The five key principles:**

1. The Task Force will assess and audit GMB policies and procedures currently in place and where appropriate provide recommendations on areas of improvements as to how GMB 'the employer' can improve and strengthen policies and procedures which will help deliver the objectives of the women's task force.
2. All GMB policies and procedures on recruitment, induction, appointment, employment, training, progression and promotion will be reviewed and harmonised across the union, adopting best practice and introducing new appointment procedures which will form national standards
3. Variations of policies and procedures that impact on the appointment procedures, employees working arrangements, environment and terms and conditions will be eliminated and brought in line with the agreed national standards.
4. Auditing and governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure all aspects of the union apply the national agreed policies procedures and standards in a consistent and fair manner.
5. GMB 'The employer' will develop an equality advisory panel consisting of employees, employer and National Negotiating Committee (NNC) representatives that will oversee and monitor the implementation of equality and wider policies and procedures to ensure that they are 'equality proofed'

The Task Force **recommends** the adoption of these five key principles, which will allow the Women's Task Force to work with the SMT and HR department and other colleagues to undertake the detailed work needed and to bring about the changes. With the view to agreeing implementation timetables, identifying and developing policies, procedures and training that would need to be put in place.

### **Women's Progression within GMB**

#### **B2. The Appointment Systems**

*“Existing equalities procedures around appointments at national and regional level including further training and support be refreshed to ensure universally consistent application”*

The Task Force analysed data regarding GMB employees, their job role and gender and recognised that whilst improvements have been made, male and female job divides are still visible in this data.

Women represent 55% of GMB's entire workforce and yet only 28% of GMB's Officers are women

The Task Force recognise the limited opportunities available to activists in gaining employment in GMB and for career progression within GMB for its workforce this is exacerbated further due to the very low turnover of employees.

It is essential therefore that when opportunities do arise all activists and employees have equal access of opportunity and confidence that there is open and fair competition, and that GMB 'The employer' has an equality proofed appointment process that ensures appointments are based on merit allowing the *'best person for the job to progress'*

The Task Force are concerned about the major differences that currently exist in regional practices within the appointment process.

The Task Force welcome the "Appointment Systems Review" exercise currently being undertaken by SMT, along with the opportunity to participate. The Task Force will use the opportunity to recommend reform and change needed to allow talented women in the organisation to progress through a fair and transparent appointment process that is fit for purpose and free from bias, a process that will allow women to progress on their merits.

That said the Task Force believe that the appointment process review is an issue which should be covered by the key principles and recommendations outlined in this report.

### **B3. Progression to Officer**

*"Maintain, develop and expand the staff to officer programme that has been undertaken"*

Whilst the Staff to Officer Scheme has been implemented throughout the union with some considerable success, the Task Force note the absence of a National Policy which has resulted in inconsistencies across the regions.

The Task Force **recommend**;

- The development of a National policy the contents of which would cover as a minimum; terms and conditions, resources, training and assessment programmes afforded to these employees.
- The extension of the 'Staff to Officer Scheme' to include senior management and leadership.

During contacts with various Regional Equality Forums concern has been raised that the introduction of the Staff to Officer Scheme has the potential to have a negative effect detrimental to GMB representatives making the transition from Post Holder to Officer. The Women's Task Force believe support should also be given for the transition of lay activists to staff and officer positions for those wishing to pursue this route. The Task Force are aware of arrangements in various parts of the union in which a "seconded" has successfully acted as Officer.

The Task Force **recommend**;

- The introduction of a similar scheme for post holders, whereon attempts are made to negotiate release to allow GMB post holders to try out the role of officer.

- The Task Force in making this recommendation are aware of the difficulties and complexities of introducing such a scheme and for that reason believe that a pilot scheme may be required initially.

#### **B4. The Assessment and Training of new officers**

The Task Force;

- Acknowledge that initial training and support is provided, by Regions for new officers but are concerned that different standards operate across the union.
- Recognise that a national course for new officers has been in place since 2009 training to date 120 Officers, but are concerned that this course lasts only two days.
- Acknowledge the new National Office appointment relating to national training and the fact that the Senior Management Team are addressing this issue.

The Task Force **recommend**;

- The minimum provision of a programme delivered consistently throughout the union to all new officers comprising of a personal assessment by a senior regional person who would evaluate training needs. Based upon the outcome of the evaluation, a bespoke programme of training commence as soon as is practical. This training may consist of in house and/or external courses as well as one to one sessions, shadowing etc
- The production and provision of guidelines for those involved in delivering one to one sessions.
- The individual training programme to be provided as an addition to standard national training for new officers, and training covered by review meetings
- The national course for new officers be expanded to a minimum of 5 days.

#### **B5. GMB Employee Training**

*“The development and promotion of a programme of support for staff and officers that recognises the specific barriers that women face”*

The Task Force acknowledge that in various parts of the union some GMB employee training is provided the Task Force believe a consistent approach is required.

The Task Force recognise the benefit derived from a well informed and motivated workforce and acknowledge the importance of all GMB employees understanding the ethos behind trade unions generally and more specifically the principals held by GMB. The Task Force believe that often a greater understanding of GMB encourages a greater involvement of employees. This was borne out when a number of women participants in the Staff to Officer Programme told their stories at Congress last year.

The Task Force **recommend**;

- Training for all staff covering the role of trade unions and GMB principals
- Briefing for all employees on key Congress decisions
- All employees be given the opportunity to attend regional based training for Officers
- GMB@Work training be made available upon request by employees

## **B6. Flexible employment practice**

*“There are issues – not unique to the GMB – around caring responsibilities that fall to women..... A universally applied and transparent approach to how the particular caring responsibilities that affect women (but also men) would be beneficial “*

The Task Force analysed membership data by gender and grade, woman represent 49 % of our total union membership.

GMB female membership is split fairly evenly with 45% on grade 1, whilst 77% of male membership is on grade 1.

Recruitment figures show that the GMB consistently recruits more women than men and for Grade 2 recruits, over 80% are female and of the Grade 1 recruits around 40% are female.

To protect the union against potential risk of allegations of indirect discrimination (by not providing lay representatives and staff the opportunity to make the transition to Officer whilst retaining part time worker status) the Task Force believe that GMB should introduce flexible employment practices.

The Task Force **recommend** the introduction of a pilot scheme of employing part time Officers which would involve filling a number of posts with 2 people who would in fact, job share.

## **B7. Internal Staff Communications**

*“GMB institute an internal staff communications bulletin and process throughout the union including each region”*

The Task Force believe that the union would benefit from the construction of an internal staff communication bulletin that would create a vehicle to circulate best practice and improve internal communications throughout the Union.

The Task Force collated and considered examples of best practice from regions.

In December 2013, the National HR Department produced the first “All Staff Bulletin” and it is intended that this communication will be on-going.

## **Conclusion,**

The Task Force seek endorsement of this interim report to Congress.

The Task Force will continue to undertake work relevant to its remit with a view to submitting further recommendations in a more substantial report to congress 2015. Were necessary this may involve recommending amendments to the GMB rule book.

## **GMB National Women's Project Appendix 1. Task Force Aims and Objectives**

### **Overarching Objective**

The GMB Women's Task Force aims to develop and recommend policies, actions and structures that will ensure that within 5 years the GMB's profile at all levels of the lay and employee structures reflects the number of women members in the Union.

### **Practical Aims and Objectives to deliver the overarching objective**

1. The Task Force will examine the rule book and other policy positions in the GMB which currently create obstacles to the progression of women in the organisation, equal representation of women on Regional Councils, Executives and CEC, and make recommendations for overcoming these.
2. The Task Force will analyse recruitment, training and development procedures for lay and employee positions at national level and across all regions and make recommendations based on best practice to ensure they are implemented and applied consistently across the organisation towards achieving balanced representation.
3. The Task Force aims to examine the scope for flexible approaches to developing women in lay representative roles and as employees at all levels of the organisation. This will include considering role sharing and team approaches to workplace representation. The aim is to encourage talented women to come forward whilst respecting their other commitments, and to help them make the most of both.
4. The Task Force aims to make recommendations on developing a positive structure of mentoring, support and development of women in to new roles and positions to be applied consistently across the organisation.
5. The Task Force will, on an on- going regular basis, submit recommendations for implementation to the Senior Management Team and/or CEC.
6. The Task Force aims to present a package of recommendations for consideration and agreement at Congress 2014. All recommendations will be accompanied with timelines for delivery.
7. The package of recommendations to Congress, if agreed, would be implemented and acted upon according to its relevant strands. It would also be rolled out in a training programme for all post holders and staff, and incorporated in to membership training programmes so the aims and culture are clear to all.

The Task Force may decide to establish subgroups to concentrate on various issues