

GMB

CONGRESS 2015

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**SIS. MARY TURNER MBE
(President)
(In the Chair)**

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Held in:

**Citywest Hotel, Conference and Event Centre,
Dublin**

on:

**Sunday, 7th June 2015
Monday, 8th June 2015
Tuesday, 9th June 2015
Wednesday, 10th June 2015
and
Thursday, 11th June 2015**

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**PROCEEDINGS
DAY FIVE
(Thursday, 11th June 2015)**

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FIFTH DAY'S PROCEEDINGS
THURSDAY, 11TH JUNE 2015
MORNING SESSION
(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, come to order please. I have some announcements to make.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before moving on to the Congress Business, I want to announce that the RMA raffle raised €1,259.10 Well done to everyone involved. We will have to cut their funding. *(Laughter)* Just to let you know, we will double that amount. *(Applause)* I want to thank you for completing the delegate questionnaires. We will now draw four delegate Questionnaires to win prizes of £100 in cash.

In the Yorkshire Region we have two members who are leaving us after this Congress. They have given long service to this union. They are Joan Keane, who is retiring in August, and Bill Chard. Bill leaves after 28 years of working for the union. We wish both Joan and Bill all the best. *(Applause)*

A phone has been found this morning — I have looked at all the exciting things in it — and the only thing is that we know it belongs to Adrian Mitzi. Also there is a wallet with the phone. I have just emptied the wallet. It is by my side if you want it, but if it rings it is going to cost you.

Before moving on to Congress business, we will now draw four delegate questionnaires to win prizes of £100 in cash. The first winner is Billy Goulding from North West & Irish Region *(Cheers)*. You can go to the bar tonight. The second winner is Mike Aldridge from North West & Irish Region. *(Cheers)* They will think that this is a fiddle. The third winner is Mick Gillow from North West & Irish Region. *(Cheers)* Put them all back! The fourth winner is Sally Maybury from Birmingham & West Midlands Region. *(Cheers)* Do the winners want to come up and get their prizes. It's cash in hand. *(The President presented the winners with their prizes)*

We now come back to the business of Congress. Could the speakers for Motions 138, 142, 145, 146 and 147 come to the front. As advised by SOC Report No. 1, Motion 149 was withdrawn which means that Motion 145 now stands alone.

EMPLOYMENT POLICY: RIGHTS AT WORK

EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKING POOR BY ZERO CONTRACT HOURS
MOTION 138

138. EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKING POOR BY ZERO CONTRACT HOURS

This Congress restates its total opposition to the continued expansion in the use of zero hours contracts, which when combined with wages being paid at the legal minimum have led to an explosion in the numbers of working poor. Congress demands that an incoming government deal with this issue by the implementation of the following, either alone or together.

1. A contract providing for a minimum of 12 hours paid per week at the level of minimum wage.

2. A minimum income guarantee equivalent to 12 hours per week times the value of the minimum wage, to be paid by the employer.

N10 NEWBURY BRANCH,
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. F. DWUM (Southern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, I am moving Motion 138 — Zero Hours Contracts. Zero hours contracts allow employers to hire staff without any guarantee of work. According to a survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics in 2014, the number of workers on zero-hours contracts has risen to the astonishing figure of 686,000, which is sad. Because of the rapid increase in zero-hour contracts, there is only one name involved — the Tory Government! The number of employers making unfair use of their employees or exploiting them is also increasing to high numbers. Zero-hours contracts allow employers to deprive workers of their basic employment rights, such as sick pay, holiday pay, maternity leave, paternity leave, compassionate leave and emergency leave, and workers are entitled only to the minimum wage. It is difficult to budget when faced with uncertainty, such as how much a worker is likely to earn or arrange childcare when there is no guarantee of working hours or time. Congress, support the motion to crackdown the exploitation of zero-hours contracts and stop this epidemic. We demand that all employees should have a contract providing at least 12 hours work or at least 12 hours' pay every week. This should help them secure financial stability and security. This will not be a complete or permanent solution to the issue of zero-hours contracts, but it will be a step in the right direction. We should not compromise on this issue because it affects many lives. It is expedient to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. S. DAVIS (Southern): Congress, I second Motion 138. President and delegates, the employers making use of zero-hour contracts are not just shameful private companies. They are used in local government, NHS trusts and household names, such as Amazon and McDonald's. In 2015 hundreds of thousands of workers are still trapped in low-paid, highly insecure jobs, where mistreatment and exploitation is the norm, and where there are limited prospects of escape. Due to the uncertainty of the working schedules, zero-hour contracts present problems for workers who have childcare, caring and other responsibilities. I do not think this is fair, and it is most certainly immoral. For these reasons, I second this motion. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. I call Motion 142.

FAIR PAY FOR ALL MOTION 142

142. FAIR PAY FOR ALL

This Congress is resolute and determined to address the wage to profit ratio currently destroying our economy, the social fabric of the country and the lives of working people of this country.

Congress notes that:

- Wages have not kept pace with prices since the 1970's. Falling wages and growing inequality and poverty is not only destroying the lives of many of the people but is also hitting small and medium business adversely.

- That the super-rich continue to see their incomes soar to where effectively we have Government policy as being one of Socialism for the super-rich.
- That all in all this is the worst attack on the living standards of workers for nearly a century.

Congress demands:

- An enforced minimum wage
- A commitment to the living wage
- A restoration of wage councils across the various economic and industrial sectors of our economy.
- A crackdown on excessive executive pay and bonuses.
- A crackdown on tax dodging, evasion and avoidance.
- The reform of Company Law away from the short term extractive model towards a balanced investment model taking account of all of the partners not simply the shareholders.
- A commitment to reform Trade Union Law to ensure **all** workers have the right to have a Trade Union collectively negotiate their pay and terms and conditions.

B84 BRANCH
North West & Irish Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. FLANAGAN (North West & Irish): Congress and President, I move Motion 142. “What do you do for a living?” That is a question many of us have been asked and asked of others, and it sounds simple. The Tory peer, Lord Wolfson, the head of Next, the clothing company, recently criticised those calling for a living wage — that’s you and me — stating that £6.70 is enough to live on, and increasing wages would prevent them from opening stores. This comes from a man who is worth an estimated £112 million and earns a basic salary of £350 an hour. His statement also came on the day that Next announced its annual profits were up by 12.5% to £782 million. I do not profess to have a great business mind, but if employers can’t afford to pay workers a wage which allows them to function fully in society and truly earn a living, then you don’t have a business! *(Applause)* The latest wage increases go nowhere near enough to end in-work poverty. Too often, in media coverage, the issues surrounding in-work poverty are treated as marginal. Poverty touches almost half of British citizens at some point over a nine-year period.

Today child poverty is an overwhelming problem facing working families, not the workless or the workshy but those in work. Two-thirds of Britain’s children who live in poverty are in families where at least one adult works. The principal problem is that these working parents do not earn enough to avoid poverty, let alone escape it. Thanks to the work of the GMB, the working poor will not become the forgotten people of Britain. As I stated earlier, I do not have a business mind, but in the words of a song I have sung a few times this week, I do have a suspicious mind. *(Applause)*

“Mr. Cameron, we can’t go on together. Here we are again, asking where you’ve been. We will build our dreams and too many are caught in a trap.” We are calling for a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work. It is a simple concept. Is it too much to ask that workers are paid enough to enable them to heat their homes? Is it too much to ask that workers have enough to clothe their children? Is it too much, Congress, to ask that working people should not have to rely on food banks in order to survive?

Finally, Congress, we know it is not too much to expect hugely profitable companies to pay their staff a living wage which enables them to live with dignity, not the minimum that locks them into insecurity. Support this motion and help workers all over the UK to fill their days with life, not their life with days. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Dave. Secunder?

BRO. P. RICHARDS (North West & Irish): I second Motion 142 — Fair Pay For All. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, in response to the motion we need to ensure that certain thriving sectors fulfil their responsibilities in committing to the living wage. Football clubs, for example, are meant to be sources of community pride that carry proudly the names of their community. What better example could they set than to reward the staff with a decent wage? Last year football clubs spent £1.78 billion on players' wages. Our biggest football clubs are in a prime position to lead by example in a fight back against poverty wages. They are falling over themselves to offer hundreds of thousands of pounds per week to their top stars. Record-breaking television deals and sponsorship agreements are fuelling mega profits year on year. This season's broadcasting deal has resulted in Premiership League games shown on SKY each receiving £10 million per game. There are only two clubs, as we sit here today, across Britain who have embraced the concept and actually pay a living wage to all their staff. They are Hearts, who play in Scotland's second tier, and FC United from the Conference League who, by the way, are sponsored by the GMB North West & Irish Region. *(Applause)* Some clubs, such as Chelsea, have made a pledge to support, but will not be implementing the living wage fully until 2017. This is a step in the right direction but it is not enough. I ask you to support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Paul. I call Motion 145, Birmingham.

A FAIR LIVING WAGE FOR ALL MOTION 145

145. A FAIR LIVING WAGE FOR ALL

This Congress notes that at its annual conference, the TUC unanimously passed a resolution from the Bakers Union demanding a legal national minimum living wage of £10 an hour. The same living wage is called for by the GMB and the think tank CLASS.

This conference also notes that reports estimates of at least 250,000 workers are not even being paid the legal minimum wage and the TUC calls earlier this year for continuous improvement in enforcement of the national minimum wage during the next parliament. We agree that there should be no hiding place for bosses who try to cheat their workers out of the minimum wage and that the taxpayer should not be subsidising these penny pinching rogues.

This Conference calls on the GMB to work together with our sister unions and the TUC to renew our fight in keeping the issue of poverty pay right at the top of the Trade Union agenda. We should ensure that every Union negotiated pay claim across the country is for a minimum of £10.00 an hour as standard practice.

Furthermore we demand that the new Government replace the National Minimum Wage with a legally enforced compulsory national living wage of £10 per hour for all workers, regardless of age or employment status. Any company who falsely claims they are unable to afford to pay this or who try to avoid paying should have their finances scrutinised, their bosses should be prosecuted, named and shamed and fined heavily at every opportunity.

(Carried)

BRO. S. ROBERTSON (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 145 — A Fair Living Wage For All. Last year Tim Roache, the Regional Secretary of the Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region, so eloquently and inspirationally spoke to us last year and told us how the GMB was going to campaign for a £10 per hour living wage, which would free our members from claiming benefits and having to take out payday loans. The TUC also unanimously agreed a motion put in by the Bakers' Union for £10 an hour. As I say, it was agreed unanimously by the TUC. It is just morally wrong that state benefits are being used to subsidise the profits of huge companies and to subsidise the pay gap between them at the top and them at the bottom.

As a union, it goes without saying that we want a minimum of £10 an hour for every worker. Of course, this is aspirational — it is a target — but how are we ever going to achieve that target unless we start fighting for it and at least ask them for it. For too long we have been fooled into the scam of the bosses. They refer to this great percentage trick. They say, “CPI is this and RPI is that”. They talk about percentages, we take it in and we start to believe that that is a fair way of proceedings. We have members on the minimum wage, and they are told that a £10 an hour living wage would be a 50% pay rise. “We cannae have that.” The bosses will cry wolf from the till. They will say, “Oh, the sky will fall in. It will be the end of the world.” This is bollocks. It is untrue. Their profits may drop slightly, their dividends to their shareholders might be reduced a wee bit, their bonuses may have to drop and they might have less perks and less jollies, but I suggest that if any small business cannae afford to pay the £10 an hour living wage, then they can go cap-in-hand to the Government and ask for a state subsidy instead of the workers in this country having to go cap-in-hand to claim in-work benefits to the tune of £5.5 billion every year. The poor wee bosses can go and claim the “Poor-wee boss benefit”. It is just an idea, but they are ripping us off. Let's hold them to task. If they tell us lies, let's stick them in the clink. Let's put them in the pokey for a wee while and maybe that will start making them tell us the truth.

If I went into my bosses and demanded £10 an hour, they would just laugh at me. They are laughing at you now because big companies are paying next to nothing, and they are raking in profits at the expense of your members. It is time that we stood up and demanded a change the rhetoric. The trade unions should change the rhetoric, get away from the script that talks about 1% and 2%. That is crap! It's crap! It's nothing, but we are buying into that. We need to tell bosses up and down the country as a matter of fact that we, as a Movement, want a decent living wage for all workers, no matter what age, what sex or what nationality they are. We all want £10 an hour now. Thank you. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Seconder? *(The motion was formally moved from the floor)* I now move to Motion 146.

LIVING WAGE MOTION 146

146. LIVING WAGE

This Congress agrees that the GMB will campaign that all workers working for less than the living wage will be exempt from national insurance contributions.

B43 BIRMINGHAM CITY GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. DAVIES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I am moving Motion 146 – the Living Wage. It is called the Living Wage for a reason. It has been calculated to give an amount of money that someone needs enough to live on, not a life of luxury, but enough to buy food, to heat the house and to keep the roof safely on. Anything less means not being able to survive and not able to live without supplementary income and handouts, food banks or payday loans. Holidays are out of the question and something of a fantasy. What kind of country have we evolved into if car workers and hotel staff, people carrying out most important roles, are forced to work excessive hours but still have to choose between food, heat, charity and food banks? *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, which is over a hundred years old, has never been so true as it is today; families having to put up with substandard accommodation let out by some unscrupulous landlords, damaging your children’s health and education and workers scared to death to have a day off ill because they can’t afford to be ill. The Government need to be pressured into seeking redress for their submissive “one nation” baloney”. I ask Congress to lobby the Government so that everyone gets the living wage, but for those who don’t to be exempt from National Insurance with no detriments. It is not enough but it is a small step towards dignity.

The Irish President, Mr Michael D. Higgins, in his terrific address, summed it up in one sentence: “It’s a living wage to be able to participate in society, not survive in society.” Congress I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)* Thank you. I now call Motion 147 — Balancing the Books — to be moved by GMB Scotland.

BALANCING THE BOOKS MOTION 147

147. BALANCING THE BOOKS

This Congress for too long people on low and middle incomes have been left reliant on in-work benefits, such as tax credits because pay in this country is too low with far too many big companies only paying the mandated minimum wage to their staff.

We as a Union can end the scandal of the taxpayer subsidising those companies that cut the costs of paying staff a decent wage.

I ask Congress to endorse this motion.

GLASGOW NURSES BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

BRO. S. MULLIN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I move Motion 147 — Balancing the Books. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Madam President, General Secretary and Congress, no one can be in any doubt that the Tories seized on the financial crisis in order to advance their ideological goal of a small state. This has been the cornerstone of their manifesto, selling their programme of cuts and tearing down of the social security safety net as a necessary step in balancing the country’s books. What the Tories have failed to address, I suspect more by choice than legitimate oversight, is the question of pay. The provision of in-work benefits, such as tax credits, is only necessary because pay in this country is too low. I suspect that tax credits will be the next thing that they will look at.

The legal and mandated minimum wage paid to staff means, in effect, that we are subsidising companies as they cut the cost of paying staff a decent wage simply to boost their profits. Again, it is profit before people. Disgraceful! Let us be clear. Until or unless we address the issue of pay, then too many people will be left struggling. Despite the right-wing propaganda, and I use that word advisedly, working people being left reliant on state support is not a result of being too lazy or too stupid. We need to be clear on our policy objectives on this subject, that delivering a national living wage to replace the National Minimum Wage should reduce the demand for in-work support and also reduce the increase in worry for working families, who are turning to food banks in order to feed themselves. I am not dismissing the policies such as scrapping the bedroom tax or the energy freeze, but without addressing the fundamental issue of chronic low pay, the vast majority of hardworking families will be struggling with their income.

As a party, Labour speaks strongly for a living wage, but also fights against the Tories' public sector pay policy. The party leadership should have been stronger in saying that they would implement the living wage. It should also be pointed out that raising incomes for those at the bottom will result in more sustainable growth across the country. Congress, the careerists within the Labour Party are destroying the Labour Party because they constantly look after themselves first and foremost, and that is disgraceful in this day and age.

In conclusion, this Government have within their reach the means to end poverty pay and stop the unnecessary of private companies whose arguments against a living wage are tenuous. As there were Tory arguments against Labour introducing the minimum wage for tackling poverty, to halt the rise in those visiting food banks is simply the right thing to do. The Labour Party must pursue the implementation of the living wage for our working families.

Congress, if you let me end by saying to those on the top table, the best way to predict the future for our up-and-coming young people is to create it. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

SIS. L. WALKER (GMB Scotland): Congress, I second Motion 147 — Balancing the Books. President and Congress, before I begin I would just like to wish my husband a happy 21st anniversary, seeing as I forgot to bring the card. Love you, Dave. Thanks. (*Laughter and applause*)

President and delegates, as my colleague has mentioned, it is time to address the issue of the minimum wage. Research conducted for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by the Institute of Fiscal Studies forecasts that 2.5 million more people could be in poverty by 2020 unless a joined-up co-ordinated approach is taken. The return of lasting economic growth and long-term prosperity will be hampered if we fail to address the levels of poverty in the UK. The minimum wage for the over-21s is £6.50 an hour. On a 37½ hour working week, this equates to £12,675 a year. The median UK salary, as stated by *Trading Economics*, is £25,406.16p. Poverty is defined relative to the standards of living in a society at a specific time. People live in poverty when they are denied an income sufficient for their material needs and when these circumstances exclude them from taking part in activities which are an accepted part of daily life in society. A person is considered poor if his or her income level falls below the poverty line. This poverty line in the UK, defined by definition, is £15,243.70p. This means that those who are being paid the minimum wage, and there are many in employment who do not even receive that, are living in poverty. The minimum wage, even if it were to be increased to a mentioned living wage of £7.85 an hour in Scotland, would just reach an income around the poverty line, so still in poverty. However, achieving this poverty line still does not bring an income anywhere near close to the national average. Therefore, lower middle-income earners would still be reliant on in-work benefits

to exist. £10 an hour is what is needed in order to raise the standards of living and reduce the benefits bill. It is time the minimum wage was increased. It should adopt a new name, be it a living wage, a fair wage or whatever is necessary to prevent these big companies in the UK using it as an excuse to only pay the mandated minimum wage to their employees. GMB must take a lead in bringing about this change. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Linda, can we wish you and your husband a happy anniversary. You can get the key to the door now. She said she couldn't find a better place to celebrate it. *(Applause)*

SIS. L. GAYLE (London): Congress, I am speaking on Motion 138. The Government! Last time we got condemned. This time we've got confused. This present Government is allowing people to live in more poverty, more low pay, more food banks and more people are living not on the breadline but below the breadline. Workers are being used and abused at their own cost.

What are zero-hours contracts? They have no pensions, no holiday pay, as we have heard and no benefits. They have no respect. I say they have no place in the workplace. Does the Government care? I don't think so. I don't think anyone would have any problem in saying that people are leaving this country. They are leaving for a better life. They are going to Birmingham and Luton. *(Laughter)* I don't think anybody at Westminster would turn up for work and be told to go home. The only reason they would be doing that is if they had been to a party the night before and they are drunk. So they would be told to go home, but they would still be given a pay rise and/or they would be paid.

Congress, this is a serious situation. We need to look after our members. Zero-hours contracts do not work, and we are a fighting union. There are many young people this year in the union, and we need to get them on the road. We need to get ourselves on the road and we need to continue the fight because this is what we do. We are a fighting union. If the Tories this year, think that they have got an easy ride, let me tell them that we are going to make their lives hell. Please support. *(Cheers and applause)*

BRO. G. DOUCE (London): Congress, I am speaking in support of exploited workers who are not paid a fair and decent wage for the work that they do. President, the GMB can deliver a living wage. Waveney District Council is controlled by the Tories but, through the hard work of GMB councillors earlier this year, we amended the Tory budget to make sure they paid a living wage from April of this year, and some of those Tories didn't even know what the living wage was when it was first mentioned. But the issue of low pay and short hours is particularly prevalent in school support staff. Last night members and prospective members in my workplace were telling me about their exploitative low wages. One colleague who joined the school only a year after it opened does a four-day week and lots of regular — regular — additional hours. It is not overtime but additional hours, and he is struggling in an area that has relatively cheap housing as well. So how does the employer help out? He has asked for the extra day to make up the full week, but we are being told that they are going to bring in another member of staff to do part of the job that has been doing. It is utterly disgusting. Then we have UNISON sending letters saying that they are the only union for support staff in Suffolk schools. GMB is the only union in there organising, supporting and with a shop steward. Support me in calling on them to join and support these resolutions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Viv Smart to speak on behalf of the CEC.

SIS. V. SMART (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. President and Congress, we are supporting Motions 142, 145, 146 with qualifications. Firstly, on Motion 142 we are asking Congress to support with a qualification that any campaign as described in the motion should be wider. It should also expose the high levels of state subsidy received by poverty-pay employers in the

form of tax credits and in-work benefits that their workforce needs each week to make ends meet. The truth is that wage-dodging employers are often tax dodgers, too. HMRC should have the right to open the books of employers which are receiving these wage subsidies to make sure that they deserve our support.

On Motion 145 it is right that we recognise that the National Minimum Wage has become a national maximum wage for millions of working people, and must be raised. The qualification to Motion 145 is that while we aspire to achieve the GMB living wage of £10 per hour for the full working week as a minimum for all of our members, each pay claim is for those members affected and their workplace organisers to formulate, according to their assessment of what is achievable.

On Motion 146, we are asking Congress to support with a qualification that the proposal to exempt workers paid a living wage and National Insurance contributions needs further detailed assessment. However, Congress, the GMB's *Life on the Living Wage* survey, conducted in early 2015, shows clearly that our members cannot live on the published living wage of £7.85 per hour without claiming benefits. If such a move to exempt these members from paying National Insurance set out in Motion 146 were possible without loss of benefits and pension credits, then it might bridge the gap between the theory and the reality of living on the living wage.

Therefore, Congress, please support Motions 142, 145 and 146 with the qualifications that I have set out.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Viv. Does North West & Irish Region accept the qualification on Motion 142? (*Agreed*) Does Birmingham Region accept the qualifications on Motions 145 and 146? (*Agreed*) Congress, I will put those motions to the vote. Those in favour of Motions 138, 142, 145, 146 and 147, please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 138 was Carried.

Motion 142 was Carried.

Motion 145 was Carried.

Motion 146 was Carried.

Motion 147 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I know that there were two people in the front row who were disappointed that I did not call them, but a lot of people have got flights booked for this afternoon. I had three requests and that was all we could manage on the timetable, so I am sorry that they did not get the opportunity to speak. You may get another chance, so let's get on. I now come to agenda item 2.

INDUSTRIAL & ECONOMIC POLICY: PUBLIC SERVICES

PUBLIC SERVICE USERS

MOTION 184

184. PUBLIC SERVICE USERS

This Congress notes that public services have been privatised and outsourced over the last thirty years without giving a voice to the public service users affected by those decisions.

Congress recognises that the public needs real powers to object to sell-offs, access information and hold private providers to account for their performance. Congress approves of Early Day Motion 438 that was tabled in

Parliament in the October 2014 and approves of the introduction of a Public Service Users Bill which would make the in-house option the default, require public consultation before privatisation or outsourcing and promote transparency, accountability and social value in public service contracts

DURHAM 43 DURHAM COUNTY LA BRANCH
Northern Region

(Carried)

SIS. F. MIDDLEMISS (Northern): Congress and President, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I move Motion 184 on Public Service Users. Privatisation has partly led to the breakdown in the fabric of some of our most deprived areas. We believe that public service contracts should use the European guidelines on tendering. That is where contracts can only be awarded if conditions are met. These conditions can include if a company looking for work has been blacklisted, if they are based in the local community and if they recognise trade unions. It happens on the Continent. It should be part of how we operate public services in the UK. Public services should be about public sector provision. In the Northern Region we know that most services are privatised in far too many cases. Westminster politicians and council leaders have put services into the private sector, and the reason given is cost. Well, Congress, that won't wash any more. It has been proved that in most cases this practice has been found out not to be financially viable. For a growing economy, we need a strong public sector. So, please, support this motion with any qualification. I MOVE.

BRO. M. J. WARNER (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. I second Motion 184 on Public Service Users. As the mover has said, we accept that the public sector provision is the way forward for our members. In the Northern Region we have seen the privatisation of the services for three decades. Across the public sector, services have been put out to tender, with the preferred option being external provisions. What is a particular scandal is the way it happened under Tories, the Coalition and Labour. We need local communities to get a better deal. We cannot have blacklists and people who don't have a stake in local communities winning contracts and penalising workers for it.

Taking services out of the public sector has led to cuts in terms and conditions, and there is no evidence that it has benefited the public. There is even less evidence that it has benefited the taxpayer. We have been told time and time again that services that would be to tender would provide better value. My experience, our experience and the experience of our members and the experience of the public is that it is just not the case. In fact, in the Northern Region the services have been slashed. Over the last five years, services have been struggling.

The agenda of the right to privatise is now firmly in-charge at Westminster. We need to work with all to fight austerity and to safeguard the public services. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. I call Motion 186.

WAG! INVEST IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES MOTION 186

186. WAG! INVEST IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

This Congress agrees that this Government in Wales should stop cutting monies to Local Authorities and start to invest in frontline services! They should also not allow badly performing Authorities to continue to trade under their management.

The Welsh Assembly Government should take control by not allowing Authorities to use Consultants (Price Waterhouse Coopers – for example, there are others) who pull thousands of pounds out of their budget (Local Authorities).

Congress agrees that pressure should be applied to WAG to enable Local Authorities to provide critical local services in their respective communities

BLAENAU COUNTY BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

(The Motion was formally moved from the floor)

BRO. D. BREWER (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 186. I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. *(Applause)*

Osborne's austerity measures in the public sector have cut even deeper. Local government finances and services in Wales have come increasingly under pressure. The cuts in spending allocations to Welsh councils from the Assembly Government amount to an average cash reduction across the 22 authorities of 3.4%. These financial slashes serve to threaten the social fabrics of our communities in Wales as councils wrestle with how best to make very difficult decisions. No one fails to understand how Wales has been put at such a disadvantage. It is because of the austerity measures being imposed by the Westminster Government as they attempt to deal with the large hole in the public finances and the weak recovery from a deep recession.

Nevertheless, local services in Wales have been stretched to such a tipping point that they may well be scaled back in a way never seen before. They need to be prioritised and adequately funded by the Welsh Government, not simply cut to pieces. The decision to place more money into funding healthcare is understandable, but cuts to local public services run the very real risk of creating a comprehensive failure in many parts of Wales. The alternative strategy of investing to save is a credible alternative to austerity and the damage it can cause over the generations in my country. The Welsh Government must find a solution that is fair to service users in both the NHS and my industry. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: I call Motion 187.

OPPOSE THE PRIVATISATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES MOTION 187

187. OPPOSE THE PRIVATISATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This Congress is appalled and alarmed at the Government's proposed wholesale privatisation of children's services.

Decisions about vulnerable children, including removing them from their families, are some of the most difficult and sensitive judgements that child protection professionals have to make, yet Michael Gove considers this work could be outsourced for profit.

Congress calls upon the Central Executive Council to construct a concerted campaign against any proposals to privatise children's services, by alerting Parliament to the dangers that children, families and communities face should the outsourcing of this department proceed, which will be an exploitation for financial gain. The

Government should continue to be directed to continue providing good public services for children and families on a 'not for profit' basis.

ASDA JOINT BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

SIS. S. MACARIAN (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I move Motion 187 — Oppose the Privatisation of Children's Services. During 2014 the Government continued to move forward with the privatisation of Children's Services, including child protection, investigations and assessments. Following public opposition to the initial proposal, the Government issued a revised proposal. It has been urged that no private company would want to take on high-risk services, such as child protection, with all the damage to its reputation that could, potentially, be incurred. When it emerged that child protection could be opened up to profit-making private companies, the resulting outcry led to an apparent U-turn by the Government, with an announcement that only not-for-profit organisations would be able to supply such services. Then a draft regulation was put before Parliament, which stated that profit-making companies will be allowed to provide children's services, including child protection, as they set up a non-profit subsidiary. Congress, this is how G4S, SERCO and Virgin Care, each of which have been seeking to expand into children's social services, would make it work for them, by setting up a non-profit subsidiary, possibly re-naming it in order to distance it from the parent company, then having the parent company charge the subsidiary for services provided. By them taking these few steps, profits can be made from contracts for children's services.

Why would any local authority contract to cut its children's services? It is clear, colleagues, that in a time of cuts to funding why would local authorities not try and find other ways of meeting their responsibilities. Child protection is far too important to be exposed to the inexperienced private companies whose main object is profit. Our children's wellbeing and protection should not be reduced to a value of profit and business gains. Let us not put a price on our children's heads. It is our Government that should be accountable for safeguarding the vulnerable. The main goal of children's services should be to protect, not to profit. This matter is so important. Please support, I move Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Linda, well done. Seconder?

BRO. T. KODOLA (GMB Wales and South West): Congress, I second Motion 187 — Oppose the Privatisation of Children's Services. In areas of children's services where the private sector is already involved, private equity firms often dominate. Private equity firms own two of the three biggest placement providers. 65% of residential homes for children are now run by the private sector, while only 11% of places in children's homes are run by charities. The high cost of places in residential homes means many local authorities now move children out of their borough, which means that they lose contact with friends, family and caseworkers.

In the case of one girl at the centre of the Rochdale abuse, she was moved from Essex and placed in a one-to-one home where she was the only resident. If that sounds like a foster placement, there is one big difference. The poor girl never woke up with the same staff member who had been there when she went to sleep. The protection of our children is a care to the social work task, and to do so on behalf of society. This is at the heart of the professional outcry to the proposals by the Government to take children's services out of local authority control. The duty to take a child away from their parents and family is a task that should always be held up to public scrutiny. Social workers know that the public have strong feelings, both about children who are removed from parental care and those who are left too long.

What is shocking in the proposals is that the people who will then take care for these children will not be regulated. We can argue over the effect of Ofsted and other regulators, but to blatantly propose that the most vulnerable children in our society should be looked after by organisations that are not regulated in the Act is outrageous and a damning indictment of the Government. I second, thank you. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Could the speakers to Motions 198, 201, 202 and 204 come to the front of the hall.

NURSING MEMBERSHIP MOTION 198

198. NURSING MEMBERSHIP

Congress urges the CEC to lobby the Government to consider asking the NHS to pay for NHS professionals registration, which is over a hundred pounds, considering nurses pay is poor and the Local Authority pays for Social Workers membership, we believe nurses should be treated the same.

ESSEX PUBLIC SERVICES BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. C. HOLLAND (London): President and Congress, I move Motion 198. Again, I have a personal interest in this motion. It is getting to be a bit of a habit. I am a local authority worker and I know that qualified social workers get their registration paid for by the local authority. My youngest daughter went through the exact same amount of time training to be a nurse, who, incidentally, I am proud of, not because she is a nurse but because she has great odds stacked against her. Her tutor, who I would love to name but I do not have her permission to do so, is an amazing lady, could not understand why the amount of work and her enthusiasm put in by Michelle meant that she was struggling with her grades. After being assessed, she was found to be borderline dyspraxic. So for her work is hard, but she was never daunted but carried on with a small amount of support. She now works in a local prison and is doing great. Thank you for indulging me in saying that.

My argument is that she gets less than a social worker and has to pay over £100 a year of her salary in professional fees. Why are people treated differently? It is well documented that front-line staff in the NHS should be paid more. It is also well documented that there are too many highly paid executives all protecting one another on high salaries. This must change. Please CEC lobby for change. I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Cath. Secunder?

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): President, I second Motion 198 — Nursing Membership. Here are some facts for you. There are almost 378,000 qualified nurses in the UK. Since 2004 there has been a 5% increase in the number of qualified nursing staff. However, the UK pays nurses a starting salary of just over £20,000 a year, which is some £10,000 less than their US counterparts and lower than our national average salary.

According to the World Health Organisation, in 2010 the UK had fewer nurses and midwives per 1,000 of the population compared with Germany, Belarus and Uzbekistan. Since 2010 the number of nurses and midwives per 1,000 people in the UK has reduced from 10.1 to 8.8. Nurses are a critical part of the NHS. As the data shows, the challenges facing them are increasingly greater. A key milestone in their career as a nurse is their registration with the Royal College of Nursing, which provides much needed support and presentation. It costs them between £100 - £200 for full

membership. It can be difficult for many of our nurses to give up part of their income to complete their registration. Just as the local authorities pay registration costs for their social workers, the NHS should offer to pay professional registration costs for our nurses and paramedics. They need to focus on the nursing of their patients back to full health. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks, Mo. Well done. I call Motion 201.

**DESPITE PHYSICAL ATTACKS NHS MENTAL HEALTH TRUST STILL INSIST ON HAVING PERSONAL PHOTOS AND DETAILS ON NOTICE BOARDS
MOTION 201**

201. DESPITE PHYSICAL ATTACKS NHS MENTAL HEALTH TRUST STILL INSIST ON HAVING PERSONAL PHOTOS AND DETAILS ON NOTICE BOARDS

This Congress asks for pressure to be brought against those trusts that have insisted on NHS nurses having photos and details posted on ward notice boards despite attacks on staff and evidence of intent to seriously harm with Stanley knives and screw drivers and insist that zero tolerance notices are the solution and have now resorted to threats of disciplinary action against those who refuse.

LINCOLN TEC GENERAL & APEX BRANCH
Midland & East Coast Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. BUCKLEY (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker *(Applause)* I move Motion 201. President, despite physical attacks on our members, some NHS mental health trusts still insist on personal photos and details of our members appearing on notice boards. I ask this Congress for pressure to be brought against those trusts that have insisted on mental health nurses having photos and details posted on ward notice boards despite increasing attacks on staff and evidence of intent to seriously harm them with knives, screwdrivers, to name but a few. NHS trusts insist that zero tolerance notices are the solution and they have now resorted to threats of disciplinary action against our members who refuse to comply. Zero-tolerance notices are no more effective than wallpaper covering the ever-increasing cracks within the NHS due to this Government's funding policy.

Safeguards are, rightly, in place for those users of the mental health services, such as data protection, human rights and confidentiality, yet these same principles do not apply to the mental health workers. Although these principles are, of course, needed within the mental health sphere, the approach needs to be different, as it is placing these workers in a very vulnerable position. Is this information really necessary? Does it make a difference to the wellbeing of the individual, given their current state of mind? Does it aid the recovery of the patient? The simple answer is no. The mental health worker is an excellent communicator and can verbally supply a name, if asked.

Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act stipulates that every employer has a duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. Failing to provide a safe working environment is bad for the staff, bad for the patient and bad for the NHS as a whole. Let's show mental health workers that we support them by supporting Motion 201. I move. Thank you. *(Applause)*

SIS. Z. WARREN (Midland & East Coast): Congress, I second Motion 201. President, we are not allowed to have any details that identify our patients in public areas for confidentiality reasons, yet our staff have their photos and details on notice boards for all to see. This practice is not safe. It makes no difference to the recovery process, but it can and has caused our staff harm. We have a duty to our

patients. Guess what, they employer has a duty towards us. Let's protect our staff. Let's get this information off the notice boards. Let's get this practice stopped. I ask you to support this motion. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Zillah. Well done. I call Motion 202.

**YOUTH IN THE N.H.S.
MOTION 202**

202. YOUTH IN THE N.H.S.

This Congress there has been for many years a shortage of young people in the N.H.S.

Where do us a Union start to encourage the youth of today to see that there is a career waiting for them.

It does not always have to be the career in medicine. There is a career in administration, catering, porter, domestic and maintenance staff the list is endless.

We need to encourage the N.H.S. that the youth of today are the staff of the future.

We know that the N.H.S. offer apprenticeships.

What we are asking Congress is to get behind the youth of today so that they can have the advantage of the expertise of the inhouse training that they have to offer every member of staff that is employed in the N.H.S.

GLASGOW NURSES BRANCH
GMB Scotland

(Carried)

BRO. P. BRESLIN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am moving Motion 202 and speaking on Youth in the NHS or, as I see it, lack of youth in the NHS. We, as a union, worry about what the Government is doing to our NHS with their austerity cuts, bed loss, lack of staff, the closing down of hospitals, clinics and the care centres. The list goes on, but what is worse is the lack of youth and young people working in our NHS. Nurses are our frontline poster people, and quite rightly so. The job they do under extremely challenging conditions can never be under estimated. Thanks can never show our gratitude when our family members and kids come home from hospital safe and well. But behind our nurses are an army of workers and support workers, who ensure that the nurses and doctors have a clean working and fully function, and safe, hospital, clinic or care centre. The problem is that our support staff are now an ageing support staff. We, in the NHS, have a vast amount of skilled and talented workers who are, to put it delicately, reaching a mature age, but there are very few youth and younger people to pass on their skills and knowledge to.

In my own workplace, which is the Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS the estates department is made up of electricians, joiners, plumbers, painters, decorators and engineers. Over 50% of us are over the age of 50, and a third of them are over the age of 65. Well done to them and more power to them, but when this generation does retire, who is there to replace them? This is the norm across the NHS, not the exception. I urge this union to tell this Government to stop now the closures of the hospitals, stop now the closures of the clinics, stop now the closures of the care centres and promote the skills and excellent standards of our hard-working and underpaid workers in the NHS. *(Applause)* These jobs can and should be life-time careers and secure employment for our young people and their families. Let GMB tell this Government to get our youth and young people off benefits and into life-changing skilled employment, because if they don't then there will be nobody left to look after us when we need them. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before the next speaker starts, there is an awful lot of noise in the hall. It is coming back up *here*, and it is not fair to those who are speaking and on the Congress floor. Secunder?

SIS. A. DEAN (GMB Scotland): Congress, I second Motion 202 — Youth in the N.H.S. Comrades, as my colleague, Pat, has just described, just like all of our communities throughout the UK, the NHS is an ageing organisation with workers in many NHS board and trust areas rapidly moving towards and into retirement. As many in this room will realise, this will, inevitably, mean challenging times ahead for everyone in those services — staff, not least the patients or, as I like to refer to those people who depend on the NHS, us. It is very obvious that without the vast knowledge and depth of experience of those older workers who have an instinctive understanding or intuition as to what is needed, where, when and how quickly, which can help to reduce tests and invasive procedures, saving time and money, this loss will be a great detriment to the NHS individually, locally and nationally. This concept of instinct, sixth-sense or wisdom is supported throughout Health Service research, and it plays a vital and valuable role in the day-to-day workings of the NHS going on at every level, in particular in terms of the health and safety of patients and staff in the broadest sense of that term. Comrades, common sense tells us that you do not need to be a doctor, nurse, paramedic or, indeed, have any qualifications of any kind to be able to help people in this way. An experienced porter or ward cleaner can identify very quickly when someone is lying in a bed, trolley or wheelchair and starting to seriously deteriorate long before a nurse or doctor is likely to notice them, thus being able to call for help and intervene earlier to save a life. Many working ancillary colleagues have stories and accounts of how events, and in some way which has led to someone's life being saved or their journey through the maze of what the NHS has become has been made safer or more tolerable.

Congress, what will happen very soon which be such a significant loss of intrinsic wisdom, and over a very short period of time, that we will be exposing ourselves as patients and staff to more risks than ever before. It must be an immediate priority for the wellbeing of the NHS that resources are found to prevent this on-coming train crash by promoting the employment, training and mentorship of younger people throughout the Service at every level and to encourage succession planning as part of every NHS worker's role and to do it now. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I now call Motion 204.

AMBULANCE SERVICE STAFF MOTION 204

204. AMBULANCE SERVICE STAFF

This Congress deplores the culture which exists in the English Ambulance Services of missed meal-breaks and late finishes, whilst the Pay Review bodies award is only partially implemented.

N12 NORTH EAST AMBULANCE BRANCH,
Northern Region

(*Carried*)

SIS. M. CHAFFEY (Northern): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I move Motion 204 — Ambulance Service Staff. The way that our ambulance service staff are being treated is getting worse by the week. Management in some ambulance services do not value their workforce, and we know this because our members tell us so each and every week. We are also handling more problems in the workplace than ever before. In the recent general election campaign,

we had North-East Ambulance Service executives openly discussing the Agenda For Change with the Tory candidate in Berwick. That was a complete disgrace.

Our members in the Ambulance Service across the north-east of England are being put upon. The penny-pinching and top-down NHS way of working and the problems that we have just over the last eight years just show the managers for what they really are. There is a simple saying: Treat others just as you like to be treated. However, within some ambulance services this saying goes straight out the window. We are already losing large numbers of highly-experienced and highly-trained NHS staff, and we are need desperately to change the culture, otherwise those who work in the NHS services, and the ambulance services along with those on the frontline, will go and seek work elsewhere. Where will that leave us? That will leave us exactly where some executives in the Tory Government want us, which is with the privatisation of our ambulance services. Congress, we need to fight for the basic right of our members. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Michelle. Secunder?

SIS. R.M. WILKINSON (Northern): Congress, I second Motion 204 — Ambulance Service Staff. The current dilemma within the Northern Region Ambulance Service is being made worse by NHS managers who have no relevant training or experience of managing with managing the service to its best effect. As a result of the Conservative Government's so-called reforms, our workers are expected to take on increased responsibility and workload for less reward. Managers appear not interested to check how things really are on the frontline. They have no idea of how much responsibility call-centre workers take on board in responding to emergency situations. In our experience of some cases, NHS managers have little or no idea what it really is like on the frontline. This is, as we know, a much wider problem within the NHS in general. It is a request of a government determined and focus on driving down terms and conditions which their managers appear to carry out with enthusiasm. Lack of trained staff is not an excuse for the basic right to meal breaks or not allowing an acceptable work-life balance whereby staff are unable to spend quality allotted times with their families, and not a case of just when they happen to return home. The goodwill of the ambulance staff is exactly that — goodwill. This should not be expected or recognised by managers as the norm.

Congress, when the ambulance workers are on a call out, the patient expects to be cared for by professionals who are fit and aware, not someone who is tired or worn out due to a lack of breaks. They are hardworking decent people, and they have the right to be treated with the respect they justly deserve. I second. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, I gave special permission for a member of the Ambulance Service to come and speak for one minute because there is quite a dispute in the Ambulance Service all the way across the country.

BRO. R. POLLOCK (GMB Scotland): Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I support Motion 204. I work in the Scottish Ambulance Service as a paramedic. I know that my brothers and sisters in England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland all share the heavy burden of missed, very late or no meal breaks, coupled with very frequent overruns of contracted hours at the end of a very demanding and often very stressful day. The continued systematic abuse of Ambulance Service technicians and paramedics has to be halted. Sickness levels have increased tremendously over the last few years, and a high percentage of this sickness is related directly to stress. The hidden consequences of health-related issues is only just starting to merge with reports from staff of diabetic issues, bowel problems and stress all on the increase.

The family members of Ambulance Service staff are all suffering. Marriages and relationships are placed under tremendous pressure. How do you explain to your young children that you have let them down yet again when they are waiting for their mother or father to take them ice-skating, to football or another family outing and, due to an overrun on your shift, it is now cancelled, and not for the first time? When we joined the Ambulance Service we knew that shift overruns were expected on the odd occasion due to the nature of the business. However, we cannot and will not accept overruns up to two hours on every single shift. Family bonds and social values are being destroyed. Great numbers of experienced staff have left or are considering leaving across the country all to the detriment of the public we aim to serve.

The Ambulance Services are not doing enough to deliver the changes our members demand. They are allowing the never-ending demands of the public to overwhelm and overpower the needs of the frontline, hardworking Ambulance Service staff. We need the support of the paramedics and technicians, we need the support of the Ambulance Service managers and we need the full support of the GMB to deliver change. Please support Motion 204. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Robert. We know how valuable you are when we need help. I now ask Martin Jackson to reply on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. M. JACKSON (CEC, Public Services): Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the CEC. The CEC is supporting Motion 184 with a qualification and supporting Motion 201 with a statement. Motion 184 is about a Public Services Bill that fell by the wayside because it was not given enough time to get through Parliament before the general election. The CEC qualification is that the Bill would have prioritised bids from not-for-profit groups and social enterprises, as well as those from the public sector. The GMB supports in-house public sector provision over the provision by not-for-profits or social enterprises.

Motion 201 identifies the problem of physical attacks on NHS mental health workers. Some NHS trusts think that having messages about zero tolerance is sufficient protection to staff against violence. I work in the NHS and I can tell you that it does not. It is unforgivable that the trust that is concerned in the motion expects people's faces, names and job titles to be publicised in public areas. There were over 47,000 assaults on NHS staff working in the mental health sector in 2013/2014. That is 129 assaults per day. We must get these figures down. It is unacceptable for trusts to threaten disciplinary action against staff for refusing to put their personal details on notice boards. If members are worried about their personal safety, they need to be listened to and taken seriously. The GMB supports the protection of our members. We are calling on the trusts to acknowledge the real risks that staff face and to take sensible and a constructive attitude in dialogue with us towards minimising those risks.

In conclusion, Congress, please support Motion 201 with the statement and support Motion 194 with the qualification that I have just set out. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Martin. Does Northern Region accept the qualification on Motion 184. (*Agreed*) Does Midland Region accept the statement on Motion 201? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put them all to the vote. All those in favour of Motions 184, 186, 187, 198, 201, 202 and 204 please show? Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 184 was Carried.

Motion 186 was Carried.

Motion 187 was Carried.

Motion 198 was Carried.

Motion 201 was Carried.
Motion 202 was Carried.
Motion 204 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I call Composite 17.

SOCIAL POLICY: YOUNG PEOPLE

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE COMPOSITE 17

(Covering Motions 323 and 324)

323. Call for Better Funding and Improved Mental Health Services for Young People (*London Region*)
324. Mental Health Services and Young People (*North West & Irish Region*)

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Congress agrees child and adolescent mental health services are currently under increasing pressure, having to cope with juggling tight resources and increasing demand. This Congress believes that mental health services for young people and adolescents are slowly being dismantled on a local level due to funding cuts from both the NHS and Local Government budgets and is having a devastating effect on the lives of vulnerable young people when they need it most.

Young people, some barely in their teens, are being let down time and time again by what mental health support there is. That support is often inadequate or inaccessible. Waits for counselling can take up to 6 months and “crisis teams” are often unable to visit young people in immediate need. This situation is nationwide.

Early intervention is, in some cases, life saving and appointments 6 months after the crisis is untenable. Experts believe that early care and intervention is better for the young person and in the long term better value for money. Without early help and diagnosis - these conditions can lead to serious problems for the young person which they may carry into adulthood often needing time in hospital, and unfortunately for many, time in prison.

Therefore we call upon the next Labour Government to hold an emergency review of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for increased funding, to ring fence funding and to improve services. Also for all GMB sponsored MPs to attend every session in the House which discusses these issues to secure a healthier future for our young people.

North West & Irish Region	to Move
London Region	to Second

(Carried)

SIS. L. WINSON (North West & Irish): Congress, I move Motion 324. President and delegates, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service — CAMS — is under strain and needs our help. The future of this service lies in the hands of David Cameron and his Cabinet now, and I don’t think his track record will convince anyone that his is a safe pair of hands. Over the course of the last Parliament, during Cameron’s first five years as Prime Minister, health trusts have suffered a real term’s cut of 8.25%. That was the equivalent of stripping £598 million from their budget. If this occurs again over the next five years, young people are going to be in an even more vulnerable position. CAMS needs help, not cuts. It needs investment and not neglect. We need funding to be ring fenced around the service, not have money taken away from it.

Seven years ago my son, who was then aged 17, was diagnosed with depression, brought on by bullying at school. One night we found him in a very distressed state with an airgun to his head. He was already in the CAMS system, having been given counselling. We got the gun off him as, of

course, everybody would try to do, and we decided to phone for the crisis team as we needed help. We phoned the crisis team and they didn't have anyone on duty who could come out to see him. So what we got instead was a fully-armed SWAT team at the front door and the back door that broke into our house, fixed Alex with a taser, handcuffed him and took him away to the local police station. There he remained on his own. We were not allowed to see him for three days and three nights because the Health Service could not get three doctors together at the same time to section him. He was finally sectioned and thrown into an adult mental health unit, where he remained for 10 days. He eventually came out of that unit and he received further counselling, which is still ongoing. However, there are long waiting lists. You only get so many sessions and then you have to be referred again. You can wait for referrals for nine, 10 or 11 months. Alex is doing fine now, and he is now a voluntary befriender for MIND. *(Applause)* Put the money where it is needed. Secure the funding and invest in the safeguarding of our children and young people. Invest in our future.

I am calling on the GMB to pressurise wherever you can to make sure that that sort of scenario is a thing of the past. I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well done. Secunder?

BRO. W. KEEFE (London): Congress, I am a first-time speaker and a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* President and colleagues, in a document issued by the NHS England in January of this year it was stated that 50% of lifetime mental illness begins by the age of 18. Couple this with the widely-recognise fact that as mental health issues in young people are diagnosed and given proper input both in financial terms and early intervention, £150,000 can be saved over a lifetime, along with a better quality of life for that individual.

An investigation last year by the charity Young Minds found that more than half of councils in England had either cut or frozen budgets for child and adolescent mental health services between 2010 and 2015. Their chief executive, Sarah Brennan, also stated that children and young people's mental health services have been chronically under-funded for a number of years, and the current cuts to funding have added to the crisis that local services face. Birmingham City Council had the biggest reduction from just over £2.3 million to just £125,000 in 2014-2015, stating that the service was, and I quote, "Primarily an NHS responsibility". I think that is what we call passing the buck. These young people are more than just statistics. Take a 16-year-old girl in Devon who needed urgent help from mental health services. No placement was available, and she spent two nights in a police cell. You tell me if that is acceptable. Take the case of another young person who was in crisis. The only bed available was over 200 miles away from her friends and family. This poor girl took her own life. To guarantee a bed for some patients, doctors have admitted that sometimes they have to section them and, more often than not, these beds are in adult wards. Even worse, they are being sent home with terrible consequences. Mental health issues in the young, as in adults, can range from depression, self harm and eating disorders. So the sooner the diagnosis, the better the recovery for the child and, hence, a better family life.

THE PRESIDENT: Bill, will you wind-up, please?

BRO. KEEFE: Okay. Mental health issues cannot be identified or mended with ointment and a plaster. This is not acceptable, no matter what. Please, to help secure a healthy future for our young please, support this motion and call for better funding and improved mental health services. I second.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Colleagues, the CEC is supporting this Composite. The Government must realise that our young people are today's and tomorrow's future. We should be looking after them. All those in support of Composite 17, please show? Anyone against? That is carried.

Composite 17 was Carried.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the mover of Motion 308.

SOCIAL POLICY: NHS, HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

CANCER CARE MOTION 308

308. CANCER CARE

This Congress deplores the fact that the coalition government has seen fit to privatise part of the Cancer Care Program within the NHS. Congress calls on the CEC to lobby wherever possible to return this service to within the NHS.

R35 JCB GENERAL BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. E. DALEY (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 308 — Cancer Care. Of all the stories of unscrupulous Tory actions concerning the fragmentation of the National Health Service, there can be none so vile as the plan, following a leaked document, to privatise Staffordshire NHS Cancer & End of Life Services. This billion-pound sell off involves 800,000 patients in north Staffordshire and the surrounding region. The document tells of a £1.2 billion sell out, which is privatisation's biggest ever deal, with no consultation, no massive furore and no union initial involvement.

Staffordshire's commissioners want to hand over all care linked with cancer and terminally ill patients to a prime provider to manage, sub-contract out and performance rate. This is a first. It is the first time that cancer care has been contracted out to such an extent. It is the first time that privatisation has been courted without prior consultation and it is the first time an international NHS contract could fall under TTIP and the cleaning and maintenance staff's new managers could even sever such links altogether. Expected is £100 million in fees as a minimum. That is money that has to come from somewhere. So, if nothing else, there has to be a reduction in frontline services. Hospices are to be expected to take a 20% cut. This may not be a cost cut but is likely to be a service cut, detrimental to all patients.

The leading businesses are all American, some of which have been accused of care failure. Hospital care and treatment is the tip of this massive iceberg, and as most of us will know, to our sadness, much of this care ends up with our family and friends at hospices and local care facilities. These huge conglomerates will have carte blanche authority to deliver disinvestment, to cut contracts to the bone or to cut parts out as they wish. The link with physios, counsellors, consultants and GPs' cuts will come, but we have to say no. We don't need an attack on any patient whose care could be slashed, let alone cancer sufferers. If there is any branch of hospital care, it is these unfortunate patients, stressed enough by their condition, who should be looked after by the state, not some multi-national money-

making leech. Please support the care of cancer and end-of-life services to ensure it remains in the NHS where it belongs. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Elaine. Secunder? *(The motion was formally seconded from the floor)*
Thank you. I call Motion 309.

PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING MOTION 309

309. PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING

Congress is aware every year 10,000 men in the UK die from Prostate Cancer, the largest cause of preventable deaths for men.

Congress congratulates the incentive by the North West & Irish Region in setting up an online petition calling on the Government to introduce a national prostate screening programme for all men over 50 years of age.

Congress also calls upon our National and Regional negotiators both to encourage employers to include prostate screening in their in-house health and wellbeing programmes and for employees to be made aware of the benefit of screening.

EALING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. M. AKBAR (London): Congress, I move Motion 309. Here are some alarming facts. 40,000 men were diagnosed with this illness in 2011. In the UK 30 men died each and every day in 2012. This is the second most common cause of cancer in men in the UK. This is prostate cancer. Despite these difficulties, I would like to begin by congratulating the North West & Irish Region for their work in creating an on-line petition. It is pursuing this Government to introduce a national prostate screening programme. We, in the GMB, must get behind this petition and promote it so that the whole of the nation can support us in our aim to defeat prostate cancer. Charities such as Prostate Cancer tell us that as many as 10,000 plus deaths every year are preventable if, like many other cancers, they are picked up early, not relying on signs and symptoms such as urinary problems or pain in the back, hips or pelvis. There must be regular checkups and screening. Screening and testing for prostate cancer helps to find some cancers early before symptoms develop and may avoid all the problems associated with advanced cancer as it spreads. The NHS screening programme in England promotes breast, cervical and bowel cancer, and rightly so, but try finding any detail of screening for prostate cancer and you might be lucky to come across it way down in the human MOT checklist.

When you do find it, there is a charge for the lifesaving simple and straightforward test. However, we can also do more than just that. We call upon employers to introduce screening in their in-house health and wellbeing programmes. We must make clear to employers the importance of screening and checkups. The prostate cancer check is a really simple blood test plus a couple of other tests. I don't see any problem why we are delaying this situation. I don't see why we have to go through the normal procedure of a long wait before it develops and takes life. Families are destroyed. It is known that prostate cancer can be treated if caught earlier as a result of screening. This is why we must push for the motion. I would like the support of this Congress. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mo. Secunder?

(The motion was formally seconded from the floor) Thank you. I call Motion 315.

ARTHRITIS MOTION 315

315. ARTHRITIS

This Congress notes that arthritis affects around 10 million people in the UK and it can affect people of all ages.

This Congress notes that people with arthritis will experience pain and difficulty moving around. Arthritis can cause loss of strength and grip, stiffness and fatigue. These can make some daily tasks difficult.

This Congress notes that many people with arthritis will be able to successfully manage their symptoms, continue to work and have a good quality of life. For the majority of people, there will be some good days and some bad days, and this is poorly understood by employers.

This Congress believes that lack of awareness of arthritis and inflexible and unhelpful approaches by some managers can force people out of work, who otherwise could continue in employment.

This Congress resolves to support campaigns designed to increase awareness of arthritis.

W15 WILTSHIRE & SWINDON BRANCH
Southern Region

(Carried)

BRO. A. NEWMAN (Southern): Congress, I move Motion 315 on Arthritis. Comrades, I must admit that until my wife was diagnosed with osteoarthritis, I didn't know a lot about osteoarthritis. I did not know a lot about this condition. It is a condition which affects 10 million people in the UK, 25% of women and 18% of men, and with an ageing working population it is becoming an increasing problem. Women used to retire at 60 not so long ago and, as arthritis normally sets in in people's 50s, although it can affect people of all ages, people in work with arthritis is a growing issue. Where it is poorly understood is in managing the symptoms. A lot of women workers, in particular, in the retail, cleaning or care sectors, will find it difficult to do their job on some days but not on others, and this is what managers find very difficult to understand. As kind people, our co-workers will often sort this out. If Julie comes in one day and says "I'm having trouble lifting things today. I'm having a bad day", her colleague, Claire, will help do the lifting. But her less sympathetic manager — let's call him Clive or whatever — might come in and say, "Why aren't you lifting? If you can't lift it, you can't do the job." What can happen is that bad managers, who are not empathetic, can drive people out of work, whereas if they managed their staff properly, those staff members could have a long working life ahead of them. The result is that instead of earning money and having the affirmation of work, they are poorer, they are not paying tax, they are on benefits and their general health declines.

All too often employers see reasonable adjustment as a one-off thing, like buying a chair. I do not minimise that, if that is something that helps your condition, but reasonable adjustment in the case of arthritis actually means being a kind and empathetic manager who will talk to their staff and ask, "Is it all right for you today? What do you need to do", and will work with them to manage their symptoms to keep them in work. What this is about is our whole vision of society, that companies should not just be looking at profit and the bottom line. They should live up to their social responsibilities, not only their responsibility to their individual employees who, let us never forget, are employed because they make money out of them, but also their wider obligations to society. They have an obligation as a company not to drive people out of work unnecessarily.

I don't know what you thought about the leadership candidates who we saw the other day, but I was a little bit unimpressed. Part of the reason why I was unimpressed was all this talking about how we need to talk to big business in a much more sympathetic way. That is right. We know that we need

business, we need profitability and we need an economy that works for everybody. But too often businesses treat their staff badly. What I want is a Labour Government that is on the side of working people. I want a Labour Government that will talk to big business and help big business in order to grow the economy so that we are all more prosperous and work with big business when it is doing the right thing. But when business is not doing the right thing, I want a socialist government that will stand up to big business and secure for workers, by hand or by brain, the full fruits of our labours.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Andrew. Secunder?

SIS. M.M. RODRIGUES (Southern): Congress, I am seconding Motion 315. Arthritis is like the game of hide and seek, where the condition leads people suffering from it to have good days and bad days. Awareness needs to be created so people, especially employers, treat these people fairly and not undermine their capabilities, and instead promote tolerance towards them by generating acceptance of their condition. We often say that the weather is unpredictable. Likewise, arthritis is unpredictable. We need to remember that sunshine follows rain, that bad days are followed by good days. I support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. I call Motion 316.

ANTENATAL FIRST AID MOTION 316

316. ANTENATAL FIRST AID

This Congress is deeply concerned at the numbers of children admitted to A&E and/or dying each year due to their parents not knowing basic first aid.

In excess of half a million toddlers are rushed to accident and emergency each year following accidents in the house – with an average of 76 under 4's dying as a result.

Accidental injury is one of the biggest single causes of death in the UK for children over the age of one. More children die each year as a result of accidents than from illnesses such as leukaemia or meningitis.

Every parent should know what to do in an emergency and should have the opportunity to learn these skills during antenatal classes. It should be top priority to learn first aid. Courses are offered in some schools and the majority of workplaces, so why not at the start of life?

We call upon GMB at all levels to campaign for first aid courses to be offered to all expectant parents as part of their antenatal care, and to lobby Government and Local Authorities to make this policy.

S85 SANDWELL COMMUNITY BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(*Referred*)

SIS. S. JAMES (Birmingham & West Midlands): Congress, I move Motion 316 — Antenatal First Aid. Before moving the motion, I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you. Today marks the end of this Congress and my first as a delegate. (*Applause*) I wanted to say thank you to my region and to everyone here for all the support and kind words extended to me and my fellow first-time delegates and speakers leading up to and over this past week.

I could not have been more proud to be a woman in our union with its equality in membership and to share this stage with you, President, in your 18th year. President and Congress, thank you for making this Congress so memorable for me. It is one I will never forget.

Each year in excess of half-a-million toddlers are rushed to Accident and Emergency following accidents in the home, with an average of 76 under-4s dying as a result, and around 29,000 under-15s having to attend A&E after choking on something or swallowing non-toxic items other than food. That is eighty children each day. Accidental injuries are one of the biggest single causes of death in the UK for children over the age of one. More children die as a result of accidents than from illnesses, such as leukaemia or meningitis. There is a lot of guidance in the public domain and courses are offered by the St. John's Ambulance and the British Red Cross, but you have to search for it. Likewise, with the first-aid advice offered on the NHS website. Every parent should know what to do in an emergency, and I believe it should be a top priority to learn first aid and have the opportunity to learn these skills during antenatal classes. Courses are offered in workplaces and in some schools, so why not at the start of life?

The Government have recently implemented changes to allow the partner of an expectant mother time off work to attend two antenatal appointments. Although we welcome this, we think that more should still be done. At these classes, topics such as what happens during labour and birth, caring for your baby and feeding and bathing are all included, but it remains a mystery to me why the knowledge to save your child's life in an emergency is not deemed so important. It is mandatory for anyone working with children — nannies, childminders, crèche leaders, to name a few — to be trained in paediatric first aid.

In February 2014 the St. John's Ambulance issued shocking new statistics showing that 44%, nearly half of all expectant parents, had not learnt basic first aid prior to the arrival of their baby, even though 62% of those surveyed stated that knowing these skills would have made them feel more prepared. This is why we are calling upon the GMB at all levels to campaign for first aid courses to be offered to all expectant parents as part of their antenatal care and to lobby Government and local authorities to make this policy. Congress I move. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

(The motion was formally seconded from the floor) Thank you. I call Motion 317.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH CONCERNS MOTION 317

317. CHILDREN'S HEALTH CONCERNS

Congress regrets the recent acquisition of the franchise for the iconic London Eye by Coca Cola for advertising and promotional purposes.

Especially at a time of great national concern with regard to both dental health issues and obesity amongst children, caused at least in part, by their huge thirst for and the promotion of, sugary drinks.

The adverse effects of this advertising will be felt far beyond London as a result of country-wide promotion and children from across the UK visiting London.

Congress therefore agrees to lend its voice to appropriate campaigns promoting the health interests of children.

CENTRAL WEMBLEY BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. J. DARCI (London): Congress, I am a first-time speaker but a second-time delegate. *(Applause)* Colleagues, when considering this motion I am sure there are two basic factors that nobody will argue against. First, our children's health is one of the most precious things in life and needs protecting at all costs. Secondly, children and young people are naturally attracted to iconic images, slogans and products. This is so far as the London Eye is concerned. Those two arguments are on a collision course with possible disastrous results. On the one hand, parents are being urged, correctly, to guard their children against too many sugary drinks, which is the main culprit in causing obesity and tooth decay. On the other hand, we have in London one of the UK's most iconic structures. The London Eye is promoting the Coca Cola product. All medical experts seem to agree that Coca Cola is one of the worst things for children in large quantities, resulting in tooth decay and obesity. Whilst we know that there are many naysayers who will deny the connection and its effects, we also know, do we not, that children are attracted to sugary drinks and attracted to high-profile and expensive activities, which is what the London Eye is all about.

We know that many politicians and parents take the easy option, and do not try to stop children buying easily affordable, available and attractive products because it is next to impossible. We also know, don't we, that prohibition does not work. We only have to look at the tobacco industry. As of now, the only possible way forward is for manufacturers to reduce sugar in food and drink. They must be required to reduce the amount of harmful ingredients in their products. It requires legislation. This Government is slow to act. For this reason, we need to campaign by challenging the manufacturers of foods and drinks with the fact that they are loading their products with too many harmful ingredients. This, colleagues, should not be beyond the ability of these multi-billion pound industries. Colleagues I move.

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Secunder?

BRO. G. AMIN (London): Congress, I second Motion 317 — Children's Health Concerns. I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Congress, since sugary soft drinks came on to the market, with much publicity on our televisions, radios and magazines, newspapers and leaflets, everybody enjoyed them but no one had taken into account how damaging these drinks are to our children's health. I am talking about drinks such as Coca Cola, Pepsi, Tango and Lilt, to name but a few, all hold massive amounts of sugar. Much of the research that has been undertaken about their effects has shown that these drinks are slowly poisoning and damaging our children's health and us. Those drinks are made with pesticides, as Coke and Pepsi have 13.4% and 10.9% pesticides. Some of the ingredients and additives they use in their production are also used as rust removers, toilet cleansers and other things besides. Nowadays everybody uses the internet so look at the side effects of these drinks and how they affect our children's lifestyles. Some of the ingredients include caffeine and aspartame other things which are linked to diseases including liver cancer. Other physical problems can result in kidney failures, obesity, diabetes, poor metabolism and bone damage. These ingredients cause problems to both men and women.

It is, therefore, vitally important that we campaign with others and challenge the food and drink industries to stop filling drinks and foods with sugar and other harmful additives in order to give our children the chances they deserve. Please support. I second, thank you.. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. Motion 320, Wales & South West Region.

VOLUNTEERS IN SOCIAL CARE MOTION 320

320. VOLUNTEERS IN SOCIAL CARE

This Congress notes the comments of the Social Care Minister that “the army of volunteers can provide some of the solutions to the challenges we face” in the sector.

Whilst it is recognised that this trend has arisen out of levels of unprecedented demand and decreasing budgets, there are serious concerns regarding substitution of qualified workers, inadequate training and volunteer availability.

Volunteers can, and do, play an important part in supporting social care services, but they are not the resolution of the endemic problem of growing demand exceeding budget provision.

Congress calls, therefore, upon the CEC to continue to campaign for the necessary funding of a sector that is a vital cornerstone of this country’s care policy.

NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL BRANCH
Wales & South West Region

(Carried)

BRO. C. PUCKETT (GMB Wales & South West): The practice of volunteering to work in many areas of public service provision, particularly in the field of health and social care, has become increasingly widespread in recent years. This trend has arisen out of necessity in many cases as the care sector has been faced with unprecedented demands for its service at a time of decreasing budgets.

It is recognised that there are several good examples of voluntary work undertaken in social care with volunteers being increasingly used when new services are being commissioned to provide support to service users, both in care homes and within communities to help those who are vulnerable and isolated. However, as well intended that the volunteers may be, the concept of providing vital services in this way is not without its difficulties and drawbacks.

As trade unionists we have a real and understandable concern that volunteers are becoming unpaid substitutes for qualified workers and being increasingly seen as cheap alternatives to skilled member of staff. Volunteers also need to be trained and the money for providing this function inevitably comes out of the training budgets set aside for directly employed staff. Levels of volunteering can and do differ quite markedly across the country. As a sector facing staff shortages the supply of volunteers is insufficient to meet service demands and the standards of care provision differ as well.

Congress, volunteering can be both job satisfying and beneficial to those who are in need of support. However, and this is the key point in this debate, the social care sector should have a choice as to whether or not it engages with this type of agenda. At the moment, the toxic combination of growing demand and falling budgets is resulting in scaling up of voluntary care arrangements.

Our position must be that voluntary work remains distinct from paid work and that it is to complement and not substitute the role of paid professionals. Local authorities are being left unable to meet the increasing demands for services as a result of government spending cuts. Whilst voluntary and community groups do play an important part in providing local services, their ability and capacity has been adversely affected by the necessary and harsh funding cuts that have been imposed.

Congress, the answer to this crisis can only be found in a policy that puts people first, particularly the old and vulnerable and infirm who depend so heavily upon support in their daily lives. The policy must embrace adequate funding arrangements that permit quality care to be provided free of charge at the point of need, and out of general taxation. Quality care is and always has been best provided in-house and without recourse to privatisation and the race to the bottom that this leads to. There must be a clear long-term plan for increasing the funding of social care so that people's needs are properly met. Nothing else will do. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, colleague. Secunder? I was expecting to hear "formally" there.

BRO. B. MILES (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, my colleague has said the social care systems in this country is in crisis. People are generally living longer and the demand for this care rises every year and cuts to the local council budgets have had a devastating impact upon the scale. In real terms, spending on social care has fallen by £770m since the Coalition Government took office and we have seen a constant rise in the length of time people have to wait for a place in a home, homecare help, and adaptations to their houses. This is totally unfair and really totally unjust. We hear far too many tales from the older people about how they cannot access the services they need or have to pay exorbitant care costs.

Increasing voluntary work is now the legacy of a system devoid of adequate government funding and an example of the anti-public service ethos. Congress, any civilised government should prioritise preparations for dealing with an ageing society and ensure that there is a social care system that legally works for our people. Caps on care costs are set far too high and too many people are required to run their savings down in order to access care services.

Put simply, the underlying problem is lack of funding unless the government provides councils with enough money to commission high-quality services so that many older people will get the care they deserve. Congress, there must be a positive vision for social care and the government must ensure the right to health dignity in old age. As we say, it ain't rocket science, it's simples! (*Clicking tongue*) I second this motion. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done. Thank you. You never said a truer word. I call Brenda Fraser on behalf of the CEC. While Brenda is coming up to the rostrum, will the movers of Motion 271, Composite 15, and Motion 274, the Royal Mail, come down to the front, please? Brenda.

SIS. B. FRASER (CEC, Manufacturing): President, Congress, I am speaking to Motion 316, Antenatal First Aid. The CEC is asking Birmingham & West Midlands Region to refer this motion. The point about infant deaths following accidents is well made and the region is right to look for a safeguard.

Congress, a number of organisations, such as the National Childbirth Trust, run antenatal first aid courses but these course are often very costly and there is very little quality control due to the lack of regulation of first aid training providers. First aid for infants is a specialist business outside antenatal classes. Congress, there is a potential for the GMB to look into this issue and develop campaigns to that end. However, any training must be provided free of charge by competent qualified persons. Developing a model such as this will require significant research by GMB. Accordingly, Congress, the CEC is asking Birmingham & West Midlands Region to refer Motion 316 to allow this research to take place. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Brenda. Will Birmingham accept the reference to refer? (*Agreed*) Yes. Thank you very much. Congress agree? (*Agreed*) I now put Motion 308, Motion 309, Motion

315, Motion 316, Motion 317, Motion 320, to the vote. All those in favour please show. I will win that bingo game yet!

Motion 308 was Carried.

Motion 309 was Carried.

Motion 315 was Carried.

Motion 316 was Referred.

Motion 317 was Carried.

Motion 320 was Carried.

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: The mover of Motion 271? Hi, Dougie.

THE CLOSURE OF BANKS IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS MOTION 271

271. THE CLOSURE OF BANKS IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS

Congress, as we have all seen on the TV and in the press more and more banks are closing in towns and villages.

With Lloyds Bank being partly public there should be a bigger push to keep banks within towns and villages, as not everyone can get to the bigger towns or cities.

Older people and people on benefits cannot always afford to get to banks; they are where people still get advice with their money.

Congress asks that both the CEC and GMB get behind this motion and campaign to keep banks open in small towns and villages are at present.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Congress, for a long time banks have been the hub of the villages and towns, along with a lot of other things like pubs, and we all frequent them. When people come into the banks they do not usually go straight home, they usually spend money in the local shops and keep the high streets alive. 2,500 market town bank branches will be closed in five years. This was in February 2014. One in four banks will disappear from our high street within the next five years. At present, there are 9,500 strong branch networks of banks. This will be cut to 7,000 by the end of 2018, more than a quarter of existing banks. Santander have earmarked 139 banks for closure. Co-Op have 50 branches earmarked for closure. These are the ones that we know about. 6.7 million people have never used internet banking. Of the above, 5.8 million are over the age of 55; most of us.

If we allow the banks to keep closing at the rate they are, it will sound a death knell for many suburban and small town high streets. At present, 1,200 towns and villages do not have a bank, 900 towns and villages have only one bank. I urge the CEC and Congress to put pressure on the Government to make sure that we keep the banks in towns and villages. At present, there is no legal requirement to keep the banks open. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. *(Applause)*

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dougie. Secunder? Thank you.

Motion 271 was formally seconded.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Composite 15. The mover, please?

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COMPOSITE 15

(Covering Motions 272 and 273)

272. Support for Public Libraries (GMB Wales & South West Region)

273. Library Closures (Birmingham & West Midlands Region)

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This Congress notes that as the NHS provides free at the point of use care for the body; libraries provide free at the point of use care for the mind.

Public Libraries are in essence socialised literature and information resource providers; affording a vital avenue for the working class to acquire education and entertainment. Public Libraries form an integral part in the collective cultural milieu and as such must be defended against those that would seek to tear communities asunder by those who advocate partial or total closure, reduction in resources, and reductions in staff.

This Congress calls for the current program of closures affecting libraries both static and mobile to be stopped. Furthermore Congress recognises that a Public Library system requires physical structures which are fit for purpose, physical resources (books, computers, and other media), along with paid and trained staff.

Congress resolves:-

- Lobby the Labour Party and all layers of Government to preserve and expand the Public Library Service
- Support vigorously groups opposing library closures and the reduction of library opening hours
- To review our relationship with elected representatives who make cuts to library services

Wales & South West Region to Move
Birmingham & West Midlands Region to Second

(Carried)

BRO. D. HAMBLIN (GMB Wales & South West): President, Congress, comrades, brothers and sisters, as the NHS is free at the point of use care for the body so, too, are libraries free at the point of use care for the mind, a collective responsibility. The city in which I dwell is that of Cardiff where a statue to that Titan of collective responsibility, Nye Bevan, adorns the city centre.

Congress, the council came for our libraries last year. They were earmarked for cuts. We were told maybe three, four, five libraries could face the axe. I say today that thanks to the tireless campaigning of local groups, Rhydypennau, Rumney, Whitchurch, Cathays, and more, Cardiff Peoples Assembly, Cardiff Trades Council, Cardiff against the Cuts, we lost not a single library last year, not a single library was cut. This was only a stay of execution.

I have been told by one of our elected representatives that libraries are a middle class issue. I say to him now, tell that to the working class student trying to educate himself, tell that to the job seeker trying to fill in the forms where he has no other internet access, tell that to the working class kid for

whom libraries are his sole refuge from the tireless drudgery that austerity has imposed upon him.
(*Applause*)

Comrades, I declare an interest. If I have any degree of articulacy it is due to libraries. If I have any degree of eloquence, it is due to libraries. In fact, my degree from the Open University is in part due to libraries. When all else is lost all the workers have is that which is fashioned by their hands and the thought that they have in their minds. The thought that someone would take that away from us is anathema to the principles of a social society. I charge all those who would cut libraries as waging war on the collective ambition of the working class.

I tell you most solemnly, my brothers and sister, that these cuts, these iniquitous and grievous cuts to libraries, emanate from Tories in Westminster and they are an effort of economic and societal brinkmanship. They wish to dissect our society to find out how best to break it and as an author close to my heart once asserted, "He that breaks the thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom." There is no wisdom in the Tory Party in Westminster and there is precious little of it in Cardiff Bay either. Wisdom is not the priority of those who cut libraries, instead it is folly. It is a folly of austerity. It is a folly of neo-liberalism. It is a folly of capitalism to attack the working class and their institutions that would seek to educate them.

We declare today that we demand library buildings properly resourced, properly stocked with fully trained and paid staff. I urge you to fight the cuts in your local area, to support your libraries, and I remind those that wish to make these cuts that our libraries contain the works of Marx and Orwell, and unless they wish us to put these works into practice, then they had better damned well stop trying to cut our libraries. "Revolutions are always verbose," as one who was an inveterate reader once said. My comrades, let us be sure that we have the words to articulate our struggle. Solidarity, please support Composite 15 and save our public libraries. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you, David. Secunder?

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): I would like to dedicate my seconding of this motion to the 1,700 public service workers of Shropshire Council, including that of library staff, who had their jobs cut in 2013. I want to start with this, President, Congress, the Manic Street Preachers said in 1996, in their song, *A Design for Life*, "Libraries gave us power, then work came and made us free." The truth of the matter is, Congress, our government is showing that where they will make cuts our freedom to work, to be autonomous in public and commercial services, is now being destroyed and compromised by middle-class values.

As a librarian, I have seen second-hand as I have just said as I have introduced the seconding of this motion how cuts can affect communities. In 2013, employees in Shropshire Council experienced 1,700 worth of cuts amounting to £80m, which meant that our library was moved to a community centre in 2014. This leaves us in a situation where the services are limited. For example, the amount of books and stock being reduced and it is now run under the auspices of a community scheme. The same is about to happen across Church Stretton and Ludlow where there have been more talks of cuts of £40m to the resource centre and the library, respectively.

Whilst it may work for one place, it should not be the last resort for others to close. If anything, libraries are centres of knowledge and should be seen as such. They should not be the casualties of a Conservative government or Shropshire County council. That they should be moved under the proviso where there is no other option is wholly deplorable. Congress, I second and support this motion.
(*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Motion 274, The Royal Mail. You could have saved a trip.

ROYAL MAIL MOTION 274

274. ROYAL MAIL

This Congress is extremely concerned at the possibility of the loss of universal delivery of postal letters across the British Isles in the near future. This will come about due to the cherry picking of profitable delivery rates by Private mail providers and the refusal of the watchdog for the industry to classify this as unfair practice. The Royal Mail has for years cross subsidised the delivery of mail to rural areas of our country. Congress is not against free competition but strongly opposes unfair competition especially when it affects our members and members of the general public in the UK.

Congress therefore instructs the CEC to take action to oppose the cherry picking of profitable delivery routes without their agreeing to universal delivery. CEC to also mobilise our sponsored MP's to oppose this unfairness in Parliament, to organise with the TUC and any other body who have an interest and that the CEC feels is fit to join the campaign against this practice.

W50 WELLINGTON BRANCH
Birmingham & West Midlands Region

(Carried)

SIS. H. ROCHE (Birmingham & West Midlands): Hello, again. In 2013, Royal Mail was privatised by the ConDem government. Cuts have been extended across the UK and the British Isles. Also, on Christmas Day 2014, 2,000 cuts were announced in CityLink in Coventry and this led to a solidarity movement across the country with those affected. Even so, I read this morning that in January they are planning to make 230 more cuts. How disgraceful is that for the service that we have put our money into. Since privatisation of Royal Mail routes have been cherry-picked by the private mail providers on the basis of financial viability regarding the routes. This is disadvantageous to the members rather than the companies. Our members are raising concerns that it is leading to unfair practice in the delivery system and we are beginning to question this unfair competition between both the private and the public mail providers as workers are now told which routes they must deliver to. Furthermore, this leads to the unhappiness of those who rely on Royal Mail as a service. To prevent this, I am calling upon the CEC of Congress that they must take the appropriate steps to oppose this unfair selection process. This should include lobbying Members of Parliament who are against the degeneration of Royal Mail and also I am calling on the CEC to engage with the Trades Union Council and other relevant organisations to mobilise against unfair practice in Royal Mail. Congress, I move this motion.
(Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Hannah. Do we have a seconder?

Motion 274 was formally seconded.

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to the vote on Motion 271, Composite 15, and Motion 274, which are all being supported. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried. Thank you.

Motion 271 was Carried.

Composite 15 was Carried.

Motion 274 was Carried.

MONICA SMITH, RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION, ADDRESSED CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, it gives me great pleasure to call on Monica Smith, National Secretary of the Retired Members Association, to address Congress. Monica. (*Applause*)

MONICA SMITH: President, Congress, first of all, I wish to thank the Northern Region for sending Mary Hutchinson and Billy Hughes to attend the RMA National Committee. After a while, I got friendly with Billy, which led to greater things and we became a couple. (*Applause*) We had a wonderful relationship, visiting each other's homes and families, and taking holidays, etc. Billy left me with wonderful memories which I will always have, but they are not as good as Billy. Thank you once again, Northern Region. (*Applause*)

I will start now. I have always been proud to be a member of the Retired Members Association. It is a continuation of my membership of this great union of ours. We do have active regional RMA committees which are well attended and I think one or two may become more active shortly. I do urge more retired members to attend their regional meetings.

I feel the RMA National Committee are a committed band of members who attend meetings religiously throughout the years, come hail, rain, or shine. Collectively, we could have a couple of hundred years under our belts and dedicated service.

Speaking of myself, which I do not often do, I have been attending RMA meetings for the past 21/22 years. (*Applause*) In 1992, I was elected to attend the National Committee Meetings and I have been the RMA National Secretary for 17 years but when you get to my age who's counting? You are not bothered about age; it is how you feel and how you tackle it that matters.

I attended a meeting recently and I was asked, "What are you doing now, Monica?" I said, "Well, apart from my busy home life and family, I attend my GMB branch meetings, regional meetings, and National Committee Meetings, etc." I was gobsmacked when she said, "Eeh, I bet you don't get anything done for reminiscing and drinking tea."

I can assure you, colleagues, the meetings I attend are not like that. The members have bucket loads of experience and knowledge, which is awesome. They certainly do not come for the proverbial cup of tea and a chat. With Derek Baker in the chair, it is more or less heads down and let's get on with the meeting.

Colleagues, we are all very much aware we are in for a very rough ride for the next five years with this Tory government, with Cameron and his crew grinding down the working class, cutting vital services and jobs, and forcing people to use food banks. I just wonder where the axe will fall next. They have said the National Health Service is safe in their hands. Do we trust 'em? I don't think so. We all know what the Tories are capable of. They have no compassion. Their motto is, "I'm alright, Jack."

At the RMA National Committee Meeting held in March, Derek Baker, MBE, was elected to attend the National Pensions Convention in Blackpool on 16th-18th June, next week, and also Angela Murphy was elected on to the National Equalities Forum for a third term of office representing the RMA.

The RMA National Coordinator, Gerry Nelson, suggested we hold our RMA National Committee Meeting in Blackpool on 16th June to coincide with the NPC march from the Tower to the Winter Gardens. The RMA banner will be carried high and the flags will be flying high as well. He is full of good ideas is our Gerry.

My own personal feeling is that as an association the GMB RMA is second to none. (*Applause*) On behalf of the RMA I wish to thank Gerry Nelson, our National Coordinator, Regional Coordinators, Regional Secretaries, and also the GMB President, Mary Turner, MBE, and last but by no means least, Paul Kenny, for their constant support of the GMB Retired Members Association: long may it flourish. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Monica, while you are in charge of the RMA, it will grow proud and strong. I love you dearly.

SOCIAL POLICY: GENERAL

THE PRESIDENT: I now move to Social Policy: General, Motion 275, Postage for OAPs. They are going to post you away now, Monica! Motion 278, Fairness in Trading Offers, London Region to move and second both. Bill Modlock will respond on behalf of the CEC.

POSTAGE FOR OAPs MOTION 275

275. POSTAGE FOR OAP'S

Congress requests the backing of the CEC to establish a third class postage for OAPs.

At the moment, with the post office being privatised there should be a 3rd class postage for pensioners more so around Easter and Christmas. It is very hard for OAPs to stay in touch with their relatives and more so if they don't have email facilities.

BRAINTREE & BOCKING BRANCH
London Region

(*Carried*)

BRO. D. RIGBY (London): Moving Motion 275, Postage for OAPs including those on benefits. When Royal Mail was in public hands they used to have a simple system for costing letters. A letter was either first-class 36 pence or second-class 27 pence. Royal Mail felt that it was an inefficient method of paying for postage because of the cost of delivery, depending on how much the letter weighed, how big the letter was, and how far it had to travel.

Congress, the cost of postage has gone up astronomically since privatisation. In 2013, the cost of posting a first-class letter was 60 pence and for second-class 50 pence. It now costs in 2015 first-class 63 pence for a 100g letter, and second-class for 100g letter is 54 pence. Lots of old-aged pensioners and people on benefits do not have internet access and prefer to send their friends and relatives letters, especially at certain times of the year. I would ask the CEC and Congress to support this motion for either a third-class reduced postal stamp or free postage for old-aged pensioners and people on benefits, the cost to stay the same and not to rise, or the free postage. Congress, I ask you to support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Dougie Secunder? While Jim is coming up, a handbag has been left in the internet café about 20 minutes ago. There is a parcel in there and there is also a bus pass. It is (?) Christine Dean Zachade. Is there any delegate or visitor with that name? (*Indication from floor*) You lucky, lucky girl! Carry on, Jim.

BRO. J. RICHMOND (London): I have to second this motion for the simple reason that communication is as important to the elderly as anyone else. Communication gets harder as you get

older but is also more vital as you get older. Colleagues, because of its importance communication should not depend on the ability to pay. Compared to other companies postage in the UK may be considered as good value but certainly more expensive than it used to be. However, pensioners or those on low fixed income find it difficult to meet the cost of regular communication. It may well be argued that the internet would provide a more cost effective form of communication but, colleagues, if a pensioner finds it hard to afford a stamp how can a pensioner afford a computer and pay an internet provider.

Royal Mail and other postal service providers are now profit-driven organisations but this does not mean they can abandon social responsibilities and the introduction of a third-class service at a reduced cost to qualifying people as a means of communication for the elderly, and Royal Mail acts as a safeguard against ill health, accident, emergency, and it means that families in this country, and abroad, can stay in touch. Congress, that is a precious gift. I second. Please support. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Jim. Motion 278.

FAIRNESS IN TRADING OFFERS MOTION 278

278. FAIRNESS IN TRADING OFFERS

Congress notes that very often offers being made to new customers are superior to those available to existing customers. This is wrong and needs to be challenged.

Congress proposes the Office of Fair Trading should be able to direct that existing customers have the right, without cost, to the same offers.

KING'S LYNN NO 1 BRANCH
London Region

(Carried)

SIS. D. ANDERSON (London): Congress, we have all seen the TV ads offering cheaper broadband and cheaper car insurance, which are for new customers only. What about existing customers who cannot change because they are tied into contracts for a minimum of 12 to 18 months; surely, they warrant the same offers. How many of us have changed to cheaper car insurance but forgot to change the renewal date and suddenly the price has sky-rocketed. Yes, attract new customers but not at the expense of existing ones. This has been going on for far too long. The government should call on the Office of Fair Trading to make sure all customers get a great deal from companies, not just the new ones. Please support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Secunder?

BRO. S. RUSH (London): Congress, I wholeheartedly agree with our colleague on this issue and as such will keep my words short, but hopefully to the point. Every year, whether it be broadband, car and home insurance, whatever, when the renewal letter pops through the door, or email in your Inbox, your quote for a further year has always increased but when you investigate online (if you have an online) via one of the comparison websites, you find that the new customers are offered a better deal than you, a loyal customer, who pays more. Why is it that loyal customers subsidise the new. I am all for competition but, surely, this is not a fair way to go. Attract new customers, yes, but look after your old loyal ones first. Some of us do not realise that we, the loyal customer, are treated unfairly and assume we are treated with respect, the same respect and courtesy that new customers receive. All we ask is that Congress supports this motion, that fair offers are available on a level playing field to old

customers and new. I second this motion and as a first-time delegate I believe as a lay person this is the close of Congress, and I am the last speaker, President, or have I been told a load of porky pies on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, and you are the last speaker in relation to resolutions and delegates down there. Well done, Simon. Thank you. We would not tell porky pies! I now call Bill Modlock on behalf of the CEC.

BRO. B. MODLOCK (CEC, Public Services): President, Congress, speaking on behalf of the CEC on Motion 275, special postage rate for pensioners. The cost of a postage stamp represents good value to customers despite the recent increase in prices. This motion proposes an idea to help pensioners better afford postage stamps. In 2012, Royal Mail offered a discounted Christmas stamp scheme to those in receipt of certain welfare benefits, which included the state pension. The suggestion of a third-class stamp would certainly help those on low income. Our qualification is that, if viable, this third-class stamp should be available for all people on low incomes, in receipt of welfare benefits and in-work benefits, and not just pensioners in receipt of the state pension. A further qualification is that this would be difficult to put in place as Royal Mail is now a profit-driven company operating in competition with other postal service providers and with companies cherry-picking lucrative business contracts. Therefore, Congress, please support Motion 275 with this qualification. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bill. Does London accept that? (*Agreed*) Thank you. I now put Motion 275 and Motion 278 to the vote. All those in favour please show. Anyone against? They are carried.

Motion 275 was Carried.

Motion 278 was Carried.

ANY OTHER CONGRESS BUSINESS

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, that was the last resolution. We now move into the procedures. Can Regional Secretaries ensure that card voting booklets are left in the Regional red trays at the end of Congress so we can reuse them next year?

Could all regions please collect their regional banners, where possible, and any hanging ones will be returned in due course.

CLOSING PROCEDURE OF CONGRESS

THE PRESIDENT: We are now commencing the closing procedure of Congress, which begins with the Omnibus Vote of Thanks, this year to be given by Liz Blackman, Midland & East Coast Region. Liz. (*Applause*)

OMNIBUS VOTE OF THANKS

SIS. L. BLACKMAN (CEC, Midland & East Coast): President, Congress, Liz Blackman, Midland & East Coast Region, very proud and honoured to be moving this vote of thanks on behalf of the CEC, especially in the City of Dublin for it was in that City in the 1800s that my great grandmother was born on a barge in the river Liffey before she and her family moved to Liverpool where I was born and grew up.

Delegates, I am sure there were very few of us whose blood was not moved by the swale of the pipes and the marching bands before we got into Congress; mine certainly was, and also the great dancing of the young Irish dancers. We thank thee.

Delegates, Congress started with an excellent parade of banners. Their display remains a tribute to our forebears who fought so valiantly for the rights we enjoy today. 126 years later the GMB stands firm in the defence of its members. To the standard bearers I thank you.

Colleagues, first, I would like to pay tribute to our National President, Mary Turner. Mary and I go back more years than I care to remember. (*Applause*) From those early days till today, despite continuing health problems for both herself and her husband, Denny, she has always been kind, commanding where necessary, and absolutely committed to the GMB and the wider Trades Union Movement. Long may you continue to represent us. I salute you. (*Applause*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SIS. L. BLACKMAN (CEC, Public Services): You are a credit both to the GMB and the wider Trades Union Movement.

Turning to our National Vice President, Malcolm Sage, Malcolm has supported Mary both during the year and at Congress. He has performed superbly. Two years ago Brian Fraser said he was the best right-hand man in the business. I cannot beat that so to paraphrase my husband, Joe, a Scot, I say to Malcolm, (*Scottish spoken: Long may you live.*) Translation freely available from GMB Scotland. (*Applause*)

To our General Secretary, Paul Kenny, thank you for steering our union through some very difficult years. The GMB today is a lusty child, alive and growing, and that is down to your influence and leadership. Thank you, Paul. (*Applause*)

This week's external speakers were Enda Kenny; Prime Minister, Michael D. Higgins Irish President, so much like Michael Foot, and Brendan Barber, chair of ACAS. That is an impressive line-up by anybody's standards and, hopefully, bodes well for the future development of GMB within the Republic.

Congress, I now turn to the Standing Orders Committee, ably chaired by Helen Johnson and advised by Barry Smith. They do an excellent job. Thank you for all your hard work. You know, President, and Congress, years ago as inexperienced young delegate we thought Standing Orders members were gods. Today, as a CEC observer, I know they are gods. Sorry, gang.

Congress, setting up Congress is no easy task. There is an awful lot of work done before, during, and after Congress. I am going to thank them all. If I forget anybody please forgive me. First, let me thank the management staff of this excellent venue who have been helpful and friendly throughout the week.

Our thanks once again to the guys from T5 who erected this impressive stage and backdrop: top marks to you.

Then on to the welcome we saw on the faces of the stewards when we entered the hall each morning. The stewards are all local, which bodes well for GMB Ireland. You have done a great job, gang. I thank you. (*Applause*)

Congress, in 2014 Billy Hughes was presented with a long service badge for his commitment to the GMB, which was much deserved. I first met Billy in the 1970s when we were staying in the same hotel. I had my leg in plaster having been knocked off my motorbike. Billy and I shared a taxi each morning going to Congress. The hotel was pleasant enough but the owner was nuts. One night in the bar he told us to drink up as he was going out on Scouse patrol. Apparently, he beat up Scousers. He had not noticed my accent. I cannot pronounce what Billy said to him but I do know it was not complimentary; that I do know. *(Laughter)* On my part, ever the lady, I said, “In your dreams, you divvy. You couldn’t knock the skin off a rice pudding.” *(Applause)*

Over the years, Billy and I shared many a laugh. Sadly, at the end of last year he died. He will be sorely missed. This was also true for John Toomey, both ardent trade unionists, both great characters.

Each year Monica Smith reports on the work of our RMA. Last years, despite her own health problems, she continued to plough on, never losing her cheerfulness and consideration for others. Under Monica’s stewardship, the RMA continues to grow. Thank you, Monica. *(Applause)*

To Kathleen Walker Shaw and her team from our European office, many thanks and keep up the good work. *(Applause)*

To the Labour Party contenders for the leadership I say thank you for coming here for the hustings but I reckon Jerry got it right, were you all in the toilet? *(Applause)*

This year you may have noticed the number of exhibitors was down. Many, I suspect, due to the emergence of UNIONLINE and the logistics of getting equipment here. To those intrepid souls who did make the journey, we give our thanks, not just for the freebies but for your unfailing courtesy. *(Applause)*

To Roger and John who ambushed you each morning each time you left the hall selling raffle tickets for RMA funds. Thank you, lads. You missed your calling. You would have made good barrow boys. *(Applause)*

There are a number of people here who without them Congress could not proceed. First, our grateful thanks to the shorthand writers, Phyllis Hilder and Michael Thear. Each word is accurately recorded. God alone knows how they do it given the diversity of accents from this rostrum, not least of all mine. I believe you both deserve a medal for diligence above and beyond the call of duty. How about applause? *(Applause)*

We next turn to the GMB auditors who have to be here but do nothing, and the nine regional tellers who have to be in the hall for every session of Congress waiting for the call for a card vote. They have impressive bladder control, which is more than I can say for me. Thank you, comrades. Well done. *(Applause)*

What does one say about Steve Short and the Head Office team? They are the people who actually make Congress work.
Our thanks for a job well done.

May I also thank the Regional Secretaries, their PAs, and the regional office staff who support their delegations excellently. *(Applause)*

Many thanks to Rose Conroy, Laura Jagdev, Charlotte Gregory, and Steve Pryle, the best news team in the business. It is no accident that the coverage of Congress has been in the news all week. It is thanks to these guys that the stories got there. Keep up the good work. (*Applause*)

Thank you to Ida Clemo and her policy team for working flat out to ensure the programme of business was carried out. Once again, I thank you. (*Applause*)

I would also like to thank the Congress visitors who gave up their time to be here voluntary. They are here because they understand and value the Trades Union Movement. Thank you all. (*Applause*)

Last but not least I will move to the delegates. Congress, looking around the hall I see many new young faces. Do you realise 41% of delegates present are first-timers and we have increased women's participation. (*Applause*) That is great news. It certainly proves that GMB@Work is working. Your very presence here today gives the lie to the detractors who say trade unions are in decline.

Unfortunately, because I was in Standing Orders I was not present in the hall when delegates were speaking but when I was I was proud of you and I have it on good authority that you did very well, including turning the CEC over. That has to be good. (*Applause/Cheers*)

Here you were, many of whom were quaking in their shoes at the prospect of addressing Congress, as I was years ago. It is truly terrifying, isn't it? Now you have faced your baptism of fire, you can all go back proudly as a credit to your regions and the GMB. You came here to do the business and, by god, you certainly did.

At the beginning of this vote of thanks I mentioned the baby born in abject poverty in the 19th century. The difference between her life chances and the lives of all of us here today is astronomical. It did not happen by chance. We owe it to our forebears in the Labour and Trades Union Movement. The fight they began is the fight we will finish. We will not flinch until we have secured our rightful places in the sun for all our people.

Congress, in the name of the General Secretary, the President, the Vice President of the CEC, let's raise the roof for our first-time delegates and our veterans. The fight still goes on. Safe journey home. I move. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Well done, Lizzie. Liz, we thank you, too. I now move on. Oh dear. Congress, I call the General Secretary, Paul Kenny. (*Applause*)

GENERAL SECRETARY'S CLOSING SPEECH

THE GENERAL SECRETARY: I am going to share and endorse a lot of what Liz said so there may be a bit of repetition but a lot of people deserve not just double thanks but our eternal gratitude for the work that they do, sometimes unseen.

Did you enjoy Congress? ("Yes.") Some of you obviously did not. Did you enjoy Congress? (*Louder cheers*) That's more like it.

The first point I want to say is to thank Dave Kearney, who is based here in Dublin from the North Wales & Irish – why do I keep saying that? I keep slipping back. It is the North West & Irish Region. (*Cheers*) Dave did so much work, not just to make this happen but also to ensure that we had some very, very important speakers come. I just make the point that it is nice to come somewhere where the

head of state actually tells you that what you do is really good, you are very important, tells you about the struggles and battles, and effectively does everything you want someone to do in a position like that, to point out how great unions are, and how people should join them. President Higgins, Michael D as he is known, I think will take some beating. For colleagues who keep asking me, there is going to be a DVD of his speech, which we are just producing, and if you want one you just contact the Communications Department and we will send them out to you. You can go on the GMB website and see where you spoke and also look at Michael's speech, and indeed any other contribution this week. We are producing the text. We are clearing the text with the presidential office and then people who want written copies for one reason or another will be able to get them. I have just got that out of the way.

Look, people have a view and a vision about unions and yet you saw this week some of the projects we have been working on, things like Children in Crossfire, where this Congress and the regions, and branches, effectively, with all the problems may be that we have, individual and collective problems in workplaces, were able to reach out and I cannot think of a better thing to carry home than what Richard said. He basically said, "If it weren't for you, thousands of those kids would die."

So, the next time one of these lick-spittle politicians talks about what damage unions do, you spit right back in their face. *(Applause)* We are a force for good. We are not selfish and self-centred. We are not in it for what we get out of it, unlike most of them up in Westminster.

When Gilbert came, Gilbert is now part of a growing trade union movement in Central and Latin America, and that happened because we reached out as a union to help them. That is what we do, we help people around the globe collectively organising. It is what we do. We have done it in Malawi, we have done it in Central America, and we have done it in other parts of Europe because that is what we do. We think trade unionism is a great force for good and so we reach out and do it.

Next time someone asks what trade unions do, you just point out that trade unionism in the world is growing. Faith in politicians is declining everywhere but growth of trade unionism is growing globally.

I want to start a bit about first-time speakers. We had just under 90 of them, 90 first-time speakers. *(Applause)* They were great, they were powerful, it was moving, and there was a lot of courage. It takes a bit of courage to come up here and speak and part of Congress, part of being in the Trades Union Movement, is people are helped and developed to start to unlock that potential. They begin to take control of not their own lives but also in shaping and helping to contribute to the advancement of others.

When I first got active in the GMW, as it was then, my job was picking up litter on Shepherd's Bush Green, and picking up the bottles left by, let's call them, unsociable drinkers. That was my job. That was okay, I liked it. I liked meeting people. I did not have a problem. I was not interested in education. I left school at 15 and if truth be known I did not do much after I was about 14. Education just held absolutely the worst barriers in the world for me.

I got active in the union and I found something I had been looking for, that was to fight for people, to do something, to stand up. I never had an interest, really. I moved from job to job. There was a nobility about it, a comradeship. I have told this story to many people. People pay me now to have a row. *(Laughter)* Get your head round that one. Mostly you do it for nothing. I used to do it for nothing and loved it. We organise, shop steward, branch secretary, convenor, and eventually what they used to call a district officer.

I always found it an incredibly noble calling, and still do. I wake up every morning and hope to the last breath I draw I will wake up every morning on the basis of being angry. Sorry, Mary, I should not have said it like that. I hope I wake up every morning. How's that?

I just want to mention a few people, if I may. Talk about courage, what about Imogen-Grace Wilkes and Hannah Roche from Birmingham? (*Applause*) Fantastic. Powerful. Well, remember Charlene Sibley from the Wales & South West Region, do you know that young lady, because you are going to hear a lot more of her, I will tell you? She recruited 600 members in the last year to 18 months. (*Applause/Cheers*) Nick Hughes and Sophie Hayes, and the membership people in the Wales & South West Region, produced some fantastic forward looking issues about retention. The Branch Working Party has looked at it and I wanted to say publicly, I think you have done a fantastic job. I think it is a blueprint for how the union should look after and go after people who drop out of the union for a variety of reasons. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region – (*Cheers*) – you have said nothing this week! (*Laughter*) Frankly, I did not know who to pick out, there have been such fantastic contributions, but I was most impressed by Liz Robinson. I was most impressed by Liz Robinson when she started pogo dancing in the bar on Sunday night. (*Laughter*) Those of you who were there will know exactly what I mean. Thank you for a fantastic contribution from the region. (*Applause*)

We go back to courage, what about Caroline Campbell from GMB Scotland? (*Applause*) It takes a lot, you know, to come up here and tell a story. But part of the magic of this great union of ours is the magic because we think of ourselves as a family. That is how we want to think of ourselves. So when people come up and tell their real stories, they are telling them to their family.

I will never forget, ever, the way that Mary comes out and gives people comfort. That is what a great President we have. She feels every inch. (*Applause*)

Ben Cook, Midland & East Coast Region, young members, an equality champion, you will hear a lot more, a great, great tribute to the region. I think we will hear a lot more about Ben and what Ben is going to do in terms of pushing the young members on to the road around all the regions in the next year, and you have my full support in doing that, mate. (*Applause*)

I was at this point going to do a quick impersonation of Bill Chard who is retiring but I decided that his version of Lay Lady Lay is best left buried. (*Applause/Laughter*)

I want just to make a note as well of some of the first-time speakers. I am particularly going to pick out about 10 or 12 today. Fay Middlemiss, Martyn Warner, and Michelle Chaffey, and all the others who had to wait till Thursday to get up and speak as a first-timer, can you imagine this, all week they have been sitting there, all week waiting, watching it going on. Listen, I thought you were all brilliant, all the first-time speakers, absolutely fantastic. (*Applause*)

London Region, well, how could you get away. (*Cheers*) There were so many great contributions and Nicky, the new Branch Secretary from Bucks who I had never met before until today, great. I never met Koulla but now I will never forget you. (*Laughter*) Fabulous contributions and really, really good stuff.

Before I forget anybody, what about that region over there whose name I keep mispronouncing. (*Cheers*) Yes, come on! Thank you for hosting this Congress. I think the father and son show has been absolutely brilliant. The contributions have been good. My old friend John McDonnell told me

that he got a bit of stick when I gave him a bit of praise from the rostrum, but it is very deserved, John. You have been a stalwart of this organisation and of the region, and I know Paul McCarthy values your contribution, particularly when we had the difficulties of merging the regions together. I think the union owes you a great debt. Well done. Thanks to Paul McCarthy and the region for hosting Congress. *(Applause)*

We have some people, some of the people you do not see. I have hardly seen them all week, actually. I am just making sure there is nothing up there. Anna Barnes and Eamon O’Hearn make sure the names go up on the screen, which is quite good because then people get to know who other people are and they do the first name stuff. Lauren Tinney and Kerry Smith from National Office, I think you are both first-timers at Congress. They did the motion numbers and kept everybody tracked. Keir Greenaway and Gary Kilpatrick did the recorded decisions and worked out who had done what, whether we had missed anything out, and the speaking positions.

Liz, I agree entirely with Liz, the SOC is way up there. I go in there and make sure I tip my forelock appropriately.

I will tell you something. Last night about 12 o’clock I sent Barry Smith a spoof emergency resolution. That is the sort of family we are, really. It was actually written by Bert Schouwenburg, who is at the back. There he is hiding under the chair! Basically, it was an emergency resolution calling for the union to throw its full weight behind releasing the thousands of budgerigars that had been incarcerated up and down the UK. *Freedom for the budgerigars. (Laughter)* It said that not only were they behind bars but they were being criminally tortured by the idea that they were not alone because people were hanging mirrors that they could look in. *(Laughter)*

Anyway, I sent this off to Barry this morning and then to my surprise Helen Johnson, a brilliant chair of Standing Orders, came to me on the stage and said, “We’ve got a very late emergency resolution,” by which time, of course, I had forgotten everything about it. Oh, by the way, I forgot to tell you the resolution was put in the name of the Canary Wharf Branch. *(Laughter/Applause)*

Helen said to me, “Ooh, I think we’re in trouble.” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “I think someone has fallen off their perch.” *(Laughter)* She said, “There’ll be feathers flying here later.” Eventually, of course, she let me into the joke.

In a sense, that is the spirit of our great union. I will tell you, I have been a guest at loads of conferences, I have spoken at loads of conferences for different unions, and it don’t work like that. Colleagues, get up here and maybe they make a bit of a mess. We have Mary’s brilliant stewardship of the Congress, and the fact that we are here for each other at Congresses, that don’t happen in lots of unions. It is too rigid. Maybe that is part of the reason why GMB has been growing and the changes in the Congress itself.

I also want to thank, I said Barry Smith but the whole of the SOC. They do a fantastic job and they are the guardians of our Congress. Our Congress is the sovereign body of the union. I know sometimes people get a little bit chuffed off with them but their job is to ensure and to safeguard the whole of this union. I think they do a fantastic job and I echo Liz’s views, you do a brilliant job. Thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)*

I thank the stewards again, Liz. Bob Crosby organised the stewards. I thank Bob and thank all of the stewards, and our NAU staff, Bob Robinson, Karen Smith, Kevin Sweeney, John McCargo, Gary Kilpatrick, Bob Robinson – Bob Robinson, twice, he must have a brother – and Graham Dow:

fantastic job. Then all the national officers, the officers, the regional secretary staff, and the officers from the regions, and the senior management team who have been fantastic; and the CEC who have vision, have had incredible vision, and have worked so hard over the last period of office to ensure the union stays on the right road.

I also want to mention an old hand from the Southern Region. He has not mentioned us, has he? Oh, yes, I knew he hated us, he has always hated us, you know, that London Region mob. There is lots of brilliant up and coming talent. I just want to mention so you balance it a bit an old hand, if you like, and that is Andy Newman from the Swindon Branch. (*Applause*) Andy makes great speeches up here but he means every word of them. On the ground, Andy and his colleagues in the Swindon Branch, first they brought us Carillion. It was Andy's members and Andy's branch, and Andy that put Carillion in our sights. Now everybody knows that that dispute, which was a good dispute in terms of justice, has turned into one of the biggest blacklisting cases this country has ever seen. Carillion are right smack bang in it. That is how the union got engaged because we actually took up one fight and it led to another. Not to be outdone, he then took on an agency, our members down there, Tempay, they got the agency agreement, and have now taken on Marks & Spencer to treat people properly. They are two pretty big companies but that was real trade union organising there in front of us. That is a real example. Thank you, Andy, and thank you to Southern Region. You have much to be proud of.

Our political team I mentioned the other day but they have done a fantastic job. In the press office, Charlotte, Steve, and Rose, and we had Ellie Baker with us this year. I have said to you from this rostrum before, we have the most fantastic campaigns and press team anywhere in the Trades Union Movement. We really do, honestly. That is not just my opinion; that is every other union's opinion. People have 15 or 20 staff in their press department but they do not get a shadow of the coverage that we get because we have a proactive and 24/7, literally, organising campaigning press team. Thank you all. You have done this union proud. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

T5, who travelled over the water with us, the people who usually do our Congress and we wanted continuity, thank you very much indeed. You have done a great job and I will be suing you for falling off the stage, so don't worry about that! (*Applause*) He thinks I'm joking! No, no, I am only joking. It is all right.

The Congress office, the people who make things work, Paula Keane, incredible, wonderful Steve Short, Barbara Casher, who works for me, and Barbara is an incredible person. I have been lucky. Before Barbara, there was Tina Wilkinson when I worked in London Region and I am really pleased to see Tina. Where are you Tina? Wave at me, kid. There you are. (*Applause*) I have been incredibly well educated by Tina and then Barbara, so I know my place, don't worry about that! Also, there is Kerry Smith and Pat Gannon. Pat was on the info desk when you came in.

To the platform party, well, Malcolm Sage, he is a rock. You have heard me say it. He is an absolute rock. He does not get flustered. The amount of work he does for the organisation is incredible. He is a complete credit. You will see him at the TUC. He is a fabulous asset for this union. He is an incredible asset for the union. He demonstrates that in so many ways. I know his region, the Midland & East Coast Region, is incredibly proud of him, and rightly they should be. I know that the CEC value him and I know this union, and I hope Congress, value him. Malcolm, you are absolutely brilliant. (*Applause*)

Kathleen Walker Shaw, well, everybody knows that the GMB is about as good in European issues as you can get and, trust me, that is down to Kathleen, and Maureen Hicks, who run the Brussels office. This is an asset (*Applause*) Old hands have heard me say it but for new delegates, she will send me a

document about some issue to do with European parliament, and say, "There is this issue." I say, "What do you think?" Not like Liz Kendall, but "What do you think?" She says, "Well, I think we should probably do this," and I say, "Well, that sounds fine to me." Basically, you can have 100% trust that Kathleen always does the right thing for the union and for the members; 100% trust. You have done a fantastic job. Thank you, Kathleen. (*Cheers/Applause*)

Ida Clemo – I am going to call you Ida, is that okay? That is her real name but I get everybody to call her Aida, and Ida, and Uda. Anyway, she is an incredible asset to the organisation. We have worked quite closely together now for a few years. I can tell you now, trust me, this is not a girl who leaves her desk at 5 o'clock. This is not somebody who goes home on a Friday night and says, "Well, I haven't got to worry about work till Monday." She writes and rewrites. She looks at every bit of policy. She rings people up. She talks to people. She is incredibly caring about the membership. She is incredibly supportive to everybody in the union but, most important, she very jealously guards all the previous policy decisions at Congress. It is Ida that says, "You can't do that because of this." She is a real asset to the union, but she is also very passionate about ensuring that Congress runs, that it runs to its real direction, and that it does not, in a sense, do anything other than what it should do. What it should do, of course, is end up working for the members. Ida, thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*)

Mary, I just do not know what to say about Mary. Liz said, and some of us close on the Executive have said, Mary has had some very, very difficult and distressing times. All through those times she has not complained; in fact, she has been the first to help everybody else. She has been through some incredibly difficult times, family personal things that I know I could never stand up for. I just would not be able to do it. She remains strong. I have to say she was determined to be here and I really wanted her to be here, I knew you wanted her to be here, and it is great that she is here and I will tell you why. The energy and love that comes from that floor she grows in. She looks much better today than she did when she arrived here. (*Applause/Cheers*)

Mary is no fly-by-night, don't worry about that. I have seen it. I know. Even when she was in hospital one time and she was not well. It is a few years back. I was visiting her and one of her members came up. Mary sort of smiled a little bit, pleased to see someone when in hospital. The woman came up and she said, "How are you, Mary?" Before Mary could say anything, she opened her bag with a load of problems, wage slips and everything. (*Laughter*) Mary dealt with them. The nurse came over wondering what the hell was going on. The woman said, "Can I unplug these things they are getting in the way?" "No, no, leave them there plugged in, please." She is a wonderful, brilliant trade unionist, person, and supporter. I am not sure that anywhere in the Trades Union Movement, either up to now or certainly now, there is anybody that is of Mary's stature in terms of presiding over their trade union. I have never met one. I have never met anybody in the Trades Union Movement that has the passion and the calibre, and cares so much. Mary, I love you. (*Applause*)

I always make this point of nicking a bit of time on the basis of saying thank you very much to my family. They have been brilliant. My wife Pat always took an incredible disproportionate amount of responsibility for our kids when I was out at meetings and so on, so I have made it very plain over a number of years how much I love her. Sorry, I am getting a bit emotional! Sorry. (*Applause*) My family means so much to me. My son, Warren, is an official but he is not an official because of me, he is an official in spite of me. He has never had a leg up from me; in fact, he has probably had a hand down. He has had to fight his way through as a shop steward, a branch secretary, and officer. (*Applause*) He is passionate about it and the reason he has had to do that is because no one would ever believe he was worth anything unless he had to prove it himself. I knew that and he knew that. So when I said, and the members of the regional committee will always remember, they kept saying, "He's very good. He is a branch secretary, a European Works Council delegate, why doesn't he apply

for a job?" I said to them, "He's not allowed to." I said to him he can't apply for a job as long as I am ever anything to do with the region. They know that. He knew that and he understood it. I am pleased that he has done so well but I want people to value him as him, not that he is my son. (*Applause*) He has been really lucky with a great wife, Sam, wonderful children. Megan, my eldest granddaughter, is in the front. I was going to embarrass you and bring you up here but I won't do that. There is Halley and Alex; and Alex looks like he could be a bit of a footballer. I am hoping so, to keep me in the retirement that I hope to have. I am very happy my other son was here. He flew in for a day to watch the Congress and see a few people. I think he cleared the dance floor in the Yorkshire do. I wasn't sure if it was John Cleese I was watching doing the silly walks or my youngest son doing a dance. And there is his son, Jay. They are very important to me.

Look, the one thing I have always tried to be is honest. I have always believed, you know, you can't tell lies in this game. You have to face people and be honest. I don't hide behind the rule books and I don't hide behind Tory laws. Five years ago at Southport I said to people that, although there was no legal requirement to do it, there is a moral requirement for me to do it. So I asked the CEC to call an election for the General Secretary and Treasurer post. On Saturday night at the CEC they passed the proposal for an election for the General Secretary and Treasurer of the GMB, the most fantastic office in the world so far as I am concerned. Those papers will be hitting you shortly when you go back to your branches.

I can tell you that that five-year term of office, I cannot offer to do five years for this union. Trust me, I will do lots of things. I will clean the toilets if I have to. I will carry on doing something for the organisation, and as much as I would love to I cannot in all honesty go into an election knowing that I cannot fulfil the five years of office. So, I want to thank you incredibly for giving me the honour to serve this union. (*Standing ovation*)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Paul. I love your honesty and you have always been that way. You have waited all the week, I know that, but I am proud that you have been my friend, longer and longer than I can remember. When this man tells you he sent a spoof email, you can believe it was bloody true. To take the heat and sadness out of this moment – it is not a sadness; we don't know what the outcome is going to be – I will tell you a story and this story is true.

My husband was a self-employed painter and decorator. Every year I had to do his tax and I used to say to Paul, "I have to close down for a week, no calls, no nothing. I have to do all his tax returns." He said, "Okay." So when the week was up I rang him and said, "I'm back on duty." He said, "Okay." A few days went by, the phone went, and my husband answered it. He said, "This is the tax office." I tell you what, I don't know about do your pants but I was having to clean up the mess afterwards when I looked at my husband sitting on the chair. Eventually, he tumbled it was Kenny and the language was just unbelievable. (*Laughter*) But it did not end there.

About three weeks later Barbara and I, and the branch, had been collecting and raffling and doing everything to buy a guide dog for a young 16-year old, which we did. She was named after us, Maba. We were to present it. The mayor was going to present the award to us that night at his dinner. The phone went and it was the mayor. Well, it was someone. I could hear all this language in the hall and all of a sudden I heard the call, "Mary, bollocks chops wants to talk to you." (*Laughter*) I go out to the hall, "Hello, bollocks chops." He said, "This is the mayor of Brent." (*Laughter*)

So, we were having to go to the dinner that night and he got up, Les, and he said, "Been called some things in my time as a councillor and as a mayor, but never bollocks chops from Mary Turner." I said, "I never said it, it was Denny." That is true.

Paul, we love you and love your family, all of them. You said I do a lot of work. I do it with strength. I have always had you, and your family, and everyone in here to support me. I, too, could not do what I do without the support of my family. My daughter is up there, come to look after me. That is very important. I would like to say thank you to my grandchildren who are doing a rota all this week at home to look after their granddad who has Alzheimer's. (*Applause*)

I thank you because without you we would not have this Congress. You make it. We are only a small, little bubble in it. I am proud to be your President. I am proud of my union. I will always be proud of it. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

Thank you. You have been wonderful. Now, colleagues, we come to the closing ceremony, which is in two parts. We will now have a short slide show with some highlights of Congress. Believe you me, a few might be caught unlucky. The music this year is *Proud* by M People.

Video shown to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Congress, before we move to the next part I would like to thank Melissa and John from our Dublin Office who have arranged transport and hospitality. Thank you very much indeed. You have been wonderful. (*Applause*)

Congress, we now move to the next part of the business. I would like to invite on stage Songs in the Key of D, a local choir who will lead us in the singing of *The Red Flag*. We will be making a donation to the choir later on. All stand, please.

Congress sang *The Red Flag*.

(*Applause, cheers, whistles, as Congress sang, "For he's a jolly good fellow."*)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh dear. Well, PK, if this doesn't tell you how much people want you to stay, nothing ever will. (*Applause*) I now thank this wonderful choir; they have been waiting out there for quite some time. You are a credit to your country and you have wonderful voices. Thank you so much on behalf of the GMB. When you are all in work, please join the GMB! (*Applause*) And we can have a GBM choir. Well done. (*Applause*)

Congress, I wish you and yours a happy rest of the year and particularly a healthy one. I wish you a safe journey, all of you. I hope to see you in Bournemouth next year. Conference is closed.

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