

THE 155TH ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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Held at:

**The ACC Arena,
Kings Dock,
Liverpool Waterfront,
Liverpool L3 4FP**

on:

**Sunday, 10th September 2023,
Monday, 11th September 2023,
Tuesday, 12TH September 2003
and
Wednesday, 13th September 2003.**

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Congress President:

Maria Exall

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**PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO
(Monday, 11th September 2023)**

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SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS:

MONDAY, 11TH SEPTEMBER 2023

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

The President: I call Congress to order. It is 9.30. Please take your seats. *(Video shown)*

Good morning, Congress. Welcome back to the second day. Thank you to Heather Vairo, who has been playing for us so well this morning. *(Applause)*

Before we begin, Congress, I would like to welcome our visitors from the Covid-19 Listening Exercise who have joined us today. *(Applause)* We urge delegates to visit their stand in the exhibition area where you can meet them and have your own stories recorded, which will then be fed into the Inquiry.

Congress, I would now like to invite an inspiring group of NHS healthcare assistants and UNISON members to join me on the stage. *(Applause)* This group of health workers are members of UNISON's Thameside Health and The Wirral Health branches. Last year hundreds of assistants in Thameside launched a campaign for fair pay and fair treatment. This year their colleagues at hospitals in The Wirral have joined their campaign. In fact, they are on strike today. Solidarity! *(Applause)* We will now hear from UNISON reps and healthcare workers, Debbie Thornton and Nicky Stockwell, who are going to tell us all about

their campaign. So, Congress, please give them a warm welcome and show your solidarity with them. *(Applause)*

Debbie Thornton: Good morning, Congress. My name is Debbie Thornton, and this is my first time at a TUC conference. I am a UNISON representative and an NHS healthcare assistant. Many of our healthcare assistants and clinical support workers across the country are undertaking clinical skills above and beyond our job role which are not being recognised or paid for the duties we have performed for years. In the face of austerity and staffing crisis, we are on the badly paid in the NHS and are being relied on more and more to look after our patients. The Government have been saving money by exploiting people at the very bottom of the pay scale to bail out their own mess.

Last year, myself and my colleague, Liz Ballenger, decided to take a stand. We began a campaign to be recognised as being skilled and to be paid for the years we have already put in. With the help of our UNISON branch, we set out to be rebranded from a band 2 to a band 3 and for back pay from April 2018 in line with other in line with other jobs in our region. We organised a collective grievance involving 800 of our colleagues, we marched and we presented a petition signed by hundreds of our colleagues in the trust. They told us to leave the premises but we stayed chanting “Fair Pay for our HCAs”. After years of being ignored, we were finally demanding to be heard. I delivered a speech to our CEO with hundreds of my colleagues cheering me on. She was forced to listen, and hundreds of my colleagues told their stories of hardship to her. Within a week of this meeting, the CEO committed to negotiations. It wasn’t easy but, Congress, we won. *(Applause)*

At the start of this year, the trust confirmed that more than 600 HCAs would receive millions of pounds in back pay, transforming our lives after years of being taken for granted. Our campaign shows what can happen when workers get together in their trade union to fight for what is right. Colleagues across Greater Manchester did the same and seven trusts have now been rebranded and with the back pay from 2018. We are delighted that we won, but there are still thousands of workers across the country who are fighting for justice. To them we say stick together and, remember, you are only asking for what you are owed. Solidarity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Nicky Stockwell: Good morning. I am a clinical support worker at Wirral University Teaching Hospital, and I have come here from our picket line as we fight for pay justice. I have worked in the trust for years and witnessed how my own and my colleagues' responsibilities have grown by taking blood, conducting urine analyses and UCG observations. Some have been doing these duties for over a decade without being paid for it. Without us performing these duties above our pay band, the hospital simply wouldn't function and the people of the Wirral would not have an NHS to rely on. Inspired by people like Debbie and others, we began our campaign to fight for justice with grievances, protests and marches, but our trust simply wouldn't listen. We are just asking for what our colleagues in the region have got; rebinding and backpay from 2018. But Janelle Holmes, our CEO, and her mates on the board seem determined to make an example out of us.

For this reason, last week we became the first workers in the country to go on strike in this issue. Management has said that we are stubborn, that we won't compromise because we rejected two of their offers but, Congress, backpay to April 2018 is the compromise. We won't accept anything less. Last week doctors at the trust settled on a deal that included backpay. There is no limit on how far back for them. Some deals go back 20 years. We congratulate them on that, but when it comes to the lowest paid in the trust, they think they can mess us about and that they can force us into a deal that is less than we deserve. We say to the trust: "We are going nowhere. We will strike again and again until you pay us what we are owed". (*Applause*) This is about more than pay. This is about dignity, recognition and respect. This is about making sure that people who work for the NHS can trust that they will be paid at the right rate for the right job.

So, Congress, please stand with us, share our stories, visit our picket lines and help us in our fight for justice. Our fight is your fight. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you all so much for coming. Obviously, we wish you solidarity and success in your dispute.

Congress, before I take next business, I would like to notify you that Motion 57 on Clarity, safety, and fairness in associate practitioner roles has been withdrawn. We will continue with Section 4 of the General Council Report: Winning a better future for working people, the section on Public Services, from page 46. Can I remind speakers to scan their badge

before they come to the stage and the importance of keeping to time so that we can get through the business of Congress.

Working hours and Burnout

(Including Motions 52, 53 and amendment)

The President: I call Composite 16: Working hours and Burnout. The General Council supports the motion to be moved by the Royal College of Midwives, seconded by the Royal College of Podiatry and support by CSP.

Toni Wood (*Royal College of Midwives*) moved Composite 16. *She said:* Congress, I am representing the RCM and I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)*

I would like to give you a picture of how it feels to be a midwife in 2023. I am a community midwife and a workplace rep for the RCM, and I would echo yesterday's statement made by Susan Tyler that our midwifery service is in crisis. We have a shortage of around 2,500 full-time midwives, and this situation has existed for more than a decade. We have caseloads of an increasingly complex nature requiring more intensive care and our staff on the ground are overrun. The NHS spends 2.8% of its budget on maternity services, and this has fallen year-on-year to its current rate of 2.3%. We need more investment.

Midwifery is a job that I have done for nearly 33 years, and I have never seen the service as stretched as it currently is. I have loved my profession and it is hugely rewarding and fulfilling. However, by its very nature it can be unpredictable. When a woman is about to have her baby, we cannot just leave because the clock dictates that it is the end of our shift. We have always stayed and wanted to stay. Our employers know this and they exploit it.

I can tell you that 89% of respondents to an RCM survey had worked additional hours with a quarter working five or more unpaid hours a week. If this is extrapolated over the whole of the midwifery workforce in England, that adds up to a hundred thousand extra unpaid hours. This cannot go on! Midwives and MSWs are propping up the NHS with unpaid hours. The goodwill of staff has been abused for years. They know we won't leave when someone needs care and it is often at the expense of your own family and health. It's emotional blackmail.

I am a community midwife and I have worked for community for most of my career. We provide an on-call service for women who choose to have their babies at home. This is something that we all love doing. However, we are increasingly being asked to use on-calls to cover the hospital when acuity requires it. This might mean that we have worked all day, got home, prepped for dinner and get called into the unit to cover. We call this "escalation". We normally do around three hours and then the next person is called if the acuity still requires it. Three hours doesn't sound too much, but you have to remember that we have to drive there and drive home, so in actual fact it can be as much as five hours. If there is a clinic the next day and there is no one to cover, you attend. This is forced

overtime. It is detrimental to the health, safety and wellbeing of our members, and it can be unsafe. It is nearly impossible to take compensatory rest. The impact on safe care cannot be underestimated. A flash survey by the RCM showed that 87% of respondents did not feel that their work area was safely staffed and 59% of midwives said that they had seen errors or near-miss incidents. Enquiries of maternity services all highlight staffing pressures and we have to address the shortage.

To address the shortage, we need to tackle retention. We have to be able to keep our dedicated workforce. Please support this composite. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the Royal College of Podiatry to second.

Anwar Ali (*Royal College of Podiatry*) seconded composite 16. He said: I am second this motion and I am concentrating on burnout. Burnout is a serious issue which affects the very backbone of our healthcare system. I stand before you today not only to discuss the serious implications of burnout but to also look at ways that, potentially, we can mitigate and address.

When we look at the most recent NHS staff survey it paints a grim and dire picture. What we see is that only one quarter of the workforce feel there are enough people in roll to carry out the jobs properly. We also see one-third of the staff reporting that they themselves are burnt out. On a daily basis, many staff think they are under unrealistic time pressures and

workloads. They leave their shifts feeling exhausted. When we look at researchers, such as the King's Fund, it reveals that NHS staff are 50% more like to experience chronic stress. Of course, chronic stress is a precursor to burnout. These statistics serve as a stark wake-up call that we must take immediate action.

It is imperative that all workplaces, not just the NHS, develop and implement comprehensive strategies to identify, prevent and address burnout. One crucial aspect would be to establish better communication channels between staff and management. We need to ensure that it is a safe and welcoming environment where employees can approach management and discuss their concerns, and they will feel assured that management will not delay in taking action.

We must see increased investment in staff development and training as well. We need to be able to equip employees with the necessary skills to effectively manage their own workloads, to effectively deliver their role and to have the confidence to have those conversations with management.

By empowering our workforce, we create a resilient and capable workforce. We, therefore, urge the TUC to campaign for all workplaces to readily review their own policies and procedures to reduce the workloads of employees, but also ensure better work-life balance for them. We advocate for the mandatory adoption of burnout prevention strategies in all workplaces. This includes implementing measures to increase access to mental health

support – for example, counselling services – with a focus on early intervention and the prevention of burnout.

Let me finish with this. Let us come together. We can build a brighter future for our workforce where their wellbeing is prioritised and their contribution valued. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy.

Helen Fitzgerald *(Chartered Society of Physiotherapy)*: President and Congress, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is proud to second this motion. Stress, burnout and work-related ill-health are normalised in healthcare. The abnormal has become the normal. In the latest NHS staff survey, over one-third of physiotherapy staff feel burnout from their work, and over 40% have experienced work-related staff in the last year. The causes are clear. They stem from the workforce crisis and under-investment in public services. Only one in five physiotherapy staff reported there being enough staff in their organisation to do their work properly, and only one in three feel able to meet the conflicting demands placed on them in work.

As well as learning from the NHS staff survey, we also have feedback from our workplace representatives of the increasing intensity that is found in the public and private sector of all four nations. However, the impact on healthcare services and patient wellbeing is less

clear. We know that burnout impacts on staff wellbeing . Its effects are insidious. I see this everyday in my workplace. I see staff irritability, cynicism, retention issues and a weariness that I know leaves staff feeling helpless and prevents them from even raising issues of burnout.

But workplace solutions to burnout are available to us all. Every day the CSP reps help their members and employers to identify and seek more constructive ways to address unsustainable workloads and involvement with trade union representatives in decision-making is a vital first step to resolving work-related stress and identifying unsafe conditions. Solutions such as adequate breaks and ensuring that staff have enough time in work to complete patient notes. These help to alleviate pressure and could improve morale and job satisfaction. For safety reps to be empowered to support organisations and implement change, the employers must be compelled to put in partnership-working principles with the trade unions. They must make a clear, top-level commitment as a positive constructive approach to trade union negotiations. Do not allow our staff to burnout. Our staff deserve this and the public deserve this. Congress, please support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the NASUWT.

Ruth Duncan *(NASUWT, The Teachers' Union)* supported Composite 16. *She said:* Chair and Conference, I started my teaching career with a contract that outlined clear and manageable expectations. Then a little bit of goodwill slipped in. Then my goodwill was

seen as additional expectations. These expectations, once goodwill, built up and became unsustainable. I tried to pull back but the pattern was set and so was my guilt when I tried to do less. Does that sound familiar? In extreme situations, to reset we have to leave our chosen school or, worse still, our profession. I learnt too late but I started to pull back. I started to leave on time. Guilt set in but I did it. I used my contractual time for planning, preparation and assessment effectively and took no school work home. Guilt set in but I did it. I constantly brought workload concerns to my head of department. There was no change. Workload continued to increase and eventually my guilt subsided. I am currently suffering from burnout.

I left a school that was rated outstanding but had no work-life balance for teachers. I left with a large number of colleagues. They knew that the only way to pull back and to avoid further burnout was to leave the school and to reset elsewhere. It is time for a limit.

What is most concerning is that I am not alone. Our recent survey about workload highlights that 59% of teachers state that their workload has increased significantly. Forty-six hours are worked in a typical mid-term week, and 14 hours are worked outside of the school day in a typical mid-term week.

From next Monday, NASUWT members across England will be taking action short of strike action instructions which will, inevitably, reduce workload issues for teachers and, ultimately, impact positively on recruitment and retention. It is time for a limit. Teachers are entitled to a work-life balance and we must have a loud voice in every workplace. We need to call out excessive workload issues. We have been forced to pursue industrial action

and ensure that we do not burnout but can flourish because we are taking care of our health and wellbeing. Most importantly, we need to be able to focus fully on the work that we choose to do to teach. It's time for a limit. No more turnout. Please support this composite. Thank you.

The President: I call Unite.

Alan Dobbie (*Unite the Union*) spoke in support of Composite 16. *He said:* Conference, I am speaking on behalf of Unite in support of this composite. Twenty-six years ago this week I started work at the North Middlesex Hospital. Like me, along with other hospital workers, I'm shattered. As a frontline equalities rep, I see the impact of burnout firsthand. I have seen what it does to health workers and what it means for our patients.

Take ambulance drivers. Research shows that more than half face burnout, brought on by excessive work and dwindling support, response times that cannot be met, queuing for hours outside of hospitals, meal breaks becoming a thing of the past and the treadmill of never-ending shifts. It is a brutal process of being devalued and dehumanised, with drivers considered little more than just dots on the screen.

Congress, the human toll is all too real. I can think of no worse indictment than the fact that ambulance drivers are now considered a high-risk group for suicide in health literature. This abuse of our health workers obviously has an impact on patients; ambulance crews who cannot get to patients quickly and are left without backup when they need it; mental health

nurses stretched beyond their abilities to provide basic patient care. This fuels the retention crisis which has plunged the Health Service into a staffing crisis. As mentioned yesterday, it is of little wonder that when Unite surveyed over 3,000 NHS workers we found that 48% of staff facing staff levels regularly reaching the point when patient care is compromised.

Congress, this composite recognises the structural reasons behind burnout. It isn't only about workloads going up. It's about resources, funding and pay going down. We need to care for our carers with burnout strategies and access to mental health support, but we must deal with the causes as well as the symptoms. We need to see fair pay and responsible funding. Support this composite and solidarity to all those in dispute. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, delegates. Composite 16 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Composite 16 was CARRIED.

Our NHS in crisis

The President: Conference, we now move on to Motion 54: Our NHS in crisis. This is to be moved by the BDA, seconded by Royal College of Podiatry. The General Council supports the motion.

Annette Mansell-Green (*BDA, British Dietetic Association*) moved Motion 54: Our NHS in crisis. *She said:* “Crisis” is a word that we are hearing a lot this week, isn’t it? Congress, you may have noticed that our NHS is in crisis. You may have tried to get an appointment with your GP, you may be waiting for an appointment with a consultant, you may have a family member waiting for life-changing or live-saving surgery or other treatment. You may have a child waiting in vain for a cancer appointment. I could go on. You will, at some point, have had an appointment, a stay in hospital or a treatment for an on-going condition. You will have no doubt experienced the care, dedication and skill of the staff both medical and support, allied health professionals like dietitians, physiotherapists, radiographers and podiatrists. You will have said to friends and family how you witnessed them working to provide the best possible care in such appalling conditions. You will have recognised the extreme dedication of NHS staff during the pandemic, whether that was by hitting a saucepan on a Thursday night or by supporting our industrial disputes. The dedicated staff who moved out of family homes to keep their loved ones safe, the dedicated staff who worked back-to-back shifts, sleeping on hospital floors without proper equipment or PPE, the dedicated staff who lost their lives and the dedicated staff now suffering long-Covid and PTSD.

Congress, our NHS was in crisis before the pandemic and it was not prepared for it. Over the last 13 years we have been moving ever closer to the ideological objective of a two-tier Health Service, one for the rich and those with good insurance, and one for the rest of us, under resourced and under pressure. We, as a movement of working people, have a morale duty to fight against this with everything that we have. The NHS doesn’t need reform or modernisation. It needs investment, real investment, in its people. Its estate, its equipment

and its resources. Congress, I don't want to see any more people dying in the back of ambulances waiting for a bed; no more 15-hour waits for people in life-death situations. We need accessible GP services and mental health services that are well-resourced and functioning so people don't end up in police cells when they are in crisis.

Thousands of NHS staff have taken industrial action during the past year with many still doing so. Others like the BDA achieved strike mandates, which took us into pay talks. Yes, the industrial action was about pay, which needs restoring to pre-2010 levels, but it was also a cry of "Enough". People have been too far with many reaching breaking point. Our members don't take industrial action lightly, but with pay still at below inflation levels, many are deciding to leave the NHS for more pay and less stress. There is a recruitment and retention crisis in the NHS with vacancy levels running at around 112,000 now, and if this trend continues, Congress, they are predicted to rise to around half-a-million by 2036. We have historically high leaving rates with many taking retirement earlier than planned, so you can see why the gloves had to come off. We have made some progress this year but we need more and we will continue to fight for the pay and recognition that our members rightly deserve.

The long-awaited Workforce Long-Term Plan was finally published in early June, and health unions gave it a cautious welcome but it lacks detail and information about how we fund it. We need a joined-up strategy on prevention, a reduction of chronic illness, which needs investment in public health, primary and community care and a fully-funded National Care Service. We need a planned attack on the inequalities of health. Frankly, Comrades, we

need a Government that places real value on a Health Service, which is universal, equitable, high quality and free at the point of delivery. There is no place for the market in health care. It is immoral. *(Applause)* Our NHS is in crisis and its very existence is under threat. There can be no more reform agendas, no tinkering and re-arranging the deck chairs, no more grand announcements of 40 new hospitals that never materialised or thousands of new doctors and nurses. We want no more political football with our NHS. It is too precious for that. We need the health of our nation and those who look after us to be a top priority with a sense of real urgency. After all, Congress, when your Health Service is broken, your economy and, ultimately, your society is broken. I move. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the Royal College of Podiatry to second.

Anwar Ali (*Royal College of Podiatry*) spoke in support of the Motion moved by the BDA: Our NHS in crisis. *He said:* The NHS is a pillar of our society, and it is currently grappling with the immense challenges which threaten its very ability to provide the quality care which our citizens and patients deserve. It is crucial that we shed light on matters like this. We need to work together to find sustainable solutions as well. First and foremost, we must acknowledge the incredible dedication of our NHS staff. We have doctors, nurses, paramedics, dietitians, podiatrists, and so many countless frontline healthcare workers who have sacrificed their own wellbeing to care for others. They have faced unprecedented pressures, stretched resources, exhausting workloads, yet they have persevered and for that we owe them our deepest gratitude. We cannot ignore these systematic issues which plague our NHS; years of under-funding, budget cuts and staff shortages. They have pushed our NHS to the brink. Waiting

times have sky-rocketed. That puts patients' lives at risk unnecessarily. Essential services have been cut, or at least strained massively, and the morale of our healthcare workers is, understandably, dwindling. This crisis isn't a mere abstract concept. It is a reality which affects millions of people. In the light of these challenges, we must demand action from the Government. Adequate funding is the lifeline of any healthcare service and it is time we had a substantial investment in the NHS. We need increased resources to address the staffing crisis, to provide the necessary training and support and to ensure that our hospitals and clinics have the equipment and facilities they need to deliver effective care. Our NHS should be driven by patient care, not by profit margins. We must protect the NHS and ensure it remains publicly funded and a publicly-provided service, accessible to all, regardless of your socio-economic background. Furthermore, we must recognise the importance of prevention, by investing in preventative measures, such as access to mental health support. We can alleviate the strain on our hospitals and improve the overall wellbeing of the population. It is time to shift focus from a reactive approach. We must take a pro-active one and one that prioritises early intervention. We advocate for the long-term sustainability and improvement of the NHS, not just for ourselves but for future generations. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: Okay, Congress. Motion 54 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 54 was CARRIED.

Making midwifery a career accessible to all

The President: I call Motion 55: Making midwifery a career accessible to all, to be moved by the RCM and the General Council supports, to be seconded by the NEU.

Keelie Barrett (*Royal College of Midwives*) moved Motion 55: Making midwifery a career accessible to all. *She said:* "Making midwifery a career accessible to all", what does that mean in reality. Firstly, it means understanding what a career of midwifery and maternity work means. Currently, in England alone we are at least 2,500 midwives short, and only 7% of midwives who responded to the NHS staff survey in 2022 said that there were enough staff in their organisations in order to deliver effective care. In recent times there has been a huge drop in the number of applications to study midwifery, and the latest UCAS figures show that applications to study midwifery in the UK has dropped by a fifth. Although student numbers are still around the pre-pandemic levels, there continues to be a year-on-year decline. We need to invest in home-grown talent. Whilst international recruitment has proved beneficial and the international midwifery workforce has made an invaluable contribution, an over-reliance on this situation risks being unsustainable and, indeed, unethical, depleting other countries of good midwifery care.

We need to ensure that midwifery students also have financial support. Since the abolishment of the bursary in 2017, it is evidence that applications to the midwifery degree, particularly for mature students and those with caring responsibilities, have fallen. Over the

last decade the average number of students per institution leaving voluntarily and without qualification has risen from nine per institution to 14.9. While there are many reasons for student attrition, the number of students leaving highlights the need for support services such as academic and placement accommodation, as well as mental-health counselling. Financial aid would help to attract and keep student midwives on courses. This is where midwifery apprenticeships could fit in.

Health Education England developed the Registered Midwife Degree Apprenticeship and those recruited on to those programmes were, predominantly, existing maternity support workers. This route has enabled them to continue being paid by their trusts while they study, thus eliminating the financial barrier to training. While this degree apprenticeship provides an opportunity to 'earn while you learn', it also enables those maternity support workers with a real desire to become midwives to bring the knowledge, skills and experience that they have gained with them on their career journey. Experienced maternity support workers who undertake midwifery training, would then have a wonderful foundation of knowledge, clinical skill and ability as well as first-hand working knowledge of what it is like to be working in the NHS.

Apprentices qualify with the same NMC registration and degree outcome as any other midwifery student. Since the launch of these apprenticeships, they have evaluated positively, demonstrating improved retention and virtually zero attrition rates. It is a value to the trusts and the health boards as local, mature employees are more likely to stay with these trusts once they have qualified from MSW to midwife. They also have a good understanding of what

it is to be a midwife and what it is to work in the NHS before they begin the course, so they are more likely to stay both as an apprentice on the midwifery programme and once they have qualified.

In order to be able to deliver the NHS Workforce Plan and make midwifery apprenticeships a feasible long-term training option, we also need to address another crisis, which is the Midwifery Educator Workforce Crisis. With an existing and widespread shortage of midwifery educators, an RCM survey in 2020 told us that 23% of educators wanted to leave their organisation as soon as possible because they did not have enough staff to do their job properly. Universities must also take steps to attract and retain high-quality midwifery educators by offering competitive salaries. With an average starting pay for a lecturer being £34,308, and yet midwives start from £35,392. The more experience the clinical midwife, the more the disparity of this increases, meaning that many skilled practitioners do not consider going into midwifery education as a viable career pathway.

The President: Time, delegate, please.

Keelie Barrett: In summary, investing in midwifery education and in midwifery apprenticeships is good for universities, NHS organisations, as well as a viable path to maternity support workers for their career progression. Please support. *(Applause)*

Emma Brady (*National Education Union*) seconded Motion 55. Congress, I am proud to be seconding Motion 55. When a young person, post-16, who I teach aspires to be a midwife, I have to manage their expectation, not because of their enthusiasm, not because of their interest, skills or abilities, but due to the lack of university places. Yes, the number of applicants have declined but so have the number of places. The University of East Anglia has only 45 places for midwives, and still the number of applicants far outstrips the number of places that are available. We drastically need more midwives. We, therefore, need more routes into midwifery. Alternative routes and need but with investment, and investment in apprenticeships is a way that we can address this issue. But, unfortunately, the situation is likely to get worse.

The Government are in the process of defunding the majority of Btec qualifications by 2025. Many students study a variety of vocational qualifications alongside traditional A Levels. Withdrawing funding for the Btecs and applied A Levels can strangle the recruitment path for healthcare, science and midwifery degrees still further, and also those who choose to go into midwifery later through an apprenticeship route, or at post-16 entering that route after their vocational qualifications. This will further increase the inequality of opportunity for students from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds, who are more likely to study Btec qualifications.

In 2021 one-third of all qualifications held by those who were accepted on to healthcare, science and midwifery degree courses were Btec qualifications. The Government are replacing Btecs with T Levels, the new gold-standard qualifications. The T Levels are equivalent to three

A Levels and are to replace the majority of the Bets by 2025, but many schools do not have the capacity to offer these qualifications. They need increased funding, they need increased equipment and they need increased specialist staff. There is a real concern that these T Levels are not available equally across the country, further reducing the opportunities of students and the chances to enter the midwifery profession. T Levels also require 20% industrial input – that is 450 hours, about 45 days. Have you ever tried to get a 16 year-old to undertake one week's work experience? It's tricky. Just imagine trying to get 450 hours! Consequently, the drop-out rates for T Levels are 33%. The Government needs to fund midwifery apprenticeships and preserve Bec funding. Congress, please support. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: Congress, Motion 55 is before you. Will all of those in favour, please show?

All those against? That is carried.

Motion 55 was CARRIED.

Measures to increase medical students

The President: We now come to Motion 56: Measures to increase medical students. Can HCSA and Unite come to the front. The General Council supports the motion, and I will call Christina Manea to explain the position on behalf of the GC once it has been moved and seconded.

Martin Bond (*Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) moved Motion 56. *He said:*

We represent doctors in the HCSA in every way, including medical students. The medical profession has been calling out for investment in the workforce for decades. Our junior doctors are currently in dispute over pay and we will soon be balloting senior doctors. The resentment our members feel after a decade of pay cuts goes hand-in-hand with being asked to do even more every day to cover unfilled vacancies. We welcome the publication of the NHS Workforce Planning earlier this year. This is the first ever plan of its kind, yet the NHS has been in existence for 75 years without such a plan, and that goes somewhere to explaining the mess we are in.

Unfilled vacancies, inadequate systems in funding gaps and very little future planning happens on a daily basis. The end result is a workforce that is burnt out, run down and ready to walk. Congress, the service cannot be must not be on overtime. Goodwill only goes so far, as we have seen in the rail industry recently. New measures cited to boost the medical workforce includes shortening the medical degrees, medical internships and the apprenticeship model. These initiatives have laudable intentions but they need serious thought and serious planning. We deserve more than manifesto pledges and gimmicks.

Patient safety must be the key. Such schemes cannot be rushed through. They must be implemented carefully. Unions have to be involved at every step. The commitment to improve medical school places is also commendable, but we need to hold NHS England to

account for the detail. A number of questions arise and we must lobby decision-makers with them. Firstly, an increase in medical students must go hand-in-hand with increased training places. As medical students become doctors, will there be jobs for them to graduate into. Every year final-year medical students and doctors in training witness a last-minute scramble to secure training places. This causes a great deal of stress and anxiety as it could be anywhere in the country. We need proper planning to ease the burden.

Secondly, we need the detailed specialisms, as intended, for our new medical students to graduate into. The Workplace Plan is not be silenced on this detail. What are the patient needs of the future and how will the new medical students be deployed to reach these standards? We haven't even mentioned AI.

Finally, Congress, we must ask who will train the future doctors? This question is pertinent given the Workforce Plan Project for consulting grades. Recruitment without retention is a pointless exercise. New doctors will need mentors, trainers and leaders to support their careers. Doctors and all their colleagues must be recognised as the most precious resource that the NHS has. For those reasons, and critically for the future of the NHS, I call on Congress to back this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Unite to second. I am calling UNISON down in case they wish to speak.

Sarah Carpenter (*Unite*) seconded Motion 56 on behalf of Unite the Union. *She said:* Congress, as our Health Service buckles in the face of chronic overwork, burnout and the crisis of staffing levels, doctors in Unite will, of course, welcome commitments to double medical school places. But how does a commitment turn into a reality? Do the Government close their eyes and wish really hard, or perhaps they should have detailed plans about training places and retaining senior doctors to support that education before they even think about raising the student numbers. Should they, maybe, have a clear understanding of the shortage specialties, including general practice, and where to direct these extra professionals?

To paraphrase a great comedian, the Government are saying some of the right words but not necessarily in the right order. The quality of that training is such a cause for concern. Away from health, we have seen the growth in apprenticeships which often aren't worthy of that name. The complete lack of detail in the NHS Workforce Plan means we have no reason to be confident that new and untested internships or apprenticeships will be any better. It is alarming that the new internships will fast-track students into hospitals, cutting down the current five or six-year medical degree, which is already considered a fast pace.

Our health members need reinforcements and they need them now. Yet we cannot and we must not plug the staffing gaps with under-trained and under-prepared students who are rushed onto those front lines. They deserve better and we, as patients, deserve better.

Everyone working in healthcare has a duty to put patients first and to protect their safety. This motion calls on us to join health workers as they stand up for patient safety, and we should not think twice about doing just that. So, Congress, I urge you to support this motion.

(Applause)

The President: I call Christina Manea from the General Council to give an explanation.

Christina Manea (General Council): I am speaking on behalf of the General Council. *She said:* The General Council supports this motion with this explanation. The motion expresses concern about the introduction of new routes into medicine, such as internships for apprenticeships. However, new initiatives like this are in line with the broader TUC policy on widening participation and access. The General Council is clear that these must be properly regulated, backed up by adequate funding and a plan to ensure that there is the requisite amount of skilled educators, with time and resources to provide high-quality training. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

The President: UNISON.

Linda Hobson (UNISON). *She said:* Congress, we all know that more than a decade of Tory rule has left our Health Service in crisis. The NHS estate is in a mess. We have crumbling buildings, staff are struggling with outdated equipment. Thirteen years of under-funding and

damaging market initiatives has affected patient care. Services are under immense pressure. Waiting lists have spiralled out of control and there are growing concerns over quality and safety. Congress, the core of many of these problems lies on the back of understaffing. Proper workforce planning was, effectively, abandoned by the Tories 10 years ago, and now the chickens have well and truly come home to roost. There are more than 100,000 vacancies in the English NHS and we now have gone a whole year with more than 40,000 nursing vacancies. As a registered nurse and the chair of the staff side in an acute hospital in the north-east, I can tell you that these gaps make a real difference in our hospitals and in our community services. So it is absolutely crucial that we get more people into the NHS, but this does not and should not mean providing care on the cheap. What it does mean is opening up new ways of entering the healthcare workforce. UNISON is very supportive of plans to boost the take up of apprenticeships in the NHS in the north, and there is good evidence to back this up. For example, the attrition rate is much lower than for other staff. Apprentices are more likely to stay working in their local health economy, boosting the levelling-up agenda. So UNISON is pleased that the General Council is reaffirming its support for the use of apprentices, including in the NHS. As Motion 56 points out, there are good reasons to be sceptical about the recent NHS Workforce Plan, and the call to lobby for rigorous workforce planning is one that we can all get behind. But, Congress, while Motion 56 is mainly concerned with medical apprentices, it is important that we send out a message that apprentices, in general, are welcome in our NHS. More than that, apprentices are badly needed. Thank you, Congress. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, Motion 56 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 56 was CARRIED.

Education in the UK

(Including Motion 58 and amendments and 59 and amendment)

The President : Congress, I call Composite 17: Education in the UK, to be moved by NAHT, seconded by Community and the General Council supports the composite.

Judith Stott (*NAHT, National Association of Head Teachers*) moved Composite Motion 17.

She said: There should be no higher priority in this society than the education of its children, but actually in the last decade we have seen nothing short of, at best, casual indifference, and at worse outright contempt by the Government when it comes to our schools. We have become used to Prime Ministers making impassioned speeches about the importance of education, only for their warm words to be quickly betrayed by their actions. The pandemic provided us with a perfect example of this. We were promised that no stone would be left unturned in the efforts to help children recover their lost learning, but when the Government's own Minister put forward his plan, it was immediately rejected as being far too

expensive. What value does it put on education when billions of pounds can be squandered on unusable PPE but schools have to make do with a fraction of what they need?

If this Government really cared about education, as it claims to, why has it implemented an almost unprecedented 13-year freeze on funding? Why has it overseen one of the biggest recruitment and retention crises we have ever faced, and why has it allowed our schools to fall into a state of utter disrepair?

There can be no better illustration of the neglect shown towards education over the last decade than the events of the last few weeks. We now live in a country where school leaders are having to close their schools because we cannot trust that the roofs won't fall in? How has it come to this? Sadly, we know too well how we have arrived at this situation. This was not unforeseeable. It did not come out of the blue. This is the inevitable consequence of the decisions taken by Government during the past 13 years. There is a wonderful line in the American TV programme, *The West Wing*, where one of the characters says to the President: "Education is the silver bullet. Education is everything. We don't need little changes. We need gigantic, monumental changes. Schools should be palaces". But what do we have here in the UK. We have children being taught not in palaces but in Porta Cabins and sheds. We desperately need a government that is prepared to match our ambitions for children that will give us the tools and resources we need to deliver the education that this generation of children so desperately need and deserve.

We call on all political parties to start valuing education and the teaching profession once again, and to make education central to their manifesto. Education really is closest thing we have to a silver bullet and we need a government that believes that just as much as we do. Please support Composite 17. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: To be seconded by Community and NEU, IES and NASUWT have indicated that they want to speak on the motion.

Linda Standring *(Community Union, Education Sector)* very pleased to be seconding this composite motion on Education in the UK. This is my first time speaking at Congress. *(Applause)*

Congress, as we have already heard, we face a crisis. The foundation of our education system is crumbling away. I am not speaking of the unsafe concrete crumbling away in many of our state school buildings. I am speaking about our teachers, those who commit themselves to the service of all of us, raising and teaching the next generation all across this country, the real foundation of our education system. Under-paid, under-valued, overworked and overlooked. It's another symptom of a Tory Government which has failed to invest in education and which has run out of the ideas and energy needed to govern.

In 2019 they pledged to drive down unnecessary workload pressures and to lift the burden placed on teachers. Nearly five years later, where are we? More than half of our teachers

feel that their workload is unacceptable. Two-thirds of our teachers spend the majority of their time on work other than teaching. As one-in-five teachers report working an average week of over 60 hours, this is the equivalent of five 12-hour days every week. Congress, our teachers face an unmanageable workload and many are burning out. Our education system is being held together by the goodwill and extra commitment of teaching staff. But continuing like this isn't an option. It's damaging the health of our teachers and the prospects of our children and students.

The Government's own report shows that the majority of teachers feel that their work negatively impacts their mental health. This isn't sustainable. Congress, it is not right. Last year nearly 10% of the entire teaching workforce in state schools chose to resign; 40,000 teachers gone! Right now, currently, around a quarter of all teaching staff say they are considering leaving the profession in the next 12 months.

Congress, we haven't faced a recruitment and retention crisis this bad since the 1940s. That's why this motion calls on us to work in partnership together. If we want our children and students to do well, if we want our country to do well, we need to invest in our teachers and our support staff supporting our teachers and young people. Delegates, please support this composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Niamh Sweeney *(National Education Union)* spoke in support of Composite 17. *She said:*

Working in education is a rewarding and demanding job. It is both physically and emotionally demanding with workload levels unsustainably high and intensive. 44,000 teachers or 9% of the profession left before retirement last year, and 4,000 school leaders. This means we have one of the youngest and inexperienced teaching professions in Europe. One-in-four head teachers said they have already made cuts to subject provision because they simply can't recruit specialists for music, DT, art, drama and IT. They are becoming the privilege of the rich. Expecting teachers to teach subjects for which they are not qualified also adds to teacher and leader stress and, of course, it is children and young people who bear the brunt of this failure. One-in-eight maths lessons are taught by a teacher not qualified in the subject; a Year 7 pupil having 22 temporary English teachers, with classes of 60/70 being taught in the hall. Job quality is worse in schools where staff are expecting a school inspection and in schools located in areas of high social deprivation. Schools are experiencing cuts to social care, cuts to support services, cuts to STEMs funding, cuts to support staff roles and lack of specialist support for mental health all add to workload.

Teachers are making the only change open to them; to leave the profession or go part-time. We have part-time members working over 35 hours a week. 76% of graduates are women, working full-time hours being paid part-time. Labour shortages need to be addressed. This includes going beyond pay. Career development and flexible working need to be taken into account.

However, the school inspection regime must be reformed beyond all recognition. Currently the fear of Ofsted and being inspection ready is associated with an acute deterioration in the

wellbeing and health of education professionals, too often with career-ending or tragic consequences. More attention must be given to reducing the intensity of each working hour, not just the number of hours worked.

The National Education Union has always been clear. It will stand up and speak out for children's right to high quality education. NEU members are strong, organised and determined. Working with our sister unions, NEU members will organise in their workplaces and across the country to send a clear message to politicians, whether they be governments in power or governments in waiting. They must prove to the profession, to parents and to children that they value education and value educators, and give teachers the professional respect they deserve. Please support. *(Applause)*

Andrea Bradley (*EIS, Educational Institute of Scotland*) spoke in support of Composite 17. *She said:* Colleagues, to some extent devolution has protected the status of education north of the border. We have been pretty successful in getting education into political party manifestos at least. When former First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, took office, she declared education her top priority and asked to be judged on her record of closing the poverty-related attainment gap. That's a double-edged sword for the teaching profession. On the one hand, her declaration signalled the importance of education to the Government, and on the other hand it set us up for a tough, sometimes dirty, game of political football that teachers and kids could never win.

Before Ms Sturgeon stood down as FM earlier this year, the EIS was clear that her Government was falling short on her promise. Teachers led by the EIS were forced to take their first strike action on pay since the Thatcher era, but just as they won against Thatcher, we fought hard to win a 14.6% cumulative pay rise after sustained attacks and strike action by our members. *(Applause)* Since then, the *Stand Up For Quality Education* campaign is designed to leverage better spending on education to reduce teacher workloads. Properly-funded initial support needs provision and tackling violent, aggressive and distressed young people in our schools, because when the Government was under-spending on education, teachers go on and on working, massively subsidising our education system with unpaid work.

Right now, the vast majority of teachers in Scotland are working the equivalent of a day a week beyond their contracted hours every single week. The Scottish Government promised when elected a reduction in teachers' class contact time and, at best, they are dragging their heels on that promise. When we continue to underfund additional support for these provisions, when 34% of young people in Scottish schools are recognised as having additional needs, they are being let down badly. Whilst this underfunding of education continues, we will see violence, aggressive and distressed behaviour driven by poverty, deprivation and trauma becoming more and more of an issue. Furthermore, because our class sizes are still too big, despite another manifesto promise to start reducing them, making schools the best places that our children need to be in for our young people to learn and to keep teachers and support staff safe in their work. Despite another manifesto promise to increase teacher numbers over this Parliamentary term, Scotland has seen teacher numbers fall this year. 20% of teachers north of the border are on temporary contracts, thousands limping from one

short-term contract to another, if they are lucky, and those who are not able to afford to live like that have left teaching. We have survey data that says 51% of teachers have assured that they will stay in the profession for the next five years. Only 18% said that they would recommend teaching as a good career option. This should be a clear warning to the Scottish Government that they must keep their manifesto promises. Investment in education is a vital public service. It's an absolute imperative to invest in it properly. Young people deserve it and the whole society depends on it. That's why EIS is standing up for quality education. Solidarity with our sister unions and the rest of the UK which is committed to do the same. Please support. *(Applause)*

Rashida Din (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke in favour of Composite 17. *She said:* Congress, I am pleased to see the amendment incorporated. We thank Community and NAHT for bringing this motion. We must move forward by supporting industrial action and campaigning to secure a national contractual limit on working time for teachers and head teachers. We have cracks in our school ceilings, cracks in our education system and cracks in our public services, all due to under-value and the funding of public services. This cannot continue.

The concept of work-life balance is a dream. The World Health Organisation define this not as 50/50 but as meeting your deadlines at work, having enough time to sleep properly and eat well and not worrying about work when you are at home. This is not what is happening. We, as a profession, are not afforded this right and we have seen what it has done to our fellow

teachers and friends. One-in-five new teachers are leaving the professions after the first two years. What a retention crisis we have.

This Government need to wake up to this fact, and commit to making improvements to the morale and health of its public sector workers, including teachers. Gillian Keegan, listen up. I am not sure if you are back from your £300,000 summer home but you need to listen to us. Nearly one-in-five teachers work at least 60 hours a week. Two-thirds of teachers say they spend more than half their time on tasks other than teaching. Let me give you an example in context. Enoch Powell, in his *Rivers of Blood* speech, allowed the emergence of the National Front as a mainstream ideology, a message which is echoed by this Tory Government today.

I live in Luton, and I am telling you right now that the National Front is trying to march down our streets, and our teachers are trying to impart values to our young people!

The NASUWT's industrial action is live. We have a valid mandate. Our time limit for a campaign begins on 18th September and, make no mistake, we will escalate to secure a national contractual limit on the working day. We have just had success in Jersey. The Government has folded to us. We have had success in Glasgow and we will have success in England.

We move forward as a teachers' union not by asking but by action, alongside our sister unions, UCU, NAHT and NEU, alongside all the unions and workers fighting for a just, social and

equitable – I want to underline that word because I am a teacher – “an equitable transition”. In the word of Martin Luther King, “We are not worth what we shall be but we are growing towards it”. Action not words. Shoulder-to-shoulder, Conference. Solidarity. Please support this composite. *(Applause)*

Nina Doran (*UCU, University and College Union*) spoke in support of the composite. *She said:* Congress, I am a first-time delegate. *(Applause)* I am here to speak to you about colleges. We have heard so far about all the devastating impacts on our public sector, on our jobs, our services and infrastructures. Unfortunately, the situation in our FE colleges has been absolutely wretched. In a decade, the sector has seen 25,000 job cuts, a 30% cut in pay and cuts to over one million adult education places.

You see, in FE they don't just come for pay and they don't just come for jobs but they come for both. It is a historical scandal. In Liverpool they didn't just stop at pay and they didn't just stop at jobs. They also came for our terms and our contracts. Yet the student numbers remain the same and the employers have cut the time for courses. So when you cut the time for courses, you can the time spent with the students. The students are packed into the classroom. Just to keep up, teachers have to teach through their lunch breaks, they work in the evenings and they work during the weekends. It's a familiar story. Survey after survey prove this.

The other big threat is to the standards of our education and what you and I may have experienced a few decades ago has been diminished, and it's your kids, your grandkids and adults returning to education who will receive a weakened quality of education. But going to college tells a story and it is a powerful story of turning your life around. It's a story for young people and adults of returning to learn, of courage to start something new, of ambition, of hope, adults finally fulfilling their dreams and young people moving on with their journeys. It is those dreams and those journeys that are under threat. As many delegates have said, the Tories don't send their kids to colleges, do they? It's the communities, so we need to kick out the capitalists who are in our colleges. They treat the colleges like their own personal fiefdoms while principals' has rocketed. Sorry: CEO pay has rocketed. When they sit across the table from the unions decrying the policy of the funding, and then they sit on reserves unashamedly. We all know that a proper education is good for rebuilding the economy, and we know that they are ensuring the knowledge and skills of the future, so where are we in our fightback. So we started with local action, we went on to regional action, we have got nationally co-ordinated action, and Liverpool's in there all along.

So like everyone we are fighting. It is infectious across our sectors because we are all striking at the same time. I have seen how union membership grows during action. Solidarity to all. The unions are taking action; UCU, NAHT, NEU and EIS we are fighting back. The TUC supports this motion Let's fight back together. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, Composite 17 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show?

All those against. That is carried.

Composite 17 was CARRIED.

Education Support Services

(Including Motion 60 and amendment and 61)

The President: I call paragraph 4.4 and Composite 18: Education Support Services. The General Council supports the composite, to be moved by NAHT, seconded by AEP, the Association of Educational Psychologists.

Angi Gibson (NAHT) moved Composite 18. *She said:* Conference, I am a serving head teacher and here on behalf of NAHT. I am delighted to be moving Composite 18.

The word “crisis” is often overused, but when it comes to supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities, I can promise you that it is exactly what we are facing in our schools right now. In fact, I fear we are now in danger of going beyond crisis point. Put simply, despite the incredible efforts of dedicated professionals up and down the country, the current system is failing too many children and their families. As a serving head teacher in the north-east of England, I see this first hand every single day. In my school, we are deeply committed to meeting the needs of children with special needs and providing them with the

best education possible, but the chronic and sustained under-investment in special needs provision by Government is making the task unbelievably difficult, and in some cases almost impossible. Budget cuts mean we can no longer provide the support we know these children need and deserve.

For example, we are having to cut the number of teaching assistants, the very people that many children with additional needs rely on, and we can no longer afford the pastoral workers that play a vital role in so many children's lives. The thresholds for getting much needed additional help from local authorities gets higher and higher each year as they themselves are desperately trying to pay off the large high-needs budget deficits that they are currently running.

Congress, I can tell you that there is nothing more heartbreaking as a headteacher than not being able to put in place the support a child needs because you simply cannot afford to do it. In knowing what a child needs but not being able to provide it for them, with the right specialist support in place, many children with additional needs can make fantastic progress. I have seen it with my own eyes, but that support that we used to rely on simply isn't there any more. Waiting for over a year for speech and language therapy has become the norm, and educational psychologists are almost impossible to find. This is creating an increasing inequitable system where parents who can afford it are forced to pay for private specialists, whilst the other children are simply left to sit on a waiting list. It is simply not good enough.

The Government have recently released a new SEND improvement plan, and whilst it contains lofty ambitions and even some sensible ideas, it comes without a single additional pound in extra funding. Without a firm commitment to a properly needs-led system with sufficient funding, it is hard to see this latest plan being the solution we so desperately need. The Government say it will take time for its latest plan to have an impact. Well, I'm here to tell you that we don't have that time and nor do any of the children that we serve.

If a Government is to be judged by how it treats the most vulnerable in society, then it is clear to me that this Government is failing and has been failing for some time. Our schools deserve better and, more importantly, children with special needs and disabilities deserve better. Please support composite 18. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call AEP to second. GMB will be supporting, and NASUWT, NEU and EIS come to the front. AEP.

Lynn Mackey (*Association of Educational Psychologists*) spoke in favour of composite 18. *She said:* Congress, I am a first-time speaker at this conference. *(Applause)* Every year tens of thousands of children, young people and their families benefit from the help offered by an educational psychologist. Our members assess need, collaborate with others to devise interventions, offer consultation and advice, provide therapeutic support, engage in strategic planning and respond to critical incidents. These are just some of the ways that Eps support

inclusion, address the developmental, learning and well-being challenges and seek to promote social justice.

EP services are vital , yet like other public services, after years of financial constraint, under-development in the profession and erosion of pay, recruitment and retention problems are widespread. This is occurring at a time of rising demand due to political policies, under-strain capitalism and corporate greed, and a broken education system intensifying mental distress and the attainment gap. We know the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis has led to greater immediate need. We also know that years of austerity has had longer-term impact due to the erosion of preventative services and direct help for young children and their families. No amount of awareness raising or identification – let’s face it, educators already know which children are struggling – can make up the shortfall in resources and provision, including specialist help. An explosion in AP workloads means that children and young people are waiting too long to be seen by Eps or, worse, do not get to see one at all.

Because of workload and financial pressures, far too many EPs are leaving the local authority workforce or either leaving the profession altogether or moving to local and private work. Our members tell us that they feel a risk of falling short of professional and ethical standards, being disciplined by regulatory bodies when directed to deliver efficiencies in a way that saves time and money. This clear short-term solution and efficiencies start up and intensify problems for the future. With private support for private schools, milking their charitable status and robbing the public purse to protect the privileges for the chosen few is an insult.

It's equivalent to the rich and powerful throwing scraps from their table after they have had a banquet. We require a fairer redistribution of money to invest in education for the many, and bring an end to the divisive ideology of meritocracy based on a limited notion of what constitutes success.

The President: Time delegate, please.

Lynn Mackey: After a decade in which real term pay for EPs has fallen this year, we ask for a fair pay rise to help with recruitment and retention. Today we announce the results of our ballot and our members have spoken clearly. 86% have voted "Yes" to industrial action. *(Applause)* Our employees, in anticipating this result, I understand will be placing a new deal on the table. Actually, it will be by lunchtime today. Please support the composite motion.

(Applause)

Trudi Tew (GMB) spoke in support of the composite motion. *She said:* I thank NAHT for moving the motion and for accepting our amendment. *(Applause)*

I have much to say and little time to say it, so please pin back your ears. I speak on this motion from my heart. I was a member of school support staff. My salary did not recognise the responsibility I took and the part I played in the jigsaw of all the school roles that all contribute to and are essential to the delivery of an inclusive education for our children. Now

I support them as their union rep. I am old. I remember when bored mums got pin-money jobs in schools to help with reading and tidying up. No formal qualifications needed, no phonics, and no numerous policies to deal with. I could go on. Now support staff roles are skilled jobs with far greater responsibility. It's one-to-one in class work, safeguarding and more, but recognition hasn't evolved with the roles.

All school support staff are shockingly under paid. On average, teaching assistants are paid £14,000 a year. I have had members crying telling me they have to leave school to earn a higher hourly rate stacking shelves in a supermarket. No disrespect meant. Others work two or three jobs, asking "Why am I paid more per hour to serve a pint in a pub on a Saturday night than I am for using my qualifications and experience working with SEND children?" Two-thirds of GMB members in schools say they cannot afford basic necessities for their own families and 40% say that they have or would be using a food bank. I volunteer. I've seen them there. Two-thirds of NAHT members said last year that they were forced to cut to TA posts or hours. There is nowhere else to cut from.

Congress, the SEND system is in crisis. The criteria for obtaining individual child-specific funding for SEND support has become harder and harder to satisfy. Did you know that 96% of local authority EHCP awards are overturned at tribunal? In addition, schools notional SEND budgets are increasingly having to be used for ordinary services, like energy. The needs and numbers of SEND children in mainstream schools have increased and behaviours are more challenging than ever before. Head teachers tell us that they can't fill their support staff vacancies. If we don't act, the future may be a teacher in a class with 30 children of hugely

varied abilities and no one else. You can work out the impact of this on the children, the teachers and the outcome. School support staff are the hidden professionals of our education system. They are essential to the delivery of an inclusive education.

GMB is proud, and I am hugely proud, to represent them. Congress, it is time that all education workers are valued appropriately and get the recognition that they deserve. Chocolates from parents at Christmas is lovely but it doesn't pay the gas bill. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Colleagues, before I invite NASUWT to come and speak on this motion, we are running slightly ahead of business and we will be able to take motion 31 earlier on the agenda. So unions involved in that be prepared. NASUWT.

Harold Gurdon (*NASUWT*) spoke in support of Composite 18. *He said:* Conference, I am a National Executive member for Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The NASUWT welcomes any meaningful discussions around special education needs and disability. We recognise how important it is to provide the right framework for high-quality training focused on an agenda and reporting. It is important that it is clear and transparent and follows the code of practice which is the statutory guidance which public bodies must heed in undertaking their functions. The NASUWT believes that all sectors should have sufficient time and support to enable them to undertake their roles and responsibilities. The big 2023 question, carried out on behalf of the NASUWT, found that 96.42% of those questions said that the pupils who they teach have

mental health challenges, and only 10.9% agreed that appropriate support is available to help them address their mental health issues. We would argue that that includes ensuring that SENCOs have dedicated time to complete the national award within the appropriate timescale. Further to this, sufficient time to complete the award should ensure the right to a reasonable work-life balance, the requirement under the contract provisions of the STBCD.

The NASUWT members reported to us that they feel they decade of austerity has affected the delivery of SEND services. One representative quote from text responses stated that SEND-needed schools have risen exponentially and support from the local authority cannot cope and support schools properly.

Our members have shared further concerns around cuts in provision, particularly mainstream schools. They have suffered years of under-investment. This has resulted in a failure to provide the necessary support for students with identified needs. Also proper consideration should be given regarding age-related expectations and pupils with protected characteristics. Our member have made it clear that the current system is not working for this cohort, and we need a system that is efficient, equitable and transparent. This should be with full and meaningful consultation. Members have reported many long delays in waiting for support to meet the needs of young people with communication, interaction, cognition and learning difficulties, including those with social, emotional and mental health issues and those with sensory or physical disabilities. This especially relates to those waiting for a CAMS and the award of an EHCP.

The NASUWT believes that all political parties should engage further with trade unions and stakeholders to explore ways to counter the existing local authority deficit. This would help to stabilise the service provided across all local authorities, in particular, unitary authorities. The outcomes are clear from the National Commission Report that the robust package of CPD is essential and integral to this regular and careful sequence training. The NASUWT feels that any future Government should provide funding for specialist provision across local authorities, not defined by boundaries. Further concerns have been raised by members that due to financial pressures not enough resources have been provided to educational settings. Serious workload issues are part of this. All political parties must take account of the diverse and cultural background of students. The NASUWT has consulted with members and their further concerns regarding the impact of loss of experience staff and delivery.

Congress, schools and the political parties must help to rebuild the crucial systems that support children and families. Please support this composite motion. *(Applause)*

The President: NEU.

Louise Atkinson (*National Education Union*) spoke in support of Composite 18. *She said:*

Congress, the first line of this composite says: “Congress is concerned about the impact on children of austerity, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis”. As a teacher, I am more concerned about the impact on children that I witness every single day in my classroom. It breaks my heart knowing that no matter how hard I work, how many hours I put in and how much I care, the children that I teach are not receiving the education that they are entitled to and deserve. Austerity, the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis are not the fault of the children and young people who I work with. Why should they pay the price. It is always those children who need a great education the most who suffer the most.

In my last class of 34 amazing children, there were six that I, as a professional, felt needed some additional support, yet I could not get an educational psychologist in the classroom for more than 10 minutes, and I had the support of a teaching assistant for just two hours a week! No matter how hard I worked, every day I felt that I had failed those kids. Congress, I didn't fail those kids. The 12 years of chronic underfunding and complete disregard to education by this pernicious Tory Government failed those children. *(Applause)* It is time that this Government valued education and educators. It is about value. It is about funding and political choices.

I have sat in meetings with representatives from the Department of Education discussing the recent SEND action plan which, as the motion says, contains some good things, but they seem shocked when I explain that the current crisis in school funding and, in particular, funding for SEND provision, means that the good things in the plan are unlikely, if not impossible, to implement in the reality of my classroom purely due to funding. The crisis is real and it is

impacting children and young children every day. Yet we heard the news yesterday that this disgusting Government have signed a £19.5 million contract with a consultant to design and develop a method of delivering better value in SEND programmes, which seeks to support 55 councils to reduce their SEND budgets, aiming for a 20% cut in new educational healthcare plans. I say to this Government: stop spending money on consulting how to make further cuts. Stop starving educational funding. Spend the money on children and young children, spend money on education and provide us with the resources that we, as educators, who desperately care, need to provide educational opportunities for all pupils. Please support this important motion. *(Applause)*

Andrene Bamford *(EIS)* spoke in support of Composite 18. *She said:* Today you are already hearing from many of my colleagues in sister education trade unions throughout Britain talking about issues that are facing our members and our young people in schools. We see violence in our classrooms, an out-of-control workforce and a profession that is really battling for status. In the EIS we recognise that at the heart of a significant number of these issues is year-after-year of chronic under funding of education. That is under funding in all aspects of education, but it is seen most acutely in SEND provision or, as it is known in Scotland, Additional Support Aids ESN.

In the EIS we support the presumption of mainstream, but we are opposed to a philosophy being used to explain and excuse the reckless cuts to ESN provision which means that our young people are not getting the support they need and our teachers are facing burn out.

In 2019 Scotland passed the Additional Support for Learning Act. It was good on paper. It promised adequate assessment, including expectations for placements outside the local authority if one was available within. It really was a good piece of legislation, supported by sound educational policy, aspiring to get it right for every child. But it was never going to be wholly successful. I can tell you from personal experience that that wasn't because of a lack of vision or a lack of wealth. It simply fell apart because of a lack of resources. Since 2018 not only has funding not increased but it has significantly decreased. For example, in Scotland the number of primary teachers with a general ESN role has reduced by 70% since 2008, and we are told that every teacher is a teacher of ESN but, with large class sizes and the highest levels of contact time of the OECD countries, this is impossible.

In Scotland 34% of all young people in schools have additional support needs. They are all competing for the same resources that are stretched to the point where they cease to become effective. We have children waiting for years for mental health and speech and language support. We see the number of educational psychologists and specialist teachers diminishing year after year. Policy is not enough and legislation is not enough. It must be resourced.

This year, as you heard from Andrene, the EIS launched our Stand Up for Quality Education campaign, and we invite you to join with us as we demand to see a long-term resourcing strategy that aims to address these critical aims, to bring permanent and increasing solutions. We demand to see smaller class sizes and we demand a reduction to class contact time so

teachers can collaborate. We can see it now for our members and our young people in Scotland and the rest of Britain. Thank you. We support. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, composite 18 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Composite 18 was CARRIED.

Section 3: Building a stronger more diverse movement

The President: Congress, we are now moving on to Section 3 of the General Council Report: Building a stronger and more diverse movement from page 28. I call Motion 31: Equal work, voice, pay. The General Council supports this motion, to be moved by Unite and seconded by the Society of Radiographers.

Equal work, voice, pay

Angela Duerden (*Unite the Union*) moved Motion 31. *She said:* Angela Duerden, pronouns “She”/”Her”. Congress, the need for equality reps in preventing discrimination and advocating on behalf of vulnerable people has grown stronger in the past 13 years of the Conservative Government with their divisive policies. Not only has this Government attacked

trade unions but they have also severely cut funding for sister frontline organisations who worked to prevent and tackle discrimination. This is one reason why, despite many years of equality legislation at an increasingly diverse workforce, significant inequalities persist in Britain's workplaces. That is only one reason. Let's face it, it's a growing list. We have seen a huge gap in the employ rate between working-age disabled people and non-disabled people. We have seen a significant gender pay gap, especially for women working part-time. We see young black men facing double the unemployment rate of young white men. While we celebrate legal advances for same-sex relationships, we see that LGBT+ workers are more than twice as likely to report being bullied or discriminated against their heterosexual colleagues.

Congress, where a union is recognised and where that union can influence decision making on equality issues through negotiations, equal-opportunity policies are far more likely to be put into practice, monitored and produce better results. The vital contribution of equality reps can make sure that equality is properly recognised as an industrial issue from pay to working hours, redundancies and restructuring. Equality reps help to ensure that issues of discrimination and harassment are identified sooner, and they make sure that actions are taken at the collective level to prevent discrimination arising in the first place. Whilst we recognise the importance of equality reps, our task is to make sure that employers recognise them as well, and provide all appropriate facilities to do the job. That recognition will only be won by developing and organising strategies in our workplaces to win recognition agreements, which include provision for rests, to table equality issues for collective bargaining at every level. That means equality issues being recognised and negotiated collectively and

not shunted off to some fake employee forums. It is important that these agreements properly define constituencies for electing union equality reps, making sure that BAEM, women, LGBT+ and disabled reps are elected by and from those constituencies.

We need to consider how our union can best support frontline equality reps. That could include rule changes to make sure that equality reps have the same rights as all reps. That means negotiating guides, education courses and legal advice. Most importantly, it means pro-active, organising strategies to win recognition in every workplace.

Finally, Congress, equality reps must have full legal protection. That is why any future Labour Government must support statutory rights to equality reps when they enter office, but we can't wait. We need to act now as a movement. Support equalities, support our equality reps and, please, support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the Society of Radiographers to second.

Dean Rogers *(Society of Radiographers)* seconded Motion 31. *He said:* Congress, I am delighted and proud to be *here* seconding this excellent motion about the important historic initiative for the trade union movement, and one that we cannot afford not to get right.

Unions are judged by members, potential members and potential activists not just by what we say we believe and stand for but by what we say our values are, but also by how we do things and how we put our values into practice. Ultimately, it is by the real tangible difference the unions make. To be honest, our track record of making a difference in areas of equality is not good enough. As a movement, as the motion says, we too often talk a better game than we have been delivering. This is, partly, I think, because we don't spend enough time challenging ourselves to make sure we get how we do things right.

At the Sor we have been using our fairly unique structures to make sure how we do things and what we do has equality at the core of everything. We are willing to challenge ourselves just as we would want and expect to challenge employers. We also ask our reps and members how our messages and actions can match our values. We listen to them as we want employers to listen to us. That is working and it is making a difference. From inviting all students and trainers to come to us and be in the same space if they were worried about, for example, sexual harassment and race discrimination in the workplaces, which had a great response earlier this year, to winning ETs against modern slavery practices in private sonography, whether it is exploiting international recruits, and it is exemplified in having women members, young members, black members and disabled members at the frontline talking on our picket lines recently about the disproportionate impact of excessive hours, inflexible working and a culture where disabled members are afraid to ask for time off in the NHS. Our NHS has really high membership density and where we, clearly, have not been making enough of a difference.

From this, we have the overwhelming support of reps to introduce mandatory allyship training for all of our reps from 2024, and every rep will be ready to become an effective equality champion. Then, and only then, will we be ready to maximise the opportunity for our movement as a whole that our equality reps offer. Equality reps are next on our list, but we need to be ready for them. Introducing equality reps can't be a tixylic exercise for trade unions. We can't be playing lip service. They can't be happening in isolation. They can't be introduced with no agenda or support. We have to be ready for them. They can be and will be an integral, positive and exciting new force that makes a real difference in our movement, but only if we take the time to get this ready and we take this seriously from now. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, delegates. I have had no other indications. Motion 31 is in front of you. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is, clearly, carried.

Motion 31 was CARRIED.

The President: Congress, I now invite you to watch a short video before we hear the address from our General Secretary. *(Video shown)*

General Secretary's Address

The General Secretary: Congress, 34 years ago I started work at Asda, just over the water in Bromborough. I joined the union when someone handed me a form on my first day at work. Five years later, as an activist in a call centre, I was sacked by an agency because I had helped organise a union. A few years after that, the wonderful Frances O’Grady, who is here today – *(Cheers and applause)* – took a chance and gave this gobby activist from Merseyside a place on the TUC Organising Academy, and not once during all my time as a union activist did I ever think I would be stood here, in Liverpool, as General Secretary of the TUC. *(Applause)* I can’t imagine feeling prouder or more humble than I do right now. Congress, thank you for your support and welcome to Liverpool. *(Applause)*

When you come out of the Centre later, look across the Mersey and you can, literally, see the hospital where I was born. Liverpool is where I went to college, went to work, met my wife, Vicky, and raised our family, but like so many people in this city my roots stretch out across the world. My grandad, Jimmy, and Joseph Novak came here during the Second World War. They played their part in the fight against fascism, married strong Liverpool/Irish women and stayed. Jimmy came from Hong Kong, a cook in the Merchant Navy. When the war was over, Britain rounded up and deported hundreds of Chinese sailors from this city. Somehow he managed to stay and he married Betty and they brought up my mum and her 10 sisters and brothers in Liverpool’s Chinatown. Grandad Joe was an engineer in the Polish RAF. He married Peggy, they had my dad and his five brothers and sisters. Joe spent much of his working life in English Electric on the East Lancs Road, a hard worker, and a man who woke up with night terrors because of what he had seen during the war. I am proud to be the

grandson of immigrants and proud of my family. *(Applause)* I am proud of the contribution that they and millions like them have made to this country. So when I hear the Home Secretary talking of a migrant invasion, that her dream is to deport people to Rwanda, when I see immigrants housed on a barge with Legionnaires Disease, or hear that the Immigration Minister has ordered a mural by kids be painted over, for me it is personal, because the real enemies of the working class in this country don't arrive in a small boat. They fly in by private jet. *(Applause)*

Our movement stands with all working people wherever they were born, whatever their race and whatever their nationality. Every migrant is my sister and my brother, and this Government shames us all because our country should never turn its back – never turn its back – on those fleeing poverty, persecution or war. *(Applause)* I am proud of this city, proud of the way it picked itself up and proud of those who helped regenerate it.

But look beyond the gleaming dockside, the museums, the tourists, the students, the football, the music and the nightlife. In this city, one in five adults is out of work. One in three kids is trapped by poverty. Demand for food banks doubles every year and a quarter-of-a-million people are sat on NHS waiting lists here in Liverpool alone. But it is not just Liverpool, it's everywhere. Nothing works in this country any more and no-one in Government cares. The Conservatives have broken Britain. They have had 13 years to sort out the crumbling concrete in our schools, but five days before the new term they tell schools that they can't open because, and I quote the Education Secretary, "Everyone sat on their arses". Could you think

of a more perfect metaphor for this Conference. A crisis of their making, someone else gets the blame. Congress, they are useless, incompetent and past their sell-by date. *(Applause)*

Yet this Government, that can't keep our rivers clean, they can't run trains on time and can't run a functioning NHS, can find time to attack the right to strike! Congress, a right to strike is fundamental. Without the right to withdraw our labour, workers become disposable, replaceable and exploitable. This new law isn't about preserving services for the public. It's about telling us to get back into our place, don't demand better, sit down and shut up. Well, that's not going to happen, not on our watch! *(Applause)*

We fought their attack on the right to strike in Parliament, we will fight it at the ILO and in the courts and when the first worker is sacked for refusing to work on a strike day, we will fight it in workplaces and on the picket lines. Congress, this movement will fight it every single day until it is repealed. *(Applause)* My dad, Joe, spent most of his working life as a welder. We worked for Cammel Laird, again, just across the river. If you know that industry, you know this. Sometimes there was work, sometimes there wasn't and sometimes the only work going was on the other side of the world. But he and my mum, Anne, knew that they were building the chance of a better life for me and my brother. When we were born in the '70s, there may not have been a lot of money about but we took the basics for granted; no food banks in every town, no legions of people sleeping on our streets and jobs – good union jobs paying good union wages – and families expected that life would be better for their kids than it was for them. That's all we ask for now: wages that go up, waiting lists that come down, kids who aren't hungry, working people treated with respect and able to go on holiday every summer

to take the kids out to treat them at Christmas. It shouldn't be too much to ask for, but it's a long way from where we are and we all know who's to blame. It's this Cabinet of millionaires, disconnected, dysfunctional, Congress, and disgraceful. *(Applause)*

I have been General Secretary for nine months, travelling up and down the country, talking to representatives and activists, reps like Daz who showed me around Airbus, which has four thousand union members with a worldclass employer. I met Colin and Jimmy, reps at B&M, where both the company and the union are growing fast. I met Joanne, a rep at a mental health hospital in Blackpool standing up for outsourced cleaners. I can tell you that three messages came back to me from each and every conversation with those reps and members. The first is that we've got to build stronger unions; second, working people are hurting but the wealthy have never had it so good and, thirdly, it is time for change in Westminster.

Let me start with our own movement, because this is the stuff we can do ourselves, not waiting for an election and not waiting for legislation, but what we can do right here and right now. Those Tory Ministers who say that strikes don't work, tell that to the Jacobs' workers who won 6.5%; to the Kingsmill bakers, who won 9% and to the Liverpool dockers who won an incredible 18% pay rise. *(Applause and cheers)* Tell that to public sector workers across the UK in health, in education, in the civil service. They voted for action, took action and won better deals for members! *(Applause)*

It has been a massive year for unions, but despite the wins, despite the media coverage and despite the new activists our membership is not growing. So many young workers support our campaigns but they don't join our unions. All too often, there isn't a union in their workplace. No rep comes over on day one, like they did to me, and gets them to sign up. Congress, nothing is more important than building a stronger trade union movement, because it takes a stronger trade union movement that can deliver the change that workers need. It matters every day in workplaces, and it matters in the face of the big challenges, too. Without strong unions, that shift to net zero will see good jobs destroyed and communities ruined. Without strong unions, artificial intelligence and new technology will deliver enormous dividends for the tech giants but not the workers, and without strong unions workers will never have the power to enforce their rights at work.

My job as head of the TUC means that I can't recruit new members to unions, only you can do that, but here's what I can do. Reps are the big heart of our movement, but our reps need to reflect today's working class, so starting today the TUC will train at least 500 new black activists each and every year. *(Applause)* Employers co-ordinate so we've got to co-ordinate, so this year we will be asking our unions to come together and organise across whole industries. I am proud, following the scandal of P&O, that our first joint union campaign will be organising seafarers with Nautilus and the RMT. No more P&Os! *(Applause)*

I will expand *Your Work Matters* campaign to seek union recognition for every outsourced facilities worker at Serco, Sodexo, ISF and Mighty & Moore, no matter the contract, no matter the workplace and no matter the employer. Every outsourced worker needs a union.

(Applause) We will improve our Solidarity Hub, which is helping unions to win so many strike campaigns, to turn union wins into union membership. So if you beep your horn as you pass the picket line, if you sign a petition or shared it on social media, and if you thought, “You know what, good for them in standing up for themselves”. There is a union for every job, there is a union for every industry and there is a union for every worker. Join a union today because when you join us, together we win. *(Applause)* More workplaces recognised, more wage rises bargained for, deal by deal, workplace by workplace, built by unions and giving working people a more equal society.

The past 13 years have been tough, but not everybody has suffered. Last year, Britain’s top bosses saw their pay rocket by half-a-million pounds each. Porsche reported record sales in the UK, and a single bottle of Scotch sold for £300,000! I say again, that the real enemies of the working class don’t arrive in small boats, but they fly in by private jet, they bank record profits and then they have the gall to tell workers not to ask for a pay rise. It is not right, it is not fair and it’s not sustainable. *(Applause and cheers)* We need an economy that rewards work, not wealth. This much inequality is bad for our country. Fairness and growth go hand-in-hand, and that’s why those with the broader shoulders should bear the greatest load.

Here are a few things that any Prime Minister, even this Prime Minister, could do today. Let’s start by closing every single tax loophole, like those for non-domes. *(Applause)* Levying VAT on fees for private schools and beefing up Revenue and Customs so we can clamp down on those who cheat on tax. Why stop there? We could have a proper windfall tax on the energy companies, and that would raise £2 billion extra this year alone. We can ask the richest

140,000 people to pay just a little bit more and raise another £10 billion this year. We can also tax capital gains at the same rate as wages and raise £12 billion this year as every year. Congress, it is time for fair taxes and time for a fairer Britain. *(Applause)* But that fairer Britain won't be delivered by this Government. So if you, like me, are tired of this country where nothing works, tired of a Government of the rich for the rich and tired of rampant inequality, vote them out!

Last year Keir Starmer addressed this Congress. I heard him and you heard him. He didn't just make us a promise but he set out a plan: *A New Deal for Workers*, the biggest expansion of workers rights in a generation. No more zero-hours contracts, no more fire-and-rehire, employment rights from day one, union rights for access to workplaces, new fair pay agreements and repeal on the attacks of the right to strike. Congress, that will be the choice at the next election. We want that first one hundred days Employment Bill through in one piece, onto the statute book and into the workplaces. That is why, when the time comes, I will tell anyone who asks: Vote for working people, vote for the change, vote for the Party we named for our movement and vote Labour. *(Applause)*

Whoever thought that a Scouser would go over his speaking time? You heard me set out a challenge for unions, a challenge that all of us can get this movement growing again, a challenge to our politicians to ask more of those who already have the most, and a challenge to both wings of our movement to kick this rotten Government out of office. Let's go united into that next election, let's deliver that new deal and let's win for working people. Solidarity, Conference. *(A standing ovation)*

The President: Thank you, Paul, for that inspiring speech. Congratulations. Thank you very much for your first nine months in office. Of course, everyone here at Congress can join me in wishing you the best for the period ahead. *(Applause)*

Congress, we are now moving on to composite 12 and motion 36. These will be taken in a group debate because they are both about the same topic: More work needed to tackle and prevent sexual harassment in our movement and in our workplace. I will be taking the movers and seconders of composite 12, then the movers and seconders of motion 36 before taking further speakers. At the end of the debate, I will take the vote on composite 12 and then the vote on Motion 36. Firstly, I call paragraph 3.5 of the General Secretary's Report, then composite 12: Tackling violence, harassment and sexual harassment in all workplaces. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by EIS, seconded by CSP and supported by SOR, TSSA and UCU. It is over to EIS to move.

Tackling violence, harassment and sexual harassment in all workplaces

(Including Motions 32, 33, 34 plus amendment, and 35)

Paula McEwan (EIS) moved composite 12. *She said:* I am the President of the Educational Institute of Scotland. I stand *here* today because if I wasn't here today I would have been on a picket line with my colleagues, because further education members are taking day one of 12 days of rolling action in all of our colleges, colleagues. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, work shouldn't hurt. It shouldn't hurt physically and it shouldn't hurt emotionally, through verbal abuse, either face-to-face, online or on the phone. It is appalling that we need to say it but, unfortunately, some of the perpetrators of violence, aggression and harassment in our workplaces have not been challenged. So let's be clear, colleagues. Work shouldn't hurt because of your belief system. Work shouldn't hurt because of your colour, it shouldn't hurt because of your gender, your disability and your sexuality. It just shouldn't hurt, full stop! But we know that it can, and we know that some cohorts of workers are more likely to be victims of workplace violence than others.

The International Labour Organisation published a survey in November 2022. It was a global survey from you can extrapolate the results. Over one-in-five people employed have experienced workplace violence, but only half of victims disclose an incident, and most of them only after repeated incidents have occurred. So the ILO believes that the figure of 20% should be higher. They found that young people, migrant workers and single women are most exposed to violence. Young women are twice as likely to suffer sexual violence in the workplace, and migrant women are twice as likely again.

The EIS is the largest teacher trade union in Scotland with almost 65,000 members. Over 80% of our membership is female, so we are more likely to be exposed to be violence and aggression in the workplace. Our recently launched *Stand Up for Education* campaign started with a pupil survey, because although the sexual violence and aggression can be adult-to-

adult in our workplaces, it can also be young person to adult and young person to young person.

The Scottish Government is launching a framework to tackle gender-based violence in schools and EIS is feeding into that work. A national strategy to prevent violence against women and girls, which is a clear recognition that there is an issue that needs to be addressed and work that needs to be done. Colleagues, we need to call in workplace violence and aggression when we see it. Our members need to feel safe and supportive in reporting and recording work-related violence.

This composite calls on the TUC to report on work-related violence and ask that it be a specific agenda to LGBT employees. Can I really hope that the title should be: "Work Shouldn't Hurt". Please support.

The President: Thank you, delegate. Seconded by CSP.

Heidi Rolfe-Hill (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) seconded Composite Motion 12.

She said: I am proudly seconding Composite Motion 12. The United Nations defines violence against women as: "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm, or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".

In today's world, the exploitation of women and girls continues widely. In 2017 forced marriage was designated a form of modern-day slavery by the International Labour Organisation, where there are, probably, 22 million people across the world living in forced marriages. These women are our colleagues, friends and our sisters, our daughters and our mothers. It is estimated that 1.7 million women in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse in 2022. In fact, I have experienced violence and abuse in many forms for over 90% of my life, including physical, sexual, psychological, emotion, economic, discriminatory, neglect, isolation, coercion, gaslighting and domestic abuse.

I was one of the lucky few. I have a very supportive employer who has put in place resources to support people like me, and I have an amazing team within my union who have been there ever through my recovery. But I am also very aware that not everyone has the support and resources that I have been lucky enough to benefit from to aid my recovery. Every single woman and girl living in an abusive relationship must have fair and unmitigated access to seek professional help. We urgently need adequate and continued Government funding for life-changing charities, such as Women's Aid. Furthermore, it should be noted that black, Asian and minority ethnic, disabled, migrant, older and LGBTQ+ survivors be given necessary support.

Despite ratifying the International Labour Organisation's Convention on Violence and Harassment, the UK Government has rowed back from making amendments to the Equality Act which could help tackle cultures of sexual harassment at work, thereby making the world of work a safer and more inclusive place for all. The UK Government are failing women in

society, homes and in the workplace. Congress, please support this composite motion.

(Applause)

The President: Well done, Heidi. SOR.

Ross McGhee *(Society of Radiographers)* said: It is with sorrow that I have to speak to a motion on the spectre of sexual violence and harassment in the workplace. The Equality and Human Rights Commission states that the workplace is not immune from a lack of reported cases, but that does not mean it has not occurred. According to 2016 research by the TUC, 52% of women, which has now become 63% of women between the ages of 18 and 24, have reported experiencing sexual harassment at work, and the situation has not got better since then. A 2020 research study showed that 44% of respondents have reported sexual assault in the workplace, and 31% of those said that their reports had not been investigated. 17 per cent were subject to bullying after they reported their incident, 10% were threatened with dismissal, 9% lost out on promotion and 22% resigned due to being sexually harassed.

Under reporting is likely to be issue, with higher rates experienced by minority groups. Diagnostic radiographers are often the first to detect violence in a domestic setting but, as a movement, we must do more to prevent sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. As trade unions we must act to do more to protect workers. Difficulties in challenging behaviour in the workplace are everyone's responsibility, but it is often difficult to have these

conversations and training is paramount. We must train our reps to be able to support people in the workplace.

The White Ribbon campaign is the UK's leading charity engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls. Their mission is to help a preventative approach in tackling this by addressing its root causes, challenging and change long-established attitudes, systems and behaviours that affect gender inequalities and violence against women and girls.

Congress, today we reaffirm our promise to women and girls not to standby, to not excuse and to not ignore. To move forward, we must put these words into actions, and to confine sexual violence in the workplace to history. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Fliss Premium (*TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 12. *She said:* Conference, as we know, we are sadly uncovering the extent and realising the extent of the problem we have within our union; which is, sadly, misogyny, sexism, bullying and harassment with sisters having been bullied or not taking part and not being in a position for the activism that they should. But we acknowledge that it is a much more compound issue for sisters of colour, for black and brown sisters, for disabled sisters and for gay and trans sisters. We acknowledge and pay tribute to the brave sisters who are coming forward to change things. We thank the General Council and the Committee for their work on this, and I invite them to join the great movement for BTU to grow confidence and

to work in solidarity with the changes that we really need to see. If anybody is free tomorrow night and Tuesday, I do invite you to join our fringe meeting there.

Recently, just before this Conference, there was a new organising conference where TSSA, my union, was there as a case study in a session. We heard from Helena Kennedy KC. If you have seen the report, it is very disturbing. The inquiry covered power boarding, sexism, drunkenness and much more. She spoke to us on that day. We discussed what it meant and where we could go with this. The conclusion was that this is not an isolated incident, as we know, because there have been several inquiries, but also that behaviour cannot continue without acquiescence of other unions, because in my union many people saw what our former general secretary was like. He was quite invisible. Nobody spoke and people were frightened to speak out. We also know that talented staff are bullied out and are afraid to speak out because they don't think they will get a job in any other union. So we have a joint responsibility to look at this. If you think it is not in your union, you are not looking hard enough. We have come to the conclusion that all unions should have their own inquiries, that we really have to stop the use of non-disclosure agreements and gagging orders in these cases. *(Applause)*

We have to improve our policies and we have to improve our training, but TSSA found that after the Kennedy Inquiry the whole Connolly report had been hidden by the former assistant general secretary in his drawer which was about the policies which were really good but were not being followed. When Helena Kennedy saw that and saw that the same things were repeated, yes, we had the policies but we did not have the practice. It was also was

acknowledged that sometimes there is complicity in staff unions and find it very difficult to look after the members in the powerlessness that they face. We have to establish safe reporting and a higher body that we can go to.

My women's group in TSSA, Women in Focus, found that when we had a complaint with the union, it was difficult to know where to go. We did not get a response from the TUC about training and how they should be behaving. We need a place that we can go to that is independent and safe.

It is really critical, not just with inquiries, about what happens in the aftermath. In TSSA we had silos, the disparaging of members working in cliques and so on and so forth. You do not change the culture by "business as usual" and just different people in posts, whether they are women or men. So we all have a long way to go. Please let's work together and make our unions fit to fight for the future that we need. *(Applause)*

The President: UCU.

Maxine Looby (*UCU, University and College Union*) spoke in support of Composite 12 and tackling violence and harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace. *She said:* I'm struggling here because the delegate before talked about work shouldn't hurt, and that really hurt me. It pains me that we are still having these conversations about sexual violence in the workplace. That situation needs to change. Just bear with me while I get myself together

because that was a very powerful speech from the previous delegate, and I am keen to acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to come up to the rostrum and say that.

Conference, it is a travesty that so many workers across the UK go to work fearing for their own safety, that so many workers are sexually assaulted and harassed just for doing their jobs. The Government's own research has shown that one-in-three workers has experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. We know that the risk is not shared equally. Women, black, disabled and LGBT+ workers are disproportionately more at risk of experiencing sexual violence at work. TUC research shows that half of women who have faced sexual harassment in the workplace – half – and that black women face double discrimination with both racist and misogynist abuse. Further, seven out of 10 LGBT+ and disabled workers have experienced sexual harassment. That is backed up by UCU research which shows that disabled and LGBT+ staff in tertiary education were much more likely to experience sexual violence than men from their disabled peers.

The truth is that employers are simply not doing enough to protect their staff from sexual violence. We need urgent action to ensure a truly zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence in all its forms. Our own research in UCU shows that 14% of tertiary educated staff who have experienced sexual harassment have been harassed by students. Research by the *British Medical Journal* and the *Guardian* also showed that almost 60% of sexual harassment and assault incidents were reported by NHS staff or by their patients. It is fair to say that we need action and we need it now to end this scourge of sexual violence in the workplace in our movement and across the whole of society. We know that the employers won't ask unless

we make them. That's why it is vital that we, as a movement, put our collective weight behind measures like *this* which can make a difference. That is why I urge you to support this important motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Now we move on to Motion 36, which is to be moved by GMB and seconded by Prospect. The General Council supports the motion. We will then be moving on to the group debate.

More work needed to tackle and prevent sexual harassment in our movement and in the workplaces.

Anne Dean (GMB) moved Motion 36 from the TUC Women's Conference. *She said:* Congress, my union, the GMB, has showed how unions can lead the way in shameful and distressing circumstances. Going back to the very dark days of 2020 when GMB, as a trade union, was forced to confront the most challenging chapter in our union's history. We struggled to comprehend how on earth this had been allowed to fester and damage so many people, predominantly women, for so very long. But with much care, attention and a considerable amount of hard work and mutual support, through its Task Force for Positive Change, GMB has found itself in a better and safer place. We have rekindled our self-respect and can look ourselves in the eye because, during the most difficult moments for our union, we were honest about where we had fallen short of our values. Because we took the brave decision needed to begin to change, that is why the TUC's Working Group is so important. As the

Report to Congress sets out, the report surveyed TUC affiliates and launched a pilot Leadership Training Programme. We need changes from Government, including a preventative duty on employers, and the Working Group must continue in the year ahead. Like any improvement process, this work will never be finished and it will never be sorted. Culture change is not a tick-box exercise. It is about all of us living the values of our movement; equality, inclusivity, allyship and solidarity.

We, as trade unionists, must continue to ensure we build and maintain processes that promote safe working practices, guided by expertise. We must never let our movement slip back into those dark days. These first steps that we have taken would never have happened without two forceful women at the helm. It gives me so much pleasure to be able to say a very genuine and heartfelt thanks to those two women; our GMB President, Barbara Plant and Helen (*Inaudible due to clapping*). Without Barbara and Helen we would have struggled to get ourselves off the ground. Helen, who is a leading expert in sexual harassment issues in the workplace, has utilised the experiences of GMB Task Force to ensure that the TUC and other trade unions and organisations are adopting many of the working practices that we have been introducing incrementally over the past couple of years. A very big thanks to you both, Helen and Barbara. (*Applause*) Congress, I am proud to move this motion on behalf of the TUC Women's Conference. Please support it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: To be seconded by Prospect.

Audrey Upington (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 36. *She said:* President and Congress, sexual harassment is a scourge in our society. I could say it has no place in our society, no place in our workplace and no place in our movement, but that would be an aspirational statement, not one of fact. The fact is that it is taking place in all of these places. Seventy-two per cent of the UK population have experienced sexual harassment in their working lifetimes, and almost a third have experienced it in the workplace this past year. Many of these people have experienced sexual harassment on a weekly and daily basis.

I have, personally, experienced sexual harassment during my career as representing members, whose lives and careers have been damaged by this. The tragedy is that it is often the victims who question their own behaviour. Have they done something to encourage unwanted sexual attention? Do they report it? Will they be accused of making trouble? How will this affect their future careers? It is endemic, it's cat-calling, with belittling comments past as a joke, lingering stares and lingering hands and, sometimes, horrifyingly, sexual assault and rape.

You don't need me to tell you that the behaviours are disproportionately aimed at women, especially those who are BAME, LGBT or disabled because harassment is a power dynamic. No workplace is perfect and, sadly, no union is perfect. But only by recognising that, can we take the action needed to end this appalling behaviour. Our ambition as a movement must be to go further than simply compliance. We must change cultures that have been allowed to perpetuate for too long by stamping out tolerance of sexist behaviour, ensure there is no

fear of reporting unwanted behaviours and building a movement that can serve as a model for the wider world.

Congress, do not just vote in support of this motion. Raising your hands is not enough. When we leave here at the end of Congress, we must go back, each and every one of us, into our workplaces and, yes, our union, and do all we can to make them safe places for all women to thrive. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Unsurprisingly, many unions have indicated their wish to speak in this debate. I am going to call ASLEF, the Bakers' Union, NEU, AUE, Unite, UNISON, NASUWT, POA, BDA, FBU and NHBCSA. If you all stay to time, that will be ideal. I call ASLEF first.

Dawn Stewart *(ASLEF)* spoke in favour of Motion 36. *She said:* Congress, research has made it clear that harassment and sexism are widespread in our workplaces. It is regarded by some as still just a bit of banter. The TUC campaign found that more than half of all women polled have experienced some form of sexual harassment, yet four out of five women did not report these incidents.

The workplace is such a fundamental part of our lives. We spend a huge amount of time in them, and everyone deserves to feel safe at work. Unfortunately, in many places we continue to see a culture of silent acceptance when it comes to sexual harassment. We desperately need to do more to make women feel safe.

I am incredibly proud of my own union, ASLEF, for our continual campaigns against workplace harassment, including our *Mind the Gag* campaign, which challenges inappropriate language and promotes dignity and respect in the workplace. We have a responsibility at unions to be at the forefront of tackling these issues, but to do that we also have to make sure that we are addressing sexism and misogyny in our own structures. At ASLEF we created an internal working group to look at how we operate and seek to address areas of concern. We created a new policy for members and staff to look for instances of sexual harassment as well as a mutual respect policy which filters into all of ASLEF structures and events. We commissioned Rights for Women to facilitate trauma-based investigation training to our lead officers. Just last week we began the rollout of a widescale training programme for all reps, which will give them the tools and skills to recognise sexual harassment, learn how to challenge it and how to act as an ally.

In an industry where less than 10% of train drivers are women, it is not always easy to increase the representation of women in our union, but I am heartened by the work that our equality committees do. This week we celebrated for the first time that ASLEF in Scotland has a hundred women members, which is a wonderful achievement. *(Applause)* This motion speaks to the heart of what unions are about: equality, fairness and a better world for us all to live in. Please support this motion and the work that we are doing to make our workplaces, our unions and our society fairer and safer for all women and all workers. Thank you.

The President: I call BFAWU.

Sarah Woolley (*BFAWU, Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union*) spoke in support of Motion 36 and Composite 12. Congress, I am the General Secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union. I am squashing six minutes into three. I have done a lot of work over the last couple of years with some incredibly brave sisters in BFAWU. The disclosures that we were hearing at meetings and being contacted about show that sexual harassment is a huge problem in our movement, the scale of which I truly don't think is appreciated. It is simply no good saying, "Our movement is like society and, therefore, it is expected there will be sexual harassment and violence within it". Our movement should be better. It should be the beacon that society strives to be. There should be no racism, no homophobia, no transphobia, no sexual harassment and violence in our movement at all. Those who feel it is okay to act in those ways towards other people within it have absolutely no place in our trade union movement. *(Applause)* How do we hold employers accountable for their lack of action, when we Aren 't acting quickly enough ourselves? How do we look our members in the eye when we are considering putting subs up when, potentially, hundreds of thousands of pounds of their money has been spent on silencing survivors with non-disclosure agreements and paying off perpetrators?

All unions, not just the TUC, should have standing-tabled agenda items on their national executive committees that talk about sexual harassment and what is being done to tackle it. Congress, we need a culture change. It is no longer acceptable to have open secrets about

who should be avoided when the bar is open, ensuring that new women are not left alone with certain men in our movement who are called “brothers” but certainly don’t act like it.

I want to finish by giving a huge shout out to Nicky Pound, who has done a phenomenal job getting the TUC work done up to here. But the culture hasn’t changed, Congress, so the work isn’t done. More resources need to be put into the Sexual Harassment Working Group to ensure everything that is asked for in the motion, and the many other motions that have yet to be passed on sexual harassment, is debated at future Women’s Conferences and Congresses can be implemented properly. So please support both the composite and the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, Sarah. I call the NEU.

Mairead Canavan *(National Education Union):* I am the secretary of the Welsh Region. As someone said yesterday on this topic, “I am making the same speech as last year”, and that is quite depressing because it can make us feel that we are not getting anywhere. As Tony Benn, one of my heroes said, “There is no final victory as there is no final defeat. There is just the same battle to be fought again and again”. So I have tried to toughen up, as he suggested, and I am getting used to saying the same things again and again.

Sexual harassment is a global issue. It stems from unequal power and status. It can affect anybody but it is primarily felt by women. It is a personal experience which may be very

different for every person. It is part of a wider relentless culture of sexual violence and misogyny. It is important that we not only define what sexual harassment is but also what it is not. Sexual harassment is not any of these. It's not low level. It's not the fault of the victim. It's not the victim's responsibility to find solutions to this problem. That responsibility is shared. It is not just a problem for women to solve. Men must take responsibility for solving it, too. It is not limited to physical, verbal or online acts, but it can be anything which makes the victim feel uncomfortable, and it is not just banter.

In the NEU we have been campaigning around sexism and sexual harassment for years. In 2017, along with UK Feminist, we conducted a study on sexism in schools and it is just everywhere. We found that schools and Government must take urgent action to tackle sexism in schools. Work on this topic is ongoing in my union, and only a few months ago the NEU released a new tool kit called "It's Not Okay". Our goal is to have schools across the UK safe, and it is time that sexual harassment stopped and making a public commitment to make that change. We have been rolling out the tool kit to our regions, districts and branches, and there is also training for boys and men on how not to be a bystander, which is vital. The whole union movement has spent a couple of years now working hard on preventing sexual harassment. Last year I was at the Women's Council of the Isles in Glasgow where the whole two days was devoted to discussing sexism and sexual harassment. From that council, we sent a motion to the TUC Women's Conference and from there we sent this motion to this Conference.

In Wales we have already started to implement some of the instructions in this motion. Wales TUC General Council has sexual harassment as a standing item on every agenda, and the Wales TUC have produced their own toolkit, which they have just updated recently. The Education Workforce Council in Wales has a very timely webinar about harassment in schools and we tend to talk about the work of the NEU alongside other organisations. Unfortunately, sexual harassment is so engrained in our society, in our workplaces and, even more unpalatably, in our unions, that it is often very difficult to root it out but root it out we must. Let's all say that we will never again be bystanders where we see sexual harassment taking place. Always be an upstander, never a bystander. Please support. *(Applause)*

The President: The next speaker is from the AUE.

Zita Holborn (*Artists' Union England*) spoke in support of Motion 36. Of course, we are supporting the composite as well. In my previous workplace in Government, there was a sexual predator who preyed on women 30 years younger than him. He was abusing his position of power and seniority for years. It only came to light because of an internal letter from one of the women he targeted. After she left, due to failures to address issues raised effectively, this letter was also sent to me in my then PCS Union role. The individual was allowed to come to work and not suspended until I raised this matter after he was spotted walking around the office. Despite union representation, it was not dealt with appropriately, promptly or effectively, prolonging the distress for those impacted. The perpetrator took the employer to an employment tribunal for unfair dismissal and won due to faults in the

disciplinary procedure, but the judge ordered no compensation because the perpetrator was guilty, and had procedures been followed properly he would have been dismissed anyway. In the ET he showed no remorse and blamed *Me Too* for making it harder for him to prey on women. This same employer, by the way, subjected me to trade union victimisation for supporting my members to bring claims against discrimination in the tribunal which led to us winning cases on long Covid and constructive dismissal. Last month I settled my employment tribunal for trade union victimisation with no confidentiality clause so I can speak freely about it. *(Applause)* On the back of *Me Too* there is Cabinet Office guidance, which means that employers in the civil service cannot automatically put in confidentiality clauses. We need that across the board.

In the arts and culture sector, we face a culture of sexual harassment and fear. Many arts workers do precarious work and have to compete for work so they are fearful of repercussions if they complain, with their work cancelled and no pay with no recourse. A disproportionate number of women working in performance arts, in producing and making art, experience sexual harassment. A key issue is the lack of structures in arts organisations to address issues and a lack of policy. Last week I spoke at an international arts convention about the importance of safety standards and policies and the creation of safe spaces for women, but also intersexual women and artists for disabled, black and LGBT+ who are taking part in arts residencies. Such residences, contracts and gigs, mean that artists often work with informal structures, with no employee status, a lack of real protections against threats and harm. They can be working in isolation abroad and in remote and unfamiliar settings, on short-term contracts and very often self-employed.

We need to ensure that in carrying out the instructions of the motion we include all types of workers, including artists, and that the employers have robust and effective systems to deal with sexual harassment, no confidential clauses ever in these cases and, yes, the trade unions must get their own house in order. Thank you, President. *(Applause)*

The President: The next speaker is Unite.

Jane Stewart *(Unite)* spoke in support of Motion 36. *She said:* Conference, the outcome of this motion must be to take action and progress achieved. We have passed motions before. This motion from the Women's Conference sets out concrete steps which should be taken if the motion is passed. These will better enable us to effectively tackle sexual harassment in our society. It requires leadership to make it a priority, not just have a discussion about motions in the past.

I see our young women coming through our foundations, the foundations that women in the trade unions have laid. I see their impatience at the need to tackle this issue. I feel my frustration when I see that from all the progress we have made, we have so much more to do. It is quite stark how little progress has been made on this issue through the terrible cases in our labour movement, the institutionalised misogyny of the police force and the objectification of women. I look at Spain and I see how the achievement in winning the World Cup has been immediately undercut by the act of sexual harassment towards Jenner Mimosa,

an act that has been the catalyst of an outpouring of women's anger and a demand to drive change in society. Last night the perpetrator resigned. He says he did so to clear his name. I say, Conference, let's forget his name and let's remember the Spanish women who said, "No more, no more". *(Applause)* If our movement is to keep growing, keep organising and keep women on the scale we need to, we must face these enormous challenges. We must ensure that young women workers find a place in our union becomes wins.

One of the crucial issues in tackling sexual harassment is that it is not an optional extra. We need to be taking action, making progress now. As trade unions, we need to be the catalyst of that change. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: I call UNISON. NASUWT will be after that.

Sharon Foster (*UNISON*) spoke in support of Motion 36: More work needed to tackle and prevent sexual harassment in our movement and in the workplace.

She said: Congress, sexual harassment is a form of violence against women. It is unwanted and it is a deliberate act of violence against a person's dignity. It creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating and offensive environment for the victim. Whilst some people may treat sexual harassment as a joke, its effects certainly cannot be laughed off. Victims of sexual harassment report negative effects on their mental health, confidence and physical health. That is the very poignant part of sexual harassment. It aims to undermine and

humiliate victims. It can be daunting to stand up to sexual harassment. The law is there as back-up, but it frequently lets women down. The TUC Report stated that over half of women in the UK had experienced sexual harassment at work. This highlights the seriousness of the situation that is so often excused with phrases of “harmless banter”.

UNISON, as a union, which has more than over one million women members, has led the way in challenging sexual harassment in the workplace but it remains endemic, and also in the home, too. Now that more people work from home, harassers have just gone online. Women are still scared to come forward and complain. We have debated, set policies and campaigned on the issue of violence against women for many years. We have worked with many women in the voluntary sector with express rules, collaborated and campaigned to protect women from violence perpetrated against them, and yet it still goes on. However, together we can certainly challenge it. Together we can call on the Government and employers to do more to protect all who are affected by this evil act.

For me one determination is that in our workplaces, at the very least, we must be free from sexual harassment because one thing I can guarantee is that sexual harassment is definitely not in any job description. Is it in yours? Is sexual harassment in your job description? I can't hear you. Calls of “No”. Thank you. As trade unionists we should lead the way, challenge sexual harassment in the workplace and encourage women to speak up, discuss it, address it and fight it. So let's get active to ensure that such behaviour in the workplace is never tolerated, that employers and work colleagues are aware that the dignity-at-work policies are in place and properly implemented. Please support. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the NASUWT and the POA will be after that.

Mark Morris (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke on Motion 32. *He said:* I am speaking mostly on Motion 32 of the wider debate, but obviously supporting Motion 36.

Motion 32, rightly, quotes the Health and Safety Executive's definition of violence at work. It is a risk that has to be assessed and managed just like any other. No job, as we have had, should have the expectation that you should go to work and get punched, kicked or spat at. The NASUWT, along with the union, has always worked to ensure that the workplaces of its members were safe, but, as exposed during the pandemic, employers are falling short of their responsibilities or have forgotten their obligations. These employer failings are not only evidenced in education. I have seen them attending conferences and doing training, and seeing on the News the reasons why other sister unions are taking industrial action. The health and safety concerns are the same whatever sector you work in.

The Health and Safety Executive reports that 50% of sickness absences in the UK are accounted for by work-related stress, depression and anxiety. These are the same in any sector that you work in. It could be caused by workload, poor conditions but also bullying and violence from colleagues, students or the public. We also know that those figures are under-reported.

Since the election of this Government, the narrative has been that health and safety legislation is red tape, and unnecessary red tape. The austerity measures in place since 2010 has halved the number of health and safety inspectors, and this situation has been made worse by cuts in local authorities and health boards. The management of violence and aggressive behaviour was already poor but, sadly, the behaviour has worsened across the UK since the pandemic.

As a victim of an assault at work, I took my own advice and reported it to the police and made a statement. During that process, the police officer stopped and said, "If we let this carry on schools, God knows what it will be like in town on a Friday night". Teachers get blamed for a lot of things and get asked to sort out many of society's problems but, sadly, like many other workers, they are leaving their jobs because of violence and aggression from pupils and parents. In my own case work, I can only describe it as teachers being broken, broken by the behaviour of their pupils.

I am proud to say that the NASUWT won a victory in the House of Lords in 2003 to give staff in schools the right to take industrial action where their safety is placed at an unacceptable risk by student behaviour. As a union, we regularly take industrial action, and this time next week I shall be on the picket line dealing with that behaviour once more. *(Applause)*

Conference, we need to support and organise around this agenda. Support the motion and the composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the POA, which will be followed by the BDA.

Jackie Marshall (POA) spoke in support of Motion 36 and Composite 12. *She said:* As prison officers we deal with many violent and disturbed men and women. Our members are assaulted every day; attacked with weapons, spat at, punched, put in headlocks, stamped on, covered in urine and faeces, scalded with hot water, and those are just examples. These are examples of reports that we get every day: “A prisoner assaulted another prison with a plug in a sock. Whilst swinging the weapon recklessly he struck an officer on the head, and the officer was taken to hospital”. “Two prisoners were fighting and staff intervened to separate them. An officer received a bite on the hand which broke the skin. The officer was taken to hospital”. “A prison was unlocked for a shower. He then proceeded to enter the toilet area within the cell and came out throwing faeces at three members of staff, all of which had to go to hospital”. “A prisoner assaulted a member of staff by biting on the hand, breaking the skin. He was taken to hospital”. “During a disorder incident, a member of staff received an injury to the side of his head. The officer was taken to hospital”. Those are just a few examples of what happens.

Many of our members go home from work with life-changing injuries. When I joined the job in 1990, female officers were rarely assaulted. I remember a time when two prisoners tried to take a female officer hostage and take her keys. Staff didn't a chance to respond. The other prisoners intervened. That's what the code amongst prisoners used to be. Not so long ago we had a female officer 'potted', covered in urine and faeces. Because it was a life-sentence prisoner, the CPS said it wasn't in the public interest to charge him. The POA took

out a judicial review against the CPS and forced them to charge the prisoner. Furthermore, the Government refused to make it a criminal offence. So he can, basically, throw urine and faeces at staff, particularly at females, and they are not classed as “staff assaulted”. Nowadays, female staff are fair game. Every day we have reports of female officers being touched inappropriately. Sexual harassment is rife.

We also have a problem with racial discrimination amongst prisoners and, unfortunately, amongst staff. We have had staff who have been found guilty under the code of discipline for racial discrimination, and the Prison Service has kept them in a job. Disgraceful! However, we as a union, through the weight of our membership, I am proud to say that they have no place in the POA. *(Applause)* Congress, one assault is one too many. Please support.

(Applause)

Vicky Bennett (*British Dietetic Association*) spoke in support of Motion 36. *She said:* No women should suffer the fear and indignity of sexual harassment in the workplace, but we know from the ground-breaking work of the TUC that this is a reality for many of us. We know from previous research, which gave us the report *Still Just a Bit of Banter*, that one in two women have experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace, and that four out of five do not report it to their employer because of the fear of victimisation.

Comrades, I am sure that everyone in this hall will agree that this is dreadful and must be stopped. But what if that woman’s employer is a trade union? What if she is an activist in

her trade union? Where does she go for help if she is a victim and the perpetrator is a senior man in her trade union? During the past few years there have been shocking instances in our movement that have come to light due to the bravery of women coming forward to speak up about their experiences with shocking accounts of the behaviour of some of the most senior leaders in our movement.

Two King's Counsel investigations have been held with the reports published and they have made very distressing reading. The TUC took action in both cases and assisted with the work that followed. A working group was established and has done some excellent work in partnership with the Women's Committee. The report of the group was released at Congress last year and highlighted that work. Congress, we must never, ever, have anything like this happening again. We are the leaders and the representatives of our workers. We are here to support and protect the women at work, so for anyone to feel unsafe in our movement is an enormous betrayal. We need to change any culture that gives perpetrators the opportunity to harass women. We must change our structures and policies. We must educate everyone, and above all we must empower women in our movement to take positions of leadership, and that any man who cannot uphold our values of equality, dignity and respect has no place here.

But, comrades, there is still much more to be done, and the working group recommends that the recommendations must be implemented in full, and a programme for education, culture

and change established. We must work together to ensure that women are safe from predatory behaviour and that our movement leads by example. Please support this motion.

(Applause)

Maria Buck (*Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in favour of Motion 36. *She said:* Our workplaces have significant problems with discrimination, harassment, bullying, oppression, sexism, misogyny, racism, homophobia and transphobia. An enormous amount of effort went into addressing the issues and various plans and policies were produced, working with Government and workers, that fell not just short but never even got going. Year on year recommendations were largely ignored and the voices of women were disregarded. For far too long now the issues of women's safety in the workplace have been shelved, used as a political football and, even worse, have been ignored. Our wives, daughters, sisters and siblings are unanimous when we say "Enough is enough". *(Applause)*

The FBU is fully committed to the eradication of all discrimination in the workplace, and our union is clear. Fairness at work must be a practice, not a policy. Our unions have a proud history of standing up for workers' rights, and this includes the FBU's *All Different, All Equal* policy. So what do we actually mean when we say "All Different, All Equal"? It means that every single member has the right to be accepted and treated the same as everyone else, no matter in what sense they are different. Anything less isn't equality.

The FBU has been at the forefront of challenging not just the employer but themselves, and is proud to play a role in the TUC Executive Committee Working Group on Tackling and Preventing Sexual Harassment. The FBU will continue to be the lead organisation fighting to improve the working lives of its members in the Fire & Rescue Service. It is the duty of every member to remind each other that it is their responsibility to treat each other with dignity, respect and challenge discriminatory behaviour, such as sexual harassment. I just repeat that fairness at work must be a practice and not a policy. Solidarity, Congress. *(Applause)*

Julia Georgiou *(NHBCSA, National House Building Council Staff Association)* spoke in support of Composite 12 and, of course, speaking in support of both motions. Congress, I have worked in the financial services sector since 1987, and I joined the union on day one. I have seen the rise in demand from customers and the rise in abuse over that time. Insurance company staff face daily abuse for prices and, of course, where I work in claims. Elsewhere in financial services banks have cut their branch networks and bank staff face not only face-to-face verbal attacks but physical attacks, too. Online abuse is rising, and I am a victim of this. It affects my members when we deal with new-build warranties, as this is a form of insurance, so this will apply across all forms of guarantees as well. Yes, we call get annoyed with your claim is turned down or something new breaks, or the payout is actually reduced due to valid clauses in the policy, but that is not the fault of the person at the other end of the phone. They don't write the policy or set the premium. They often don't even make the decision to reject a claim or reduce it. We know in the insurance world that people exaggerate claims. If that is spotted and you actually get a fair settlement, that is the one doing a good job. They are not

worthy of being abused. These, perhaps, are not as obviously harmful as other forms of abuse that we have heard about but they do hurt and harm the victims.

Congress, we should and most actively work to end abuse of all workers, including abuse by third parties and customers. Here's the thing. We're all workers and we're all customers, so we must accept that abuse can and does take place, not just by our neighbours, as the EIS said right at the start of this debate, but by unionists against unionists. Congress's zero-tolerance approach has to extend to our own ranks. As with any other abuse, we must take a stand as I have done in the past, take action or support employers' action against our own members when they abuse others. We cannot call for this to stop unless we start from the ground up working against it. Congress, support these motions. *(Applause)*

The President: We will now take the vote on Composite 12. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against indicate? That is carried.

I will now take the vote on Motion 36. Will all those in favour of Motion 36, the motion from the Women's Committee, please show? Those against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 12 was CARRIED.

Motion 36 was CARRIED.

Social Security.

(Including Motion 24 and amendment, and 25)

The President: I now call Paragraph 2.6 and Composite 8 on Social Security. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by PCS, seconded by Equity and supported by the NUJ. This is the last motion we are taking this morning.

Martin Cavanagh (PCS) moved Composite Motion 8 on Social Security. *He said:* Congress, this composite on Social Security is an absolutely critical motion at a time when our union movement does need to stand up and take on the mantle of defending the most vulnerable in our society. We have seen decades now under different administrations, including under the previous Labour administrations, decimating staffing, decimating the workforce, decimating the conditions of service and making it more and more difficult for those who have to claim benefits, whether it is disability benefits or in-work benefits, not only having no choice and they ability to claim that much-needed financial support in the first place, but being able to continue to receive that much-needed support.

We heard earlier this year an absolutely despicable announcement by the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions concerning what is called a Job Centre Innovation Pilot, where they were genuinely trying to incentivise our members to make it more difficult for people to claim and keep the benefits that they desperately need.

Congress, our union has always been at the forefront of demanding a better and fully resourced social security system. It has always been at the forefront of demanding that those who absolutely need our support, absolutely need the ability to be able to make ends meet at a time of poverty, at a time of disability or sickness, get that support at day one. It should never be a punitive system like it is now. It shouldn't be one that is there to try and make it more difficult for people to get help. It should be absolutely from day one. It is a system that is there to support, that is there to help and generate a genuine understanding of what people go through at a time of most need.

Comrades, our members, when we organise and mobilise, have been at the forefront of the fightback against the despicable conditionality of a sanctions regime. I want to applaud the work that we have done with our brothers and sisters in the Unite community, not only in terms of conferences on social security but absolutely being at the forefront of advising claimants and claimant groups about how they can get round some of the legislation that is the modern social security system.

Conference, let's be clear about this. It is not just the Tories who need to wake up. Every single politician who sees anyone who claims benefits as a scrounger, as somebody who is a blight on the state, quite frankly, needs to sod off! *(Applause)* These people are not scroungers!

See what happened during the pandemic when, virtually overnight, 2.5 million people were plunged into absolute desperation. They needed the support of the Department for Work and Pensions, they needed the support of our members, and they absolutely were grateful for us bending over backwards, and many of our own members put their own lives and their families' lives at risk to provide that much-needed support. Record benefits were paid. Two-and-a-half million new cases of Universal Credit were processed. Our members were allowed to provide the help and support to those at the most difficult time, but that should not just be something for a pandemic, but that should be something that we aspire to day in and day in, week in and week out and year in and year out. Those who need social security and the provision of social security should be able to get it in the same way that those in this country are able to access free healthcare and free education from day one at the point of need.

(Applause)

Comrades, I will finish by saying this. If we, as a movement, can't understand that those members of ours who have to claim benefits because their salaries are so low are in exactly the same boat as those who are having to claim benefits permanently because they can't find work or are too sick or disabled to be in work. If we, as a movement, don't grasp that concept, then we are failing, we are letting those people down and we are letting future generations down. A properly funded social security system that stays within the public sector and stays within the civil service, that is absolutely based in providing help, support and confidence at the point of need from day one right the way through that journey, is something that we all need to demand and will continue to demand. *(Applause)*

Our union, comrades, will be at the forefront as it is our members who have to deliver it. But I urge every single union and every single trade unionist not just in this room but back in their workplaces to get behind that campaign, to get behind PCS and our members, to try not to allow others to scapegoat our members to say that they are the problem. They are not the problem. The Tories are the problem, and any right-wing politician who sees that those who claim benefits are the cause of the problem should step aside and move on. We will provide a system. We as a movement demand it. We will get there. Cheers, comrades. *(Applause)*

The President: Equity to second.

Paul Valentine *(Equity)* seconded Composite Motion 8. *He said:* Congress, like my PCS colleague, I was expecting this motion to be heard on Wednesday, so guess who hasn't written a speech? Yes! So in true Equity tradition, impromptu. That's what we've got right now. *(Laughter and applause)* Essentially, we are seconding this motion because we are taking this from the creative freelance angle because, obviously, for us, I'm an actor, creative workers have difference freelance portfolio careers, that kind of thing. Naturally, our members need the social security net because we do our work, we drop out of it, we need extra support and then we will come back in again. Ironically, I am happy to second this motion, anyway, because I am also a member of PCS because I have to have a day job from when I'm not acting, so I work at the Southbank Centre. My experience shows that the social security net isn't fit for purpose. It is rubbish.

One of the big things that Equity has done is worked with the University of Warwick and we have been doing some research to show people how useless this system is. One of the big things that we are pushing towards is the abolition of the minimum income floor because it completely skews everything. I won't go into complete detail now because I am running out of time and I didn't realise I was going to speak today. Essentially, it is in the motion as to why it really isn't fit for purpose. I am going to wrap this up early, I think – hooray – because it is almost lunch time. Please support this composite. Thank you. Cheers. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the NUJ.

Natasha Hirst *(NUJ)* spoke in support of Composite Motion 8. *She said:* Thank you, President and Congress. I am from the National Union of Journalists and proud to be the first President of my union who is also a lifelong disability actor. *(Applause)* I have also not prepared a speech because I thought this item was going to be heard tomorrow.

The NUJ has been doing a huge amount of work about the way in which the social security system treats disabled people, especially, who have been the target of absolutely horrific, inhumane and hateful rhetoric in some parts of the press during the past few months. That has come directly from a Government that repeatedly treats disabled people with utter contempt. They know that their policies are pushing disabled people into poverty. They know that their policies are cutting away our access to independent living and cutting away our human rights under the UN Convention on the Right of Disabled People. Just a few weeks

ago a delegation of disabled people from different organisations was in Geneva to submit evidence on the continuous human rights violations of the UK Government against disabled people here in the UK. The UK Government did not send anyone to that evidence session. They were not willing to stand up to the scrutiny of an international committee that exists to protect disabled people's human rights abuses by the state. So when we are talking about social security, we are talking about people who are in some of the most difficult situations in their lives where they need that support network, yet the UK Government are more than happy just to pull the rug and then blame us when we can no longer access employment, when we are not able to work. They just continue with the sanctions and conditionalities that make our lives absolutely desperately hard and difficult.

We are appealing to the wider trade union movement not to forget us. Remember, we need that collective power behind us if we are going to bring the Government down on this because they really did not want to listen. This is just one of a number of areas in which they are continuing to attack us. So, please, support, but keep on taking action within your unions and within your workplaces to support disabled people who work, who want to work but also those who can't work and have every right to live happy, secure and healthy lives. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: Congress, Composite 8 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show?

All those against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 8 was CARRIED.

The President: I have a grovelling apology from the TUC. We take full responsibility. There has been a discrepancy with what went to the pre-Congress General Council regarding the order of business and what is actually printed in the Guide. Can I just say that it's been a great social experiment because your speeches on spec have been brilliant. *(Applause)*

Congress, that concludes this morning's business. The fringe meetings are on. Look in the Guide from page 33 onwards. You can check the website. Congress, you need to know this before you go. The hall will be closed now and it won't be open again until 1.45. So take anything you need when you leave. You will not be able to access the hall before 2 o'clock. Please be back promptly for this afternoon's session.

Congress adjourned until 2.15 pm.

AFTERNOON SESSION

(Congress resumed at 2.15 pm.)

The President: Delegates, I call Congress to order. Many thanks to Heather Vairo who has been playing for us today. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, this afternoon we have had lots of requests for additional speakers, which is a good thing, but we don't have enough time to take them all. In principle, the decision is that we are going to restrict a lot of the extra speakers, which concerns people who are not moving, seconding or involved in composites. We are taking additional speakers in the debate on MSLs, that being a highlighted debate, and also the debate on Motion 76, which we are well aware is contested. I will make sure that the different voices on that motion are heard. There will be loads of opportunities to speak after this afternoon.

We now continue with Section 2 of the General Council Report: The economy and the cost-of-living crisis. I call paragraph 2.3 of the General Council Report and Composite 3: Steel and national security. The General Council supports the motion. It is to be moved by Community, seconded by Unite and supported by Nautilus.

The economy and the cost-of-living crisis

Steel and national security

(Including Motion 11 and amendments)

Reg Gutteridge (*Community*) moved Composite 3. *He said:* Congress, I am a proud steel worker, moving the composite on steel and national security. Putin's barbaric invasion of Ukraine last year and the brutal war that Russia has waged against the sovereign state has served as a moment of reckoning for Europe. Nations across the continent have been forced

to confront uncomfortable truths about their national defence apparatus and their reliance on other countries for essential commodities.

In the UK we might have to ween ourselves sharply off imports of Russian gas, oil and coal worth £4.5 billion a year. Congress, we should all be concerned about the dwindling domestic access for steel and an increased reliance on foreign imports. Reports have highlighted in stark terms how the UK's hands-off approach to its military steel supply chain poses risks to both our defence industry and the thousands of jobs it supports as well as our national security. A lack of access to domestic steel isn't just a source of regret, but lack of steel is a clear and present threat to our sovereignty and security.

However, earlier this year we had the absurd, alarming and, quite simply, appalling spectacle of a Business Secretary telling reporters that it was not a given that the UK should have a domestic steel industry. Congress, it is a disgrace that we have a Government that stands idly by while Britain's steel workers are made to compete with one hand tied behind their backs. We know that energy costs for industry, which can be twice the price for steel makers in the UK, than for competitors in mainland Europe. We see it on steel procurement for infrastructure projects. Less than half the 17 million tonnes of steel the UK uses each year is produced in the UK. We see it very clear in the lack of support for decarbonisation. Currently, there are 23 green-steel projects across Europe, but none in the UK. The US is investing \$282 billion in green manufacturing, and the French, Spanish and German governments are all investing billions in their green and steel industries.

But when our shambolic Government does show impressive support in the industry towards decarbonisation, they are well off the mark and couldn't care less. Colleagues, I have seen a recent support suggesting that Ministers are close to a deal with Tata in relation to Port Talbot Steelworks towards an electric arc-furnace and remodelling at a cost of three thousand jobs. Congress, we should be clear on this. We are committed to making our steel sector greener, of course we are, but steel workers should not have to pay the price. Jobs are my union's priority. We make no apologies for it. The fact is that to replace our blast furnaces with electric arc furnaces will cost thousands of jobs and mean plant closures because you cannot make all grades of steel through recycling scrap steel. That is why we don't support the switch to electric-arc. It may be the companies' and the Government's preference, but our priority is and will always be our members' jobs. I know that my members at Lantern are not interested in steel if it doesn't employ anybody, and that is why the steel unions must continue to work with all stakeholders pressing our case for a green steel transition that protects our members' jobs and safeguards the future of a vital strategic industry.

When Community members marched on Parliament earlier in the summer, our message to Britain was "We need our steel". It was not just a campaign slogan but a statement of inescapable fact. We can't play our part in fighting climate change without the millions of tonnes of steel we need to build wind turbines, electric vehicles, nuclear power plants and green infrastructure projects. The country stands at a perilous crossroads, and if we continue on the same path the UK will become the biggest economy worldwide to have no significant

domestic steel capacity. Congress, we cannot and will not let this happen. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Unite.

Terry Mills *(Unite)* seconded Composite 3. *He said:* Congress, the time is overdue for the Government to commit to our steel industry through investment and procurement. It is an indictment that when steel workers are fighting for the future of their industry that Government support through procurement is so faltering. Public support in projects accounts for only 10% of the steel produced in the UK. That leaves us lagging behind similar nations. Public procurement accounts for 18% of steel in the US and 32% in Germany. This is at a time when there are countless opportunities from Fleet support ships and the green revolution for publicly-backed projects in the UK to use UK-made steel. There is a strange logic that part of the green revolution would be to transport steel halfway around the world. It doesn't seem very green to me.

Perhaps an environmental consideration is steel miles in procurement. Congress, we cannot leave support for the steel industry to a broken market or the whims of Whitehall. Unite's addition to this important composite demands legally-binding commitments to use domestic steel for every major publicly-funded infrastructure project. By changing procurements rules to focus on domestic suppliers, we can significantly increase public-sector demand for

domestic steel, growing to an estimated additional 700,000 tonnes per year by 2025. This in turn could create over eight thousand jobs in the sector and wider supply chain.

Besides sustaining and even growing the industry, this could be a vital lever to protect jobs and wages. Public contracts and all public funds awarded to steel employers must come with iron-clad guarantees for jobs, union-recognised rates of pay and conditions. Bizarrely, we need to look no further than the United States where procurement comes with pro-union obligations. If it can happen there, it can happen anywhere, but it must happen, but it must happen here. We will accept no more excuses.

Congress, our steel industry has been pushed closer and closer to the very brink. Don't let our steel communities go the same way as our coal communities did. Steel workers make no apologies for an ambitious vision as an alternative to decline, negligence and despair. Our members are committed to winning that future for themselves. Support this motion and show you are backing them all the way. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call Nautilus.

Martyn Grey *(Nautilus International)* spoke in support of Composite 3. He said: Congress, I am speaking in support of the composite on steel and security. Steel is a strategically vital component for the UK economy. It is more than just a primary means of substance into which a significant chunk of our manufacturing processes go, but it is essential to the very national

security and food security that exists in this country. I take notice, as you would expect, from Nautilus International, about shipping, where global trade moves 90% of everything and, particularly for the UK, 95% of imports and exports are moved by water. This is a significant amount of things that we rely upon, from food and fuel to other consumable items. In this time of geo-political instability and increasing change, we must have a domestic steel base on which we can rely to prepare, support and even construct vessels that are vital to keeping this country fed and warm.

We are but a cold winter and a delayed shipment away from the power going out in certain parts of this country, thanks again to cuts which have been made to strategic reserves. Ships are ever more crucial to keeping people fed and warm, and a lack of domestic steel at these times, where there are challenges facing global security, leaves us, potentially, crippled against being able to repair and support ourselves in being able to remain an independent nation.

Congress, we ask you to support this vital motion and to keep steel jobs here in the UK and to keep steel manufacturing here in the UK. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, Composite 3 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? Those against? That is carried.

Composite motion 3 was CARRIED.

The President: I call paragraph 2.8 of the General Council Report and Composite 4: Investment in Better Public Transport and Solidarity with transport workers. The General Council supports the composite which is to be moved by the RMT, seconded by ASLEF and supported by Unite and the TSSA.

Investment in Better Public Transport and Solidarity with transport workers

(Including Motion 12 with amendments, and 13)

Alex Gordon (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) moved Composite 4 on Investment in Better Public Transport and Solidarity with transport workers. *He said:*

Under this Tory Government, delegates, the Department for Transport has driven a head-on attack on our public transport networks aimed at driving down conditions for transport workers, cutting Treasury transport investment while increasing the opportunities for parasitic corporations to feed off our national infrastructure. Rishi Sunak's regime is degrading our public transport to feed private profits. As Tory Chancellor, Sunak demanded a £2 billion annual cut in the cost base of our national rail network. As a Tory Prime Minister, his Government has pushed a cost-cutting agenda into the railway infrastructure through Network Rail and into passenger operations through state contracts with train operating companies. Network Rail is cutting back on railway renewal work, placing greater responsibility on rail maintenance workers, at the same time as cutting almost two thousand frontline maintenance posts across our network and cutting the scheduled maintenance tasks

by 50%. The outsourcers in the rail infrastructure industry have already siphoned off more than £230 million annual profits from Network Rail contracts. That is now set to increase. More speed restrictions have been planned and assets, instead of being replaced when they are worn out, their lifespan is being extended. Today Network Rail continues to pay more money each year to its corporate bond holders in interest on loans than it spends on maintaining the tracks that our trains travel on. Our rail system is heading back to the terrible days of Railtrack Plc.

This Tory Government have worked hand-in-glove with train operating company bosses to come up with plans to cut around almost a thousand railway ticket offices. Ticket offices make our railways safe, accessible and secure, especially for women, older people and people with disabilities. Almost 90% of the stations on our rail network are already unstaffed and this situation is set to get worse if the Government's current plans are allowed to succeed. This Government have made the delivery of these cuts a pre-condition on pay rises for railway workers. Our members, employed by the train operating companies have had no pay rise now for four years during a cost-of-living crisis, and this Government insist that this won't change until we agree to accept their plans to cut jobs, downgrade jobs, drive down pay and rip up working conditions.

In London the Government have waged a war on London Underground staff and provoked industrial disputes by making emergency funding for Transport for London dependent on reckless cuts to its operating costs, including specific conditions that attack our members' pay, pensions and working conditions. Congress, the response by the members of our rail unions

to these attacks has been magnificent. Across the rail network and on the Tube we have repeatedly smashed the ballot thresholds of the anti-trade union laws. Laws brought in to stop us striking have only demonstrated the determination and unity of our members. They have risen up and fought back in defence of their jobs, conditions, pensions and pay, risen up in the face of the full might of the Government that bankrolls private companies, a law designed to frustrate and a capitalist media which seeks to denigrate them at every opportunity. In spite of this, we have received massive public support in our campaign!

Congress, we need a new pay deal not only for workers but we need a new deal for our country that means investment in transport and all our vital services. We need to replace austerity aimed at driving down wages and degrading public services with a new approach to public funding. Spending on public transport benefits the whole economy and creates jobs. For every pound spent on rail, £2.50 of income is generated in the wider economy. Spending on rail is critical to our carbon emission reduction goals. We need to reduce car mileage by at least 20% by 2030 compared with today.

Comrades and conference delegates, we need to rebuild properly-funded, publicly-owned rail as an engine of growth in our economy and vital infrastructure to meet our climate goals.
Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, delegate. ASLEF to second.

Mick Whelan (*ASLEF, Association Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) seconded Composite 4. *He said:* Conference, I am happy to second this motion. Was it only three Prime Ministers ago when Boris was on Paul's plane flying up and down for dinner with the *Telegraph*. Prior to the pandemic, we had been talking about a green economy and a green future. Everywhere the political will was that rail would be the centre of it. This little island 800 miles long, how would we deliver Kyoto, how would we deliver Paris and how would we deliver the 1%? We electrify the lot. We build the transport for our communities. We rebuild those deregulated buses that feed the public transport system. We make freight integrated so the lorry drivers keep their jobs and the freight drivers keep their jobs, and we grow the capacity. Furthermore, we do HS2 in full, start it on the south coast, finish it at the top of Scotland and rebuild for our communities everywhere. But that's not where we are! We had a time when the Government openly said that they are putting us into managed decline. Managed decline kills industries. We have seen what happens when our industry is degraded. Last week Network Rail pleaded guilty under section 76 to 20 charges in Aberdeen, when three people lost their lives three years before in Carmont. If it had not been for the pandemic, that would have been a full train and the tragedy would have been far worse. So you can't degrade our railways.

At the same time, in our freight industry, all those nice shiny electric engines, because of the high cost of energy under the Tories, have been mothballed and sold off. That doesn't tell you about our faith in our future. That doesn't tell you about what they want to do to our industry. I have never been prouder to stand with my colleagues in the RMT, Unite and TSSA like I have done for the past 14 months. (*Applause*)

They can stick their minimum strike levels or service levels where the Sun don't shine. We will fight and everybody will fight. We will undo this unjust legislation. No indenture for British workers! *(Applause)*

As the previous speaker has quite rightly said, this isn't an industrial dispute. This is political ideology. This is people with unfinished business with the rail unions, whether it be from the '80s, or Boris, with the seven times he lost when he was the Mayor of London or elsewhere. We don't have a problem in Scotland and we don't have a problem in Wales, we don't have a problem in freight and we don't have a with Eurostar or the Elizabeth Line. We are all doing deals for our workers elsewhere. That tells you that this is a Tory Government changing our railway for the worst and we will not allow it to happen. *(Applause)* Quite simply, Congress, if you want a green future, you want a proper nationalised railway, well staffed, because when they talk people away from our railway it is not a safe community. We need a physical presence in ticket offices, on platforms and on trains. Sexual assaults grew by 180% before the pandemic. We were talking about acid attacks; we were talking about county lines. We don't live in a polite society. That set the stage for the functional green railway that we need, with every worker in those jobs safe and secure themselves. I support and second. *(Applause)*

Paul Ainsworth *(Unite the Union)* spoke in support of Composite 4. *He said:* Congress, I am a proud London bus driver, speaking in support of Composite 4. As we meet here, the bus industry is in the second year of a nationwide strike wave. More than 40,000 bus workers

have been involved in more than 150 disputes in every corner of the UK. Congress, together we are winning the inflation-beating pay rises that bus workers more than deserve. 18% for Abellio in London; 16% for National Express drivers in the west Midlands; 20% for Stagecoach drivers in Hull. The sheer number of successful disputes is dragging up pay levels across the industry. Unite's analysis shows that successful strikes are delivering, on average, more than £3,000 for each striking driver.

What is more, this collective action has dragged the rate for the job up by £2,000 since the pandemic. That means the action of bus workers has raised the pay floor for all workers in the industry. It is from a growing position of collective strength that transport workers must now consider their future. We believe that it is by improving jobs, pay and conditions today that we can guarantee the strongest protection for the jobs of tomorrow.

Congress, the public transport network has been broken by Tory mismanagement. Bus privatisation and fragmentation has been a costly experiment which has utterly failed. We cannot leave the future of public transport to those who have broken it so comprehensively. That is why this important motion commits us to campaigning for a just transition based on full worker participation and on the principle of "Nothing about us without us"? Congress, support the motion.

Simon Tarp (*TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) spoke in support of the composite.

He said: Congress, I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) We don't shout enough about

greening the rail network, but it needs to be accessible and affordable, with public ownership. The Tory's short-sighted folly of scaling back HS2 will not only deprive the north of its benefits but the move to terminate it in west London rather than the centre will mitigate the time savings that would have been achieved.

Shutting down ticket offices is totally a wrong directional move. It will push people away from the railway and back onto the roads. The railways needs to be safe, accessible and affordable for all, with an infrastructure to match. Talking of driving people away from the railways, if there is not a significant investment in the railway infrastructure, there will be more delays and cancellations which will result in people looking for a more convenient option for them.

We need to massively expand jobs in public transport, not cut them, bring outsourced services back in-house and support those workers. We must not sit back and allow the transport network to be subject to massive cuts. We need investment now. Electrification of the railway has been painfully slow. Again, projects scaled back or cancelled. We should not be cancelling work but instead looking to increase them. We need to step up measures to decarbonise our transport network. Moving more freight to rail is extremely important to bringing down carbon emissions but, again, we need the investment in infrastructure to convince more freight operators onto the network, and this includes delivering HS2 in full without delay giving more capacity on the west coast mainline for freight traffic. Please support the composite. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, colleagues. Composite 4 is before you. Will all those who are in favour please indicate now? All those against? That is clearly carried.

Composite Motion 4 was CARRIED.

Closure of ticket offices

The President: I call paragraph 3.4 of the General Council Report, and Motion 14: Closure of ticket offices. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by the Bakers Union on behalf of the Disabled Workers' Conference, and seconded by Unite.

Sarah Woolley (*Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union*) moved Motion 14 on behalf of the Disabled Workers' Conference as the original mover of the motion. *She said:* Congress, it was an absolute privilege to be able to put this motion forward as an emergency motion at the Disabled Workers' Conference this year to support and stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the RMT. We were absolutely chuffed that it was subsequently chosen to be the motion brought to Congress. It was one of the biggest debates that we had at the conference. How brilliant is it that so many people have responded to the consultation, the largest ever responded to a Government consultation that has forced it to be extended. I don't know about you, but when I put my response in, the response that I received to my submission and one on behalf of the union was very generic and very unmeaningful, and basically said that they couldn't cope with the numbers, which did make me smile on Thursday afternoon. That was down to the absolute dedication of the RMT reps, their officers and

the support of my sister unions, ASLEF and the TSSA as well as the wider trade union Movement. That can't be under-estimated.

This move is being sold as a modernisation process that will get people out from behind the glass, but we know and our community knows that it is a smokescreen. It is an attack on our friends within the RMT and our communities. The plans to close ticket offices are catastrophic for everyone, but particularly for elderly and disabled passengers trying to access the rail network. One hundred and eighty million journeys were made last year by people using ticket offices. Removing them is not in the interests or safety of passengers. It is about making profits for the self-interests of the train operating companies.

Congress, disabled people face numerous barriers already in accessing the railway, and they are three times less likely to travel by rail than non-disabled people. We heard a number of personal experiences during the debate at conference on just how difficult it can be to travel by rail if adjustments or support is needed by the traveller. There is a real risk that if these closures go ahead, not only will the jobs of RMT members be affected, but disabled people would no longer be able to travel by rail. It is discriminatory and why, as a movement, we must continue to fully support the RMT campaign, engage with the consultation and ensure that our voices are heard in abundance. Please support this motion.

Martyn Gwyther (*Unite the Union*) seconded Motion 14. *He said:* Congress, the Government plan to closed one thousand ticket offices across the rail network in England with total

disregard for legal duties under the Equality Act. One-fifth of the population is disabled and two-thirds of all rail passengers with a disability experience barriers to travel, according to the Government's own data. These closures will, effectively, make the railways a no-go zone for disabled people. The closure of ticket offices is a slippery slope to unmanned stations. Ticket offices are a place that disabled people can go to for information and assistance. Disabled people heavily rely on highly trained ticket office staff for information on journeys, timetable information and also for purchasing tickets. Demand for train travel by disabled passengers has been going up. There are more than 240,000 disabled person's railcards in circulation this year. That is 11% higher than last year. Tens of thousands of disabled people who hold a concessionary freedom pass, which entitles them to free travel, can be forced to pay high inflated price for many rail tickets, once the tickets offices are closed. Accessing train travel is difficult enough for lots of people with disabilities. Removing ticket offices will make it impossible for many. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: We move to the vote on Motion 14. Will all those in favour please show? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 14 was CARRIED.

The President: I call Motion 15: Tackling flags of convenience and growing domestic shipping. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Nautilus International and seconded by RMT.

Tackling flats of convenience and growing domestic shipping.

Mark Dickinson (*Nautilus International*) moved Motion 15. *He said:* Conference, I am the General Secretary of Nautilus International. Motion 15 is about tackling flags of convenience and growing domestic shipping. Colleagues, as we come together in this great city, a proud city with a proud shipping and maritime history, once considered the gateway to the world, and as a scouser I would say it still is. I am rising in support of our motion highlighting one of shipping's most immoral practices, namely flags of convenience.

It may surprise some delegates to hear that just three countries – Panama, Liberia and the Marshall Islands – with a combined population of about 10 million people, represent nearly half the world's commercial shipping fleet. Flags of convenience, such as these, allow any shipowner to register a vessel in their state without requiring a genuine link between the ship and their country. This is done by shipowners, unsurprisingly, to hide away, to avoid control by regulators and to avoid the enforcement of minimum standards. We should be clear that flags of convenience or FoCs, more often than not, mean very low wages, poor on-board conditions, inadequate food, poor drinking water, long periods of work without proper rest leading to stress and fatigue.

The worst impact on the FoC regime was apparent during the global health pandemic. As country after country entered lockdown to suppress the spread the virus, hundreds of

thousands of seafarers, key workers, were denied repatriation. They were forced to remain on board vessels for months longer than planned. Many were denied shoreside medical care and there were even claims – I kid you not – of bodies being stored in ships freezers with the crew’s food as they were denied repatriation for burial. International conventions, prescribing fundamental rights for seafarers, such as the Maritime Labour Convention, were simply ignored. FoC states, with the responsibility for enforcing and guaranteeing those fundamental rights were nowhere to be found. Seafarers were left behind.

In March 2022 P&O Ferries unlawfully sacked 786 seafarers, members of the RMT and members of Nautilus. There was no notice and no consultation. The authorities in the Bahamas, Bermuda and Cyprus, where the vessels were registered, again, were nowhere to be found. That’s why Nautilus, with RMT support, for which I’m grateful for this motion, is asking that the TUC support to campaign for the UK Government to call for a global review of shipping registration practices with a view to enforcing Article 91 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. That article requires a genuine link between the state and the ship.

But let’s be clear. The FoC system is so entrenched in the global maritime industry that it will not change overnight. That’s why the Government needs to support and protect our domestic shipping industry, to protect it from the race to the bottom that FoCs inevitably create. The UK is one of a small minority of maritime states that does not have any form of protected legislation. Cabotage law is what I am referring to. In Norway they have just brought forward laws to protect Norwegian jobs, so we need to follow suit and we need to

enact progressive cabotage laws to provide opportunities for good training and good employment for UK seafarers, underpinned by collective bargaining agreements and fair pay agreements.

It is often said that if we don't learn the lessons of the past we are doomed to repeat the mistakes. Never again can we let seafarers be collateral damage in the fight against a global pandemic. The ITF has been celebrating the campaign against flags of convenience for 75 years. Join with me, support the motion and celebrate their work. Unity and solidarity mean that there will be victory. Thank you. I am wearing your badge, President. *(Applause)*

David Douglas *(RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)*

seconded Motion 15. *He said:* Colleagues, I rise to support this motion. We call on the Government enact an overly due International Maritime Organisations United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We must ensure that all seafarers are secure in every role, in every department and in every type of vessel in which they work. The International Maritime Organisation's convention does not cover human rights at sea, let alone employment rights. The Maritime Labour Convention says that minimum conditions must apply to seafarers who are employed or engaged of work in any capacity on a ship on international routes.

The second part of the amendment emphasises the importance of a mandatory seafarers' charter as proposed by the RMT, Nautilus International and progressive employers, although

not the current Tory Government. We strongly welcome the joint statement issued on the first anniversary of the P&O sackings by Labour's Deputy Leader and union champion, Angela Rayner MP, and Shadow Transport Secretary, Louise Haigh MP, to introduce a legally binding seafarers' charter to mandate agreements between the unions, the Government and employers on minimum protections on pay, working patterns, pensions, taxation and training. This is exactly what we need to fight back against this culture of flags of convenience, and it should be a priority in the first one hundred days of a new Labour government.

We need an internationally recognised crewing model. When Grant Shapps spoke to Parliament in March 2022, he knew that the UK Shipping Register does not require the shipowners to employ UK seafarers. We need to introduce a policy to establish self-mandatory cabotage regulations to enshrine comprehensive employment rights and collective bargaining on all vessels operating between UK ports and from UK ports. This would recover ratings jobs, strengthen the maritime skill base, benefit UK ports, improving living standards and bring to an end the exploitation bonanza on merchant ships that spend most of their time in UK waters regardless of registration or nationality of crew. Please support. Thank you.

The President: Thank you. Motion 15 is in front of you, Congress. Will all of those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 15 was CARRIED.

A tipping point in the climate emergency – we need to act now

(Including Motion 16 and amendments)

The President: I call Composite 5: A tipping point in the climate emergency - we need to act now. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by UNISON, seconded by Prospect and will CSP and FBU come to the front to support.

Tony Wright (UNISON) moved Composite 5. *He said:* Congress, this July the temperature recorded in Iran was 70 degrees or 158 Fahrenheit, a level so extreme that it could test the ability of humans to survive outside for more than a few hours. The world is polluting, flooding and burning at an unprecedented rate. Mental health nurses in the UK are reporting a dramatic increase in treating children, as young as seven, with climate anxiety about their future. They are so extreme that they feel suicidal. Seven years old! Just think about that for a second. Whilst there may be far fewer climate deniers in the face of the overwhelming scale of climate-related disaster surrounding us each week, simply acknowledging the emergency is not enough. We all want to pull together and champion the urgent actions we need to take as governments, employers and as individuals to meet the challenge head on.

Congress, in the face of this emergency, this Tory Government seems to think that we can postpone action until it's a bit more convenient. This is a disgrace and it's a very dangerous game to play. Our current reckless Government seems to think that they can carry on

regardless instead of making the difficult decisions they were elected to take when facing an emergency of this scale. Worse still, they seem to think they can meet their commitments to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels by issuing a hundred new permits to extract even more.

Instead of taxing the extortionate profits made by polluting industries, they seem set to spend ever more billions each year on tax breaks to prop up the status quo with £20 billion more in subsidies going to fossil fuels than on cheaper renewables since 2015. But, Congress, as we know, without a true commitment to the necessary transition away from fossil fuels and to a carbon neutral future being a fair and just transition, it will be our most disadvantaged workers and families who will suffer the most, just as we saw in the recent Covid emergency.

However, we also have to accept that the reality of all this is a global emergency, and the solutions and transitions have to be global, too. It should be entirely unacceptable that we are beginning to talk about some countries already far more disadvantaged than our own becoming sacrificial donors. We are seeing the direct threat to basic human rights, such as the right to life, the right to food, a habitable environment affecting the most vulnerable global communities first, and environmental racism where some people's lives are more expendable than others should shame us into more urgent action.

Without encouraging and enabling global solutions, we simply won't meet these vital targets, and that brings us back to the "No jobs on a dead planet" scenario. Congress, our role as trade unions in the UK must be to throw our collective weight 'just transition' solutions both

at home and abroad, and we must be ambitious. This can't just be about the re-skilling of jobs and to imminent threats, although that is vital. We will involve the skill sector and many other areas of industry. We need to harness the purchasing power of public finance to take out the profit motive from what needs doing. We need to be vigilant and ensure that the urgency cannot be used as an excuse to drive down workers' rights, health and safety or environmental regulations, all of which is already being discussed in Whitehall. We need to re-think how families and communities can be properly protected and supported to adapt and thrive alongside the necessary changes ahead, and we need to make sure that the trade unions are at the table, both nationally and locally, when transition plans are formulated. This will be a hard road. We cannot bury our heads in the sand about that. We must ensure that transition is ethical and fair for all and that no one is left behind. The risk of failure on this is something that we simply cannot ignore. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call Prospect.

Richard Clatworthy *(Prospect)* seconded Motion 16. *He said:* Congress, the threat, this climate emergency, is becoming clearer to the world day by day. Wild fires have raged this summer from the devastation in Hawaii to Europe's largest ever wild fire in Greece burning an area bigger than New York City. Closer to home last year, we saw the mercury soar above 40 degrees for the first time ever, and more frequent and intense weather extremes are becoming the norm now. I don't know about you, I can imagine that climate deniers are happy that this is just an anomaly.

Prospect members are critical to dealing with the climate crisis, not just those working in nuclear and renewable energy, who will help to secure our transition to becoming the clean energy superpower, but also our climate and environmental workforce. They are the forecasters in the Met Office to providing early warning for potentially deadly extreme weather events. While the environmental managers at the Environment Agency are responding to major incidents like flash flooding, the scientists at Natural England are fighting to reverse biodiversity decline and realise the future of nature recovery. We have a spectacular array of highly-skilled specialist roles across dozens of agencies, but what they have in common is more than a decade of funding cuts and threats to hiring experts to deal with this emergency. To fight this crisis we need the very best experts working in the Government, but these experts are being driven out of these agencies by savage real-term pay cuts. They are deeply committed public servants and they cannot be expected to stay in their jobs as their incomes are eroded year after year, because pay, not passion, puts food on the table. When we surveyed more than 700 of our environmental specialists earlier this year, poor pay and a lack of progression was cited again and again as the overriding calls of astonishingly poor workforce morale. It is no wonder that many are voting with their feet. A majority of respondents reported vacancies in their teams and difficulties in recruiting to fill them, which leads to hugely increased workloads, working hours and untrained staff who are assigned tasks which need to be completed by experienced specialists. The reliance on an overworked and unpaid workforce cannot go on any longer. The future of our country and our planet is at stake. Congress, please speak with one voice in support of this motion, and

push the Government for the investment we need in our climate and environmental workforce to secure our future. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: CSP.

Sam Grover (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapists*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 5.

He said: Congress, the health consequences of a climate breakdown demand our attention. Consider the impact of air pollution especially on those living with respiratory illnesses. It would be easy to declare that we are all in this together, to believe that we all face the same danger whether from inner-city smoke or global wildfires. If truth be told, it is our most marginalised communities that suffer the most from climate change, pollution and loss of nature.

In the United Kingdom it is our most deprived communities, often with higher proportions of black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals who reside in areas with poor air quality. Within these neighbourhoods, the most affected are children and older people. It is they who experience a heightened risk of illness, respiratory exacerbations and allergic reactions. The journey to net zero cannot be separated from social injustice and equality. Our members working in respiratory services know this all too well, which is why the CSP is working with partners to progress clean-air policies where they are needed most. But air pollution is just one phase of this crisis. We must also address the depletion of nature and biodiversity.

A diverse and accessible natural world is essential for pharmacology, physical activity, mental health and respiratory health. The loss of public open space limits access to physical activity, worsening the global surge in non-communicable diseases. So we endorse initiatives towards net zero and ecological recovery, but we also insist that workers are central to establishing, implementing and tracking these initiatives.

Let's look at healthcare itself, which involves significant use of energy, land and scarce materials. Indeed, 5% of global carbon emissions are related to health services. Recognising this, it is, of course, imperative that healthcare services act to attain net zero, but if these actions were implemented as top-down, command and control measures, they would be ineffective at best. At worst, they could be counter-productive. This is why in 2022 my union's governing council declared a climate natural emergency and supported to work to address the impact of healthcare on the environment and nature. What can be the case in healthcare can be the case in wider society so, Congress, please support this motion.

(Applause)

Jamie Newell (*Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in support of the composite motion. *He said:* Comrades, we are at a turning point where urgent action needs to be taken. The FBU has been working on this issue since 2009. Sometimes it is the trade unions working globally to influence governments and employers who hold the levers of power to take action. Our jobs it mobilise our members, to galvanise our unions and to work alongside climate activists to for the powers which have the option to make change and change direction.

Fire-fighters have been on the frontline of this crisis for decades now, and I pay tribute to those fire-fighters who have been fighting huge wild fires in Scotland and Wales this year and to those who deal with extreme weather events as part of their daily work who respond to flood events with other agencies backing. For us climate change is not just a matter of politics or ergonomics. It is an industrial and safety issue that fire-fighters are already facing and responding to. If you cast your minds back to last July – I am sure you remember the heatwave – there were significant wild fires that took hold in the UK. Fifteen fire and rescue services declared major incidents. Five of these were problems within my region. At one stage we had fire engines from Merseyside in Norfolk battling to put out fires because the crews down there were exhausted and there were no resources left. We had fire engines taken out of museums that were 30 years old to assist in putting out fires that took place there. We lost 14 homes. Chiefs called it unprecedented. If it was just one degree lower, it was just another hot day, and it exposed the fragility of the fire and rescue services.

A regional report by the London Fire Brigade also reaffirmed substantially what the Fire Brigades Union had said that they had run out of fire-fighters and they had run out of fire engines. There were 39 fire engines unavailable that day due to the lack of fire-fighters on duty. They lost 40 homes. That's one fire engine for every home that was lost. Wild fires consumed businesses and homes across the country. Wild fires are a reality. We thank those members who responded to flooding events as well throughout the year. From flooded basements in single homes to washed out High Streets, fire-fighters respond to this out-of-role work because no one else can. We help to protect and preserve the critical national

infrastructure and minimise disruption to our everyday lives. I have a story rich in its own dark waters, where a young man lost his life due to contaminated water run-off in his own home. We have warned for two decades about the risk of flood with our extreme weather. The Government must believe that we all live in yellow submarines.

To close, the risk of climate change is clear. We have to commit the strength of our unions into this fight. We need investment in public services, we need investment in the Fire Service. The trade union movement must play its part. Let's recommit ourselves today, that when Congress is finished and we go back to our branches, we must take the message back from all of our members. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: The last speaker in this debate will be Unite.

Cliff Bone *(Unite the Union)* spoke in support of Composite 5 and for my neighbours in the oil and gas industries. *He said:* Congress, this motion raises important ideas about what our movement can do to meet the climate crisis head on, but the reality is that we must start by recognising that a green future will not be won on the conference floor or on the shop floor.

From the North Sea to the refineries, it is the workers in these industries who have the power to move their employer and transition their industries to a green future within decarbonised workplaces. But, Congress, we can only do that with your full support. That means a strategy based on the power of collective bargaining and the principle of defending every job. When

we talk to these workers, whose jobs, livelihood and communities are all too often disregarded in these debates, we have to look them in the eye and show them that we are serious. That means ambitious and credible industrial plans to defend every single job here and how. We understand the need to decarbonise in our sector and we are working hard to deliver long-term green manufacturing jobs that support our communities because, Congress, we know what happens with so-called transition strategies that don't put workers first. The experience of the miners and the cruelty with which their industry and communities were destroyed has haunted our movement for a generation. We must not allow that to be repeated today.

We cannot see that devastation ushered in in Aberdeenshire, Humberside or Pembrokeshire just so we can end up importing fossil fuels at a greater expense in money and, indeed, and in emissions. I believe that nobody at this Congress wants to see a repeat of the past. We need and demand a just transition for workers and for their communities. That is why we must demand fully-costed plans with cast-iron guarantees for protecting jobs. This means plans for creating like-for-like jobs or better, which are endorsed and led by workers in these industries. The principle is simple. "Nothing about us or without us". We cannot abandon these working class communities. Congress, we support this composite. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, composite 5 is before you. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 5 was CARRIED.

Charting a just transition for maritime professionals

The President: I call Motion 17: Charting a just transition for maritime professionals. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Nautilus International and seconded by Prospect.

Martin Grey (*Nautilus International*) moved Motion 17. *He said:* President, Congress and colleagues, this motion concerns charting a just transition for maritime professionals. We heard in the last debate that climate change is a very real event, and I believe I need not repeat aspects of that. So let me take you forward to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, it being a major step in tackling the climate crisis, but noting that our industry of shipping and other industries, including aviation, were notably absent from the contents of the agreement. In fact, only in July of this year had the International Maritime Organisation agreed to reach net zero for greenhouse gas emissions around 2050. As many shipowners and employers begin to invest in new and alternative fuels and innovative technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it falls on us as unions to ensure that these challenges are done in a just and equitable way that improves the working lives of our members. However, just and equitable cannot be buzz words on a page and they must mean something. They must have a real-life application. The key question for all of us in this room is what does “Just” mean for our unions and for our members?

For Nautilus members and for maritime professionals, we believe that there are three key components to ensure a timely, democratic, safe, equitable and, ultimately, just transition. Firstly, we have to ensure that no one is left behind as technologies and fuels evolve. This means supporting skills and training, ensuring that maritime professionals, wherever they are in their career, can access the training and skills needed to continue doing the job they love at no cost to them. We believe that there should be a fund in the UK, like the one we have successfully championed in The Netherlands. This fund supports those for whom, for whatever reason, cannot make the transition into a decarbonised economy. We need to future-proof the skills and training. We must support young people so that they can consider careers in our maritime sector, remove barriers to access to ensure that trainees, who are predominantly young workers, receive fair compensation for their time at work. Secondly, for this to be a just transition, it must have the health and safety of workers at its heart. This means having the voice of workers in the room where decisions are made. The move to alternative fuels for new technologies will bring about its own distinct risks with potential increases in toxicity, flammability and explosivity of new fuels. To ensure that implementation is done with seafarers' safety at its heart, the people who will live and operate these ships must be consulted in the design and procurement of these vessels.

Safety also means international regulations as soon as possible on the handling and implementation of these alternative fuels to make sure that every possible safety measure is taking place, including appropriate PPE that fits all workers and is suitable for all body types.

There must be no compromises on safety, particularly at sea and especially when it comes to a just transition.

Thirdly, the transition must be just about technologies and fuels. We must use this opportunity to address long-standing injustices and usher in a new deal for seafarers, who are cautious of this transition being used as an excuse for shipowners and employers in general to cut jobs, to reduce pay and to increase tours of duty, thereby further exploiting seafarers, precarious workers and continuing a race to the bottom. Colleagues, we are at a crunch point as the world changes to mitigate the worst aspects of climate change. We cannot let the transition be the preserve of corporations, governments, shipowners and employers. We must fight for a transition that is just and equitable to ensure that no one is left behind. Finally, let us work together across unions, across industries and across nations to share resources, to share knowledge and to bring about a brighter, better and sustainable future to secure the planet with securing workers' rights. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call Prospect to second.

Sue Ferns (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 17. *She said:* Congress, I also want to focus for a moment on that phrase "Just transition". It's language is recognised internationally and features a fair amount in policy documents, and that's important. But what does it really mean, and crucially when will it actually happen? Bankers and industry leaders have adopted the language – I've heard them – but I can tell you that they interpret it in their own interest. The people who don't talk so much about it, if we are honest, are the workers – our members,

whose jobs will be affected – are already being affected by the need to decarbonise our economy. This needs to change. We have to move beyond the policy jargon to address the real-life concerns about members. So, to the credit of Nautilus International, we must re-focus our minds on this key issue, after a summer in which the climate crisis has been all too scarily evident. As the motion states: “A process of just transition must address issues of skills, pay and health and safety”. Congress, this is our core bargaining agenda. Whatever language you wrap it up in, it’s our issue.

In the short term, supply chains, workforce diversity and community benefit will need real and sustained political leadership. For that, Congress, we need a change of government to one that is willing to work with us to achieve it. Quite simply, a transition that doesn’t provide the good jobs for all involved is not a just transition. For maritime professionals, to workers in energy, manufacturing, steel and many more, let’s stop talking about ‘Just transition’ and let’s make it happen. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, I am now going to take the vote on Motion 17. Will all those in favour, please indicate? Will all those against, please indicate? That is carried.

Motion 17 was CARRIED.

Unplug the profiteers: the case for public democratic ownership of energy.

The President: I call paragraphs 2.1 and 2.2 of the General Council's Report. We move on to Motion 18: Unplug the profiteers: the case for public democratic ownership of energy. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Unite and seconded by RMT.

Sharon Graham (*Unite*) moved Motion 18. *She said:* Conference and delegates, I am the Unite General Secretary. (*Applause*) Let me start by saying solidarity from this hall to all of our members in all of our unions who are on strike right now. Many representatives are here today and many of you are taking action for the very first time. We stand with you. Victory to the strikes and solidarity to you all. (*Cheers and applause*)

I want to thank the reps in our movement and the reps in our movement in this hall for the confidence that you have given to workers for standing tall when you were tested, for putting the stake in the ground, for putting money back in workers' pockets and for showing that *this* is the real power of the trade union movement, in this room and rooms like it! Because – make no mistake – collective bargaining is still the tried and tested method of pushing up pay. It's what they really fear, not table talk but purposeful action at the point of production. Friends, at Unite we have had over 900 disputes covering 200,000 Unite members in the last 18 months, and we have won more than 80% of those disputes, with £400 million going back into workers' wallets. We are levelling the playing field, using forensic accountancy and leverage, and paying out £32 million in strike pay. Unite has put our money where our mouth is, and that's our members in dispute. This is our focus.

But when we began to try and do this we were told to back off, that workers asking for a pay rise was an absolute national disgrace, that they were driving up inflation. Friends, they were told this by the same people who clapped the City like seals before the last financial crash, a crash they never saw coming. Well, friends, we are not taking any lessons from the Pied Pipers of the establishment, because it wasn't wages pushing up inflation, it was rampant profiteering on an unprecedented scale. *(Applause and cheers)* In no sector was this more evident than in energy, a broken market that chose to swallow £45 billion in profit rather than cut household bills. Friends, the price hikes delivered are toxic double-whammies of rising costs and further pay cuts, and it ended with the absolute farce of workers being told to tighten their belts while City bonuses soared. But none of this was inevitable.

There were clear choices. There are clear choices. Energy privatisation has failed; pure and simple! It has crippled our communities and what remains of our industrial base. There is only one credible answer, and that is we need to take our energy back into public hands! *(Applause and cheers)* Friends, don't let anyone tell you that we cannot afford it. It would cost just £90 billion to take our energy back into public ownership. We are a £2.5 trillion economy. Of course, it is affordable. It's a choice.

But, friends, it does seem that our politicians are pro nationalisation as long as it is another country doing the owning. Where is Labour on this issue? Where are they on this issue? They cannot be on the same wobbly fence that sometimes they are on with the other issues

we are trying to abolish. Here our economy is broken. People are suffering right now. We are in the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades. This is the time to be bold. It is not 1997. There is no point in grasping for a policy mix stuffed down the back of a 1990s sofa, too timid to talk of hope and too conservative to make change. Whilst spending limits become austerity light, when they refuse to even discuss taking back control of our national assets, and you are watering down your own policies to give workers a real voice. If you lose sight of what you are in there to do, then you are not seeing whose side you should be on and what we created before. *(Applause)*

Friends, we have heard it said that we should not push Labour out, that we should trust them, that it'll be all right on the night and don't make any waves. Just keep going! But, Congress, we have been down this road before. We cannot wait for jam tomorrow. I am sorry, but with the rowing back of workers' rights, I'm not in a very trusting mood. The challenges we face are just too big to leave to the timid. Workers cannot right, and if politicians won't do what is required then we have to take actions ourselves and become a real workers' movement so that our influence is not just waving money but it is also waving the mobilisation of people, of workers, for the policies we propose.

So, friends, let's be bold and not retreat. Let's walk the path of prestige for long-term opportunities. This is in our hands; it's in this hall. Let us be the change that we so often demand from others. Friends, the flame flickers anew. Let's rise up together. See you on the picket line. Solidarity. *(Cheers and applause)*

The President: To be seconded by the RMT. John.

John Lynch (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) seconded Motion 18.

He said: I am very proud to stand up *here* and support this resolution with our specific amendment and encouragement everything that Sharon has just said to you, calling for the public ownership of energy and that we are living in a world that can easily afford it, should afford it and has a moral obligation to deliver for our class of people, the people who we represent.

Our specific amendments talk about two specific issues in this resolution, but I would also say that in the last 12 to 18 months my union, alongside others, has been in continuous industrial activity with strikes all over the railways. I salute our own from the rostrum because we are in it until we win it. We are still going strong, and there are all these other issues that we are talking about with the railways, but *this* is about energy.

One of the other areas of our activity that we have been involved in is, of course, in the offshore oil and gas sector where we have had strikes this year as well by our members in Acquire, Horsted and Vattenfall. But, you see, it's two worlds that we are working in. If you work in that sector and you come under the Scandinavian countries you'll have sectoral bargaining. You don't have that if you work under employment law in this country, and we are calling, which is what this specific amendment talks about, for the "use of sectoral

collective bargaining, public ownership to assist 'Just transition' in the offshore energy sector, a guarantee of retaining unionised jobs in equivalent terms and conditions". What we need is that everywhere. We need it in this country as well as the other places.

Also we are talking about nailing down that incoming Labour Government to include fair pay agreements being introduced through sectoral collective bargaining across the economy as soon as possible in Labour's first term. We demand that now. We are proud to support this resolution. They are getting stuck in along with all the rest of the other members of the RMT across the United Kingdom's economy fighting back against inequality and poverty. I salute them. I salute every single one of the members who we are representing this week at this year's TUC Congress. Let's stay in it till we win it. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

The President: Motion 18 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 18 was CARRIED.

Industrial action and protecting our right to strike

The President: Congress, we are going on to Section 1 on Industrial action and protecting our right to strike. I intend to take this in this afternoon's debate on paragraphs 1.1 to 1.5 of the

General Council Report on the right to strike and including rights as follows. I will be taking Composite 1, Campaign against the Minimum Service Levels Legislation, and Motion 1, Trade union and employment rights as one debate. I will be calling the mover and seconder of Composite 1 first. Then I will be calling the mover and seconder of Motion 1 before calling further speakers on both motions. At the end of the debate, I will take a vote on Composite 1 and then a separate vote on Motion 1.

Campaign against the Minimum Service Levels (MSLs) Legislation

(Including Motion 2 and amendments, Motion 3 and amendment and Motion 4)

I call Composite 1: Campaign against the Minimum Service Levels Legislation.

The General Council supports the composite. I will call on Paddy Lillis to explain the position of the General Council. It will be moved by NASUWT, seconded by RMT, and supported by FBU, UNISON, NEU and BDA. I call on Patrick from NASUWT to move the composite.

Patrick Roach (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) moved Composite 1. *He said:* Congress, I am proud to be moving Composite 1: Campaign against the Minimum Service Levels Legislation. Let's be clear that we are united in working together and campaigning together to defeat this Government's attacks on working people, on children, families and communities. This is a Government that has lost any shred of decency, a Government that has so lost the argument that it retreats to using illegal and immoral tactics to try and defeat us, a Government that made it a priority to enact draconian anti-trade union legislation rather than be on the side of workers in challenging unscrupulous working practices, a Government that did nothing

when P&O egregiously sacked workers and continues to preside over the rampant use of fire-and-rehire practices by bad bosses, a Government that told mums and dads up and down the country to put up and shut up when they are unable to put food on the table to feed their children all because of the cost-of-living crisis made in No. 10 Downing Street. What a disgrace!

After 13 years of failure, this Government of law breakers, now wants to break the will of working people and we will not stand by and let that happen. This is one of the most egregious, pernicious, spiteful and vindictive pieces of legislation. Minimum Service Levels! What minimum service when the Government's systematic assault on our public services has left our key workers broken, our schools crumbling, unable to recruit and retain teachers, head teachers and support staff, and pushed our NHS and other public services to the brink of collapse. It is this Government that have failed to maintain the minimum service levels needed to protect the public. It's them, not us, not our members!

So forget about Tory work notices. We are putting this Government on notice that we will defeat this legislation in our workplaces, in our communities and in the ILO. (*Applause*) Congress, there are those out *there* who will say that the campaign of resistance is all about law breaking by trade unions, but I say this. Our movement is built on resistance, and our resistance is the hope for working people. It is the Government who are on the wrong side of the law, and we are the ones on the right side of history. Let's remember that it was this Government that was found guilty in the High Court for breaking the law when they tried to

force agency workers to be used to break strikes. We resisted that legislation, we took the Government to court, we defeated them, we won and we'll do it again, Congress. *(Applause)*

Congress, we have also defeated their Trade Union Act in the thousands of disputes that we have organised throughout the length and breadth of the country, overcoming arbitrary ballot thresholds, never giving up, never giving in and a victory for every one of our members standing together and refusing to comply with this Government. We have refused to be silenced. We have refused to be cowed by their threats and intimidation and we continue to fight for a better deal for our members, including with our, the NASUWT's, national action next week. No anti-trade union laws will ever stop us from taking action to protect our members. The NASUWT is committed to working with every other union to resist any measures and any laws intended to break the will of our members because, Congress, we will not stop until this legislation is defeated, consigned to the dustbin of history, and we will not stop until this Government are sent packing, too. *(Applause)*

Congress, let's campaign together, organise together, defeat this wicked legislation and win a better deal for all workers. Congress, thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call Mick Lynch from the RMT.

Mick Lynch *(National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* seconded Composite 1.

He said: Delegates, if you want to know what the Tories are about, they've got this leaflet

out from our friends in the Institute of Employment Rights, and it shows the continuous oppression and suppression of our rights in this country. For 40 years we've had these laws. If we don't get rid of this lot, we are going to get more because they will find a way to bring in more legislation that has stopped us doing what we need to do. Why I want to concentrate on seconding this composite is what is in it. We need to deliver the contents of this motion. What it is talking about is non-cooperation and non-compliance with this legislation. Anyone in this movement who thinks that this is just going to go away if we keep quiet has got another think coming because the legislation they have put in and the regulations they will write can be adopted right across this economy in every sector. If we don't stop them and defeat them, they will intend to push it further.

Let's not forget, the Labour Party is committed to repealing this legislation in the first one hundred days. That doesn't mean it's going to be gone by the end of next year. We could be well into 2025 before we see this legislation off the statute book. If we seek to comply with that, where are our disputes going to go? Where will our actions be? The mandate that the RMT now has with the TOCs could be covered by this legislation if the Tories get their act together, and the notion that we will be issued with a work notice and that we will identify our members and tell them to go to work, and that will tell our rank and file picket supervisors to instruct their work mates to go past their own picket line is a nonsense. We will not be complying with that. We will not accept it. *(Applause)* Our stance is non-compliance. That's what it says and that's what we have got to deliver. Non-cooperation and non compliance. We need a special Congress which is in this motion, it needs to be called as quickly as we know the details of what they are going to bring in and we have to work out exactly what we are

going to do to non-comply as this resolution and motion says. So let's not accept this meekly. To meet compliance with this legislation is the road to oblivion for this movement. Nobody remembers those who complied with oppression. People remember the Tolpuddle Martyrs, people remember the Chartists, people remember 1926 and the miners' strike not because they gave in but because they fought back. That's what we have to do. We are going to fight for working people. We will defeat them at the workplace and on the streets. We want mass mobilisation of the British working class. Let's see it, and let's see the TUC lead that fightback, and it has to start straightaway. Thank you very much. Please support. *(Applause)*

Matt Wrack (*Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in support of Composite 1. *He said:* Congress, I was very pleased having taken part in the compositing process to produce the document that is in front of you. I think it is probably one of the most important strategic discussions that we will have this week because it affects the entire future of our movement and the ability of workers to resist and defend their pay, their rights and their conditions.

Let us remind ourselves of the policies of this Congress are to see the back of all anti-union laws, and we need to send that message to the Labour Party as well. This is a pernicious and undemocratic piece of anti-union and anti-worker legislation. In the Fire and Rescue Service it, effectively, means a strike ban. The Government are still deciding what a minimum service level will mean in the Fire and Rescue Service. They conducted, as they have in other sectors, a consultation on this. Under Option 2 of the Home Office Consultation, the MFL for fire-fighters was as high as 90% of staff, with a middle ground softer position of 77% of staff required to work. That's what minimum service levels supposedly mean for us. That is,

effectively, a strike ban. The Home Office admitted to us that in certain sectors of our industry, in Emergency Fire Controls, for example, who take calls and mobilise fire engines, that in some cases there are two or three people on duty, and a minimum service level would mean 100% of workers required to work to provide a minimum service level. That is what this will mean in our sector. It's effectively a strike ban.

The truth is that fire-fighters, like all workers, take seriously the question of going on strike and the consequences of that, but sometimes to defend our pay, to defend our pensions and to stop cuts it is what we have to do, and we have seen a marvellous strike wave as workers across the country have stood up and defended themselves over the past years. We should not apologise for it. We should praise them and stand together in solidarity.

We need to be clear, Conference, about the scale of this attack, and that is why we raised the question of non-compliance within the composite. We welcome the pledge from Labour that they will repeal this within 100 days of taking office, but we need to demand of Labour no backsliding, and the strong position from this Congress to an incoming government is to say, unanimously, following this composite, that we will defeat this legislation and we will not allow it to be introduced. *(Applause)* Congress, we have no alternative but to defeat the legislation, support the composite and build a strike wave. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, Matt. UNISON.

Nicky Ramanand (*UNISON*) spoke in support of the composite. *She said:* Congress, this Act was the Government's response to ordinary workers asking for the best pay during a crushing cost-of-living crisis. It gives employers to sack any worker who takes part in lawful industrial action. It is not just an attack on a union trying to take strike action, but a fundamental attack on democracy. It is an attempt to maintain the fear of unions to take any strike action at all. It is an attempt to intimidate ordinary workers, like myself, from every voting again to go on strike. It is the last of a long line of attacks on trade unions and ordinary trade unionists. But within UNISON we saw our ambulance members break through the threshold and to take sustained action. Having stood on a picket line with our ambulance members it was obvious that it was the last resort for them. They are passionate about the quality of care they provide, and they knew their only resort was to take on the Government. They did it and they won. This terrible Act will not shorten waiting lists, increase pay, solve recruitment or retention problems and it will not resource or strengthen public service delivery. It will worsen industrial relations and it will reduce goodwill. It makes ordinary public service workers the scapegoat for this Government's mistakes. Instead of acting in this damaging way, the Government could have focused on dealing with the real problems facing public services in this country. It is an attack on the very people's goodwill, hard work, unpaid overtime and dedication that keeps public services afloat.

UNISON members would welcome minimum staffing levels in the NHS every day all year round. Instead their proposals for minimum service levels in the Ambulance Service would actually cut across existing arrangements for life and limb and endanger patient safety.

Congress, as our victory in the High Court on agency workers showed, we will defend our members and we will defend our right to strike against a Government that a judge found acted in an unlawful, unfair and irrational way. That is a perfect description of the action they are doing. Today we are putting the Government on notice. We will fight this. We will challenge them in every arena available to us, and this composite outlines the way forward to do this. Please support and continue to fight. *(Applause)*

The President: NEU.

Emma Rose (*National Education Union*) spoke in support of the composite. *She said:* Congress, I am President of the National Education Union and a secondary school teacher. When I first started teaching, teaching GCSEs, we were told there was no such thing as a pass or a fail. Every grade counted. That was the brilliant thing about GCSEs. Then league tables came in, and in order to rank schools we were told it was only 5A* to C that mattered. It was only important that you got your 5A* to C. Then they told us, “Actually, now we are only going to count it as 5A* to C, including English and Maths”. Then the English Baccalaureate comes in. It has to be 5A* to C including English and Maths, plus a science, plus a humanity and plus a modern language.

Then Progress A came in, and it included a tranche of subjects that mattered and others that didn't matter so much. It felt as a teacher that every time we got good at playing the game and getting our students the passes that were required, the goalposts shifted. It feels that

this is what the Government are doing with the anti-trade union laws now. Let's get really clear. They brought in the anti-trade union legislation with their punitive ballot thresholds to make it impossible, or at least very, very difficult, for us to strike. During the past year or more, more and more of us have shown that we are not going to listen to those ballot thresholds. We are not going to take notice of them because we have organised, we have fought back, we have been to those ballot thresholds and more and more of us are taking strike action than ever before over this last period.

But the Government are now moving the goal posts again, and they are wanting to make it even more difficult for us to take that strike action. So what they want to do now is to make it impossible. Our members have taken eight days strike action during the past year. They were really clear that it was on their pay. As professionals we should be paid properly, but it was also on funding, but we are not allowed to strike on funding and very soon they will make it impossible for us to strike on pay as well.

When I first heard about the Minimum Service Level Agreement, I thought, "Great, I really want to talk about that as well", because at the moment there are far too many people in our schools who are not getting a minimum service level because of these Government cuts that have gone on for the last 13 years. Does the Government care about a minimum service level when the under-funding of our schools during the past 13 years or more has led to thousands of children not being in school at the moment because the ceilings are going to fall on their heads? Does the Government care about a minimum service level when SEND children do not have proper school places or an appropriate decision? Does the Government

care about minimum service levels when a lot of our children don't have specialist teachers because of the recruitment and pensions crisis? Does the Government care about minimum service levels when some classes have 34 pupils or more? Does the Government care about minimum service levels when there are 90 students in a hall being taught by one teacher at a time? So let's talk about minimum service levels. I am sure that all of us here will have examples from our sectors as how minimum service levels cannot be delivered at the moment because of the Government austerity measures during the past 13 years.

So let's take *this*. It can't just be words on a page. We need a strategy. Nothing has ever been given to us. We have had to fight for every single thing we have got. Everything we have fought for cannot be taken for granted. We have to defend what we have. So let's go from here with a commitment to build, to fight and to beat this Government. (*Applause*)

The President: I call the BDA.

Annette Mansell-Green (*British Dietetic Association*) spoke in support of Composite 1. *She said:* Congress, if we don't mobilise behind this fight against this legislation we might as well get our coats. I can't remember a time when trade unions haven't been under attack from the flurry of anti-trade union legislation in the 1980s and the 1990s Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act, which at the time was described by somebody as the most restrictive trade union laws in the western world. Who was that? Tony Blair! So it must have been bad, comrades. However, he did nothing to improve things for us, did he? We have been

under attack through our history and here we are again fighting for our lives against the latest of threat -- Minimum Service Levels – and anti-trade union law. Make no mistake, this has nothing to do with services and everything to do with stopping us from taking industrial action. For the last year's industrial action across the public and private sectors, the response of Government is to bring in this draconian legislation rather than engage, listen and find reasonable settlements.

I thought I was living in a free and democratic society, one where fundamental rights to withdraw our labour and to protest were respected. Comrades, BDA members have not voted for strike action since 2011 but, as I said earlier, they have reached a point where they felt there was no other option if we were to see any progress on pay. So, effectively, they banned their right to strike by threatening them with dismissal if they didn't cross picket lines is absolutely appalling. To suggest that NHS staff working in other services would put people's lives at risk is, frankly, insulting. We always take a balanced approach to derogations and always put patients first.

Comrades, this is a political act, an existential threat to our movement and part of a long-term strategy to neuter us. This legislation is confused, unworking and, very likely, illegal. Today's announcement that the TUC is taking a hard line by reporting the Government to the ILO is very, very welcome. We need a repeal of all anti-trade union laws, including the 2016 Act with its thresholds, and we must have electronic ballots.

I am pleased with the Labour commitment to repeal this law, and I say to them that we will hold you to account. I say to this Government, “If you want a fight, bring it on”, or as we say in Birmingham, “Come and have a go if you think your hard enough”. (*Applause*)

The President: I call on Paddy Lillis to give the General Council’s explanation to composite 1.

Paddy Lillis (*General Council*) said: Congress, I am speaking on behalf of the General Council. The General Council supports the composite motion with an explanation. This composite sets out the General Council’s steadfast opposition to anti-trade union legislation and the Government’s strike Act. It sets out the General Council’s commitment to opposing unjust minimum service level laws up to and including a strategy of non-compliance and non-cooperation to make them unworkable.

The motion commits the General Council to a set of actions including legally challenging the legislation, supporting affiliates whose unions and members are sanctioned for non-compliance, building coalitions, the campaign for non-compliance and against other restrictive trade union legislation, and organising a special Congress to explore options for non-compliance and resistance. Much of the details of the legislation is yet to be determined with the Government not yet having legislated on the set action levels of minimum services or finalising a statutory code of practice. The special congress would play an important role in assessing how the General Council should best defeat the legislation as it emerges, including the time and the nature of any demonstration or march. The campaign approaches

and will determine what the risks and opportunities around different strategies of non-compliance and resistance. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Trade union and employment rights

The President: I now move on to Motion 1, which is going to be moved and seconded before we take further contributions in this debate. The General Council supports the motion with a reservation, which Paddy will outline later, but at the moment we are going to hear motion 1 to be moved by Unite.

Patricia Roach *(Unite the Union)* moved Motion 1. *She said:* Congress, hopefully we are in the last year of Tory misrule, and how typical is it that they are choosing to use the last of their allotted time to attack workers and their trade unions in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis? The Minimum Service Level Bill is a Tory attack on the ability of critical workers to strike and in the industries of transport and nuclear energy. To paraphrase the Scottish play: “Nothing in their time in power”. See Act 5, scene 1. This is why my union, Unite, is also fully supportive of Composite Motion 1, which concerns the Minimum Service Levels. This motion demands of Labour that any incoming government must repeal all anti-trade union laws within 12 months of gaining office. Let us hope that this comes to pass.

Congress, this motion is also proposing the devolution of employment law to Scotland, a position that I, on the part of the General Council, have agreed to support.

My union, Unite, is clear within our manifesto that this is about replacing and not undercutting employment law in other parts of the UK. In a letter to the Scottish Labour Party, this is a call for the devolution of employment rights with the UK to encourage a race to the top on workers' terms and conditions. What trade unionist could object to that?

Time and again, workers in Scotland are subject to anti-trade union and anti-worker legislation to which the Tories have a zero-democratic mandate. Time and again, when Scottish trade unions are supporting the Scottish Parliament, they are blocked by Westminster. To take an example, the Scottish Parliament has been moved to support the increase in the minimum wage and to mandate the Scottish living wage, but it has been blocked by the Tories in Westminster. Secondly, the Scottish Parliament has been moved to support abandoning zero-hour contracts and the introduction of sectoral collective bargaining, but it has been blocked due to reserved powers. There is no guarantee that Scotland will be any less restricted to reserve powers after the General Election. All anti-union legislation should be scrapped in every corner of every nation. Congress, there is an opportunity in Scotland right now for better laws which are blocked in other parts of the UK. Thank you, please support. *(Applause)*

The President: Equity to second.

Paul Flemming (*Equity*). *He said:* Congress, I am the General Secretary of Equity. Thank you, Congress, who would have had it on their Congress bingo card for Equity to be opposing minimum service levels and Unite to be quoting the Scottish play? That is what I call inter-union solidarity. (*Applause*)

Congress, we have a Tory Government that hates red tape. They hate red tape when they could have saved lives in Grenfell Tower. They hate red tape when they could have saved our schools from collapsing. They hate red tape when it is about protecting workers' rights and health and safety, but they love red tape when it is stuck on a red flag. In 1980 Margaret Thatcher's Government took away our rights to secondary solidarity action. In 1988 they banned our closed shop. In 1992 they introduced penalties for trade unions that are by far the most restrictive in the western world, something Tony Blair said with pride in 1997. In 2016 they introduced a threat of the ballot in our strike action, and in 2022 they banned noisy protests.

When we had a Labour Government the last time round, they said, "Don't worry about the fetters that the trade unions are bound by, because we will give you minimum wages, we will give you minimum regulations, which the Tories have turned to dust over the course of the past 15 years.

Where does that leave Equity's 50,000 members, the overwhelming majority of whom are self-employed? It leaves them with no statutory rights as self-employed workers to sick pay,

maternity pay and paternity pay. They have no rights to challenge a dismissal for being unfair unless they have been employed for two years or more, when the average theatre production lasts less than eight weeks. But only Equity members do have those rights. 85% of the people you see on TV, on film and stage are Equity members. When they work on our collective agreements, they have those rights to sick pay, maternity pay, paternity pay and the right to challenge a dismissal for being unfair from the day that they start work. How do they have them? It's because we bargained for them. We won them. That is a consequence of a strong union. *(Applause)*

Equity's success shows the fruits of having unfettered and strong unions, and unions in this room have shown that during the past few years. They set a barrier, we smash it. They set up a hurdle, we reach it. But alongside that cry, we must remember that things could be different. In the United States right now, our sister unions, like WGA, are taking actions after balloting their members once, achieving a threshold of less than 50%, and their Executive deciding at noon that they are going on strike and the action starts at midnight. That is not some socialist dream. That is the strength of California in the United States. That is the alternative that we could have in this country if a Labour Government empowers trade unions to get down to the job that we are there to do.

What Congress would not support devolved administrations who are more supportive of social justice than Westminster, who are more supportive of workers' rights and who know that strong workers' lead to a strong economy? Why would not unfetter them and empower them, too?

Equity's agreements are strong and they will not be used to undermine the actions of our sister union in the United States. We know, as a movement, alongside the FTUC, we will ensure that any devolution does not result in a weakening or undermining of rights across this country. Conference, I am proud to second this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Conference, I call on Paddy Lillis to outline the reservation from the General Council.

Paddy Lillis *(General Council Member)* said: Congress, the General Council supports the motion with a reservation. In supporting further devolution, the General Council would want to avoid any danger of undermining workers' rights across the UK or in any region or nation of the United Kingdom. Devolution must be accompanied by clear commitments to raise the protections given to workers across the UK, and must not reductions of protections in any nation. Crucially, any new settlement on the devolution of employment rights must also be undertaken with the full involvement of trade unions at the UK level and in the devolved nations. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, Paddy. We have several people who have indicated that they want to speak in the debate, which is going to be on both the composite and Motion 1. First to speak in the debate is going to be EIS, but can PCS, CWU, GMB and ASLEF come to the front.

Mike Dolan (*EIS, Educational Institute of Scotland*) spoke in support of the Motion. *He said:*

We will call on the support of the General Council for this motion. The motion goes to the heart of the freedom of workers to be represented through trade unions. In times of crisis for a workforce, the strongest weapon we have is the threat to and the action of withdrawing our labour. This is a basic human right and a fundamental principle of any democratic society, a right which we exercised this year to win our members the best pay deal that they have had in 20 years through five days of strike action. (*Applause*)

For decades now we have seen the concerted efforts of Government and business to restrict the rights of workers. The attack on pay is now being followed by a further attack on the rights to fight for a fair wage. We are witnessing the dismantling of every part of the public sector and we need to maintain the right to fight back. This motion creates a strategy to use the devolving of employment law to the Scottish Parliament as a challenge to the vicious Tory Government. It can offer the workers' movement in Scotland the opportunity to play their part in building a platform of opposition for all workers in Britain. This is not about the politics of separatism. The EIS is an entirely Scottish-based union, representing almost 65,000 teachers and lecturers. We have strong working relationships with our sister trade unions in other parts of the UK, and it is our policy to campaign for the devolution of employment law, which is supported by Scottish Labour and the SNP. There is a long-standing existence of a separate legal system with different regulatory bodies.

In Scotland the Tories last had a majority in 1955, and currently it has around 20% of the vote when polled. We have all seen the damage that successive Tory Governments have done to workers' rights. With such a small Tory vote in Scotland, it creates an opportunity to build a benchmark employment law to benefit all the UK. Please support the motion and send a message to this Tory Government that the strategy to fight back starts here. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: PCS.

Davina Camaro *(PCS)* spoke in support of Motion 1. She said: Congress, PCS opposes in its entirety the Minimum Services Level Act. It is a blatant attack on trade unionists along with numerous sectors, including our own members in the Home Office and working on our nation's border. This Act is an attempt by one of the most right-wing Governments in recent history to remove the hard-won rights of trade unionists and, essentially, to criminalise the act of taking strike action. Although not all sectors are included in the first part of the legislation, be under no illusion, Congress, that where possible this Government will extend these rules to a broad range of workers. The Bill would give Secretaries of State overwhelming authority to define and introduce service levels to service sectors without any input or consultation with workers or trade unions. Our members and those of several other trade unions can be sacked for taking part in action which has been democratically voted on by the membership. Trade unions can face substantial fines for any breaches. PCS is concerned that this legislation breaches the confidentiality of our Home Office members, many of who work in complex and difficult circumstances in border security.

We believe the Bill was in direct breach of international law and, therefore, the unions must be willing to take the fight down every possible legal avenue to ensure our members are protected from this sham law. We acknowledge that Ministers have launched a consultation relating to the impact of the minimum service laws. However, PCS will produce a submission but we will in no way endorse this legislation, its impact on our members or its attempts to stifle the democratic processes of our movement.

We must be ready to stand alongside colleagues in any affected sector, encourage mass protests, legal challenges and, where possible, non-compliance, ensuring that we re all united in our fight to beat this Bill. We welcome this motion and hope that our colleagues in all unions will stand with us and building a broad campaign of opposition. We also urge opposition parties to stand alongside the workers and ensure that no-one is sacked because they invoked their human rights to remove their labour. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the CWU.

Michelle Bailey *(Communication Workers Union)* spoke in support of Motion 1. *She said:*

Congress, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Having participated myself in strike action last year and seen all the other strike action in this country, I wanted to get up and speak. The Minimum Service Levels Act is an outrageous attack on millions of key workers who the

Government hailed as heroes during the Covid pandemic. It means that hardworking people, such as nurses, doctors, teachers, rail workers and others who have risked their lives can now be sacked for exercising their legitimate right to strike for a fair deal. Surely, this cannot be right?

The TUC has, rightly, called it unworkable and almost certainly illegal but, as we have witnessed lately, this Government are known for not letting well-established democratic freedoms and human rights stand in their way. The Strikes Minimum Levels Act does not cover the postal, telecoms and other sectors where the CWU operates. But, Congress, let's not be mistaken. An attack on one is an attack on all, and it is absolutely clear that the Government would attack all and roll out this pernicious legislation to other sectors given half the chance.

The CWU is right behind this motion. It is vital that we act together to fight back against the relentless attacks on the trade union movement in this country and to hold Labour to their commitment to repel the MSL Act as early as possible. We will do all we can to do all the appropriate union-wide responses to ensure we defeat the Minimum Service Levels Act along with the Trade Union Act 2016 and all other anti-union legislation. Please support. *(Applause)*

The President: I call GMB.

Kevin Buchanan (*GMB*) spoke in support of Motion 1. *He said:* As some speakers have indicated, the Minimum Service Levels Act is an outrageous violation of workers' rights. We fought that legislation when it has been carried through Parliament, and, Congress, we will defeat and repeal this rotten law. We fought, too, for the Labour Party's New Deal for Working People, for the right to access workplaces to organise, enhance employ New Deal for Working People, for the right to access workplaces to organise, enhance employment protections, electronic balloting, a fair pay agreement in social care and the reform of the statutory balloting threshold, and many more commitments that will make an essential difference to our members' working lives.

We must leave in no doubt that the New Deal will apply in Scotland as well as England and Wales. Congress, GMB supports the principle of devolving employment law, but we also believe that we cannot place our faith in the SNP Government, which has failed to deliver its Fair Work agenda, failed to deliver jobs and its promise for renewables and failed to deliver £15 an hour in care. As Paddy said, we believe that the Westminster employment law should represent a floor that the devolved nations can improve upon. In making these calls, we are mindful of their impact in Wales as well. The Wales TUC is currently undertaking its own commission on the question of the devolution of employment law. It should be allowed to report and their affiliates should be consulted on its conclusions. Therefore, Congress, I ask you to support the motion with the reservation. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Andrew Hudd (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) spoke in support of the Composite. *He said:* It is worth reminding Congress that minimum service levels and this

kind of pernicious legislation was aimed directly at the transport sector. The Government understands that ASLEF, a small but powerful union, when they go on strike, have a large impact on the country, but we know that minimum service levels aren't going to work. Mick Lynch put it very well yesterday when he talked about the signallers. If you are looking at 50% service levels for signallers, you can't get half of the signallers. When you look at the railways running trains, they are doing a good job at running 50% of the trains at the moment without our help. But if this legislation comes in, and it will, of course, and they look at 50% of trains in any company that we represent here, you are still going to need 60%, 70% or 80% of our members to come into work. I think the main point for us is that we, as activists in trade unions, are not going to be encouraging our own reps and activists to cross picket lines. I will remind you that this started as an attack on the railways. It's been extended. You're next. If we are going to become or remain a fighting force, a trade union force and an active force in this country, then we have to stop it right now. Support. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, delegate. I am now going to take the vote in this debate. The first vote will be on Composite 1. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is clearly carried. It's unanimous, as far as I can see. We now take the vote on Motion 1. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Composite Motion 1 was CARRIED.

Motion 1 was CARRIED.

Stop employer intimidation and defend the right to strike.

The President: We now come to Motion 5: Stop employer intimidation and defend the right to strike. The General Council supports the motion. UCU to move, seconded by NAHUWT.

Dr Jo Brady (*University and College Union*) moved Motion 5. *She said:* Congress, I am the General Secretary of the UCU. When we take strike action we understand that we forego pay. It is the trade that we make when we withdraw our labour in a bid to force employers to recognise the value of it. This year in higher education we have seen bosses docking significant amounts of pay as part of our on-going pay dispute, and this has been on the basis of members taking part in a marking and assessment boycott. In some cases, our members have been docked 100% of their pay, even though the activities that they have withdrawn from represent 5% to 10% of their labour. This is an absolute disgrace. At the point of deducting the salary, there is nothing we can do to stop it. It is a matter that has to be challenged after the fact. Again, this is an absolute disgrace, but it is completely in line with the anti-union and anti-worker laws of the country. They are allowed – in fact, I would say encouraged – to get away with it.

Employers in the higher education sector wielded this legal entitlement with glee, applying it despite knowing that it is completely disproportionate and, in some cases, plunging our members into serious and significant financial hardship. They have used students as a morale shield to justify this disgusting and iniquitous tactic. One university boss is even on record,

admittedly in a leaked WhatsApp, as saying that he wanted his staff to feel pain. This extreme callousness laid bare the contempt that university bosses have for their staff.

We demand an urgent change to the law, one where employers must prove that any deduction for partial performance is proportionate. Also we need a mechanism to prevent it being taken, if that is disputed by the worker or their union. This should be a basic right for anybody in a civilised society. We also need a collective mechanism to do this on behalf of groups of workers. This law allows employers to attack us as a collective. We must be able to fight back as a collective as well. They organise, they lobby and they act collectively. So must we! But more than anything else, Congress, we need an industrial campaign that is about the right to strike. Everywhere we look in the UK the Tories are attacking the things that are dear to us: the NHS, education, the railways, Royal Mail and many, many more. They want to stop us with thresholds, they want to stop us in the courts, they want to stop us with punitive deductions and, yes, they want to stop us with minimum service levels. They want to see working people starved back to work and with little rights to stand up for themselves. I am here to tell you that UCU members have had enough!

Also, I am also here to say that we cannot do it on our own. So let's pass this motion, let's make sure that every single person in the UK supports the right to strike, that they support the legal challenges that we are calling for, that they demand legal change and that they oppose the laws that the Tories are trying to ram through.

I will finish by saying this. As we rapidly head towards a general election we need Labour to step up. We want less vague promises but more policies that will fundamentally change things for working people and not just protect but enhance their rights at work. We don't just want things repealed or rolled back. We need things to be drastically improved. Finally, we want to see 100% solidarity to everyone in this hall to unions taking strike action and for all striking workers. *(Applause)*

Rosemary Carabine (*NASUWT*) seconded Motion 5. *She said:* Colleagues, I am the President of the NASUWT, the Teachers' Union, seconding Motion 5. Congress, we have just had an important debate on the need for us to build a resistance to the Government's anti-trade union laws. These laws must be repealed, and we must never rest until they are.

But there is another threat to the right of trade union members to take action to protect the rights of workers, right here and right now. There are employers who are exploiting the law to impose punitive deductions to the pay of workers taking action short of strike action. What the UCU has described in this motion is also happening to our members in schools right across the UK. Across the country, in England, Wales and Scotland, employers are being encouraged by governments to threaten and intimidate, and to do so with impunity. In Scotland, Glasgow Council deducted salaries whenever NASUWT members took action short of strike action to ensure their safety at work. The employer went further by locking our members out of their workplaces. We were forced to escalate to strike action and, Congress, we won. *(Applause)*

But our members should never have had to endure such abuse.

Next week members of the NASUWT across England will be starting our first national work to rule industrial action in over a decade. We want the message for this Congress to be that you will stand with us. We want the members of UCU, NASUWT and all our unions to protect the rights of all our members to take industrial action to protect their working conditions and jobs without the fear of punitive attacks. We will not let these employers get away with these abuses any longer. I second. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you, delegate. Motion 5 is in front of you, Congress. For all of those in favour, please show now? Any against? That is carried.

Motion 5 was CARRIED.

Tackling one-sided flexibility

The President: I call paragraph 2.9 and Motion 6: Tackling one-sided flexibility. The General Council supports the motion. It is going to be moved by Usdaw and seconded by Prospect.

Dave McCrossan *(Udaw, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* moved Motion 6.

He said: President and Congress, I am from Usdaw, moving our motion on Tackling one-sided flexibility. The cost-of-living crisis continues to have a devastating impact on working families. Rising prices of everyday essentials mean that many are now finding it nye-on-

impossible to actually survive. Usdaw surveyed thousands of our members earlier this year and the responses actually demonstrate the horrific situation that people find themselves in. Nearly a third struggle to pay gas and electricity bills every single month. More than 60% have relied on unsecured borrowing in the past year just to pay their bills, and around seven out of 10 people report that financial worries are having a serious impact on their mental health.

While everyone is being impacted by the crisis, we know that it is clearly going to have a greater impact on those who can least afford to pay. So, as a movement, we need to be clear. The roots of this crisis are far deeper than the Tories shocking mismanagement of our economy or the global factors that they seem to blame from time to time. At the heart of this cost-of-living crisis is our weak employment law framework, a framework that robs workers of their financial security or certainty and a framework that leaves workers constantly vulnerable to economic headwinds and changes of circumstance. The last 13 years are littered with Tory broken promises on employment rights. First there was the Taylor Report, then it was their pledge on the right to a normal hours contract and, of course, then, let's not forget, the high-wage economy that they were going to deliver for each and every one of us. Then we heard again and again about how they were going to bring forward an Employment Bill, while they delayed and delayed again with meaningless consultation after meaningless consultation, all of which came to precisely nothing. Their failure to tackle one-sided flexibility has hurt working people and held back economic growth. We must never forget that in the midst of an unprecedented squeeze on living standards, this Government, the Tories, decided to prioritise attacking the right to strike rather than driving up wages and conditions at work. It says everything about who they are and everything about what they

believe in. So it is time for us to build a new type of economy, one where workers are properly recognised, rewarded and respected, an economy where we end insecure work and give working people the financial security that they deserve, and an economy where we level the playing field by ensuring that flexibility benefits everyone and not just employers.

Comrades, the scale of the challenge in front of us cannot be understated. In this country, 3.9 million people are in insecure work, including a disproportionate number of black and young workers. More than a million workers are on zero-hour contracts, almost two-and-a-half million people are under employed in our economy. They need more hours but they simply cannot get them. We urgently need a new deal for workers and that is why we should welcome Labour's pledge to enact one within their first one hundred days. Make no mistake, Labour's proposals will be transformative. New rights for trade unions to access the workplace and changes to the rules around recognition will level the playing field to some extent, allowing more workers to have a collective voice within their workplace. Workers will get proper notice of shifts and the right to a contract that reflects the hours that they actually work alongside other measures to tackle one-sided flexibility. This must be part of Labour's central manifesto.

As a movement, we should continue to do all that we can to campaign for a comprehensive new deal for working people, and ensure that we are the ones looking at the technical details of any proposals so a new deal can be quickly introduced and, most importantly, properly enforced, to give workers the rights and the freedoms that they deserve. Congress, our members cannot afford to wait any longer. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: I call Prospect to second. I am unable to take any further contributions from unions on this motion.

Mike Clancy (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 6. *He said:* Prospect is pleased to be seconded Motion 6. We don't affiliate to the Labour Party but, funnily enough, we get on with them quite well. All unions have a stake in campaigning for change in Government policy regarding the labour market.

Prospect represents many members, but also many in the creative sector who experience precarious work and who can be exploited. They need the promise of the New Deal and more. Our freelance and self-employed members who work in film and TV are a very clear case in point. The last few years have shown how work can evaporate. First of all, it was Covid when, obviously, everything necessarily closed down, and whilst we express full solidarity with our American colleagues, the drying up of work has left thousands of our members brutally exposed in that sector. These are members who have key skills, who can at times flourish as freelancers but, at the moment, they can lose their economic footings. As a result, we want to tackle the insecurity of the freelance world, something which has been echoed by other trade union colleagues today.

Working with our colleagues in Community and with the Fabians, we have recently composed a series of apps that complement the New Deal asks for those who are in precarious direct

employment. These include, for freelancers and the self-employed, establishing parities on key rights and entitlements, empowering self-employed workers to act collectively, equalising sick pay, ensuring that leave and other flexibility entitlements are comparable to those of employees, providing income security when the risks hit, which recognise the nature of self-employment, and modernising the pension system to accommodate the self-employed.

Congress, everywhere you go there are conversations about the future of work and the meaning of good work, but for millions it is a long, long way away from those lofty ambitions.

So we are pleased to second Motion 6 and, please, support it. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, Motion 6 is before you. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 6 was CARRIED.

Section 5: Working together at the TUC

Coordinating the trade union movement

The President: Congress, we now move to section 5 of the General Council Report: Working together at the TUC. This is on page 56. I call Motion 74: Coordinating the trade union

movement. It is the General Council's motion, to be moved by CWU, seconded by RMT, and again, I am afraid, we are not going to be able to take any other speakers in the debate.

Coordinating the trade union movement

Dave Ward (*Communication Workers Union*) moved Motion 74. *He said:* This motion is all about us working together more than we have ever done before. The past year has seen workers in all sections of the economy, in all unions, taking action, standing up against employers and the Government, which is more than we have seen at any time in the last four, five or six decades. We have polled every work who has taken action because every worker knows that by that collective action we have shifted employers, shifted the Government and better settlements have been on the table that would otherwise have not been achieved.

We also applaud and stand together in solidarity with all the workers here who are still in struggle and still fighting for a decent settlement for their members, but Congress we are here today to say that we really mean this. We really want to do the things that have been said at this rostrum, some great stuff, through some great trade union leaders. We also have to reflect honestly on what we have also seen in the last year and what lessons we can take from that to make us stronger.

The first thing that we have seen is that the hand of Government is truly aligned with every employer and the media with one sole objective: to destroy all forms of collectivism. The

good news is that every one of you has played your part in making sure that they have failed. *(Applause)* We also know that workers everywhere now understand that the reality is that these so-called experts in growing businesses haven't got any solutions whatsoever. All they do now is get grotesque pay not to grow and improve services but to smash them up to make sure they asset strip and to make sure that they get more and more money for shareholders in dividends, and workers are paying the price. They don't want it to continue and they know that the only people who are standing up for them are us collectively. We also know that we don't need to fear these people any more, not that we ever really did but, by God, when I see you lot out *there* on the media, you wipe the floor with every one of your counterparts.

Let me say to Mick Lynch that that old lady must be still having nightmares when you did that interview. Surely, Congress, the biggest thing that we have seen is that had we worked together on the New Deal campaign – it's great that we are on it now, and CWU led that campaign – one of the key things in that campaign was collective bargaining being thrown together across sectors of the economy. That is the key to building the strength for collective action and, ultimately, strike action.

This motion calls upon the TUC to do a number of things. Firstly, it calls upon you, Paul, and the General Council to get into the room together and have the best debate we have ever had about is what does a collective bargaining agenda across this sector of the economy actually really mean? Can we pull it off, can we put it into practice and can we, really, turn the tables and shift the balances of forces in the world of work? You know we can do it. We urge you today to set out that agenda. We are totally behind what you said.

Secondly, it calls upon to conclude the review of the TUC, to facilitate exactly that objective, bringing unions together and making them stronger, making us more democratic than we have ever been previously. It also calls upon us to set out a media strategy that builds on the success that we have all had in the past year; a workers' strategy with the TUC leading it with all of our resources together.

Finally, Paul, what you said earlier on is spot on. It calls upon us to lobby the Labour Party not just to take the title of a New Deal but to deliver the policies that are contained within it, and we are totally committed to that objective. Congress, power is in this room. The power is in every one of us. We don't have to wait for the political change. We have to lead it and show them the way. I have never known a time where it is more necessary to defend workers, but this is the test for every single one of you, every leader, every union and every representative: are we prepared to set aside on occasion some of our own individual aspirations as unions in favour of us working together with collective strength, building collectivism? I am here to tell you that the CWU is ready to do that and I know you are as well. Vote for the motion. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

The President: RMT to second.

Eddie Dempsey *(National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* seconded Motion 74 in supporting the CWU. *He said:* We are answering your call, Dave. We are ready,

absolutely, to do what you have just described. I have to say, Congress, that there has not been a single debate that we've had so far during this Congress which would have been prevented in some way by the way the economy is run right now. I am talking about the things that we stand for: good jobs with decent pay, safe working conditions, housing, education and the ability to retire with dignity. All of these things come into conflict with the fact that our society is run on the basis of the profit motive and not on the basis of what is right and good for the people in this country. The reason why things are that way is because the bosses and the corporate power in this country are organised and they have a strategy. They co-operate with Government and the media to make sure that they gobble up our public services and our industries. They make sure that they get from the public purse bailouts when they fail. They make sure that they get from the public purse money to cover losses they incur during strike action. They make sure that they are able to get the Government to bring laws in to reduce our ability to bargain as workers at the table, and they use their friends in the media to try and divide us, to demonise our movement and to portray us as things we are not in front of the general public. All of those things are done to us because they are organised.

When I joined my union, I was brought up on the understanding that it always comes down to who is better organised, them or us! If they are better organised than us, then they make more profits and we'll have less jobs, poor conditions, no public services and no safety net for our people. But if we are better organised than them, then we are on the march and could really do something. We could really make this country better. We could really improve education, take our NHS back, get rid of these anti-trade union laws, make sure that our old

people are looked after and have pensions so that they can retire in dignity. We can do all of that on the basis that we actually get organised with a strategy and work together, which is going to mean putting aside some petty differences in the trade union movement in order to achieve it. We are absolutely behind the CWU. I want to pay tribute to the leadership that they have shown and to how hard they fought during their recent dispute. Give them a clap. They've been an inspiration to our members in the RMT. *(Applause)* They are always willing to co-ordinate with the CWU. Just look at Mick and Dave. They've even co-ordinated their haircuts for this Congress. *(Laughter)*

I am urging you to support Motion 74. It's a fantastic motion and a very important piece of work that we must do because, if we don't, we are going to be back here again next year and you are going to have delegate after delegate coming to this rostrum painting a picture of every industry, sector and public service we work in being on the rocks in a managed decline of Britain. So let's get organised together and show them what for. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you to Dave and Eddie for that. We are now going to vote on Motion 74. Will all those in favour vote now? Those against? That is carried.

Motion 74 was CARRIED.

The President: Congress, unfortunately we are running behind schedule, so this is a bit of advanced warning. We will not be able to take the following scheduled business this

afternoon: Motion 77, Motion 78 and Motion 79. I will tell you later when we can fit those motions in.

TUC – the next 10 years

The President: We are now moving to Motion 75 on TUC – the next 10 years. I call paragraphs 3.6 to 3.17, and Motion 75. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Prospect and seconded by GMB.

Mike Clancy (*Prospect*) moved Motion 75. *He said:* Congress, I am going to speak to the courage of members and their representatives who have taken industrial action across the last two years. It is truly humbling and everybody, rightly, in the last day or so has paid tribute to them, drawn inspiration from it and there will be more disputes ahead. I speak on behalf of a union with many members with a great deal of bargaining leverage. You can turn the electricity off in this room at a moment's notice.

I am going to ask you to think about a percentage as I move this motion and why it is important, and it's 12%. Why is it 12%, colleagues? Have a think. Having said that our representatives and members have shown this tremendous courage, we must also guard against the media painting us as disruptive. Our members want us to solve their problems and influence their employers as well, which requires a range of tactics. We need to be known as experts at work and in touch with contemporary workplace challenges. Union profile has

been exceedingly high in the last two years. The most sobering thing is that the most recent figures on membership show that total membership fell by 200,000 in 2022 alone. Colleagues, that is a massive wake-up call. Combined with the fall the year before, the gains of the previous years have largely been eradicated.

Our movement is ageing, and a lot of the members who we represent reflect the lineage. If these trends continue our movement will be compromised. Many activists in this room and beyond are due to retire and this is a challenge we can't leave to the next generation. Density has fallen below 50% in the public sector, and that sets alarm bells, but the primary crisis facing trade unions in the UK – Prospect represents the public and private sectors – is that just 12% of the workforce are union members. I repeat: 12%! Much of the sector has no presence at all. Dealing with the private sector requires different tactics; markets, products, profits and sustainability all play out differently, and our practice in bargaining and employment security, which help to influence union policies and responses. But if we don't address this matter as a priority, public sector trade unionism will look like an oddity, and our enemies will say that it is only in the public sector that those people have unions, they have pensions and they have people who speak for them. The crisis in the private sector is a crisis for the public sector and we will face more furious attacks if we don't succeed over the next 10 years in having a renaissance of private-sector trade unionism. We are all in that together.

As we look to a potential change in government, with the Labour Party riding high, we have a chance and an obligation to reverse this decline. We don't need to convince ourselves in this

room about the value of trade unionism. We need to convince the 78% of people in the private sector who are not union members.

A progressive government might throw open the doors and we may have some opportunities, but the organising is on us. We have to think through the strategies and we have to think through how we are going to reach these people who have never been a union member, or who have never been asked. That is still a crucial challenge to the trade union movement. It is not just the Tories making it difficult. We have to find out why we are not more attractive on more occasions to people particularly in the private sector.

We have to seize the opportunities. That's why we are proposing a working group. That might not sound particularly startling, and that's maybe why the TUC has agreed to it, but we think this is absolutely essential to put private sector trade union renaissance, private sector trade union organising and supporting, therefore, our members in the public sector as an absolute priority for the TUC, particularly as we are heading, hopefully, to better times ahead with a Labour Government. So I ask you to support this motion, and let's be honest with the challenges. Let's deal with the 12%. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the GMB to second.

Charlie Grey (GMB) seconded Motion 75 on behalf of the GMB union. *He said:* Congress, we know there is power in the union, but for 30 years that power has not reached further

across the world of work, which is changing and being more exploitative. Last year the proportion of trade union members out of all the UK's employees was at its lowest since modern records began in 1995. The world of women workers in our economy remains grossly undervalued, yet women union members in the private sector made up two-thirds of last year's fall in trade union membership. TUC research found that workers from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to be trapped in insecure work, but disabled workers were more likely to be low paid, and that one-in-five workplaces do not have any policies to support LGBT+ staff. Age banding in the National Minimum Wage means that every hour young workers, aged under 18, do the same job as other colleagues, can be paid nearly half as much for doing so. Our economy underpins these inequalities, but we cannot end them while the disparities that remain with how the trade union membership is made up of today.

Congress, we should not ignore the plights and whims of our members who have suffered in their workplaces this last year. As Paul Novak our TUC General Secretary said today, we have not been complacent in our workplaces, but the problem is the workplaces that we are not in. Close to half of employees who were trade union members have been with their current employer for 10 years or more. We can't expect to fight on their own just because we think our values should be naturally appealing to them. We have to go out to them, to organise and rebuild, that's worker by worker and workplace by workplace, building a movement fit for the challenges of today and the challenges of the future. That is a responsibility that lies with all of us. This is the biggest collective challenge we face since those who rebuilt the country and grew this great movement of ours since the Second World War, and I want to be

a part of that generation of trade unions that rises to that challenge. I am sure all delegates here share that feeling, too. But our actions must speak louder than our words. New and improved practices and behaviours will make them louder, and by doing what we do differently and by the struggles and experiences of workers everywhere, we will be heard. Please support this motion Congress. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Moving to the vote on Motion 75, will all those in favour of Motion 75 indicated now? All those against? That is carried.

Motion 75 was CARRIED.

The role of trades councils.

The President: I call Motion 76 on the role of trades councils. The General Council's attitude to the motion to seek remission or oppose. I will be calling the TUC General Secretary to explain the position. I understand that the POA is not prepared to admit, Steve. Is that right?

Steve Gillan (POA): That is correct.

The President: It is going to be moved by the POA, seconded by the Bakers, I will bring Paul in on behalf of the General Council, and then I am afraid that I will not be able to take all the

speakers who have indicated but I will try to do a balance between those who are for and against, and that will be CWU, Prospect and FBU. Over to you, Steve.

Steve Gillan (*POA, The Professional Trade Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers*) moved Motion 76. *He said:* I am the General Secretary of the POA, and we hope that we can persuade you to support this motion.

The role of trade councils is vitally important. Trade councils have a rich history in the whole of Great Britain, actually. So if you go back, probably, to 1858 to 1860 where trade councils were founded in Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Sheffield, Edinburgh and, of course, Manchester. Of course, the TUC was founded with a proud history in 1868, but it was Salford Trades Council that convened the founding meeting in the TUC at the Manchester Mechanics Institute. We should not be afraid of this motion. We should be embracing this motion, and I will explain why.

It has just been explained in Paul's speech this morning, which I think was inspirational, the challenges we face and how to identify that we have to grow this trade union movement. The way we want to grow it is not by being insular but by embracing the resources around us, and that means embracing trades councils. Trades councils at the moment do not feel part of the trade union movement. It is only recently, actually, that they have been able to come to conference as a delegate to move a motion on behalf of the TUC JCC. One motion is all they get, and then they are not allowed to vote or speak on any other motion whatsoever.

I know that across the country – let’s take Scotland, for example – when the STUC was set up in 1897, it was done for a particular reason, and that’s because they didn’t like the ostracization of trades councils in England at that time by the Political Parliamentary Committee. From there the STUC have three delegates from each trades council, two reserve seats on the General Council and they can send three motions and three amendments. There have been no issues. The sky hasn’t caved in on Scotland, has it with regards to trades councils, and most unions in this room organised in Scotland? I don’t see that it causes much disruption in the internal running of those unions. Yes, there may be one or two teething problems that the General Council may have to remedy, but that is not insurmountable. I wait with interest to see what Paul’s response is going to be on behalf of the General Council. Unfortunately, I have to leave rather sharpish because there was a Wandsworth escape and I to attend some meetings. So I will miss all the debate on that.

In reality – Mike Clancy set it out – it’s not a rosy picture, is it? There’s 12% density in the private sector. In the public sector the density is 45%. Why aren’t we embracing trades councils who, incidentally, turned up everywhere. They campaigned religiously as well. Yet, we don’t give them that voice. We should be inclusive, not exclusive. Why not embrace them? I don’t know whose who and who is going to vote for this. There is certainly some opposition to this. The reality for me is that there is still time during this debate for you to change your mind. We have challenges ahead of us. The strapline says “Winning at work”. We can only win at work if we are inclusive and we pool everybody together and co-ordinate everybody to fight together. That’s when we will be at our best. So, please, support this

motion. It's not earth-shattering. If it can work in Scotland and it can work in Wales, why can't it work in England? Please support. *(Applause)*

The President: I call Sarah Woolley of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers to second.

Sarah Woolley (BFAWU) seconded Motion 76. *She said:* President and Congress, I am the General Secretary of the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, proudly supporting the POA motion. Congress, I was at the STUC Congress this year, and I had a brilliant conversation with a number of trades councils about the work they had been and the potential for joint working in the future. As a delegate, I was even given a booklet which outlined the work of a number of trades councils in Scotland, and I was left wondering why we don't do the same.

Trades councils are in our communities. They engage our activists to go further than being active in one union but to work on behalf of the whole movement in the towns or cities that they live in. In the Yorkshire and Humber region we have some amazing trades councils, and I am very biased because that is where I am from. I know other regions do, too. Sheffield needs a pay rise to fund raise for an organiser to work for the trade unions in the city to build our movement in the lowest-paid city in the UK. I know that Jane, who is here, does a phenomenal job for Leeds Trades Council, and greater Leeds must get organised along with the many other initiatives that that trades council has run over the years that is drawing in young people to sign up and do organising sessions at the May Day marches. Wakefield has created a fantastic climate group which is made up of trade unionists, climate activists, young

people and community members. Hull has created a solidarity shop. Our trades councils organise picket-line support. You don't have a picket line without somebody present from the local trades council. They organise our May Day marches. Ealing Trades Council – I appreciate that that is outside of Yorkshire and Humber – is one we have been working with and we have organised now.

These groups of activists in our communities think outside the box and they live here when it comes to building our movement. As Steve said, we need them if we are going to grow even more. They get to take part, as we do in Scotland and Wales, but not here. That's got to change. I want to thank the people who are active in our trades councils for everything they do for our movement every day of the year. Support the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: I call on the General Secretary to explain the position of the General Council.

The General Secretary: Thank you, President. The General Council is asking Congress to oppose the motion. Many of us have been active in the trades councils movement. In my case, we are all trades council three decades ago. Everyone in this room supports trades councils. Everyone in this room wants more unions to affiliate to their local trades council, and everyone in this room wants trades councils to support local union campaigns and deliver all the parities that we are discussing this week. But this motion isn't about that. It's about changing the nature of this Congress, a congress of sovereign unions, democratically accountable to their members.

Every trade council already has the opportunity to attend this congress as a delegate of their own union, accountable to their union and representing their union. Currently, trades councils are represented at this congress by a delegate who is elected at the preceding trades council conference to move their motion to Congress. Increasing their number to three delegates would give trades councils a larger Congress delegation to almost half of our affiliated unions. This motion would give a vote to trades council delegates, but it is not clear in the motion how many votes they would have, who they would be voting on behalf of or how they would be accountable for those votes.

Most unions at this Congress will hold delegate meetings. They will consider motions against their own union's policies, but those at the Trades Councils' Conference would be voting on issues, voting on motions submitted by affiliated unions with no accountable structure to take a mandate from or being responsible to.

The motion also calls for trades councils to have an automatic seat on our General Council. Congress, there are 28 affiliated unions who do not have an automatic right to sit on our General Council. Each one of those unions is affiliated to the TUC, funds our campaigns and directly represent people who work. That's not the case for trades councils. They are not unions. They have a different job. They are not affiliates to the TUC. They do not represent people in workplaces. So, please, let us support the work of our trade councils, celebrate the work of our trade councils, let them affiliate our branches to them and make sure that we

send delegates to those trades councils, but please support the General Council position and oppose this motion. Thank you, comrades. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the CWU to speak. Then I will be calling Prospect and FBU.

Tony Kearns (*Communication Workers Union*) spoke in support of Motion 76. *He said:* I am going to speak briefly to support the motion before congress.

Patrick Roach moved Composite No. 1 earlier. He said that we are united in working together to protect our communities. We campaign together and we organise together. They won't clap, they won't cheer and they won't carry the motion. Except here we are now with the General Council telling us not to do that. You can't face both ways at once.

We all know the attack from the Tory Government on a Minimum Services Bill. We also know that we face unprecedented times. As Mick Lynch pointed out, if they get away with this they will come to outlaw the trade union movement. So it is essential that we use every single method at our disposal to come together to be united and to work as a collective. You do not do that, Paul, by excluding people from that debate.

You said that it will change the nature of this TUC. There are, what, about 400 people in this room, and we are asking for two more than they already have. They've got one, they are

asking for three, and those three are going to change the nature of this conference? I don't think so. When you ask the question of who holds them to account, we all hold them to account. The people who elect them as delegates to come to this Conference are the people who hold them to account. The position is exactly the same as it is now but one person.

This point where you say "Give them more than what a number of our trade union affiliates already have in this hall today", does not take anything away from what those trade union delegates have got. It just opens up to make us more collective. One of the issues that we need to face – I think it was what Sarah was alluding to – is that we need to embrace what goes on in our communities. Let me give you two examples. One is the *Morning Star* article this morning by Dave Chappel. If you have a dispute that is operating down in Somerset, the amount of work done by the Mendips Trades Council to get public support and campaigning around that is tremendous. If you go to Portland where they have docked the barges to house refugees and migrants, the trades council down there are on the streets day in and day out organising the communities, explaining to them how migrants are not the enemy. The amount of work, the body of work, that trades councils do in this country should be recognised and it should be recognised by carrying the terms of this motion. We keep hearing how much we need solidarity and we keep hearing about how much we are under attack. We keep talking about inclusiveness and we keep talking about togetherness. Here is our chance to prove it, to bring in those people to this Congress and move this movement forward as a collective, as it should be. We support. (*Applause*)

The President: Prospect. Then I will be taking the FBU and then we will have Steve's right of reply.

Toby James (*Prospect*) spoke in opposition of Motion 76. *He said:* Congress, I am speaking to oppose this motion. I understand where this is coming from and I understand the immense value of trade councils. I am a lay rep and I am a delegate to my local trades council.

Last year we carried a motion encouraging affiliation to trades councils. I wanted to remind you of that while I have this platform. Those of you, who are lay reps and staffers, whose branches are yet to affiliate, get pen and paper or text or email your branch secretary and remind them to affiliate, because it is brilliant. It is what our movement is about. Delegates, we must keep an eye on our future. Let's ask ourselves: what should we be doing and how does this motion fit in? We need to be engaging the disenfranchised, the marginalised and people who feel there is no place for them and are not yet organised. We need to empower every working person in this country who is as yet unheard in our movement.

Congress, trades councils are not where we find these people. Trades council delegates are already engaged. They know the movement. They are already trade union members and, accordingly, they are already represented here. The motion states that trades councils total affiliated membership, were it a single trade union, would warrant a far larger Congress delegation. Congress, this is double counting. Again, every single one of these is already in a union. I am one of them. We are already represented. We have our delegation. We are

already in this room. Further to this, trades council delegates are among our most engaged members. By double-counting these people specifically, we are reinforcing the biases that exist in our movement. We are heightening the barriers that exist to engage with others.

Let's focus instead on creating our movement, giving a voice to the people who do not yet have one instead of duplicating our own. So, please, engage with each other, affiliate to a local trades council but reject this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I call the FBU, the last speaker in this debate.

Steve Wright (*Fire Brigades Union*) said: Our union has always recognised power, solidarity and collective action. That's why the Fire Brigades Union supports this motion, which calls for an essential change in how we acknowledge and include trades councils within the TUC.

The trades councils have been allies in our union's battle at the local level for many years both politically and industrially. Our General Secretary sits on the General Council and has sat on trades councils for decades, and he knows the importance of the role that they can take. As Steve and Sarah have said, trades councils have been present on all of our picket lines and on all the picket lines of delegates here during the past year-and-a-half. They have been organising with unions to provide vital them with vital support. Importantly, they are a vital avenue for extending solidarity amongst our movement. What we are seeing in our union,

in times of our struggles, they have been present in bringing communities and the broader movement together. That is an absolutely key role that they take.

The work and the role of the trades councils has been mentioned by many speakers who have stood *here* over the last couple of days. Delegates have spoken of the important role they play. Let's acknowledge that and support it. Trade councils provides an opportunity for grassroots activists to join the struggles of trade unions, to join the struggles of working people and to join the struggles of our class. They need our support and they need our commitment. So we can support the call from the trade councils that they receive with a representation that they deserve. A single delegate and a one-motion submission is hardly reflective of the influence and commitment, that with our support and acknowledgement today, they can bring to our movement. So let's recognise that not just with words but with actions. So, Congress, support this motion, recognise the important role that trade councils can have and enhance their ability to influence the direction of our movement. We support.

(Applause)

The President: I call Steve Gillan to exercise the POA's right of reply.

Steve Gillan (POA) exercised the right of reply to Motion 76. *He said:* Thank you very much, President. In this right of reply I will try to address some of the issues that Paul raised. To be fair to Paul, he has had off-the-record discussions with me about some of the issues, which we have tried to resolve behind the scenes. So I commend you, Paul, for doing that. However,

I come back to the real issue again. Some of the issues that Paul has raised are about accountability, equality and them having more rights than 28 unions which do not have a seat on the General Council. The reality is that those didn't bring a motion about that. I brought a motion through my union about this issue. If there are things to be changed, let's change them. *(Applause)*

We are quick enough as a trade union movement to criticise employers and governments for a race to the bottom. Let's not fall into that trap because I see *this*, if *this* goes down, as a race to the bottom because trades councils – I will repeat this again – do turn up and they co-ordinate different actions. I remember from the RMT, the Dover trades council manoeuvred within 24 hours. The amount of trade council banners down there to bolster the crowds was tremendous. *(Applause)* They chased the far right out of Erskine, in Scotland; they chased them out of Liverpool and they chased them out of other places. The work that they do is fantastic. Why can't we work hand-in-hand with them? Why can't we do that, because I have been chairing the TUC JCT annual conference for about five years and I attend most meetings throughout the year, and there is a frustration there. They can't always attend as delegates here through the trade unions because some of them are actually retired. I am talking about people like Martin Bayer and David Chappell. These people have decades of experience who can nurture young people coming along. It is not as if there is a massive list to join trade unions in our communities, and that is why, if we embrace and work together, we can get communities through recruitment for trade unions and, in times, more ethnic minorities into the movement. We would be able to entice young men and young women and so forth.

This is the beginning of a conversation, irrespective of how this motion goes. It is not going to go away because I don't want to come back in two or three years, when the trade councils have collapsed and people are ruing decisions, that you have made the wrong mistake. Think carefully about what you are doing. Please support this motion, I urge you. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, we move to the vote on Motion 76. Will all those in favour, please show now? Those against? I am sorry. Can we take that vote again? All those in favour? All those against? I think we need to go for a card vote. This is a bit of excitement. Tellers in their places, please. Will delegates and photographers please be seated and leave the gangways clear. We can do this swiftly if everybody co-operates. The names of the tellers are: Anwar Ali, Angela Partington, Jill Taylor, Jackie Marshall and Alan Dobbie. *(Applause)*

I will now take the vote. I am sure some of you have done this before. All of those in favour, please stand, turn to your left and show your card. Please stand where you are until your votes are all taken. Keep your hand up until I say you can put it down. The votes "For" have been counted.

We now come to those who want to vote against. I understand we have all the Tellers here: Anwar, Angela, Jill, Jackie and Alan. All those against the motion, please stand and turn to your left and show your card.

Comrades and friends, we have a result.

Votes For: 1,850,000. Votes Against: 3,137,000. So the vote is lost.

Motion 76 FELL.

Address by Eric Campos Banto, general secretary of CUT Chile

The President: Bear with us, comrades. We have one item left on the agenda. I am very honoured to do this. We have a guest speaker address by Eric Campos Banto, the general secretary of CUT in Chile. Today, Congress, is the 50th anniversary of the right-wing coup in Chile, a time when solidarity was vital. I am now delighted to be able to welcome Eric to address Congress, and with him is his interpreter, Hassan.

Eric Campos Banto (CUT Chile) (Speaking through an interpreter) said: Friends, colleagues and comrades, first and foremost, I would like to bring our warm greeting to the leadership of the TUC and to all the delegates who have come to this Congress to consider how to strengthen the workers' movement and the trade union movement as a principal tool of struggle, a struggle that has as its core objective the wellbeing of the working class and the struggle against the oppression that we suffer day-to-day in our lives as a consequence of the permanent chains of capital. Today, more than ever, we see the historic contradiction between capital and labour.

I come from Chile, located in the extremities of South America, which has amongst it our most notable working class sons and daughters, Louise Amelio Ricardo, Thresha Froyl, Gabriella Mistrado, Ulletta Parnow, Victor Hardon and so many others who were part of the fight and gave their lives to socialism and for the workers' struggle, as was the case until his last breath, our Comrade President, Salvador Allende. *(Applause)*

I want to thank this act of memory, one of thousands taking place across the world, to remember not just the figure of the President, Salvador Allende, but also the centring of the working class that was part of the experience of the popular Unity Government. That was and continues to be the only government in the history of Chile that belonged to the workers and put at its centre the democratisation of the means of production, of political participation and culture. In summary, and as President Allende said, it was the start of the second independence of our people and of our country. *(Applause)*

In this important event, I want to give recognition and thanks in name of the workers of Chile, to the Ford workers in Britain, at the Rolls Royce engine factory, who refused to repair the engines of the Hawker Hunter plane that had come from Chile in protest against the coup in 1974. *(Applause)* I especially want to mention John Keenan, who recently passed away. This model of British planes, as it was know, were used by the Chilean Air Force to bomb the presidential palace on the morning of 11th September. Our infinite respect for the solidarity of the TUC and all British unions who, like the workers at Rolls Royce, have displayed multiple

acts of solidarity with the Chilean people during the dark days of the Fascist dictatorship of Pinochet. *(Applause)*

The military coup carried out exactly 50 years ago was organised by the oligarchy, by the business elite, by the right, with the close collaboration of the United States, something that has now been shown in multiple documents, now declassified by the North American Government itself. The coup did not just have the objective of defeating the popular Unity Government, which was seen as a danger to the privileges of those responsible for the coup, but more than that it was an attempt to destroy the organisation of the working classes who, from the first strike in 1879 to the election of Salvador Allende in 1970, had become a fundamental social and political act in our country.

In Chile the coup had the objective, for the first time in the world, to instal neo-liberalism and to achieve this objective, first, they sought the destruction of the power of the collective action of the working class. They focused on causing trade union fragmentation, de-politicisation and established a no-strike law that, in practice, was not able to disrupt.

In summary, they promoted a purely individual relationship between the workers and the company, removing all of the power built up for almost one hundred years of history of the workers' movement. Chile is not immune from the global phenomenon of the advance of neo-fascist ideas, which in our country has seen the denial of human rights abuses, and a new celebration of the figure of the dictator, Pinochet. However, the people have responded by

carrying out thousands of actions across the country, creating a battle for historical memory and historical truth.

The best tribute to the more than a thousand detainees and disappeared, for the 30,000 who were tortured and to the thousands of men and women in the struggle is to continue promoting the socialist values of the Salvador Allende Government, putting at its centre democracy and the working class. *(Applause)*

Brothers and Sisters, comrades, colleagues and friends, history is ours and it is the people who make it. Long live the people! Long live the workers! Long live the TUC! *(A standing ovation)* I hand over this medal in the name of Salvador Allende in the name of the Chilean people, in thanks and respect from all of the solidarity from the British trade union movement. Thank you. *(Applause, cheers and table banging)*

The President: Wow! Solidarity, comrade.

That concludes this afternoon's business, Congress. I remind everyone that there are meetings taking place this evening, and these can be found in the Congress Guide and also on the TUC website. Congress is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning. Have a good evening. *(Applause)*

(Congress adjourned at 17.45)

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