**THE 154th ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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**Held at:**

**The Brighton Conference Centre,**

**Brighton**

on:

**Tuesday, 18th October 2022**

**Wednesday, 19th October 2022**

and

**Thursday, 20th October 2022**

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***Congress President:***

**SUE FERNS**

**………………………………..**

**PROCEEDINGS – DAY THREE**

**(Thursday, 20th October 2022)**

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**PROCEEDINGS: DAY THREE**

**Thursday, 20th October 2022**

*Congress commenced at 9.30 a.m.*

**The President:** Good morning, everybody. Let’s start by thanking Jackson Leonard & Squint who have been playing for us this morning. *(Applause)*

Congress, yesterday we were unable to take the following motions: Motion 43, Supporting trans and non-binary workers; Composite Motion 12, Workers’ mental health must not be the price of the cost-of-living crisis; Motion 45, Young workers’ mental health, and Motion 46, Discrimination. I will take all of these motions at the end of this morning’s published business.

As reported earlier in the week, we also have three emergency motions to take, and I will take them after the unfinished business. Emergency motion 2, UK embassy relocation; Emergency Motion 3, Save our public services from tory chaos and, Emergency Motion 4, Rail disputes and the new transport secretary.

Congress, as we are taking lost business from yesterday this morning, it is likely that we will run slightly beyond 12.45. Therefore, I ask that we are able to run into lunchtime if we do run beyond 12.45, so that we can complete the business of Congress. Is that agreed? *(Agreed)*

Delegates, we return to Section 2 of the General Council Report: Respect and voice at work and the section on equality continued. I call paragraph 2.7 and Motion 36: Reasonable adjustment passports in the NHS and public bodies. The General Council support the motion. It is to be moved by CSP, seconded by GMB and NEU will also contribute to the debate.

**Reasonable adjustment passports in the NHS and public bodies**

**Alex Mackenzie** *(Chartered Society of Physiotherapists)* moved Motion 36.

She said: Congress, as a profession physiotherapy has a very mobile workforce. It starts with our newly qualified physios, who often take jobs that rotate through a variety of areas every four to six months. Where I work, they are working across the whole range of NHS services; acute, community, GP practices, schools, mental health services and so on.

At present if a physio with a disability is rotating we look at what they need in each area as they rotate into it. Some of it is transferable, but some of it is more individual to the sector. How much simpler would it be if there was an appropriate, comprehensive assessment done at the beginning, and how much simpler would that be if that could be taken to their next job. Physios commonly move roles as they build up their experience, and this means that many of our members will increasingly move between workplaces, and their health and physical needs move with them.

In 2021 there were 4.4 million people living with a disability in employment in the UK, according to the Government. For many people living with a disability the only way to be in employment is if there are some adjustments made to the work environment, whether this is at home or on site. As we all know, this comes under the Equality Act 2010 as reasonable adjustments. Many of these adjustments are fairly simple; a bit more time to complete activity, altered start or finish times, a different chair, desk, a piece of IT equipment or software. Of course, there are those who need a bit more than this. It is important to remember that where it is practical, working from home should be considered as a reasonable adjustment.

The main aim is to ensure that people with a disability have the same opportunity to achieve and progress at work, and that includes being able to go for a different job. We, as reps, know that sorting this out for someone can be time-consuming. When the person starts the role, not everything is in place, and it starts that person’s job off at a disadvantage. They need to go through occupational health services or produce evidence of their disability, and this is often questioned and discussed at length before the employer hopefully agrees to the change. It can be exhausting for the person. It creates an immediate feeling of being a burden, of being different, when all that person wants is something to allow them to do their job. So about doing this just once? When you start work you have a full assessment of your needs, which you can then take with you as you move roles. It’s a clear document that outlines what is required, so it can be put in place before you even start. Obviously, any updates can be made as necessary. Having a passport in place would be simpler for the employee and simpler for the employer.

In 2020, with the pandemic, we saw more people working from home than ever before. Nearly three-quarters of disabled staff who worked from home during the pandemic felt they were more or at least as productive. As a physio, this makes sense. Reducing impact on pain and fatigue due to less commuting and more flexible working with additional breaks or a change in start time. Being able to manage your condition better whether on site or at home means fewer sickness absences and a happier workforce. But many staff suffered due to lack of work-station adjustments and IT equipment to support them whilst working at home. Isolation and loneliness particularly impacted upon disabled workers cut off from colleagues due to inaccessible and outdated communication systems.

Starting a new job or changing your workplace should be stress free. It should be a transition with reasonable adjustments in place from day one. This is why we are moving this motion in support of reasonable adjustment passports, which will enable our workers to secure the adjustments that they require to stay well in the workplace, so that every workplace is suitable whatever your needs, that a new job or manager can’t mean a new battle to have your needs met.

In public bodies, in particular, our workforce should reflect our communities, but to enable people with disabilities to succeed we need employers to deliver inclusive workplaces, whether at home or on site.

Our trade unions represent members whose health and workplaces have seen so many changes over the past few years, and which will continue to change. We are, therefore, calling on the TUC to campaign and lobby for the recognition and use of accessibility passports to be mandatory in all public bodies for workers with a disability. Congress, thank you. *(Applause)*

**Pauline Twigg** *(Royal College of Midwives)* seconded Motion 36.

She said: I am seconding Motion 36, Reasonable adjustment passports in the NHS and public bodies. In the UK one-in-five people have a disability, 80% of which are hidden disabilities. There are lots of barriers to disabled staff disclosing their disabilities to their employer, such as fears that it will affect career progression. These fears are not unfounded. Research by the TUC found that one-third of disabled workers were treated unfairly at work because of their disability or long-term health condition. Also, one-in-eight disabled workers were concerned that their disability, health condition or impairment had affected how their performance would be assessed by their manager.

I am one of the people who kept quiet about my hidden disability. For 20 years I worked as a midwife until the pandemic and a shielding letter exposed the real extent of my disability to my employer. The pandemic and treatment of disabled people has worsened my condition so it is not so hidden now, but that’s another story.

Like many during the pandemic I was given reasonable adjustments to work from home. However, a third of those supported during the pandemic did not get the right equipment to support them and either struggled or provided equipment themselves. A survey last year carried out by the Royal College of Midwives found that of those members who had asked for reasonable adjustments to be made a quarter said that these adjustments were not made, with only one quarter saying that all of the reasonable adjustments they needed were made.

NHS employers state that most reasonable adjustments cost less than £100, whilst most costing nothing but a simple change in process and policy. It is a statutory duty, under the Public Sector Equality Duty, to advance equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. The use of reasonable adjustment passports helps to open quality conversations between employee and manager, building trust and discussion around what matters to the employee and how they can be supported in the workplace occur. These conversations build confidence for the employee and can be recorded, even digitally or in paper format, so become transferrable between roles. It reduces the over-use of occupational health referrals which, in itself, can delay the implementation of reasonable adjustments, but acknowledges the employee as the expert in their condition and what works for them. Organisations using this approach will ----

**The President:** You have run out of time, so could you finish, please?

**Pauline Twigg:** Organisations using this approach will demonstrate disability confident qualities, supporting staff and helping the NHS being a truly inclusive service where everyone belongs. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Lorraine Parker Delaz Ajete** *(GMB)* spoke in support of Motion 36. She said: One in five workers identify as disabled or as having a long-term health condition. It is estimated that two million people are living with long-Covid. We must defend and strengthen the duty to make reasonable adjustments. Congress, as we remind employers regularly, it is not an option but a duty. Often even a small change can make all the difference. Most reasonable adjustments are inexpensive or free, but when many of our members move jobs or get a new manager these positive working arrangements can fall apart. These conversations are not easy.

Most disabled workers who disclose to their employer regret doing so. We need to break that cycle. That is why the GMB worked with the TUC to produce a model reasonable adjustments passport. We have negotiated the option of the policy with our employers. Congress, more than 25,000 workers are now covered across the public and private sectors. That passport is making our members working better every day. We need now to promote it more strongly through the TUC structures.

Congress, justice not charity, and nothing about us without us. Support disabled workers and support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Sarah Carter** *(National Education Union)* spoke in support of Motion 36.

She said: Reasonable adjustments! It sounds obvious, doesn’t it? But getting them for our members is sometimes really difficult. My chair today in Congress is an adjustable office chair. It’s got arm rests and it goes up and down. Why do I have it? Because I can’t sit for a long time in here. Without it, I am made disabled. This is the social model of disability.

What if I had been told that that adjustment wasn’t possible or reasonable because other workers didn’t have a chair like mine, that it was unfair to others for they only had an ordinary conference chair? It wouldn’t happen here, though, would it? Definitely not. Of course, as a local lay officer and a case worker, I regularly attend meetings in schools with members to agree reasonable adjustments with the managers and heads. These meetings can go well but they can be deeply unpleasant if a bullying head is involved. Some managers don’t understand the necessity for change in the work environment at all. Some ignore the medical advice of occupation health, GPs and consultants with their reports. It is no surprise that one-in-10 members who are disabled give up work altogether. It’s hard to keep fighting. It just wears you down. Employers must see adjustment passports as being mandatory or they will be ignored by some. Workers definitely should not have to explain the effect of their impairments over and over again to every boss they come across. There needs to be a proper conversation, however, with the manager about how these effects can fluctuate as not every day will be a good day. Some are far worse. If the workplace changes, then so must the adjustments passport. But we are, clearly, too much trouble for some employers to deal with and, like me, we are often quietly taken aside and encouraged to consider giving up either our roles of responsibility, for which we are paid extra, or our jobs.

One disabled worker who I work with was diagnosed with epilepsy and advised that she had to be based on one site at school. She worked on a split site with a few miles between, so had to drive. She was not allowed to drive for a whole year. This was a temporary fix until she could get her medication under control. It was advised medically that she even got Access to Work to agree to get her taxis to and from school, but the school refused to give her that help. They would not give her that benefit because it was not fair because other people had to drive between sites, even though not everybody did. It was a choice they made. What wasn’t fair, though, was making her feel that she should give up her job because it was no longer accessible just because she is disabled. She is an experienced science teacher whose work is exemplary, so why should she be forced to leave? It was doable. It should have been done. It’s not perfect, but Motion 36 gives us another weapon in our armoury, so please support it. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you. We will now vote on Motion 36. Will all those in favour please show? Any against? That is carried.

* *Motion 36 was CARRIED.*

**Using the disability employment charter to make the national disability strategy deliver for disabled workers**

**The President:** I call now Motion 37: Using the disability employment charter to make the national disability strategy deliver for disabled workers. The General Council support the motion. It will be moved by Sian Stockham on behalf of the TUC Disabled Workers’ Committee, seconded by UCU and I will also call speakers from Unite, NEU, NASUWT and the NUJ.

**Sian Stockham** *(UNISON and TUC Disabled Workers Committee)* moved Motion 37. She said: Congress, I am moving Motion 37 from the Disabled Workers TUC Conference.

Conference, this motion is about solutions. It is about ending 12 years of inaction by successive Tory-led governments, and it is about developing a manifesto that could change the lives of millions of disabled workers.

Back in 2019, before the pandemic, UNISON organised a round-table event shared by Karen Monaghan QC at which we took the decision to stop talking about the problems that disabled workers face and, instead, ask everyone to put forward solutions. After the round-table meeting, Disability Rights UK, the country’s biggest disabled people’s organisation, suggested some of us work together to develop a charter for disability rights in the workplace based on the solutions from the round table, and this is how the Disability Employment Charter was born.

UNISON, along with Disability Rights UK, were founding members. Together we worked on a set of key actions that the Government could take that we believe could be a game-changer for disabled workers. Those are the nine ‘asks’ in the Charter. As the only union involved, UNISON was keen that the list included core issues of concern to the union Movement. So the charter includes the right to time off for trade union equality reps, mandatory publication of the disability pay gap and improved sick pay. It also stops the Government awarding contracts to companies that refuse to employ disabled people. We pushed to ensure that one of the asks called for the new right to the reasonable adjustment response to be within two weeks, and a stronger right to disability leave. I am delighted to report that more than 220 employers have signed up to the charter. Our comrades in UCU, Unite and PCS have also backed the charter.

What are the Government doing? I am sorry to report that they are in a bit of a muddle. That is an understatement after yesterday. They consulted on the so-called National Disability Strategy, but the consultation it was based on was so bad – downright offensive, in fact – that the High Court found it to be illegal. Because of this, the whole strategy was declared illegal. What a mess, Conference! But this is the perfect time for us to come forward with a disability employment charter. It is a ready-made recipe for improving the rights of disabled workers, and if the Government were at all serious about this they would agree to it straightaway.

In the absence of a government that gives a jot about workers’ rights, UNISON and our comrades have been focusing on working with the Labour Party who, I am pleased to say, have been very positive about the charter. We look forward to a future Labour Government delivering some of the asks.

Conference, I said at the start that this motion was about solutions. It does not have all the answers, of course, but it has options we can use as a basis for our campaigning. Importantly, these options have been backed by a cross-section of disabled people’s organisations, charities, trade unions and public and private-sector employers. Of course it is not perfect, no comprise ever is, but we are trade unionists and we understand how negotiations work. It is fantastic that we have private-sector employers, including McDonald’s, to sign up to key trade union asks, like better sick pay, time off for trade union equality reps and mandatory publication of the disability pay gap. So let’s all work together to back a charger as a campaigning tool that we can use to win the change that disabled workers have been waiting for. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Dave Allan** *(Unite the union)* seconded Motion 37.

He said: Congress, I am seconding Motion 37 from your Disabled Workers’ Conference. This Government’s disability strategy fails on all fronts. It was delivered too late, it was not based on any consultation with disabled people or disabled people’s organisations, it has zero ambition and any recommendations it manages to make are only voluntary. It is not worth the paper it’s printed on and does nothing to answer the needs of the hour.

Congress, the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people has long remained over 30%. Your colleagues in the TUC Equalities Department are about to announce figures that are even worse. The employment gap is over 30% and the pay gap between disabled and non-disabled workers is over 20%. The pandemic has only served to make the situation worse, with redundancy rates for disabled workers being far higher than non-disabled workers. So the Disability Employment Charter is one of the tools that disabled workers and our organisations will use to fight back. It proposes concrete demands to remove the barriers to proper employment with union-recognised terms and conditions. That means shining a light, the light of scrutiny, on the large employers who need to publish, on an annual basis, the data on the number of disabled people that they employ. It means the option to work flexibly from day one, it becoming the legal default for all jobs. It means stronger rights to paid disability leave for assessments, rehabilitation and training. Congress, that the start, just the start, that we will develop further.

As the President has said, your General Council has unanimously asked you to support this motion. Please support the motion and fight for disabled workers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Colleen Johnson** *(NEU, National Education Union)* abstained from voting on Motion 37.

She said: President and Congress, I am speaking on the Disability Employment Charter to make the National Disabilities Strategy deliver for disabled workers. There is a very important phrase used in disability politics: “It is nothing about us without us”. This phrase explains why the National Disability Strategy was so badly received as the Government had consulted with countless charities, rather than DPOs or disabled people’s organisations. This motion, which appears to want to address some of those failings, came by a rather unusual and interesting route through our Disabled Workers’ Committee and Disabled Workers’ Conference.

The Disability Employment Charter mentioned in this motion is supported by some unions, but if you look it up it is also supported by many, many charities and few, if any, disabled people’s organisations. In addition, at the time it appeared, the TUC already had sound policies on the employment of disabled workers. So, given the strong and principled feelings of the National Education Union on disabled workers on the need to truly and properly consult with disabled people themselves rather than charities and businesses, we will abstaining from voting on this motion. Thank you.

**Deborah White** *(NASUWT, The Teachers’ Union)* spoke in support of Motion 37. She said: Congress, I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. *(Applause)* I speak in support of Motion 37 using the Disability Employment Charter to make the National Disabilities Strategy deliver for disabled workers. In the UK, one-in-five workers are disabled, according to the Equality Act 2010. This equates to 14 million, and the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people is nearly 30%, including 6% of adults with a learning disability in paid work. Hence, the need for new measures to address this disparity.

Too often people diagnosed with a disability are viewed as liabilities and denied employment opportunities, whereas their skills can be a strong asset to a diverse workforce, rather than being condemned to a life of poverty and exclusion. Being employed is more than earning money. It’s about feeling valued and living full independent lives. The challenges of stigma, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination can only be overcome by removing the barriers to successful employment, including physical accessibility, attitudes and policies.

To achieve this, prompt workplace adjustments are essential. Through no fault of their own, many hardworking, high achievers can find themselves facing harassment and discrimination upon developing health conditions, often work related, which could easily be mitigated by reasonable adjustments but many employers fail to conduct tailored risk assessments leaving disabled workers facing the stark choice of their job or their health. I speak from my own experience and as a case worker dealing with colleagues suffering with mental ill-health and symptoms of the menopause, often at the peak of their careers but forced to accept less favourable terms of employment, or leaving their jobs altogether.

Throughout this Congress we have heard how women, BAME and disabled workers are worse affected. The Government’s National Disability Strategy, published in July 2021, was expected to improve the lives of disabled people but was ruled unlawful by the High Court in January 2022 based on a case brought by four disabled people in relation to the consultation process. The Government are appealing. However, we know that any strategy or policy that has elements which are not mandatory is open to misinterpretation and exploitation to the detriment of the very people ----

**The President:** Could you wind up, please, delegate, because you are out of time?

**Deborah White:** The NASUWT is committed to fighting for the rights of disabled workers and we intend to put forward a charter at the next disabled consultation conference next month. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I call a speaker now from the NUJ.

**Natasha Hirst** *(NUJ, National Union of Journalists)* spoke in support of Motion 37.

She said: Congress, I am supporting Motion 37 although I am quite ambivalent about it, and I will explain why.

I have been a disability activist for 25 years and, quite frankly, Congress, I am tired. I am tired of having the same conversation year after year and seeing only superficial progress with plenty of words but never enough action. In 2017 I was a member of the UK Delegation of Disabled People to the UN in Geneva where we presented a huge volume of evidence about the human rights’ violations against disabled people in the UK. The situation was so bad that the committee declared it a human catastrophe.

Now, more than five year on while the next review is underway, we are hanging on to our rights by our fingernails. This is the bottom line, Congress. Disabled people have the same fundamental human rights as everybody else, the same right to an education, the same right to access employment and the same right to life! *(Applause)* Yet disabled people disproportionately died during the pandemic. Disabled people are disproportionately affected by poverty and this is the result of political choices. It is not inevitable.

As a trade union Movement we cannot stand by while the lives of one-fifth of the population are viewed as being dispensable by the state. If our human rights don’t matter, nor do anybody else’s, and the UK Government have been making that quite apparent recently. So vote for this motion but it barely scratches the surface. As a trade union Movement, we should be doing a hell of a lot more to secure disability equality. Congress, it really is time that we demand better. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you. We will now vote on Motion 37. Will all those in favour please show? Thank you. All those against? That is carried.

* *Motion 37 was CARRIED.*

**Video and presentation of Congress awards**

**The President:** Congress, it is time to celebrate the work and achievements of those who bring the benefits of trade unionism to tens of thousands of workers each day of the year. Of course, I am talking about our workplace union representatives. First, we are going to watch a short video which celebrates their work before the General Secretary presents the winners with their awards. *(Video shown) (Applause)* What a fantastic video, and isn’t it always great to see our lay reps in action.

Congress, as you will have seen, we have been joined by Keir Starmer, the Leader of the Labour Party, on the stage. *(Applause)* We are looking forward to hearing from Keir very shortly, but first of all, though, I am going to ask the General Secretary to present the winners of the Learning Rep Awards with their awards.

First of all, this year’s Safety Rep Award goes to Jamie McGovern of the CWU. *(Presentation made amidst applause)* The winner of the Organising Award this year is Bella Fashola of RMT. *(Presentation made amidst applause)* The winner of the Learning Rep Award this year is Kathryn Williams from Unite. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*  The winner of the Young Member’s Award is Lewis Akers of NGSU. *(Applause)*

The final award is the Women’s Gold Badge and this year’s recipient is Carol Sewell of UNISON. Unfortunately, Carol cannot be with us today but I am sure you will join me in congratulating her and we will make sure that she gets her award safely. *(Applause)* I call paragraph 5.6.

**Address by Rt. Hon. Sir Keir Starmer MP (Leader of the Labour Party) at**

**2022 TUC Congress on Thursday, 20th October.**

**The President:** Colleagues, I would now like to welcome this morning’s keynote speaker, the Leader of the Labour Party, Keir Starmer. *(Applause)*  At Labour’s Conference last month, Keir set out how a Labour Government would deliver a new deal for working people, a vital part of Labour’s plan to build a fairer and greener future, and this, of course, is in stark contrast to the chaos of the current Government, which seems to get worse by the minute. We look forward to hearing more from Keir today about his vision and about how Labour will work with the unions to support working people through the cost-of-living crisis and promote workers’ and trade union rights. Keir, you are very welcome and I invite you to address Congress. *(Applause and cheers)*

**Sir Keir Starmer**: Thank you, Sue, thank you, Congress, and it is a privilege to come and speak to you at such an important time. I have to say, what with everything going on, I am a bit nervous to turn my phone off for half-an-hour or 45 minutes. I really do not know what will have happened by the time we turn it back on.

Let me say that watching that video and hearing the words of the reps was really moving. It was a real reminder of the importance of the trade union Movement. Before I go any further, I want to say thank you to the General Secretary, my friend, a giant of the labour Movement, Frances -- *(Applause) –* who is on the side of workers, on the side of women and on the side of Arsenal. Frances is always on the right side. But, Congress, especially during the pandemic, where her determination to fight for working people was an inspiration to all of us. Never forget, it was Frances who led the employers and the Government to the furlough scheme, a tripartite deal for those troubled times, a true collective agreement for the nation. Without her deal, 10 million workers would have been jobless during a monumental social crisis. My Labour Party supported it every step of the way, including on the many occasions when the Government wanted to scrap it prematurely. We will never forget that leadership, Frances. Thank you for that. *(Applause)*

And thank you to Paul, too. The organising you did to keep workers safe during the crisis saved countless lives. I know how much our movement is in your blood. I also know that you are an Everton fan. So, as the TUC moves from red to blue, I look forward to working with you as Britain moves in the opposite direction.

Congress, today I want to set out what is at stake for Britain, because while politics is always about choices the choice now is as stark as it gets. We face a battle for the soul of our country, who we are, who we are for. The Labour choice is a Britain that is fairer, greener and more dynamic, a Britain where we rebuild our public services to provide opportunity and security, to tackle the climate emergency head on and use it to create jobs and industries of the future; restore faith in politics as a force for good, get Britain’s hope, its confidence and its future back. But the first step, the foundation that all of this rest on, is respect for the working people who create the wealth that drives our country forward. It is not just the privileged few who grow Britain’s economy. The Tories are so wrong about that. It’s the cleaners, carers, nurses, teachers, engineers, physios, scientists, shopworkers, drivers, builders, bar-tenders, teaching assistants, technicians, cooks, warehouse workers, posties, farmer and small business owners who grow our economy. Who is growth for? The right choice and the only choice, the Labour choice, is working people. *(Applause)*  My government will be dedicated to building an economy that works for working people. Everything else flows from this.

Britain knows exactly where the Tories stand. They can dance around a u-turn. They can sack this Chancellor or the Prime Minister, but the damage is done and they did it! They crashed the British economy, and for what? To show they were on the side of the richest 1%. It’s a crisis made in Downing Street without a democratic mandate, paid for by working people in higher bills, higher rents and higher mortgages. This is who they are. These are their true colours. Never again can Britain take seriously their claim to be a party of aspiration or sound money.

But, Congress, last night in Parliament, even by their standards, a new chaotic low. All the failures of the past 12 years have now come to the boil; the victims of crime who can’t get justice, people dying because ambulances can’t get there in time, millions going without food or heating, and none of it can drum into the Tories the idea that our country must come first. They lack the basic patriotic duty to keep the British people out of their own pathetic squabbles, and it has wrecked the finances of our country and for millions of people. This cannot continue. Britain deserves better. Britain cannot afford the chaos of the Conservatives any more. We need a general election now! *(Applause and cheers)*

Congress, just look at their latest plan to get our country out of the hole that they dug. They turn to austerity, they turn to you, to your members and their rights. Congress, I am sure you have heard that tape, of how the Prime Minister thinks that working people lack skill and application. They have heard her say that your members don’t graft hard enough. It’s delusional and it’s insulting, but it comes with a warning, because look around the country – a national emergency on the cost of living, public services on their knees, working people grafting every minute of the day still unable to make ends meet. Ask yourselves this: with that warped logic in charge, what happens when the Tories finally see the full reality of what they have done? I’ll tell you. They will lash out, double down, attack my Party, our movement and your members.

So, Congress, let me stand here and spell this out. If they bring forward further restrictions on workers’ rights or the right to strike, we will oppose and we will repeal. *(Applause)* Just as we will tear up anti-trade union legislation, such as the Trade Union Act 2016, we also need to be prepared, disciplined and relentlessly focused on the future. We must meet their attacks with hope and provide the leadership this country so desperately needs, and build a Britain where working people can succeed again, where working people are backed as the people who really create economic growth. That’s the Labour choice. That’s not just words.

I don’t come from a privileged background. I grew up in a pebble-dashed semi in the 1970s. I remember what the anxiety of rising prices feels like. I remember when our phone was cut off because we couldn’t pay the bill, and I know what that anxiety looks like now.

Let me tell you about a care worker I know. She works 14-hour shifts, often overnight, never flinching at the relentless pressures put upon her, and every week – yes, every week – she struggles to make ends meet. Congress, that care worker is my sister. When I think about the work that she and millions like her did for our country during the pandemic, risking their health to save lives on low pay with low-security contracts, and the Prime Minister says that people like my sister lack graft! Let me spell it out. The fight for fair pay, the fight for good work and the fight to make our economy work for everyone, not just a privileged few, is personal for me. I will not rest until we see a Britain based on those values. That’s the Labour choice. *(Applause)*  If you don’t back people like my sister, don’t be surprised if you get 12 years of stagnant growth. That’s why we backed working people on rising energy prices.

When the Prime Minister argued against handouts, Labour provided the clarity the nation needed. We said “Not a penny more on anyone’s bills, and we will make sure that the oil and gas companies pay their fair share”.

I will tell you something else. We would abolish non-dom status to get our NHS back on its feet. *(Applause)* That’s the main barrier to capacity right now – staff. So we would invest in more doctors, more nurses and more health visitors. A tax break for some of the richest in our society or a stronger NHS workforce is not a hard choice for us. *(Applause)*

But to end this cost-of-living crisis once and for all, we also need a long-term plan, a plan that will deliver cheaper bills and higher energy standards for working people, growth and jobs in all parts of the country, and real independence from tyrants like Putin, who weaponise fossil-fuel exports and threaten our security. That’s what our Green Prosperity Plan will achieve: 100% clean power by 2030, investment in wind, solar, nuclear, hydrogen, green steel and carbon capture, training for plumbers, electricians, engineers, software designers, technicians, builders, a national Sovereign Wealth Fund that generates growth and private investment, insulation for 19 million homes, and Great British Energy, a publicly-owned company that takes advantage of the opportunities of clean British power and turns them into goods that provide high-paid British jobs.

The argument for our plan is simple. Green energy is already cheaper than fossil fuels – nine times cheaper. Working people need more of it. Britain needs to own it, and the jobs and growth we generate must be shared with every community. That’s the Labour choice. It is why I have always said that we will fight the Tories on economic growth. The Prime Minister is completely out of touch with the reality of the British economy. She thinks workers’ rights and collective bargaining are a barrier to growth. She doesn’t care about the distribution of wealth in Britain. She hasn’t u-turned on that. That’s a clear argument -- I’ll give her that – but it’s one we have heard before, and it doesn’t work! Working people will not be better off because we make the rich richer. It’s pure dogma. The world has moved on from these discredited ideas. Every day the Tories stick to them is another nail in the coffin of Britain’s economic credibility.

Her real problem is that we create too many jobs that are low-paid and insecure. We lock too many communities out of the wealth that we create, and our public services are not strong enough to help working people succeed. That’s why we struggle to grow. Our economic foundations are too weak. The Tory argument is that that’s fine. As the City of London races ahead and the rest of Britain stagnates, they think that is okay. Congress, forget about lines on a graph. If you leave this many people behind a nation will not grow fairly. You can’t do it with low wages. You can’t do it with insecure jobs and bad work, and you can’t do it without a modern industrial strategy. This is not a debate. The evidence is in.

A vicious cycle of stagnation is how the now former Chancellor called it. And on this one thing he was right. Twelve years of Tory stagnation have left the average British family £8,800 poorer than other advanced economies. I am talking about economies like France, Germany and The Netherlands, economies that do have stronger collective bargaining, do have stronger workers’ rights and do have a fairer share of wealth across their country. These things are not a barrier to growth or higher productivity. They go hand-in-hand with it. That’s the Labour choice!

So we will strengthen the role of trade unions in our society. *(Applause)* An economy that is strong for working people cannot weaken the institutions that give working people strength, and it cannot be built on insecure foundations. Security at work is the bedrock for aspiration and opportunity, for giving people the confidence to get on. Nobody does their best if they are wracked by fear about the future, if their contract gives them no protection to stand up for their rights at work or if a proper safety net doesn’t support them in times of sickness and poor health. That’s what Labour’s New Deal for Working People is all about. That’s why we will end fire-and-rehire, ban zero-hour contracts, extend parental leave, strengthen flexible working, better protection for pregnant women, mandatory reporting on ethnicity pay gaps, statutory sick pay for all, a single worker status and no more one-sided flexibility. *(Applause and cheers)*

Congress, so far as I am concerned, that is not just a list of rights: it’s a statement of intent on social justice, on fairness, whose side we’re on, and more security for every worker in our country. Because of that, a stronger foundation for working people to aspire and get on. That’s the economic dynamism that Britain needs. That’s how you get growth. That’s the Labour choice! It’s a choice that provides the basis for true social partnerships, a modern industrial strategy where we unite and tackle the country’s challenges on behalf of working people.

I will say this here. I’m not just pro-business. I want to partner with business to drive Britain forward. I will say the same about trade unions to the CBI. You saw the deal Frances struck during the pandemic. The results speak for themselves. It’s a model that Mark Drakeford had used successfully in Wales, and it can work because the vast majority of business leaders don’t buy into the Tory trickle-down fantasy. They are not knocking on my door saying that they want to rip up employee rights. They don’t tell me that the problems they face will be solved by corporation tax cuts. They want fair taxes, high skills and the long-term stability to invest. We could work with that, we will work with that.

We will set up a new Industrial Strategy Council, a permanent part of the landscape, that brings in the creative genius of science in our universities, that holds us to account on our decisions, that helps businesses to innovate and grow and delivers a real partnership between government, business and unions. This is how we can give Britain the stability it needs for higher investment, a long-term plan, not short-term fix. That’s the Labour choice.

But when we talk about economic stability, I want to be frank. The damage the Tories have done to our finances and public services means things are going to be really touch now and during my Labour government. We cannot take any risks with the public finances. We have to restore economic stability and be the party of sound money. You have all seen the damage that can be done from fiscal irresponsibility. When you lose control of the economy, as the Tories have done, you lose the ability to do anything, and working people pay the price. That will not happen with Labour. I will not let it! It doesn’t mean that we have to take a back seat on fair pay. Low pay is the biggest barrier to a fairer, more dynamic Britain bar none. It’s a huge drag on our prospects for growth and social justice. We need a minimum wage that reflects the cost of living, and with a Labour government that is exactly what Britain will get.

But we will go further, because ending low pay in Britain is not just a question of law, it is not about the rules that the state sets. It’s about the power that working people have to shape the rules that govern their lives. So my Labour government will end the Tory race-to-the-bottom on pay with fair pay agreements -- *(Applause) –* agreements that will make work pay for the people who create Britain’s economic growth.

Just think how this would work in social care, a sector where half-a-million workers are paid less than £10 an hour, where people have to work multiple jobs and still struggle to provide for their family. With our fair pay agreements, social care employers and unions will have to get around the table and negotiate, and the deal they strike will set the floor for every social-care employer in the country. That’s how you make work pay fairly. That’s how you improve conditions and raise the status of care work. Respect the workers who saved countless lives in the pandemic and create this country’s wealth. Good work, fair pay and respect. That’s the Labour choice. It’s what both of us fight for, party and movement. But we must fight in different ways. We must accept that when it comes to delivering for working people we have different jobs.

I support the right to strike unequivocally. I understand that it’s always a last resort. The Tory idea that working people give up their wages lightly in the worst cost-of-living crisis for a century is completely unserious about the pain that people feel right now. *(Applause)*

You are representing the democratic choice of your members. You are doing your job and I respect that, but my job is different. The single most important thing I can do for working people is to make sure that we win the next election and get a Labour Government. *(Applause)* That is how we role out our Green Prosperity Plan, how we deliver the New Deal for working people and how we create a modern industrial strategy together. None of this happens unless Labour is in power. So I will never be ashamed to say that my Labour Party wants to increase worker power in our economy, but nor will I apologise for approaching questions on industrial action as a potential Labour government. The Labour Party is not doing its job when it is in opposition.

I will not let this be an era of Tory chaos, stagnation and attacks on working people. We cannot go on any longer. This cannot be a re-run of the 1980s. That’s what they want. Liz Truss has torn away the veil. They’re not even pretending any more. The battle is here, a battle where all the usual signs of Tory decay, crumbling public services, the run on the pound, the question about how we keep the lights on and the brutal hit to living standards of pensioners, families and the poorest in our society will be turned back on us.

Congress, have no doubt about what is coming. Take nothing for granted. This winter will be brutal. We must do everything we can to look after people. But the Tories will not give up on power. That’s not who they are. Our country is crying out for decisive leadership, and Labour will provide it. We will work every day to earn the trust of the British people, to meet their ambitions for real change, walk towards a better future and put this Tory trickle-down nonsense back in its box once and for all. That’s the choice for Britain. *(Applause)* A Tory Party that’s lost control of itself and the economy, or a Labour government that delivers fair pay, good work and prosperity for all, a country where aspiration is rewarded, a clean energy superpower, a fairer, greener and more dynamic Britain where working people get their rights, respect and security that they deserve. That’s the Labour choice! Thank you, Congress. *(A standing ovation)*

**The President:** Thank you, Keir. That was a wonderful speech, and know that you have the full support of the trade union Movement.

**Questions and Answer session**

**The President:** I now call delegates to put their questions to Keir. I will call you in threes to ask your questions. When we have heard the three questions, we will hand over to Keir to respond. We will start with calling Sam Hemraj from UNISON, Amanda Naylor from Usdaw and Bella Fashola from RMT.

**Samantha Hemraj:** Good morning, Keir, and good morning Conference. Public service workers, including those of us in the NHS, are bearing the brunt of Tory austerity, not least with the hit on our pay packets. By the end of October NHS key workers across the UK will be deciding if they will be striking for better pay and staffing this winter. Labour in opposition has shown its support for public services, but what will Labour do in power to ensure that in future our members in the NHS and other public services receive pay awards that are at least in line with inflation? Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Amanda Naylor** *(USDAW, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)*: My question this. Usdaw survey data shows that one-in-four Universal Credit claimants are missing meals every month just to pay the bills, with one-in-five having to rely on food banks. Low-paid workers have been failed by Universal Credit under the Tory’s austerity programme. The system is not fit for purpose and has not been structured in a way that supports low-paid workers. How will the Labour Party put pressure on the Tories to increase all benefits in line with inflation and what plans does the Labour Party have to work with trade unions and to deliver a social security system which provides an adequate safety net for the country? *(Applause)*

**Bella Fashola** *(RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers):* Keir, firstly, can I thank you for all you did working with the RMT to fight the P&O sackings and support our seafaring colleagues. *(Applause)*  I, myself, am a railway cleaner and my job is outsourced to a company called Churchills. Because we are outsourced we get worse conditions of employment and outsourced workers are overwhelmingly BAEM women workers. Will you promise to stick to your new deal for workers so that thousands of outsourced transport workers like myself can be brought back in-house? *(Applause)*

**Keir Starmer:** Let me deal with those three, starting with the NHS and the question that Sam put to me. Personally, let me say thank you to all of those who work in our NHS and in all our public services for everything they do every day, particularly during the pandemic.

Congress, as you probably know, my wife works in the NHS, my mum worked in the NHS, my sister worked in the NHS and my wife’s mother worked in the NHS, so it runs through my body like my DNA. We know that it is not just the strain of the last few years. There are 12 years’ worth of strain in that.

What will we be able to do in power? The first thing is to broaden the remit of the pay review bodies, to put additional emphasis on pay reflecting the need for improved recruitment and retention. But we also need to grow our economy, and that’s why what I said in my speech and what we said at Conference is really important, because we intend to abolish non-doms and to use that money to double the number going into our medical schools and so on to build up our public services, to make that choice. Thirdly, we must tackle inflation because the cost-of-living crisis is going to go on for some time if we don’t get inflation under control. That’s why our energy package was so important, and making sure that we answer the question. If you are going to freeze people’s bills, who pays for that? It has to be a fair share from the excess profits of the oil and wind companies. It is really hard to believe that Liz Truss is really saying we are going to freeze energy bills for six months, but she is not going to ask the oil and gas companies, which made profits they did not expect to make, to pay anything towards it. She is going to put it on the never-never, which means that your members will pay for it in additional taxes for years and years to come. Sam, we’ve got a big programme for public services when we get into government, and I look forward to working with you to take that forward.

Mandy, on benefits in line with inflation, the first thing is the statistics that you just quoted are absolutely awful in terms of the number of people in real poverty now. We have to take this on. We believe that benefits should go up in line with inflation, and the Government used to believe that until a few days ago. In the short-term, we will work with Tory MPs, who feel strongly about this, to make sure that we put up a united opposition in Parliament to what the Government are proposing. In the longer term, I do think that we need to reform aspects of our benefit system where they are not working. I know that Jonathan Ashworth is already starting work with the trade unions on that, and we will continue to do so.

However, there is one final point, Mandy, that I would make – this goes back to my argument on growth and pay – which is that we do have to ask ourselves why in this country we have so many working people who are also reliant on benefits because they simply are not paid enough money? That is shocking and that is why we need to grow the economy, have secure and well-paid jobs for so many millions of people who are struggling just at the moment.

Bella, on the questions of the new deal for workers and P&O, firstly, thank you for everything that you and the union did – I include the trade unions generally – in relation to that P&O dispute. I met a number of those who lost their jobs in that disgraceful action by P&O. They came to see me, they talked me through it and they had had years and years of experience in the job that they did, they were extremely concerned about the loss of their jobs, what it meant for them, their family and their community. But I’ll tell you what their main concern was, that the boat or ship that they had been working on wouldn’t be safe. That is what they talked to me about around the table. Their concern was that they were being replaced by inexperienced people and would put those on the boats and ships at sea in danger. That was the motivation for them. It was really fantastic to meet them, but it shows you why we need the new deal for workers. We are absolutely committed to that, Bella. We’ve got it drafted, we had it at Conference last year and we are committing to implementing it within the first 100 days of the next Labour Government. Thank you very much for that question.

**The President:** I now call Taj Salam from Unite, Carol Robertson from GMB and Gary Elliott from Nautilus International.

**Taj Salam** *(Unite):* Keir, I am a bus driver and a Unite branch secretary. Unite has won 64 bus strikes in the last year after profitable employers initially refused to pay decent pay rises. Do you agree, when profitable employers with the ability to pay try to impose pay cuts on workers, that those workers are right to take industrial action? *(Applause)*

**Carol Robertson** *(GMB)*: My sons are looking for work and one of the few local employers is Amazon. I am extremely concerned for their safety if they do have to work there. There are very real accounts of oppressive pick rates, too short break times, injuries and a culture of surveillance and job insecurity. No employer in this day and age should be treating workers in this way. Will Labour promise to deny Amazon any public-sector contracts, including for Amazon Web Services, until it has sorted out its appalling health and safety record, and ended its aggressive hostility to trade unions? *(Applause)*

**Garry Elliott** *(Nautilus International, the Seafarers’ Union)*: In March 786 British seafarers were unlawfully dismissed by P&O Ferries without consultation or notice. P&O Ferries factored into the cost of breaking the law when they decided to sack almost their entire British crew. As a coincidence from what you just said, they never sacked one Dutch seafarer because of their employment rights, which are far stronger than those in the UK. Additionally, UK law does not provide for injunctive relief. Would a Labour Government put that right?

**Keir Starmer:** Thank you. Let me deal with those three points. Taj, firstly let me thank bus drivers for everything they do, and particularly what they did during the pandemic. I met the daughter of Ranjith, who you will remember was the bus driver who died from Covid when doing his job as a bus driver. So I know first hand just how hard that was during the pandemic.

When it comes to industrial action, obviously, that is an incredible record for Unite in terms of the strikes and the negotiations and what they have won for their members, and quite right, too. We have to understand the suffering of so many people whose wages have not gone up for a very, very long time and prices are going through the roof and they can’t make ends meet. That’s why that action is taken, and it is the role of trade unions to take on that action, and I support the right to strike. I do think there is much more we can do when it comes to bus services and bus drivers. I was with our Metro mayors, Andy in Manchester, Steve in Liverpool and Tracey Brabin in West Yorkshire. What they are driving towards, when it comes to buses, is this idea of a flat fare plus control over the routes that are used for buses. That is the sort of thing that in-coming Labour Government could absolutely push forward, not just where we have Metro mayors but across the whole of the country. So thank you, Taj, for that.

Carol, in relation to Amazon – firstly, I am really concerned by the issues that GMB have raised in relation to Amazon, some of which you mentioned in your question but there are plenty of other examples – I think it is the role of government to drive up standards. I don’t think government should just get out of the way. It is the role of government to do so. That’s why our new deal for working people is so important. Day one rights for every worker whatever their status would make a huge difference when it comes to Amazon.

There are other things that an in-coming Labour Government can do. There is a lot of procurement, and it is up to a Government to put terms and conditions and a framework around procurement to make it clear the standards that we would expect if public money is going to be expended on any business, whether it is Amazon or anybody else. Carol, I will be very clear to you and to Amazon. They should recognise the GMB and have a unionised workforce. It’s as simple as that. *(Applause)*

Gary, on P&O – obviously, I have said one or two things about it before – what really frustrated all of us in relation to that appalling series of sackings was that the provision in the law that they used to do it was pointed out as a gap two years before they did it. The Government knew there was gap, they knew they had to close that gap but they didn’t do it and P&O sailed right through it, and the Government have done nothing about it. We would take that on, we would change that law, close that gap and put it with our package of employment rights within the first 100 days of a Labour Government. What they did was absolutely disgraceful. It was flagged to the Government, the Government did nothing and P&O then took advantage of that. We cannot allow that to happen again. The comparison with other countries is very, very valid. Thank you for that question. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Keir, thank you very much for taking the time to answer those questions. Just before we let you go, I am going to abuse the Chair because, as you might expect, we had lots of other questions from unions. So many of our public sector unions are dealing with the consequences of vicious cuts, under-stated staffing levels and real-term pay cuts. University lectures, civil servants, teachers, early-years workers, health workers and others are all in the midst of industrial action ballots or considering action. Of course, some like the POA members in England are even denied the basic right to industrial action, even though their colleagues in Scotland can take industrial action.

So what would a future Labour Government do to invest in our public services and heal the relationship between politicians and hardworking public servants who feel they just can’t take any more? How do we rebuild our public services?

**Keir Starmer:** Sue, thank you for that question. As most people will know, I ran a public service for five years with 7,000 staff, and I know what it means to be a public servant. It means you go to work, you work hard and you have that public service ethos that goes with it, always doing the extra work. It breaks my heart to see what has happened to our public services during the past 10 years. I saw what austerity did 10 years ago. We cannot do it again. We cannot take cuts to our public services. This is a fight we will have to have before we get into government, I fear, because that is exactly where this Government is going to go. We will resist it every step of the way.

With public services, and particularly the NHS, I often say that they are on their knees. A lot of people working in public services say, “No, Keir. They’re actually down on their face now”. It’s that bad. So we have to make it a mission of the next Labour Government to rebuild our public services. It goes with growth. The idea that you can either have economic growth or public services is completely wrong. You can’t have growth without public services and vice-versa. We have to see them as one part of the same argument, as to how we build a better economy that works for working people and how we build a better Britain for the future.

Sue, that is what want to do: a national mission to rebuild our public services. I look forward to working with you and all the trade unions in this room as we go down that path to rebuild our public services. It will be one of the best things that the next Labour Government could achieve. Thank you, Sue. Thank you, Conference. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Keir. Thank you for joining us. We look forward to seeing you in Downing Street.  *(Applause)*   
  
Congress, we now return to Section 3 of the General Council Report, Good services, the section on justice on page 35. I call Motion 61, Defending the integrity of the justice system. The General Council support the motion. It will be moved by NAPO and seconded by the POA.   
  
**Defending the integrity of the justice system  
  
Ian Lawrence** *(NAPO)* moved Motion 61. He said: We should have known what we were in for. A few years back, when serving a spectacularly useless spell as Secretary of State for Justice, Liz Truss famously said to Parliament that her strategy for determining drones from depositing drugs into prison yards was to deploy more barking dogs ‑‑ barking mad! It is unfair to focus on her failures alone because with one honourable exception, we have seen a successive stream of Justice Secretaries whose stewardship of this important position has been nothing short of abysmal.  
  
Way back, we had the insane privatisation of the probation service, which we eventually overturned, if you recall, but the truth is that the Probation and Family Court Service has been subject to one crisis after another, with huge workloads and inept political decision‑making, which has had a major impact (and still does) on staff. The recent courageous industrial action by the Criminal Bar Association laid bare further what we already know, that the justice system is in crisis.  
  
As Motion 61 sets out, our members in the Family Courts face a new threat to their professionalism and their duty to feel confident in making potentially life‑changing recommendations to the judiciary in public and private law applications. It should be the case that staff working in the Family Courts are able to conduct their work without the additional stress of politically populist initiatives such as the one described in the motion and kept safe from the possibility of harassment, public ridicule or, worse still, physical harm. We await news of the two pilot trials that are taking place in the Family Courts for this so‑called transparency project, but needless to say, the then Secretary of State, Dominic Rabb, made no attempt whatsoever to consult with NAPO before launching this plan and the top‑line practitioners, who know a damn sight more about the Family Court system than he does.  
  
In probation, the monstrously stupid move to direct probation officers to no longer make recommendations to the Parole Board hearing has major implications for the delivery of natural justice and, as you would appreciate, public safety. It is another example of a no‑nothing politician playing footloose with this important component of the justice system. You will hear more in a moment about the impact that this is having on our brothers and sisters in the prison service from POA.  
  
As the motion is self‑explanatory, I do not need to rehearse the key issues here and will hopefully save a minute or two of your time, but two developments have taken place recently which are significant, one being the debate in the House of Lords this week where the excellent work of Lord Fred Ponsonby and cross‑party colleagues demanded that the minister change direction on this policy before people die, because that is the obvious connotation from this. If the parole boards are not given the right information from skilled professionals then serious mistakes are liable to be made. The other is confirmation that following the successful challenge by the lawyers on behalf of a client involved in a recent parole board hearing, there will be a judicial review taking place in the High Court over the next few weeks and NAPO has been asked to make an impact statement and will be pleased to do that.   
  
Congress, it is pretty clear that what is going on in the Family Courts and probation service is a disgrace. It will take a change of government to see these retrograde changes consigned to the dustbin of history where they belong. Our members will look to the Labour Government to restore the justice system to a standard that the taxpaying public want and deserve and rescue it from the shambolic and reckless management that has caused such egregious to this most priceless public asset. I move. *(Applause)*   
  
**Mark Fairhurst** *(POA)* seconded Motion 61. He said: This is a dangerous thing to do as a Justice Secretary, to overrule the professional opinion of highly‑trained people, who make life‑changing decisions on behalf of the public. Probation officers assess everything on risk and base all their decisions on risk. When we are looking at the basis of this motion when we are talking about Family Courts, it is a dangerous road to go down.   
  
I just want to give you one example of why we are so supportive of this. I was told yesterday that one of my work colleagues left his workplace, walked across the road from the prison to the staff carpark and was attacked. Two people were waiting outside the staff carpark just to randomly attack the first prison officer they saw. He was seriously injured just for doing his job.   
  
Put that into the context of this motion, a probation officer in a Family Court, where the public have access, targeting someone because they do not like the report they have just read out or they do not like the decision. We are talking about sensitive information. All the Justice Secretary is doing is pandering to the right‑wing populist view. I was actually with the head of the Parole Board a couple of weeks ago and she told me that less than 1% of the people they release re‑offend so the success is there.  
  
It also has a backlash on the staff in our prisons, including probation staff, because we bear the brunt on the frontline of decisions that are made by this Government. So let us give NAPO the power of the entire trade union Movement to go to the clowns in the Government and get this decision reversed. Thank you. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. We will now vote on Motion 61. Will all those in favour, please show? Thank you. Any against? That is carried.   
  
 \* *Motion 61 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  I turn now to Section 5 of the General Council Report, Administration and developing the TUC, from page 50. I call paragraphs 4.9, 5.1 to 5.5, 5.7 to 5.15, and Composite Motion 20, Sweetheart deals and unions working together. The General Council support the composite motion. It is to be moved by NASUWT and seconded by the GMB.  
  
**Section 5: Administration and developing the TUC  
Sweetheart deals and unions working together**  
  
**Patrick Roach** *(NASUWT, The Teachers' Union)* moved Composite Motion 20. He said: Congress, our success in the fight for education and the rights of working people begins with our Movement, campaigning together to develop decent working conditions, better pay, the right to decent pensions and equal treatment at work, including our fight against workplace discrimination, closing the gender pay gap and stopping racism at work. It starts with our unions working together to take on bad employers wherever they are, employers who believe that they can get away with playing fast and loose with our members' terms and conditions, bad bosses who believe it is okay to threaten workers with the sack in order to drive down their wages and their conditions of service.   
  
There are independent school employers, a growing list of shame, that are engaged in widespread fire and rehire practices against loyal and dedicated teachers: the Girls' Day School Trust, Pocklington School in East Yorkshire, and many, many more, school and college employers the length and breadth of the country who are on a mission to strip teachers of their contractual rights, treating teachers with contempt, using threats, bullying and intimidation.   
  
Congress, we applaud all those workers who have courageously taken a stand and bravely fought back and won: members of the NASUWT and other education unions, fighting to defend their employment rights and also winning the right to collective bargaining; our members standing together, campaigning together, taking action together and winning together.  
  
But every attack on working people means that we must redouble our efforts to secure proper trade union rights and recognition with inclusive trade union recognition agreements building on our principles enshrined in our TUC model recognition agreement. We must confront and challenge any collusion within our sector and we call on the TUC for its support because no one is safe from bad bosses unless all of our members are safe. An injury to one is an injury to all and we win when we stand together united.  
  
So, let us stand together on picket lines and at the bargaining table to defend jobs, pensions and pay. Let us reject any attempts by employers to agree sweetheart deals that exist to divide us. Let us demonstrate our trade union values, solidarity, and that we are serious about working together to grow our Movement. Together, we can change the world of work for good. Congress, please support. I move. *(Applause)*   
  
**Kevin Buchanan** *(GMB)* seconded Composite Motion 20. He said: Congress, as is evident from the many inspiring contributions at Congress this week, workers across the country this year have had enough. The GMB and our sister unions have been leading strikes across the UK and the entire economy for better pay. Everyone in this hall wants to advance the working conditions of our members and the generations of workers to come. Many of us this morning were standing in support of our CWU postal worker colleagues outside the Brighton sorting office to express and demonstrate our solidarity with them.  
  
There are many sectors and employers where multiple unions work together. I know many members of my union and yours work alongside members of other affiliates every day. When we maintain our individual union identities and mandates, our mission is common. Our Movement must remain independent from employers. We will never hesitate to stand up for our members' interests.   
  
We are at a time where workers need unions more than ever. I want to put on record our thanks to the NASUWT for accepting our amendment which builds on our joint record of winning a better deal for members in schools. Congress, this motion sets out the right principles on recognition deals. Please support. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. We will now vote on Composite Motion 20. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.  
  
 \* *Composite Motion 20 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  I now call Composite Motion 21, Trade Union Congress review. The position of the General Council is that it is seeking remittance. I understand the CWU is prepared to remit the motion and I call on the CWU to explain your position.   
  
**Trade Union Congress review**   
  
**Dave Ward** *(Communication Workers Union)* remitting Composite Motion 21. He said: Congress, apologies to Tony Kearns, our Deputy General Secretary, because I have just come in, after not being here all week, to meet Keir Starmer in a minute, hopefully, and because I have been dealing with our dispute. I want to thank everybody who turned out at our rally today.  
  
The message that we have and what this motion is about is that we believe now that we are at a point where either every worker counts or no worker counts. I have just come up literally to tell Tony that I will take this over as I was not meant to be here. I want to say that we understand that one or two aspects of this proposition may seem a little bit controversial and we accept the logic and the rationale that we should look at those things in the review. Obviously, we will be making our case for some of the points in there, including whether the General Secretary of the TUC should be elected every five years and whether you have an elected Deputy General Secretary and all those things.  
  
We have agreed to remit this. We support Paul and we nominated Paul to be General Secretary. We recognise that he is following Frances who, in my view, in my lifetime, is the best General Secretary of the TUC. *(Applause)* What this is really about is that we are passionate in saying that we have never known a time when our members, working‑class people in the UK, are facing so many struggles at the moment. We believe that we cannot wait for political change. We believe that we have immense power in this Movement. I have been inspired by many of you for years, listening to you, knowing that you are up for the fight. We think that the right way forward for this Movement is to lead the fightback for working‑class people.  
  
The biggest problem that everybody in the UK faces (and it is cutting through now) is that there is an imbalance of power and wealth. It is there in the world of work for all of us to see, it is there in the way that the economy is rigged against working‑class people, and it is there in the way that inequalities are growing day by day to unacceptable levels. Whether it is race, gender or working‑class inequality, it is all there for us to see.  
  
Our plea is this. It is time for us to review our Movement and get it fit for the fight of our lives. It is coming and I know you are all up for it so we are happy to remit the proposition on the basis that we are going to mobilise working people to change this country, change the world of work and make our members' lives a lot better than they are currently. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

* *Composite Motion 21 was REMITTED.*

**The President:**  Thanks, Dave, and thank you to the CWU for agreeing to remit the motion. That completes Section 6 of the General Council Report. You will see that we have been joined on the platform by Jo Stevens, who is the Shadow Secretary of State for Wales. Jo joins us this year as the Labour Party's sororal delegate and, of course, many of you will also know her as a secretary of the Trade Union Group of Labour MPs in Parliament. She is a ceaseless campaigner for trade union rights and a great friend to our Movement. Jo, you are very welcome and I would like to invite you to address Congress. *(Applause)*   
  
**Address by Jo Stevens, Sororal Delegate for the Labour Party**  
  
**Jo Stevens:** Thank you very much indeed, Sue, and friends, colleagues and comrades, thank you for such a lovely welcome this morning.   
  
In all the years I have been coming to Congress, I never thought I would have the privilege of making the sororal address so whilst I cannot say "first‑time delegate, first‑time speaker", I can say that I bring you all sororal greetings from the Labour Party, the party that will form the next Government of the United Kingdom. *(Applause)*   
  
I joined my union on my very first day at work and I am proud to have represented and advised members from I think nearly every single union in this hall as a trade union lawyer. Trade unionism is in the Labour Party's DNA, obviously, but it is right through my DNA too.   
  
In Parliament, I represent the wonderful people of Cardiff Central. This is a constituency that has got really special connection with our union Movement and the Labour Party because it was a trade unionist from Cardiff Central, James Holmes, who moved the motion at the 1899 TUC Congress calling for the formation of the Labour Representation Committee, which obviously led then to the creation of the Labour Party.

James Holmes was the organising secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, a predecessor of the RMT, and he was central in the early 1900s to the Taff Vale Railway Dispute, one of the landmark trade union and Labour law cases, which topically was about employing replacement workers on the railway to cover the work of existing union members. The Tories do not ever come up with an original idea, do they, Congress, and their latest wheeze, their desperate attempt to divert the headlines from their reckless, destructive Government and the economic crisis that they have created, is to attack working people's fundamental rights.   
  
So, Congress, I am here on behalf of the Party to make sure that everybody knows that the Labour Party exists to defend the rights of working people and defend them we will! *(Applause)* You heard earlier from Keir that we will oppose those attacks and in Government, we will repeal them. *(Applause)* He, and we, will provide the leadership that this country so desperately needs and we will build a Britain where working people are backed as the people who really create the country's economic growth.  
  
Congress, on behalf of our Party, I want to thank you and your members for getting the country through the pandemic and out the other end, but, first, I want to say thank you to my lovely friend, Frances, who has always been such an inspirational role model to me and to so many people across our Movement. Without Frances's leadership, as you heard from Keir this morning, in securing that Government agreement for the furlough scheme, 10 million people would have lost their livelihoods. It is almost unimaginable to think about it now ‑‑ 10 million people. The Labour Party could not be prouder that you, Frances, and Dave Prentis, will join us both in Parliament in the Parliamentary Labour Party next year. *(Applause)* We know, and I know, that the brilliant Paul Nowak, despite his football allegiances ‑‑ and, actually, Frances, yours as well ‑‑ will lead the TUC with energy, graft and absolute dedication on behalf of all our Movement.  
  
As this is the first time that we have been able to have Congress in person since the pandemic, on behalf of the Labour Party, I say again to every single key worker, on whom our country relied in the worst possible circumstances, thank you; thank you so much. You put your lives on the line to save others and I know that far too many of your colleagues, like so many others, paid the ultimate price.  
  
I am able to be here today because of the dedicated and expert care that I received from healthcare workers when I was in hospital with Covid. From the people who fed me, to the doctors who treated me, and everyone in between, I will never forget what you did. But those Tory MPs who stood on their doorsteps and clapped you each week, those Tory MPs who posted and boasted about their doorstep pictures on their social media, how quickly they have forgotten you, the very same Tory MPs who say that working people must pay the price for the economic crisis ‑‑ their economic crisis, made in Downing Street ‑‑ and it is not just paying for it this year, but paying for it for years and years to come.  
  
But, Congress, things can and must be different. Enough is enough. Labour has the plan to build that stronger economy, a plan that is not based on that fallacy that economic growth trickles down from the top to everybody else. It is a plan that harnesses the talents and the efforts of working people in every single nation and region of our country, everyone across the private and the public sector. It is a plan that lives and breathes our Labour and trade union values that by the strength of our common endeavour, we achieve more than we achieve alone. We will deliver the fairer, greener future that this country deserves, but we cannot make that difference for working people without power.   
  
So, Congress, let me tell you as a former trade union lawyer for nearly 30 years, let me tell you having done that work under a Labour Government and under a Tory Government, it is only a Labour Government that will repeal the anti‑trade union laws. Only a Labour Government will give workers rights from day one. Only a Labour Government will end fire and rehire and strengthen those collective bargaining rights and maternity and paternity rights. Only a Labour Government will deliver fair pay agreements and only a Labour Government will deliver a new deal for working people, and we need it.   
  
Labour is not just the party of working people; we are the party for working people. We will deliver that new deal for working people, as you heard Keir say, in the first 100 days of the Labour Government. We, the Labour and trade union Movement, will do that together for a fairer, greener future for everyone. Thank you, Congress, and solidarity! *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Jo, thank you so much for joining us, thank you for your words, and I am delighted to present you with a gold badge of Congress. *(Presentation of gold badge)* *(Applause)*   
  
Congress, as I indicated earlier, I now intend to take outstanding business and I will take it in the following order: first of all, Motion 43, Supporting trans and non‑binary workers; then Composite Motion 12, Workers' mental health must not be the price of the cost‑of‑living crisis; Motion 45, Young workers' mental health; and Motion 46, Discrimination; then Emergency Motion 2, UK Embassy relocation; Emergency Motion 3, Save our public services from Tory chaos; and Emergency Motion 4, Rail disputes and a new Transport Secretary.   
  
I hope that is clear. I call paragraph 2.6 and Motion 43, Supporting trans and non‑binary workers. The General Council support the motion. It is to be moved by Julia Georgiou on behalf of the TUC LGBT+ Conference, seconded by CWU, and I am also calling in the debate UNISON, GMB, NEU, NASUWT, PCS and UCU.  
  
**Julia Georgiou** *(National House Building Council Staff Association)* moved Motion 43. She said: I move Motion 43 on behalf of Kacey de Groot of the NEU and the LGBT+ Committee. Kacey was supposed to be here today and she was a first‑time delegate, but cannot be here due to teaching commitments. I have taken her speech for her.   
  
Kacey says, "I want to thank Maria Exall and my NEU delegation for enabling me to have been in this position. I had the privilege of moving this motion to the TUC LGBT+ Conference and standing here to be able to move this would have been an even greater privilege.  
  
"Congress, I am a transgender woman who has been given a platform. This is not common. 2015 changed my life. That was the so‑called transgender tipping point. Laverne Cox was on the cover of *Time* magazine and there was a sense that being transgender was okay, but I was a teacher in a big secondary school. I could not be transgender and a teacher.   
  
"In 2013, Lucy Meadows, a trans primary school teacher, accepted by her students and parents, was literally hounded into taking her own life by the tabloid press. Rod Liddle, a journalist at the time, the least authentic descriptor of trans people, said that she was not in the wrong body, she was in the wrong job. He did not use those pronouns.   
  
"By 2018, I knew it was not a choice and I started my transition. My head teacher and my brilliant NEU District supported me all the way. We made a video of me and played it to 1,500 school kids at the school in their own classrooms. On the whole, they could not have been more understanding or supportive and they are still there today.   
  
"So what has happened since? I have had to listen to a brutal, relentless debate, which is what my life has become. My pretty ordinary life has become a debate that I do not want to participate in. There is what is being done to the culture war, but it is not a culture war, Congress; it is a brutal and indiscriminate cultural onslaught against a tiny, very marginalised group of people. When the people attacking you are your own Government, the organisation set up to support you ‑‑ yes, EHRC, I do mean you ‑‑ and includes the means of mass communication, private baron, Russian‑owned, state‑run and state‑funded groups in the UK, who are directly funded by right‑wing US organisations, who do you turn to? The answer, as always, is you turn to the trade union Movement. Right now, it feels like there is nowhere else.  
  
"What people are told, as gender‑critical people try to erase us, is that we are predators or threats or are delusional, mentally ill deniers of reality. We not only uphold the gender stereotypes that affect us too, but we are forced to perpetuate them and reinforce them onto the rest of the population, wearing dresses and makeup as one example.   
  
"We are told we are cultists, we push our ideology on to children, we brainwash, creating an epidemic. The neuro‑divergent community are completely gaslighted because they are over‑represented in trans and non‑binary communities. Autistic people surely cannot know who they are. This is toxic, Congress. Trans healthcare is the most gatekept and difficult to access in the country and our healthcare is getting worse. We are accused of bodily mutilation, going against science and nature, and all of this is multiplied ten‑fold if you are young or a child. Graham Norton was recently asked by Mariella Frostrup why we do not listen to and platform trans people in this debate. That is pretty much all he said and from the social media pile‑ons that resulted, he has now withdrawn his Twitter account.   
  
"Trans community, adult and future adult, need the trade union Movement. This motion provides the tools to fight. We have to highlight the underhand funding links and connections between the organisations. We must make our Movement's opposition to transphobia more visible because, sadly, there are still trade unionists amongst us who do not grasp that trans rights are human rights.   
  
"The saddest thing of all, Congress, is they are not grasping that supporting trans and non‑binary rights is supporting human rights and that doing that categorically does not affect other protected groups' rights other than in a positive way. It really does not matter if it is trans, non‑binary, gay, lesbian, bi, women or men, white, black or any other colour, race, creed or religion, able‑bodied or differently‑able. We are all people and all deserve the respect and dignity afforded to any other person because of that. *(Applause)*   
  
"We ask, Congress, that you support this motion because trans liberation is everybody's liberation. Congress, I move." *(Cheers and applause)*   
  
**Maria Exall** *(Commercial Workers Union)* seconded Motion 43. She said: This motion calls on all unions to develop support for trans and non‑binary workers, to create more equal workplaces and to prevent discrimination. That is our job. Trans and non‑binary workers deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, but currently, at work and in wider society, trans and non‑binary people face a hostile environment.   
  
How can we best challenge the torrent of hate and abuse, the provocative misinformation and demonisation? We, as trade unionists, need to develop our members' and reps' awareness of trans and non‑binary workers' issues and this motion has concrete proposals on how to do this. We start from the trade union principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. As trade unionists, we respect our members' experiences and it is our job to listen.  
  
But, Congress, trans and non‑binary people are more talked about than listened to. The prevalence of transphobic hate in the UK is stark. According to the European Commission for Human Rights, the UK is in the same shameful league as Hungary and Poland. The far‑right and the traditional right have well‑funded and well‑connected transnational networks and the Conservative Party has been captured by them. During their recent leadership election, all the candidates stoked up prejudice for votes and this Government is using transphobia to distract us from their failures ‑‑ and there are many of them ‑‑ and to divide and rule working‑class people, but we will not let them.  
  
President, I have a couple of final points. First of all, this motion refers to the misuse of free speech. Congress, it is not free speech to promote hate. It is not freedom to be trapped by prejudice. Secondly, we need to dispel the notion that trans and non‑binary rights and women's rights are in opposition. I am a proud feminist, I am a proud trans ally, I am an out‑and‑proud lesbian and the LGB Alliance does not speak for me. *(Applause)* Misogyny and transphobia have a common root ‑‑ we must recognise that ‑‑ and we must confront both.   
  
Congress, to build equality at work, we have to challenge prejudice wherever we find it. We all lose out if transphobia is not dealt with. To build strong unions, we must practise solidarity for all. Support this motion. *(Applause)*   
  
**Jackie Lewis** *(UNISON)* supported Motion 43. She said: Congress, as you have heard, there has been a huge rise in transphobic discourse in the UK in recent years. There is a near constant deluge of attacks on trans people and trans rights from politicians, online and in our media. There has been a further escalation in the volume and the toxicity of anti‑trans articles across all media platforms.  
  
Just to give you an idea, in May alone, there was an average of 16 per day. The *Daily Mail* alone published 163 trans‑related articles. This is in respect of a community that makes up less than 1% of the population. The rights of trans people have become such a talking point that every candidate in the recent Tory leadership election thought it necessary to take an anti‑trans stance. The tactics being used, particularly for vilification of trans women, by those campaigning to roll back the existing rights of trans people, including gender‑critical and anti‑trans groups, are almost identical to the tactics seen around the time of Section 28 when gay men were portrayed as sexual predators and a danger to children to spread fear and mistrust.  
  
Congress, a sustained campaign is needed to address these issues and cancel the transphobic discourse. Trade unions have a vital role to play. In June, the UNISON Conference adopted a motion "Trans Equality – Louder & Prouder", which included a commitment to making trans equality a major campaign.   
  
In July, we launched our national campaign "Trans equality is a UNISON business". Different components will bring our trans and non‑binary equality work under one umbrella campaign. It includes the rolling out of trans ally training across the union and the promotion and guidance from other material. It also aims to build trans and non‑binary member activism in the union.   
  
Congress, we welcome the proposal to launch a TUC alliance for trans and non‑binary rights. Trade unions need to be speaking out consistently in support of trans rights, speaking out for trans and equality, speaking out for our trans members and speaking out loudly and proudly for trans equality. Please support. *(Applause)*   
  
**Barbara Plant** *(GMB)* supported Motion 43. She said: I am speaking in support of Motion 43 as an LGBT+ ally. The GMB welcomes this important motion from the TUC LGBT+ Conference and I am really proud that GMB has a policy on self‑identifying. All our members should feel that they can be exactly who they are within our Movement and I am really proud about GMB's trans and non‑binary toolkit which was developed by our trans and non‑binary activists.   
  
Our toolkit provides members with resources to build towards equality for trans and non‑binary people at work. It includes a model workplace policy for reps to negotiate with employers as well as a fact sheet and a terminology document. Reps can use the toolkit to organise workers, increase understanding of the concerns of trans and non‑binary workers and to bargain for better workplace conditions. We have done this so that we do not shy away from difficult conversations, so that we can break down stereotypes and give all our members clear definitions so they do not fear saying the wrong thing.   
  
Fundamentally, Congress, this is a collective issue. If employers treat one group of workers in exclusionary or discriminatory ways, they will do it to others. Our power comes from solidarity and if we are going to be strong, everyone needs to feel included. Every member needs to feel valued. *(Applause)* We cannot hold up collective strength if there are members who feel marginalised. Congress, please support. *(Applause)*   
  
**Voni Hardman** *(National Union of Journalists)* supported   
Motion 43. She said: I am a first‑time speaker at Congress. *(Applause)* I am a woman, I am a lesbian, I am a teacher and I am a mother of a fantastic non‑binary young adult. *(Applause)* I am also old enough to be a survivor of the heinous   
Section 28 and for brevity, because I am aware there are a lot of people to speak, if you want to know how that has personally affected my life, my choices and my pension, come and have a chat with me.   
  
I am also a proud, working‑class, left‑wing feminist from the Durham coalfields and I fully support this motion. *(Applause)* I grew up in a family of trade unionists with the notions of solidarity, community and family central to my core values. Congress, we are a family. You are my family and some of our family are hurting. What do we do in our family when someone is hurting? We step up and we support them and we stand with them. *(Applause)*   
  
So far this week, we have heard lots of positive messages of togetherness, of the power of collectivism and how we must stand together on every issue, so please stand together on this issue. *(Applause)* We need, as allies, to educate ourselves to combat the disgusting and divisive narratives that are being perpetuated. That narrative of hate must be challenged. The age‑old tactics of divide and rule by spreading fear are being used to great success, just as they were used against the gay community with Section 28.  
  
I remember realising that I was gay against a backdrop of that narrative, that because I was gay, I was a danger to family life and a danger to children. I am now a teacher. It is an awful and dangerous narrative. It is strikingly similar, as has already been said, to the narrative that has been perpetuated around our trans and non‑binary siblings right now.  
  
It seems like yesterday, but it was the day before when I attended an excellent fringe around trans rights where we discussed how we could challenge the increasingly dominant narrative. This motion begins to set out some actions that we can use to do this. We need to educate ourselves and then educate others, challenging each other where necessary. We must show empathy and listen to the voices of trans and non‑binary people and also have empathy with those who disagree because there is a lot of fear out there, which is through lack of knowledge and lack of understanding.  
  
We need to change hearts and minds. We need to have conversations. We need to talk to each other. We need to be really honest and challenging where necessary in those conversations. We also heard from Neville Lawrence, who left us in no doubt of the power of the solidarity of the TUC. Let us give that solidarity to our trans and non‑binary siblings right now. *(Applause)*   
  
As a Movement, we have a huge ‑‑‑‑   
  
**The President:**  Can wind up, please, as you are out of time.  
  
**Voni Hardman:** Simply, we must unite and we must plan better. Please stand together; we are a family! *(Applause)*   
  
**Nafiza Khan** *(NASUWT, The Teachers' Union)* supported   
Motion 43. She said: The NASUWT fully supports trans  
workers' rights and we welcome the increased visibility and empowerment of trans and non‑binary people in society. We are committed to campaign for a simplified, free, statutory, gender‑recognition process based on self‑declaration and to support the rights of gender non‑binary people at work and in wider society.  
  
No one ‑‑ no member of our family ‑‑ should be the subject of personal attacks as a result of how they choose to assert their gender identity and neither should they be forced to adopt or comply with an externally‑ascribed view. We, at the NASUWT, believe that all young people and staff in schools and colleges have a right to learn and work in a safe and secure environment where they are treated with dignity and feel valued and respected.  
  
The NASUWT's recent LGBTI Equality Survey revealed that 45% of respondents had witnessed transphobia in their workplace yet many employers are failing in their statutory duty to protect trans and non‑binary teachers from discrimination, harassment and victimisation at work. They are breaking the law and must be held to account. There must be a zero‑tolerance approach to transphobia and discrimination and prejudice against non‑binary people so that our schools and colleges are safe and secure places where teachers can teach and pupils can learn free from the threat of prejudice, abuse and violence.  
  
We need to see every school and college employer putting in place effective systems for reporting and dealing with cases of discrimination, bullying and harassment. It is high time the Government takes the realities facing too many of our teachers and takes steps to ensure that LGBTI staff are included and respected at work. Providing pupils with an LGBTI‑inclusive curriculum must also be an integral part of the efforts to tackle the problems of prejudice and abuse in schools. Family, we ask you to support this motion, please. Thank you. *(Cheers and applause)*   
  
**Fran Heathcote** *(Public and Commercial Services Union)* supported Motion 43. She said: We support Motion 43, but with a qualification. PCS supports this motion as we think it is a really good motion, which sets out positive action for trans equality and supporting our trans members. We wholeheartedly endorse the motion's call for guidance on how to resolve tensions amongst our activists regarding trans rights, gender and sex.  
  
Like many other unions here, we have had a number of debates and arguments surrounding these issues, but the last bullet point about a briefing on the misuse of concepts such as freedom of speech potentially undermines that positive call and does need clarification. To resolve tensions amongst activists, it is essential that there is discussion and debate.   
  
There is a crucial distinction to be made within the idea of free speech between right‑wing hate speech directed at LGBT+ people and legitimate discussion within our Movement about sex and gender, which we know are complicated issues that require openness. The Tories and the right‑wing media use the issue of free speech to legitimise hate and to attack struggles against discrimination so the motion is correct to say that we must spread awareness of how that affects LGBT+ people.   
A briefing could be really useful, but the briefing must not close down discussion within our own ranks.   
  
It is not just a matter of academic freedom. Free speech has always been crucial to the workers' movement and to liberation movements. It is also a workplace matter with union activists being suspended and/or sacked for speaking out about actions taken by their management.  
  
In the civil service, we have had members victimised for expressing their views as members of the public on social media so trade unions must be clear that we defend our right to freedom of expression. Let us not throw the baby out with the bath water. We need to be very careful to make the correct distinctions and recognise the many sensitivities involved when we issue advice to our activists on what is the misuse of free speech. It should not be confused with disagreements on what are very controversial debates.  
  
Congress, we have to declare unconditional support for trans people fighting discrimination, but we must also recognise that the critical discussion of ideas and of politics is legitimate and we support those struggles. We must not end up unintentionally providing support for the victimisation of people legitimately expressing views within this controversial debate which take place within our ranks.  
  
PCS does support the motion. We ask for an assurance that the briefing will make the necessary distinction between hate speech and legitimate debate and thereby contribute to the resolving of tensions that the motion rightly seeks to promote and helps unite our struggles for liberation. Thank you, Congress. Support the motion. *(Applause)*   
  
**Jo Grady** *(University and College Union)* spoke in favour of Motion 43. She said: Trans people make up 1% of the population in the UK, but their existence is increasingly treated as though it should be requiring a public debate. Trans people are threatened, intimidated, attacked and dehumanised, often by people who should know better. *(Applause)* it is sad as well as it is wrong.   
  
The issues and challenges facing working people have never been greater. The UK has never been more unequal yet we are constantly drawn into right‑wing territory ‑‑ divide and conquer. This is a repeat of how gay people have been treated and this is a repeat of how black people have been treated.

Some people should hold their heads in shame for the views they have held then and let me tell you right now, people will hold their heads in shame for the views that they have now in years to come on this discussion. *(Applause)*   
  
It is disgraceful, it is shameful and, as trade unionists, we should refuse to support or contribute to this. We should never engage in the oppression of others. That is why this motion is so important. It is because it calls on all of us to ensure that our communities, our workplaces and, yes, our trade unions are spaces where trans and non‑binary people do not just survive life in the UK, but they thrive. *(Applause)*   
  
I want to draw a line in the sand now. Let us say we will never entertain our unions being spaces for these disgraceful and hurtful debates. *(Applause)* Entertaining these debates cuts us off from solidarity with trans people and also the wider LGBT+ family and I will not stand by and let that happen. Let us tackle the reality of the issues faced by trans people, not as they are imagined by people who do not face them. I am unequivocally and proud to be supporting this motion. Solidarity to the trans community. *(Cheers and applause)*   
  
**Paul Fleming** *(Equity)* supported Motion 43. He said: Congress, I am not the first LGBT General Secretary of Equity and I am not the first LGBT General Secretary in this Movement, but I am the first out LGBT General Secretary in this Movement and I am remarkably proud of the shoulders on which I stand. *(Applause)* I make absolutely no equivocation that the shoulders on which I stand are the shoulders of trans and non‑binary workers as much if not more so than other members of the LGBT+ community.  
  
My sexuality and liberation politics around it are not separate to that, they are not separate to my identity as a socialist or as a trade unionist, but fundamentally part of it. *(Applause)* This Movement has to be clear that we reject strands in society that say that LGBT people are stood at the gates of a fortress and want the keys to access it. No. Like every black trade unionist, disabled trade unionist, woman trade unionist and trade unionists from across our working‑class Movement, we see a castle of capital and we want to tear it down and all of the structures which it contains. *(Applause)* No group of workers exemplify that struggle better than trans and non‑binary workers and this motion seeks to address how we engage, we organise and we show them solidarity, as they have shown us solidarity decade after decade after decade.   
  
I want to talk about an experience of one of our members, a member who is a pantomime dame, who is a drag act in the style of Danny La Rue, a working‑class style of entertainment that has flourished in this country for centuries, and this summer was promoting a local pantomime, as he has done for years.

His local library in Norfolk is picketed. He has a false flag acid attack in the streets of Norfolk. He has his 80‑year old neighbours fighting off vigilantes who throw a bin through his front window. He has a Scotland Yard police protection. This is an ordinary working person like us and who stands by him? He is not a trans or non‑binary member, but Joseph Ballard, in the east of England, is being protected by LGBT and trans support groups and we, as a Movement, must be there with them and with him and with all who suffer in the wake of it. *(Applause)*   
  
As Jo has said, I might be the first out LGBT General Secretary. I am also currently the youngest General Secretary. I thought I would get that in! The greying hair does not suggest that will last long! Even when I was at school, it was a statutory responsibility of teachers to tell people that I was a pervert. That is the truth. Within not just living memory, but my school years, that was the truth.   
  
Gay men and lesbian women have to be absolutely clear that we are the next on the list, but when they talk about the threat to society that is posed by trans and non‑binary workers, they are talking about black workers. It is the same language. *(Applause)* When they are talking about ‑‑‑‑   
  
**The President:**  You need to wind up as you are out of time.  
  
**Paul Fleming:** Let us be clear that this is an issue of unrelenting solidarity from whose‑ever mouth it comes. Congress, support the motion without equivocation. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. We will now vote on Motion 43. Will all those in favour, please show. Any against? That is carried. *(Applause)*   
  
 \* *Motion 43 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  Congress, I am going to take the next two motions, Composite Motion 12, Workers' mental health must not be the price of the cost‑of‑living crisis, and Motion 45, Young workers' mental health, as one debate. First, I will call the mover, seconder and supporters of Composite Motion 12 and the mover and seconder of Motion 45 and then open the debate to any other speakers. After that, the mover of Composite Motion 12 and the mover of Motion 45 will have the right to reply, if needed, in that order. We will then vote on Composite Motion 12 and Motion 45. I hope that is clear.   
  
So I call Composite Motion 12, Workers' mental health must not be the price of the cost‑of‑living crisis. The General Council support the motion. It is to be moved by UCU, seconded by USDAW and supported by the CWU and EIS.   
  
**Workers' mental health must not be the price of the cost‑of‑living crisis**   
  
**Janet Farrar** *(University and College Union)* moved Composite Motion 12. She said: I am very proud to be President of the UCU, especially given the excellent contributions that we have just had in the previous debate. I am going to be moving Composite Motion 12 on workers' mental health and the fact that it must not be the price of the cost‑of‑living crisis, but can I just take a self‑indulgent moment to say that it is a true privilege to address the TUC Congress. If only my postie grandad could see me now, I think he would be pretty proud! *(Applause)* Can I thank USDAW, CWU and EIS for the amendments. They are very welcome and we believe that they strengthen the motion.   
  
Mental health is a workplace issue, which makes it a trade union issue. We need to be leading the way on this as a Movement. We cannot allow it to drop off any agenda. We can get very caught up in statistics when we are talking about mental health and as important as they are, I would like to just use this time that I have to remind everyone of the human impact of mental health issues in the workplace.  
  
In July this year, UCU produced a report called "ON THE BREADLINE ‑ The cost of living crisis for England's college workers". I would like to share a couple of quotes from our members in further education colleges. One said, "I've been teaching for less than two years. I'm so stressed out that my hair has started to fall out in massive clumps. I've started to have anxiety attacks. I'm now applying for another job so I can get my life back."  
  
 In this next quote, there is a suicide trigger warning. I'm going to really try and get through it: "As a single person living alone, I cannot afford to buy food or pay my energy bills. I'm in debt constantly. I'm so depressed, I think about death every day as it's a way out of all this constant worry."   
  
Of course, these kinds of experiences are not confined to our further education sectors. In a survey report from October 2021, Dr. Siobhan Wray and Professor Gail Kinman, working together with Education Support, who are a brilliant organisation, found that over half of UK university staff are showing signs of depression ‑‑ over half, just take that in for a second. 90,000 university workers are on casualised contracts. We know that these staff are much less likely to declare mental health issues to their employer and we know why. One member said, "My mental health has been severely affected by my insecure contract. During an intense period of marking, I was incredibly unhappy. I was emotionally distraught and regularly cried in front of my computer for about two weeks. I did not think I could get through it."  
  
As already mentioned by our President Elect yesterday, in our union, we are taking the fight to our employers and we will not allow our members to die in the workplace or struggle through these avoidable mental health crises unsupported, just for doing the jobs that they love or that they once loved, which is why our college workers are in their fourth week of strike action so please give it up for them. *(Applause)* They are fighting 35% real‑terms pay cuts since 2009.   
  
Our prison educators are planning their action after a successful industrial action ballot and they really do deserve our applause. *(Applause)* They work in some of the toughest conditions in education or in any sector. Our university workers are engaged in the biggest ever ballot in our union's history, fighting the real causes of workplace mental health crisis ‑‑ unsustainable workloads, equality pay gaps, rife casualisation and pernicious attacks on pay and pensions.  
  
So to close, I would just like to draw your attention to the actions in the motion. We want a Movement‑wide campaign that acknowledges the political choices that are exacerbating this mental health crisis. We want legislative change on workplace suicide. We want proper mental health support for all workers. Investing in mental health saves lives so let us get out there, let us get organised and make it happen. I move. *(Cheers and applause)*   
  
**Paddy Lillis** *(Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* seconded Composite Motion 12. He said: Congress, mental health is a workplace issue. The way we are treated at work, the security of our employment and our pay and conditions all have a significant impact on our mental health. The public‑facing workers face endemic abuse and violence, a precarious employment rights framework and a Government that does not seem to care that the nature of work has had a negative impact on the mental health of many, many workers.  
  
In an USDAW survey of thousands of low‑paid workers, nearly three‑quarters told us that financial worries are affecting their mental health. In household after household up and down the country, workers are worrying that they are not able get enough hours, that they are not paid enough or that their job is not secure enough for them to keep paying their bills. The cost‑of‑living crisis is becoming a mental health crisis for low‑paid workers, terrified that they will not be able to support their families, with weak employment rights protections, with one‑sided flexibility that always seems to benefit the employers and not the workers. For people living in fear of having their hours cut, it is no surprise that so many workers feel unable to tell their employers about their mental health issues, unable to ask for support, and unable to stop issues from escalating.   
  
This Government could choose to make work more secure, to give working people more certainty and to reduce their worries about this winter, but rather than put the promise in the Employment Bill, all we have seen is empty promises, dither and delay and now it seems that the Government wants to slice our rights even further. Congress, we must demand that employers and the Government take these issues seriously, that they protect vulnerable workers and that they deliver guaranteed working hours. That is why I urge you to support this composite today and support a strong campaign that delivers protection for working people that is needed to tackle the mental health crisis affecting our communities. Congress, please support the composite. Thank you. *(Applause)*   
  
**Andrew Mercer** *(Commercial Workers Union)* supported Composite Motion 12. He said: Congress, the current cost‑of‑living crisis is having a severe impact on the nation's mental health. The number of people contacting Mental Health UK regarding the cost of living has risen by 108% in the year to May 2022. National figures meanwhile show that mental health referrals hit record levels of 4.3 million last year in England and there is a backlog of 1.4 million people waiting to start treatment. Approximately one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year.  
  
Work itself is also an increasing source of stress for millions of people. Intensification of work is increasing while workplace autonomy is decreasing. The Government's own commissioned review into mental health and employers found that more working people suffer from mental health conditions than ever before with the number of mental health conditions far outnumbering that of physical conditions.  
  
Now, the pandemic, of course, turbocharged many of these trends. A survey of 12,000 people conducting by Mind found that over a third of adults and young people's mental health had got worse since March 2020. Now, as the motion says, work‑related stress is one of the causes of work‑related suicide yet there is no regulation of work‑placed suicide in the UK. If you break your arm or you get a rash because of unsafe working conditions, your employer is legally obliged to report it to the UK regulator at HSC for investigation. Suicide, however, does not need to be reported to anyone other than the coroner.  
  
We have added a slight amendment and the reason we have done that is because in 2019, a CWU motion called for legislation that mandates compulsory investigation into workplace suicides with the burden of proof resting with the employer to prove that suicide was not work‑related, such as already exists in France. Hazards Campaign estimates that there are 650 work‑related suicides in the UK every year and that 10% of suicides are work‑related.   
  
The Hazards Campaign has been campaigning for legal recognition of work‑related suicides since 2003 and yet the HSE has consistently refused to incorporate suicide into their list of workplace fatalities. This omission leaves families of those who have taken their own life at work or because of work without the support and without acknowledgement of the real cause of the suicide. Congress, it is time that the HSE stopped turning a blind eye to workplace suicide and new legislation was put in place. Congress, please support. *(Applause)*   
  
**Adam Sutcliffe** *(Education Institute of Scotland)* supported Composite Motion 12. He said: According to the Health and Safety Executive 2021 Workforce Statistics, 50% of all new and longstanding cases of work‑related health issues are caused by stress, depression or anxiety. In 2019/2020, 55% of working days lost were due to stress, depression and anxiety.   
  
As an educator, I went into the job knowing that there would be work‑related stresses to deal with at times, but in a survey of EIS members published in December 2021, 70% of respondents indicated that they felt stressed frequently or all the time. A staggering 73% of EIS members said that they managed their stress on their own with only 3% indicating that they seek assistance from their employer.  
  
On a question of wellbeing, over 50% of EIS members rated their overall wellbeing as poor or very poor. This is simply unsustainable. One of our respondents stated, "Love the kids and my colleagues. Stressed by everything else." Almost 60% of current EIS members are unlikely to recommend teaching as a good profession. One member reported, "It used to be my dream job, but with all the pressures and increasing workload, it's hard to keep being motivated. I feel that I don't find time to look after myself and rest and recover. I'm always working for school at the weekend."  
  
Like many large employers, my local authority runs an employee assistance programme which provides independent counselling and occupational health services. The top referral reason to occupational health was mental health at 32% of all referrals. My local authority has over 15,000 employees yet last year only 8% of us used these services and across the UK some 10% of employees used these types of services. I know from my own members in my own school that many ignore the existence of this programme.   
  
It is estimated that the cost to employers of poor mental health rose from £45 billion to £55 billion over the course of 2020/2021. Figures from HR magazine demonstrated that increased usage of these employee assistance programmes increases a return on investment. It therefore seems counterproductive that employers are not doing any more to prioritise the health and safety of their workers. Actions seem to be more reactive than proactive.  
  
Congress, the pandemic and the cost‑of‑living crisis have devastated the mental health of the workforce, many of whom were lauded as key workers. The EIS is currently balloting members, demanding that our employers pay attention regarding pay, but it applies equally to mental health. As a Movement, trade unions need to campaign to get all employers to pay attention and put employees' mental health front and centre. Please support the motion. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. I now call Motion 45 on young workers' mental health. The General Council support the motion. It is to be moved by Moira Cahill on behalf of the TUC Young Workers' Conference. It will be seconded by Prospect and after the motion has been moved and seconded, I will also call speakers from Unite and NASUWT.   
  
**Young workers' mental health**   
  
**Moira Cahill** *(Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* moved Motion 45. She said: Congress, there is a mental health crisis amongst young workers in this country. Young people were hit hardest by the pandemic. Too many were isolated and unable to access their usual support networks and now young people are being disproportionately impacted by the cost‑of‑living crisis. Many are paid less than their older colleagues as a result of discrimination in the national minimum wage and we are at the sharp end of the housing crisis, unable to save a deposit for a house and facing extortionate rental costs.  
  
It is easy to forget that young workers have responsibilities and costs just like any other worker. In fact, TUC research has shown that one in three young workers is a parent. The YoungMinds survey reported that 83% of those with mental health conditions said that the pandemic had worsened their mental health and it is hardly as though the situation was great before the pandemic struck. Too many young workers were already struggling with their mental health, demand was already outstripping supply and services are stretched to breaking point.   
  
As if the impact of a global pandemic were not enough for young people to contend with, we are now faced with a full‑blown cost‑of‑living crisis. The cost of everyday items is rising and energy bills are skyrocketing. Young people are desperately struggling to make ends meet and, at the same time, this useless Tory Government never misses an opportunity to smash the hopes and aspirations of young people. After 12 years of Conservative Government, services are worse, wages remain lower and many essential items are simply unaffordable. Is it any wonder that in USDAW's cost‑of‑living survey, 88% of young members said that financial worries are affecting their mental health.  
  
Unions have been taking vital steps to get employers to address mental health and wellbeing concerns, even in this difficult environment, but we need to step up to make this work. We need all employers to assess the impact of their policies, practices and procedures and what effect they have on the mental health of their workers, and we need to have employers to act upon these findings. We also need urgent action from the Government to tackle this crisis.

Whilst employers may be offering some forms of support, this will only ever be a reactive response once someone is already suffering with those mental health issues. We need an economic system that supports workers and enables them to thrive, not just survive. We need better pay and conditions, the roll‑out of collective bargaining and a stronger employment rights framework.   
  
Congress, we need a new deal for young workers. Too many of us are in insecure work with zero hours or short hours' contracts, on a pitiful minimum wage youth rate. Without the protections we need or deserve, it is time for a new deal, grounded in day one rights for young workers, including statutory sick pay that reflects normal earnings. This new deal must also be coupled with better investment in mental health services, services that will guarantee mental health treatment in less than one month, backed up by thousands of new mental health workers.  
  
Congress, it is essential that we tackle the mental health crisis amongst young workers. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*   
  
**Toby James** *(Prospect)* seconded Motion 45. He said: We are here because we believe in the power of the collective. This only matters to us because we care about the individual. Our Government rules over us with a tight fist, does it not? They view us as abstractions, as nothings that can be sacrificed to ideology, and in doing so, they break people. When one of us is broken, it spirals and it touches so many more of us and it breaks some of them too.  
  
I wanted to talk about this because it is important that young men like me do talk about this. I could not find words that were not just me rehashing a poem. I wrote this poem a few months ago so here it is:  
  
 Train delayed, leaves on the tracks.  
 Seething suits play musical chairs to fill the one‑person space left vacant today.   
 The train is not running, I will be late for dinner. The wife will kill me, the kids will too.  
 I'll be late for work. My boss will kill me.   
 I need these hours. My project is due.   
 Crawl into work, dying to get home.   
   
 Service cancelled, leaves on the tracks.   
 Screaming in the faces of jobsworths, whose jobs are to help me, not tell me there is now’t they can do.   
 Brakes screech, a whistle howls,  
 A driver pales, she sees on the tracks,  
 The streaming brown eyes, the streaming brown iron,  
 The weeping red iron he leaves on the tracks.  
   
 The world that brought him to here, his children, his mother, the memory of his father, he leaves on the tracks.  
 His partner, his sister, he hasn't seen her for two   
 years.   
 His mum is in a home now; the nurse, Jack, will tell her.   
 Steve in the shop, whose days were always brightened,  
 by jokes about weather and rubbish like that.  
 Small interactions, the little things that make us,   
 and the big things he leaves on the tracks.  
  
Mental health is a product of material conditions. Support this and support each other. Thank you. *(Applause)*   
  
**Aaron Griffiths** *(Unite the Union)* supported Motion 45. He said: President, Congress, so you have had the facts and figures, you have had a poem and I am going to tell you a story.   
  
Now, this is a motion very close to my own heart. I spoke on this motion in London at the TUC Young Workers' Conference. It was 3rd April, the first Sunday of the month. I left the room in floods of tears. I promise I will try not to do that again, but it might happen.   
  
It is a tribute to my friend, Sam, sadly lost to the date one year ago, the first Sunday of April, a 29‑year old man, a father of two and a friend to many. I will never forget that Sunday, sat at home, my own family together, nice Sunday dinner, Bisto's best beef gravy which, to this day, I successfully claim is homemade, even when we have chicken!   
  
It was also this Sunday that I received the phone call, the contents of which will be burned into my memory for an eternity. Sam was gone, no goodbyes. What came after was a conflicted feeling ‑‑ anger, upset, complete devastation and confusion, knowing that two young boys will now grow up without a father, the knock‑on effects of constantly wondering "What if?" and the eternal guilt of not stopping to talk and say, "How are you doing?"   
  
I have experienced loss before, but nothing compares to the anger, confusion and upset of never truly knowing why this has happened. This needs awareness. This needs support. In loving memory of Sam Brown, father, friend, son and a bloody good digger driver. Thank you. *(Applause)*   
  
**Rashida Din** *(NASUWT, The Teachers' Union)* supported Motion 45. She said: I am the first Muslim Junior Vice‑President of the NASUWT, The Teachers' Union, the inclusive union. *(Applause)*   
This is my first time attending Congress, the first time as a delegate, speaking in support of Composite 12. *(Applause)*   
  
President, Congress, teaching can be incredibly rewarding. I have taught for 27 years. It is not a job, it is a profession, it is a vocation, and one that I am proud to be in. I have seen the impact of cutting our education budgets to the bone, those cuts which have hit our most disadvantaged young people and our economy. There is no levelling up.   
  
Mental health services have been cut. Over £82 million has been cut from budgets from Children's Centres. Many just closed. That is shocking. There was a £260 million cut from youth services. Since 2010, teachers have lost £50,000. That is 25% in real terms. 65% are struggling to pay their energy bills. 70% of our teachers are concerned at the long‑term impact of pay levels and are considering leaving. One in five teachers leave in the first five years.  
  
The cost‑of‑living crisis and the impact of Covid have only worsened the situation. Do we pay our food bill or heat our homes? Do we have enough in our pay packet to pay our mortgage? Yes, Kwasi, you do need to join a union as your boss made you the fall guy, if there was ever a reason to join a union! Teachers experienced higher levels of work‑related stress and anxiety compared with other professions, and that is from the HSE themselves. 64% of teachers feel stressed at work. 29% of teachers work over 51 hours a week. That is underpaid and overworked.   
  
We are working in solidarity with our sister unions and we have written to the Prime Minister ‑‑ well, I am assuming that she is still the Prime Minister ‑‑ to express our concerns. This is not levelling up; it is chaos. The DfE must do better and the Government must do better. Leadership and management ‑‑ fail. The NASUWT, The Teachers' Union, have relentlessly campaigned for better and fairer teaching conditions through our Better Deal campaign.   
  
Now, the NASUWT says "Enough is enough". Our ballots open on 27th October. Notice is served. We want that 12% restorative pay award. Solidarity to all workers struggling with the cost of living and workers will not pay the price. Our mental health will not be the cost. We fight to save our services together. Let us stand together. Support this motion. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. We will vote first on Composite Motion 12. All those in favour, please show? Thank you. Any against? That is carried.  
  
 \* *Composite Motion 12 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  We move on to vote on Motion 45. Will all those in favour, please show? Thank you. Any against? That is also carried.  
  
 \* *Motion 45 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  I now call Motion 46 on discrimination. The position of the General Council is that it is seeking remittance. I understand that TSSA are prepared to remit the motion so I call on TSSA to explain their position.  
  
**Mick Carney** *(Transport Salaried Staffs' Association)* explained the position on Motion 46. He said: Congress, it was heartening to see Tracey Croucher on the screen on Tuesday talking to Frances about her experience and the discrimination which she had faced, which makes the General Council's response to this motion all the more disappointing.  
  
For those who do not know, Tracey was dismissed essentially for being short. Her bus company introduced new buses which, because of her height, she was unable to drive to continue doing the job she loved. She was offered inferior work on inferior pay, which she refused, so she was dismissed, as clear a case of discrimination as you will see. It is a huge credit to her union, Unite, for overturning this gross injustice and getting her reinstated.   
  
The company did it because they could. There is no clear law that says you can discriminate against somebody because of their height and yet the General Council voted unanimously to not support this. What exactly are we saying: we will only protect you from discrimination if you are *this* big or *this* big *(indicating)?*  This is the TUC. It is not Alton Towers.  
  
But is it really an issue? Well, yes, actually it is. Oxford University studies have shown that short people stand to be paid over £100,000 less over the course of their careers. They are less likely to receive promotion. They are less likely to get jobs in the first place. The one part of the General Council's reasoning we could agree with was the reluctance to open the Equalities Act under a Government that would have you scrap the whole thing. So for that reason, on this occasion alone, I will be the bigger man and agree to remit, but I will bring this back. Thank you. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  I would like to thank TSSA for agreeing to remit the motion and we now move on to the emergency motions so I call Emergency Motion 2, UK Embassy relocation. The General Council support the emergency motion. It is to be moved by the NEU and seconded by UCU.   
  
**UK Embassy relocation  
  
Louise Regan** *(National Education Union)* moved Emergency   
Motion 2. She said: The trade union Movement has a long and proud history of standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The General Council International Statement reaffirms this commitment. However, Congress, Liz Truss is now trying to emulate Donald Trump, but she has been defeated and forced to U‑turn on her Republican Trump Tea Party‑style economics policies and now she should U‑turn on this Trump‑style foreign policy.  
  
Congress, if this move goes ahead, it will be disastrous for the likes of Palestinians, rewarding Israel for the policies it has carried out since its occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967. Despite huge international support for the Palestinian people and countless UN resolutions, which this proposed Embassy move would contravene, the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate.   
  
2022 has been the deadliest year since 2006 with at least 105 Palestinians killed, including 26 children aged between 12 and 17 years. The monthly average of Palestinian fatalities has increased by 57% compared to last year. Since the beginning of October alone, 15 Palestinians, including six children, have been killed by Israeli forces.   
  
Alongside this, there have been extensive movement restrictions in East Jerusalem and Nablus, limiting access of many to healthcare, education and livelihoods. Palestinians in Nablus continue to protest this and they were out on the streets again last night. They call on us, the international community, to send solidarity and to amplify their voices because I am sure none of you will have seen any of that on the mainstream media.  
  
Any attempt to move the UK Embassy to East Jerusalem will not only contravene numerous UN resolutions, but will also undermine the cornerstone principle of international law that states should not annex conquered territory, a principle that the UK has supported, most notably in response to Russia's annexation of territory in the Ukraine. The only outcome of this proposed move is the further deterioration of the situation in Palestine, further undermining of the Palestinian people's rights, and pushing any chance of a just and peaceful solution for Palestine further away.  
  
Congress, as I said, trade unions have a long and proud history of international solidarity and we know that none of us are free until all of us are free, but Palestinians need more than our words. They need our actions. We need to call out this incompetent Government. We need to raise the issue of Palestine in our trade unions, our workplaces and our communities. We need to be the voice of people who are silenced.  
  
Congress, I am proud of the work that my union has done speaking out for Palestinian rights. I am proud to be Vice‑Chair of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. I am proud to say that I will never be silenced. When there is finally justice for the Palestinians, I will know that I stood on the right side of history.   
  
Congress, if not us, who will speak out? If not now, when will we speak out? Congress, we need freedom, justice and peace for the Palestinians. I move. *(Applause)*   
  
**Joanna de Groot** *(University and College Union)* seconded Emergency Motion 2. She said: Like my colleague from the NEU, I am proud to be speaking up for people who are so often silenced.  
  
I want to remind Congress that Palestinian people are living in a situation which the UN and which Amnesty International now describes as a form of apartheid. We have a proud history in this Movement of challenging that wherever we find it. *(Applause)* Let us also remind ourselves of the long historic presence of Palestinians in Jerusalem. As an historian, I could give a whole talk on that which you will be thankful not to hear!  
  
This Jerusalem has been under Israeli attack for decades with initiatives which look very like ethnic cleansing, removing residents from their homes, renaming streets and squares, and taking over buildings. That is the context in which the illegal, foolish, wrong proposal to relocate the UK Embassy is a direct attack on Palestinian lives and aspiration, whose existence and rights (or lack of them) are affirmed in innumerable international policies and agreements, however much they are denied by the Israeli Government.  
  
It would, as my colleague said, make the prospects for a peaceful, just and constructive solution for Palestinian/Israeli issues even more remote than it is anyway. It would position our Government not as a supporter of such a solution, but as a partisan, ideologically‑driven player, siding with oppression and a denial of rights and identity. Is that any way to play a responsible international role?  
  
Congress, we need to speak out against a proposal which is damaging to the Palestinians, damaging to prospects for peace, and does no credit to the UK's international role and reputation. I proudly second this motion. Please support it.  
*(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. We will now vote on Emergency Motion 2. Will all those in favour, please show? Thank you. Any against? That is carried. *(Applause)*   
  
 \* *Emergency Motion 2 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  I call Emergency Motion 3, Save our public services from Tory chaos. The General Council support this emergency motion. It will be moved by the GMB, seconded by UNISON and Unite and NASUWT will also speak.   
  
**Save our public services from Tory chaos**  
   
**Barbara Plant** *(GMB)* moved Emergency Motion 3. She said:  
Congress, I want to thank the GC for accepting this emergency motion to be debated. Our public services are at total breaking point. For the past 12 years, wretched and reckless austerity policies, driven by ideology rather than economics, have run down our public services to the point of almost total abandon. The many millions of our dedicated public sector workers, refuse workers, street cleaners, teaching and school staff, hospital workers, town hall workers, social workers, to name but a few, have been getting poorer, working longer and have endured cut after cut after cut. We now have workers on the lowest spine point in the NHS and local government, earning less than the recommended living wage foundation rates.   
  
Congress, there is no other way to put it. These are workers on poverty pay and it is an absolute disgrace. The Tory campaign of underfunding our public services has made our country poorer and sicker. This was all true, as we all know, long before the disastrous, now U‑turned mini‑Budget. We also know that local councils were already facing funding gaps of billions of pounds over the next two years. The 17th October reversal of the mini‑Budget still leaves our public services in a black hole of £30 billion. We know the problems, but we have to be able to provide practical and just solutions to them. These need to enshrine a commitment to the ethos of public service and the recognition of the professionalism, dedication and care that distinguishes and dignifies all our members in these vital spheres.  
  
This motion makes good common sense. Our demands of the Government are clear: protect our public services, pay our members properly, make the wealthy pay their fair share, and call a General Election to let the public decide who they want to govern the public finances. It makes sense for our members, their families and the communities they serve. It makes moral sense and rebuilds our world‑class public services that our members want to deliver and what the people of this country deserve and need. I urge you to support. *(Applause)*   
  
**Mandy Buckley** *(UNISON)* seconded Emergency Motion 3. She said: I am pleased to be seconding the motion on behalf of UNISON as a first‑time delegate and first‑time speaker. *(Applause)*   
  
Congress, in the past four weeks, we have seen the gory details, one disaster after another, and just how dangerous the Tories are. They are dangerous for the economy, dangerous for our public services and dangerous for our trade union members. The mini‑Budget turned out to be a massive blunder, unfunded tax cuts promoting meltdowns in the markets and the entire economy being trashed.  
  
But, for the Tories, it is a price worth paying so that the party of the rich can help the very rich and the rich get even richer. But, Congress, even with the U‑turns, some things remain consistent. They still want the tax cuts for the benefit of the wealthy with the most. Bankers will still be free to rake in the biggest bonuses and, worst of all, our public sectors remain in the firing line continuously.  
  
This is because, Congress, we know that cuts are on the way. They are on the way all the time. This will be a problem at any time, but big services are already being hollowed out. Subject to more than a decade of damaging Tory austerity, our National Health Service, our colleges, our universities, social care services, councils, schools and police services simply just cannot take any more.   
  
Congress, the problem is our members as well. No longer should they be expected to take the brunt. We have endured a lost decade of wage cuts where we have failed miserably to keep pace with inflation. Now, energy bills and other bills are going through the roof and the prospects for winter are going to get grimmer and grimmer. It is bad enough with our National Health Service and our hospitals that have to have food banks for our underpaid staff. We have to have warm tanks and heating in pubs for our citizens to keep warm within the community.   
  
In social care where I work, it has fallen to the lowest of all sectors. Vacancies are now reaching a high of 165,000, with a third of staff leaving their jobs each year. Congress, I am living proof that when we stand together, we win. We had 86 days of strike action in the Birmingham home care disputes and we won. *(Cheers and applause)* UNISON OCS members at Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust announced their total victory yesterday. Having taken 26 days of action, they have won a 15% pay rise, seven days' additional annual leave and much more. We stand together and we win. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Could you just wind up now, please, as you are out of time.  
  
**Mandy Buckley:** We must work together and coordinate action to get fair pay and fairness for our members because together we are strong. Please support. *(Applause)*   
  
**Suzanne Abachor***(Unite the Union)* supported Emergency   
Motion 3. She said: Congress, what a shameful period in history. In‑work poverty has spread across the public services for working people. Having struggled through austerity, I definitely condemn it and now we have the cost‑of‑living crisis. The Tory Government is on the ropes.   
  
The Tory Government may be divided, but the two things they always rally behind is attacking the unions and cutting public services. Congress, I have lost count of the times we have debated the Tories attacking the unions, but this year is different. This is the year of fighting back and winning so let us hear it for the winners, Congress, tens of thousands of workers. Let us hear it for the bin workers of Ruby, Edinburgh, Croydon, Beckton and Newham. Let us hear it for the victory strikers of Coventry City Council. After six months of hard‑fought strike action, they have won double‑digit pay increases. Congress, let us hear it for the victorious strikes across 15 Scottish councils, who have won £600 million for their workers. Let us hear it for the council workers in Northern Ireland, who have already won a proper pay increase, and the thousands of union representatives in Northern Ireland who have been inspired to join the fight. Congress, across the public sector, the list of winning goes on.  
  
Congress, I say winning builds confidence and confidence is growing. That is why over 5,000 health workers across England, Wales and Scotland, including the ambulance service, have balloted for strike action. That is why we join council workers across the country and are balloting for a proper pay rise. That is why we want to save public services and put control into the hands of the community so that everyone can benefit. That means high‑quality public services with enough for customer improvement and accountability for making our public services better. Why should we not put this to the Government?  
  
Congress, we are fighting, we are winning and we are getting there. Thank you. *(Applause)*   
  
**The President:**  Thank you. We will now vote on Emergency Motion 3. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried. Thank you.   
  
 \* *Emergency Motion 3 was CARRIED*   
  
**The President:**  I now call Emergency Motion 4 on Rail disputes and the new Transport Secretary. The General Council support the emergency motion. It is to be moved by the RMT, seconded by TSSA and supported by ASLEF.  
  
**Rail disputes and the new Transport Secretary  
  
Mick Lynch** *(National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers)* moved Emergency Motion 4. He said: Hello, everyone, nearly there! I can see you all looking at your phones to see what is going on. This is not about another new Transport Secretary, but the last new Transport Secretary!  
  
Before we start, sometimes you get a bit downhearted in this game, but when I was out this morning on the CWU picket line, in the rain with the General Secretary of the TUC, and watching those workers take on the oligarchs, take on the rich, standing together as men and women who are fighting to win for all of us, that is the inspiration we need. As the son of a postal worker myself who took ten weeks' action in 1971, I am glad to say that we will always be with the CWU and the workers of this country are going to rise up and change it for the better for everyone. *(Cheers and applause)*   
  
We wrote this emergency resolution on Tuesday, thinking it might be quite timely, but it is already out of date so there you go! Going back to the railway dispute, this is about the Government's attitude. Anne‑Marie Trevelyan was widely reported in the press as saying that she was changing the Government's attitude and that we are all a family. I do not know what kind of dysfunctional family we have on the railway, but it was all going to change. Yet, at the same time, she is bringing in this legislation this morning.   
  
Let us face what this is. They are going to conscript our members and the members of ASLEF, TSSA and Unite, who are on the railway too, to go to work and break our own disputes and work in collaboration with the employer to crush our own union. We cannot abide that. Nobody with any sense in their head would allow this to happen, compulsory work for striking workers, and if we do not pick out who is going to go to work, the employer will pick them out. If we do not do that effectively, we will be fined astronomical amounts of money, our members could be fined from their own earnings for not going to work against their own dispute, and they can be legitimately sacked.  
  
Now, I am delighted with what Keir Starmer said and what Jo said earlier. I am very heartened by that. What we need is the reform of the anti‑trade union laws, we need to see in the Commons in the next few days a robust opposition against this draconian anti‑human legislation, and we need to see the Labour Party's front bench standing up and delivering the commitments they have given. If they do that, they will have our full support in the RMT and I am sure the rest of the Movement will give that as well.  
  
They are dictating the dispute. They are indemnifying the railway companies for every penny of revenue that is not given over. At the same time that they are dictating the way the dispute is run and telling the train operators' companies that they cannot make a proposal to the RMT and to ASLEF, at the same time, they are going to conscript our people to work.   
Well, I am telling you that we are not having it. In the last sentence of this resolution, it says, "Congress will fight this legislation and consider all means necessary to resist the attack on transport and other workers." That is what we have got to do ‑‑ fight them in Parliament, fight them in the workplace and fight them on the streets.   
  
I can tell you now ‑‑ I said it on the telly the other day ‑‑ they will be gone to the dustbin of history. Kwarteng has gone there already. Liz Truss is getting a one‑way ticket right now off the 1922 Committee to go to the dustbin of history. We are going to put this legislation in the dustbin of history and we are going to assert our rights, as the organised working‑class, to change this country and win a better deal for our people. Please support this resolution and let us move forward together. *(Cheers and applause)*   
  
**Sarah Jane McDonough** *(Transport Salaried Staffs' Association)* seconded Emergency Motion 4. She said: This motion not only spells out our resistance to the attacks on jobs, pay and conditions on the railway, but our absolute opposition to all anti‑union legislation used against us, the workers of this country, because, Congress, make no mistake, this mistake is not just about the railway. What the Government is doing is not even just about destroying the unions. It is about destroying the working‑class system of this country. It is about keeping the workers on their knees.  
  
What is happening to us in the railway will be replicated for working people across all industries. There are some useful puppets in the ruling party saying, "You lot have had it far too good for far too long anyway." I think what these people have forgotten is that we have had to fight for what we have today. It has not been handed to us on a plate. We, and those workers who came before us, fought for and won our pay, our terms and conditions and our agreements, and we will do it again.  
  
But there are some people who have had it far too good for far too long and I think we should be very clear about who they are because whilst staff at Euston station were being told that their Sunday shifts were being taken away because there was no money, FirstGroup handed its shareholders £500 million. The three private companies who own the rolling stock made pre‑tax profits of £208 million. It is not us who have had it too good for too long, it is them.  
  
Network Rail want to cut track maintenance jobs and cut safety checks on the railway. Meanwhile, the Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer of Network Rail took home   
£1 million between them last year at the height of the pandemic. It is them who have had it too good for too long.  
  
It is repeated outside of the railway. As we have heard from our comrades in the CWU yesterday, look at the Royal Mail Group. They announced profits of £758 million in May. They gave £400 million of it to shareholders. Now they are saying they are broke and they need to cut down on staff. It is them who have had it too good for too long. Solidarity with our comrades in the CWU and all those fighting back against this anti‑worker Government.  
  
Once again, it is us, the people, who lose out. Rail fares still increased by 3.8% this year and that money has not gone into much needed investment in the rail infrastructure. It has not gone into a decent pay rise for the workers. It has gone into the pockets of privateer operators. Billions of pounds of taxpayer money have gone into the railway over the past few years and it has leaked out of it into private profit.   
  
Finally, Congress, successive governments have normalised injustice under both the Cameron and the Thatcher Governments and the anti‑union laws have been normalised as well. So, we truly do demand better. We need not only to repeal these new anti‑strike laws, not only to repeal the ballot thresholds put up in 2016, but we have to tear up Thatcher's anti‑trade union laws which ban secondary and solidarity action. *(Applause)*   
  
Congress, this is not a cost‑of‑living crisis. This is a crisis of private profit and the workers will not pay for it. "The great appear great because we are on our knees. Let us rise!" *(Cheers and applause)*

**Simon Weller** *(ASLEF. Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)* spoke in support of Emergency Motion 4).

He said: President, we were promised a change of tone with the new Transport Secretary. She said she wanted to make a landing space, whatever that may be, in the current dispute. So we went into this with a little bit of optimism. We felt, “Okay. We’ve got rid of Grant Shappes. We’ve got someone sensible”. It turns out that while the chaos of this Government is still going on, and we think that they are collapsing, they are doing anything but collapse. They are actually progressing their anti-worker agenda.

This morning they announced their Bill for Minimum Service Levels, a minimum service level on the railway of 20% of the trains. That’s pretty good news for Avanti West Coast passengers -- *(Laughter) –* but utterly, utterly impracticable. Surprise, surprise, they haven’t actually thought about it. To run 20% of the trains, you need 40% to 50% of the drivers. That’s just the way the railway operates to make sure everything gets back in the right place. So in some ways minimum service levels is a bit of a gift to us because we can completely disrupt the railway and still get paid for it! They are incompetent.

However, not only are they incompetent, they are vicious! This is an attack on the right to strike. Make no bones about it. They want to remove our right to strike. It might be the railway workers now but where else is this going to go?

Let me say one thing. We will fight to maintain our right to strike. ASLEF has been here since 1880. We’ve seen railway companies come and go. We’ve seen governments come and go. We’re still here, we’re still fighting and I support the emergency motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Congress, let’s now vote on Emergency Motion 4. All those in favour, please show? Any against? That is carried. Thank you.

* *Emergency Motion 4 was CARRIED.*

**The President:** Could I now draw your attention to Appendix 3 from page 74 of the General Council Report, which is the TUC accounts. Unfortunately, the auditor is not able to attend Congress due to another engagement on our rescheduled day. Can I ask does Congress accept the accounts set out in the appendix? *(Agreed)*

I call Appendices 1, 2, 4 and 5 and the Special feature: emerging from the pandemic. Delegates, that completes the formal business of Congress. So I now ask you to adopt the General Council Report. Is that agreed? *(Agreed)*

* *The General Council Report was ADOPTED.*

***CLOSING OF CONGRESS***

**Vote of Thanks**

**The President:** I now wish to make a number of votes of thanks to those who have contributed to the smooth running of Congress. They will be brief because of the time but they are sincere and heartfelt.

I would like to start by thanking Gail Cartmail for her role as Vice President *(Applause)*and the General Council members who have sat here during the week helping to keep our speakers on time. *(Applause)*

I would like to move a Vote of Thanks to the staff at the Brighton Conference Centre for all they have done *(Applause)* and thank you to the stewards and, indeed, all the TUC staff for their hard work and assistance during the week. *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank the verbatim reporters, the tellers, the stage crew – QED – and the musicians who have worked hard through the week, too. Thank you. *(Applause)*

It is now time to say farewell to colleagues leaving the General Council. First of all, Larry Flanagan from the EIS is retiring from the General Council. He has served on the General Council since 2012. Larry – where are you? – please come up. I have great pleasure in presenting you with the Gold Badge of Congress. *(Presentation amidst applause)*

**Larry Flanagan** *(EIS):* I want to say that it has been a great privilege to represent Scottish teachers on the General Council. As most of you know, education is wholly devolved to the Scottish Parliament so our focus tends to be in Edinburgh, but we have networked with colleagues across the UK unions, not least with our sister union, the National Education Union, but also our colleagues in the NASUWT and UCU. It has been a privilege to represent the Scottish teachers’ voice.

The people of Scotland are looking forward, as everyone in this hall is, to an election and perhaps there will be international solidarity greetings from Scotland in the near future. Cheers. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Larry. Tony Woodhouse, from Unite, is also retiring from the General Council. *(Applause)* Tony has been on the General Council since 2008. Tony I am very pleased to present your gold badge. *(Presentation made amidst applause)*

**Tony Woodhouse** *(Unite):* Can I just thank my union and my general secretary for the support they have given me for many years. But the one message you have got here today, colleagues, is stick together. Stick together and anything can be achieved, despite the strikes going on all over the country, but our job is to bring this Government to their knees. Hopefully, a Labour Party will listen to what Congress has said this week so we don’t have the massive disruption that our members are suffering week in and week out. It is not easy going on strike, colleagues, but you can see how bad the situation is with the amount of people who are going on strike. My union is supporting the strikers, and if we stick together, colleagues – stick together – and we will come through this okay. Thanks. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you, Tony. I have one more Gold Badge to give out to somebody who is not leaving quite yet, so it is not goodbye, but when Frances retires as General Secretary at the end of the year she will also be leaving the General Council. Frances, it is my absolute pleasure to present you with your Gold Badge on behalf of myself and everybody else. *(Applause)*

Congress, also leaving the General Council this year are Paul Holmes and Kath Owen from UNISON, and Ruth Cross from Usdaw. I am sure Congress will want to show its appreciation for the contribution and commitment of all colleagues leaving the General Council. *(Applause)*

Manuel Cortes from the TSSA is also leaving the General Council.

Finally, Congress, I can announce that the next President of the TUC who takes office from the close of Congress is Maria Exall. *(Cheers and applause)* Maria, I wish you every success and I hope you enjoy your year as President as much as I have enjoyed mine.

**Vote of Thanks to the President**

**The General Secretary:** Thank you, President. Can I call on Gary Smith to give the Vote of Thanks to the President.

**Gary Smith** *(GMB and General Council):* Congress, comrades and friends.

Comrades, I am the GMB General Secretary and Prospect member. I am, truly, touched, actually, to be asked to say a few words of thanks to our wonderful President this year, Sue.

The truth is that we all moan about the TUC. It’s not just Mick Lynch. I am not quite sure why because I guess we are the TUC. Congress, for all our gripes and groans, let’s never forget that *this* thing in this hall, and more importantly our thing on those picket lines this morning with the CWU, is important. Never forget that what we represent is so very important in every regard. Therefore, to be asked to preside over this Congress is a huge privilege and honour for anyone. For those of us who attended the General Council Dinner last night, we saw Sue with her family. Being President of this movement and Congress is understandably and something rightly to be proud of.

Having worked with Sue for many years and followed Sue’s work, particular on energy, I know about her passion, her breadth of understanding, her commitment and the competence she brings to everything she does. Sue, you have brought all that wisdom, competence and understanding to bear as President of our Trades Union Congress. At this event we have seen your decency, your compassion and your support, particularly for the most important people in this hall: our lay members! *(Applause)*

Sue, I am so pleased that due to the hard work of all the TUC staff we have actually managed to meet as a Congress. Sue, you truly deserve *this* for your lifetime of service to our Movement, and in my first year on the General Council my observation would be for providing over the box of frogs that is often us as well.

A heartfelt thank you from all of us, Sue. This will be a Congress that people remember, a backdrop of increasing struggle and industrial militancy and of a collapsing Tory Government. You are a credit to Prospect and you have done the whole trade union Movement proud. Sue, thank you so much. *(Applause)*

**The General Secretary:** I call on Claire Sullivan to second the Vote of Thanks.

**Claire Sullivan** *(CPS):* Gary and I had a bit of a chat last night, Sue, and we agreed that Gary would do the tributes and I would do the jokes, but I don’t want you to think that just because I am going to take the piss out of you it is any less sincere. I also get to do the presents as well. I am also aware that, Sue, it is only you and me standing in the way of trains, planes and everything else that people in the hall need to get. Someone seems to have set me a three-minute timer and, of course, my favourite thing about doing the Vote of Thanks is that I don’t actually think there’s a time limit, which is certainly helpful.

Sue, I want to say three things, really. The first one is that this week at Congress you have chaired it absolutely, completely and precisely as yourself, as the calm, consistent and reassuring President that you have been for all of us in this most turbulent of years. I could not think of anyone who has done so in a more natural, welcoming and sisterly way than you have this week. A huge thank you for that. *(Applause)*

I also want to pay a short tribute to Sue’s optimism. So, Sue, after a really long year of chairing meetings of the TUC General Council, meetings of the TUC Executive Committee and numerous other meetings of trade union general secretaries, I sincerely admire your continued optimism, even this week, when you continued to make your kind offer to us that we should not feel that we have to use our full five minutes’ allocated speaking time. I love the fact that you still seek to appeal to our better nature when, surely, by now you have realised that we don’t have one. *(Laughter and applause)*

Secondly and more seriously, there won’t have been a single first-time delegate in the room this week – there have been a lot of them – many of them brilliant and many of them young women, who won’t have felt supported and reassured by you. This is a great skill and a reason why you are so brilliant, whether it is in Prospect, at the TUC or in any other forum, at giving courage and hope to up and coming trade union women everywhere. Thank you for that. *(Applause)*

For me, Sue, your particular power is that you are not, unlike so many of us, well, okay, it’s just me, swearing and shouting. It’s your calm, quiet way of being fully but complete in-charge that is both so compelling and so appealing. I am just going to tell you all one more thing, and this absolutely appeals to the physiotherapist that will always be within me. A few weeks ago, Sue, good climate ally, was taking her used washing-up water out into the garden to put on the plants, tripped over and fractured her wrist. Some days later she was chairing a meeting at the TUC when she got a call to say that she had to leave urgently to have surgery on her wrist. That was a Monday lunchtime. I remember it because it was my first day back after holiday. She left, had a general anaesthetic, an operation to fix her wrist, and was back at her desk on Tuesday morning, not because she had to, not because she was told or even asked to but quite the reverse. She was being encouraged to take the time she needed. This was just before the Congress we would have had in September.

So, Sue, I’ve always known that the steel of Sheffield is strong in you, now literally as well as metaphorically, and this commitment is the measure of you: no fuss, no fanfare, just guts. *(Applause)*

This is our first Congress together for three years at a time of enormous struggle for working people in an environment of unprecedented industrial unrest in recent memory. You steered us through it skilfully and sensitively and shown your own kindness and humility throughout. Once I had dried out after the rain that Dave so kindly booked for the strike rally this morning – cheers, Dave. It was sunny until you arrived. He is not still in the room but just in case – I nipped out this morning and bought a couple of things. I always thought I wouldn’t want to be the TUC President, but now I can see the massive amount of presents that I am about to give you, I am, kind of, changing my mind. Seriously, Sue, with great sincerity, on behalf of Congress, thank you so much for this week and I am now coming to give you the presents. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I just want to say, very briefly, thank you to Gary and thank you to Claire. As Gary said, it is an enormous honour to be TUC President. So thank you to all of you for giving me the opportunity. As people have said throughout the week, we are a team. I’ve had loads of support from my union, from every union and from the TUC. It has been great and I wish Maria all the best for her year. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Just before you rush off, as Congress ends, of course our campaign does not. In the face of attacks on the right to strike and on trade unions, as we have discussed, we must mobilise our members to take action. Our political representatives need to hear from working people about how the Government’s priority should be to deal with the cost-of-living emergency, not attacking workers’ rights to organise for a pay rise. We are facing the most extreme Tory Government of our lifetime but we know that they are vulnerable.

Friends, on your tables, some of you have already found your *Protect the Right to Strike* posters. Please, everybody, raise your posters together for a photo to show that the Movement stands together in solidarity with all our members and against this Tory Government’s attacks on working people. *(Photograph)*

Thank you, delegates. As I am sure you know that on Wednesday, 2nd November, we are co-ordinating a mass lobby of Parliament. Thousands of trade union members will head to the Commons to lobby their MPs and rally together. We know that together we can make a difference and push back against this anti-trade union legislation and set a pro-worker agenda for a future Labour Government. Please, if you have not already done so, sign up to lobby your MP. Behind me, I hope, is the link to say that you will join us in London, and on the same day you will be bringing the trade union Movement together for a huge rally in the evening. We will come together and send a huge message saying “Trade unions are fighting back”. So, please, spread the message far and wide that on 2nd November, the labour Movement will come together to demand better from this shambolic Government. Thank you for all your support this week. Thank you for all you do. Thank you for being part of the trade union family.

I now declare the 154 Congress closed.

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