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Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,
Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 10th September 2017
Monday, 11th September 2017
Tuesday, 12th September 2017
and
Wednesday, 13th September 2017**

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Congress President:

DR. MARY BOUSTED

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**PROCEEDINGS – DAY TWO
(Monday, 11th September 2017)**

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SECOND DAY: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11TH 2017

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

The President: I call Congress to order. Many thanks to Pianjo & Co, who were fantastic, who have played for us this morning. Let's give them a round of applause.

(Applause)

Colleagues, I think it is important to make a comment about yesterday's events at the close of Congress. A lot of delegates, guests, visitors, union and TUC staff were evacuated from the Grand Hotel and also from the Conference Centre. First of all, I would like to express my thanks and the thanks of Congress to all the staff at the Grand and here at the Brighton Conference Centre for the calm and professional manner in which the evacuations were conducted, and for the rapid response of the emergency services. They keep us safe. I would invite Congress to show their appreciation. *(Applause)* Thank you, Congress.

Health and Social Care

The President: In a change to published business, we start today with section 4 of the General Council Report: Good Services. This is the section on Health and Social Care from page 48. This section includes Motions 57, 58 and 59, which will be taken later in the week, and Motions 33, 34 and 35 will be taken after Motion 66 this morning. I call paragraph 4.1 and paragraph 4.3, and Motion 60: Public health — an investment in the future. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by

The Royal College of Midwives, seconded by the CSP and I understand that Unite and BOS also want to speak.

Public health — an investment in the future

Gill Walton (*Royal College of Midwives*) moved Motion 60. She said: Congress, I am the new General Secretary and Chief Executive of the Royal College of Midwives, and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I left the NHS only a month ago. This is not quite my usual Monday morning. I am moving Motion 60: Public health — an investment in the future.

Congress, we are well aware of the damage that cuts to funding are having on our NHS, and the impact that this is having on our communities. One of the real tragedies of the funding cuts is that it stops valuable investment in public health initiatives which improves the health of the nation and saves the NHS money in the long term. Front-loading cuts to the NHS is a false economy compared to increased public funding, which is an investment in the future. Midwifery 2020 said that midwives have a unique contribution to public health. They work with women throughout pregnancy, birth and into the first weeks of family life; hence, they have a vital role to play in improving health and social wellbeing for all women. Yet every year we see more women with complex health needs.

The RCM conducts a survey of midwifery managers every year. Last year's survey found that 93.2% of heads of midwifery said that their services are dealing with more complex cases than the year before. When asked what types of complex cases they

were seeing more of in the last year, heads of midwifery reported overweight and obese women, women with long-term health conditions and reported drugs and alcohol abuse. Around 12 per cent of women are recorded as smokers at their booking appointment and 20 per cent are obese. That creates complex services. Pregnancy offers an opportunity to encourage these women and their families to make changes in the way they live their lives, and that will be good for them, good for their baby and good for the NHS, and good, too, for the whole of society. For example, promoting breastfeeding will also give more newborns the best possible start in life. As with other areas of maternity care, the RCM say that this is to promote informed, evidence-based choice and support women in their chosen method of infant feeding. It is true that for the first six months of an infant's life, breastfeeding is the most appropriate method of feeding. There are numerous health benefits and benefits to babies' development, such as IQ and behaviour. Breastfeeding provides a unique opportunity for attachment between mother and baby. No other health behaviour has such a broad spectrum and long-lasting impact on public health. While breastfeeding rates in the UK have been increasing, there is still a rapid decline in the number of mothers who continue to breastfeed. The evidence suggests that women give up breastfeeding before they would really like to. Women give up breastfeeding primarily because of lack of a supportive environment, and it is clear that employers need to do more to enable women to continue to breastfeed after they return to work.

Investment in public health does not just involve care delivered by the NHS. It also means good employment rights and good trade unions enforcing those rights. The Government need to be ambitious in improving the health of the population. Maternity services and the rest of the NHS must be properly funded and invested in to

meet these ambitions and make a real difference to the health of women and their families.

The RCM is calling on the Government to commit to invest in public health. It is clear that an investment in public-health initiatives helps save the NHS money in the long run and is our best investment in the future. Please support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Gary Watt (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) seconded the motion. He said: Congress, public health is more than just preventing illness. Its role is also to promote health and wellbeing leading the better, longer lives. We commend this motion from the RCM and are very happy to support it.

Physiotherapists, along with a range of health professionals, have an important role in many aspects of public health. A good example of this is falls and falls prevention. One in three people aged over 65 will fall every year, equating to more than three million falls per year. Half of the people who have had a fall will fall again in the next 12 months and 10 per cent to 25 per cent will sustain a serious injury. The current falls are associated with increased mortality, increased hospitalisation and higher rates of long-term care, all of which cost money in an NHS which is increasingly stretched. The cost of falls to the NHS is estimated at £2.3 billion every year.

Physiotherapy-led exercise programmes, which are focused on increased muscle strength, improving balance and promoting more active lives, have been shown to

reduce falls by up to 30 per cent. Compared with the cost of treating a fractured hip or a long hospital stay, this seems like financial common sense, but public health funding has not escaped the savage cuts imposed on the NHS and the wider public sector.

In April of this year, the House of Lords' NHS Select Committee described the Government as "woefully short-sighted" and warned that the £531 million cut to public health under the current administration would cause unbearable pressure on the NHS in years to come. We are in full support of our colleagues at the RCM in calling on the Government to provide a robust and well-funded public health system, and we ask you to support the motion and the amendment. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Joyce Still (*Unite*) spoke in support of Motion 60. She said: Congress, whilst acknowledging the role of midwives in promoting health in pregnant women, we must not forget the key role of health visitors and school nurses in the promoting and supporting of health throughout a child's and its family's life. Health visitors see all new mothers following the birth of their baby usually around nine to 10 days, when often breastfeeding is not quite established. Often now, with the increasing workload, they are not able to offer the support to the breastfeeding mother that they would like, and this task frequently falls to volunteers. School nurses also are often unable to offer support to young people to ensure that they are aware of the lifelong dangers related to smoking due, again, to their increasing workloads.

The provision of health visiting and school nursing is now the responsibility of the local authority. This has been the case since 2015. Unfortunately, local authorities

have, in many cases, tendered this responsibility out to private companies; for example, Virgin Healthcare, Solutions for Health and Serco. Worryingly, these companies have very little understanding of public health and the implications to staff in working with vulnerable families. Let's not forget that a private company's main interest is in making a profit for their shareholders. Nobody can argue against increased investment in public health. However, we also need to ensure that these public health initiatives are provided by staff who are working for employers whose priority is, indeed, public health, such as the NHS, and have the best interests of the public at heart.

Congress, investment in public health is not just important to address the health needs of our nation now, but it is an investment in the health needs of our future generations. Please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Claire Shaw (*BOS TU, British Orthoptic Society Trade Union*) spoke in support of the motion. She said: President and Congress, did you know that the only vision test your four-to-five year old will get is at school, agreed by the National Screening Committee, and it is an orthoptic lense service. Currently, these services are being delivered by the NHS. They are still commissioned in Scotland and in Wales, but in England they are being decommissioned. In fact, recently, a screening process was pulled with no consultation or notice. The argument for doing this is that the parents can take their child to a High Street optician to have an NHS eye health check. However, there are no figures to show that this occurs, how many are referred back into orthoptic services by their GP or how many are prescribed glasses.

In Wales a screening pathway was set up and a recent audit found that 97% of children who failed their school screening test were followed up and the audit loop was closed compared with less than 13 per cent who went to a High Street optician before the pathway was in place.

Research shows that between 7 per cent and 10 per cent of four-and-five year olds will have a vision deficit in one or both eyes that needs treating before visual maturation at the age of seven to eight. With the withdrawal of these services, we will return to pre-NHS vision impairment figures in a short time. Those with poor vision in one eye as a child who then gets a problem with the other eye will be registered as visually impaired much earlier than if they had been seen and treated. This will have a knock-on effect for employment and future benefits. Please support this motion.

(Applause)

The President: As there have been no speakers against the RCM's motion, will the RCM waive the right of reply? *(Agreed)* Thank you. So we will move to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 60 was CARRIED.*

Mental health funding

The President: I now call on Composite Motion 11: Mental health funding. The General Council supports the composite motion, to be moved by Community,

seconded by the BDA, supported by Usdaw, and there are other speakers who wish to be called. They are CSP, Unite, UCU, GMB, FBU and NUJ.

Roy Rickhuss (*Community*) moved Composite Motion 11. He said: President and Congress, at the beginning of this year the Prime Minister announced a package of reforms which, in her own words, she said “will transform mental health support in schools, workplaces and communities”. Well, nine months on we are still waiting. We have heard nothing, not a peep from a Government on its workplace review, and certainly no more funding to tackle the crisis in mental health support. Not a bit of action to match the talk. Congress, that is simply not good enough.

In July at the Community Conference in Torquay we debated a range of issues to decide which should be our priority campaign for the next two years. The debate was open to all delegates and we were glad to have Frances with us to see and hear the excellent contributions. Our membership overwhelmingly voted to focus on the issue of mental health, and it was of little surprise given the inspiring and emotive nature of the speeches. We heard from a steel worker who read the testimony of his step-daughter about her daily struggle with mental health. We heard from a prison officer who told us about her mental health illnesses and how little help was available. We heard heartbreaking contributions from delegates across all sectors of our union. We heard many stories of the challenges presented by mental health inside and outside of the workplace. This is why I know we cannot let this issue be sidestepped any longer. My members have told me of their struggle and sadness while they wait for help.

However hard the issues that we face as a country, we cannot and must not forget about people's quality of life. We will be calling on the Government to guarantee that every workplace has a fully-trained and supported mental health rep, who has the same level of rights as health and safety reps, bringing these issues to the core of every business. We have already met with the Department for Business about support for small businesses, who struggle to support mental health workplace schemes, and we need to continue to push that. But we also need to improve our focus as unions.

As a result, from next year, we will offer more training to our reps so that they can support and spot signs of mental health issues, understanding and knowing how to respond appropriately. We will tackle the stigma in our workplaces. We will provide tailored support to all of our members wherever they work.

Congress, this issue affects us all. We need to change the culture around this topic and make it acceptable to speak about mental health concerns. Every single one of us has that duty of care. Evidence is also growing to show that people can lose years off their lives as mental illnesses impact on their physical health, too. The sad fact is that this is one of the biggest health challenges of our time and it remains largely unaddressed. It must be top of the agenda for government and employers. If they don't listen to the moral case for action, they should at least understand how it affects their businesses. It is now the biggest cause of long-term sickness absence, and it costs £2.5 billion to the economy with replacing staff. It costs £15 billion in low productivity. So current approaches are clearly not working. The facts say it all and the stories tell us more. So, Congress, let's push ahead together. Let's call for action

to end the crisis in mental health funding. Let's put our movement at the forefront of change on mental health. Please support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Annette Mansell-Green (*BDA, British Dietetic Association*) seconded Composite Motion 11. She said: Congress, the barometer of success of any nation is the health and wellbeing of its people. So it is a tragedy that in the UK today levels of good mental health are disturbingly low, so we have a long way to go before we can say that we are a thriving nation. Medically, we have made great strides in the health of our bodies and our life expectancy, but we need to achieve the same for the good of our healthy minds.

You might be wondering the BDA, the dieticians, are interested in this. Registered dieticians work in all areas of mental health, including adults, CAHMS, older people, those with learning disabilities, eating disorders and autism. Our own research at the BDA shows that there is now a serious gap in service provision across all of these areas. Posts are being lost due to cost savings, services are being limited to in-patients only and there is no funding for community services.

Congress, nearly two-thirds of us will experience a mental health problem in our lifetime. That is two-thirds of the people in this hall! All of us can be touched by this situation, whether it is personally or family and friends. I have, personally, been touched by it and there are a number of people in this hall today who were really helpful to me and supported me. I, probably, would not be standing here right now if they had not helped me at the time. So two-thirds of the people in this hall and in the country will suffer a mental health problem. If you are out of work, that figure rises

to 85 per cent. So this rising demand is outstripping capacity, and it is caused by the policies of this Government and the so-called austerity agenda. As I said, demand is outstripping capacity, bed occupancy rates for in-patient units are regularly exceeding 100 per cent, more and more children are presenting at A&E departments for psychiatric reasons, and worryingly referrals to CAHMS have increased by 44 per cent over the past three years.

The experience of poor mental health, whilst touching every age and demographic, is not evenly distributed. If you are a woman, a young adult, on a low income or living alone, your risks of facing poor mental health are higher. So what is to be done? Apparently, it's all all right. It's getting sorted. Jeremy's on the case — Hunt, that is — and he has announced a plan for better services and 21,000 new posts are to be created with a major drive to re-train and retain mental health staff. We are going to be treating an extra million people by 2021, and so on. Really, is this possible? It is unrealistic. The money is not there and the timescales are too short.

There are persistent gaps in the mental health workforce and trusts are struggling to find enough staff with the right skills to deliver existing services to the right quality, let alone future services. Congress, we demand a real, properly-planned and funded, immediate programme to address this crisis. Thank you. *(Applause)*

John Hannett (*USDAW, Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) spoke in support of the composite. He said: Congress, my union's experience has shown that mental health is an issue of growing importance to union members. Of course, that applies to every union represented here today. In the UK around 12 million people

see their GP about a mental health problem every year. Think of the individuals and the numbers involved. All individuals struggling with a major issue. Congress, as long as mental health continues to be a hidden disability that is rarely spoken about, then that becomes part of the problem. But there have been some high-profile cases which has brought this debate into the open. Therefore, some of the challenges we faced in the workplace in an ever-increasingly complex place of work are real issues that our members are faced with. Of course, when people get back to work, it is always difficult for those issues to be recognised, and there is a real responsibility on companies to train managers; in other words, to have some empathy and understanding when somebody is facing mental health issues. Not only does the stigma attach to mental health conditions and make people less willing to discuss this matter with their managers, but topics typically associated with mental health, such as absence of work or being distracted from the job, are more likely to put individuals into conflict with their employer. So there is a major responsibility on employers to understand and to make sure that managers are appropriately trained. Of course, we cannot be experts in every issue, but having empathy and understanding is part of the way to address the issue.

Congress, as a result, my union, Usdaw, has seen that mental health issues can have a serious impact on an employee's ability to hold on to their job. Therefore, it should be no surprise that recent TUC research on the subject has shown that 75 per cent of people with a long-term mental health condition are not in work.

In recent years, the trade union Movement has won important safeguards for people suffering from mental health issues. If depression or anxiety is revealed as the true

cause of an absence, the Equality Act can provide protections at work and place responsibilities on employers to make reasonable adjustments, and so they should. However, this can only happen if members feel they have the confidence to report openly and discuss the issue in the first place. To ensure that this happens, my union has embarked on running significant campaign activity around mental health awareness, to campaign activity to remove the stigma around mental health, to signpost people to the relevant services for advice and support and normalise conversations with managers.

In conclusion, Congress, this is an extremely important composite and one that everybody, I am sure, has empathy with. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, John. This is a really, really, important composite motion. There are a lot of speakers. So please do not feel that you have to take up your full three minutes. Please concentrate on your key points. Can we start with the CSP?

Alex Mackenzie (*CSP, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) spoke in support of the composite motion. She said: Congress, we are glad to see the inclusion of stress in this motion on mental health. Work-related stress is a huge health and safety concern for us and for all trade union reps and members. The TUC 2016 Biennial Safety Rep Survey found that stress was identified in the top five hazards by 70% of safety reps. In addition, there are 10 million lost working days per year and stress is responsible for a third of all new instances of work-related ill health.

It is important to note that feeling stressed in itself is not a mental health condition, but prolonged exposure can cause mental ill health to develop, most commonly depression and anxiety. At some point in our lives many of us will suffer a period of mental ill health. It may be related to an event or caused by continuous excessive stresses. Despite this, the stigma of mental ill healthy remains. We would not expect a colleague with a broken arm to come to work and do their normal duties. Yet staff suffering under excessive stress are expected to continue as normal.

In addition to the DDA, most employers have systems in place to make adjustments for staff with temporary physical limitations, but seem to ignore those who need adjustment for temporary mental health issues. Our members in the NHS and elsewhere are struggling every day with cuts to funding and resources, increasing case loads, paper work and constant reorganisation. CSP research, backed up by the 2016 NHS Staff Survey showed that 59 per cent of physiotherapists went to work when they were ill, and 31 per cent of NHS physiotherapists reported feeling unwell as a result of work-related stress and pressure.

The CSP is so concerned by this issue that, at the end of 2016, we launched a new campaign called “Pinpoint the pressure” to tackle stress and workloads. The aim of the campaign is to empower stewards, safety reps and members to identify stresses in the workplace and to work together with each other and managers to create an action plan. The CSP has developed resources to support this, such as survey tools and training on good sickness-absence management. Early survey results confirmed what we already knew, with respondents describing the workload as unbearable. However, there have been some positive outcomes already with trusts increasing the length of

appointment times, updating equipment, changing the format of staff meetings and taking measures to improve communications in the department. Even in these times of austerity, we must not lose sight of the fact that we, trade union members, can make a positive difference in the workplace through the power of campaigning. We, wholeheartedly, support the wider motion on mental health and ask you to do the same. *(Applause)*

Ann Crozier (*Unite*) spoke in support of the composite motion. She said: Congress, I have got my speech all written out but everybody has said what I wanted to say, so I am going to say my bit but I am not going to stick to my speech. I am sure that Unite will support me on this.

Since I have come to Brighton, I think it is beautiful and I have walked around for two days, because I got here early, the amount of people I have spoken to with mental health problems — that's the guys and girls on the streets — are many. I know that the NHS is very short staffed. In Scotland, where I am from, Unite has a mental health nursing association section. To me the work is stressed, and although it is part of the job but we are all suffering from it, especially the reps. However, my concern is for the patients, for the people out there who are suffering, and this Tory Government is taking us back to the days — I know it is going to come — where we will be putting people with mental health problems into asylums, locked up, get them out of sight because they are messing up the streets and are messing up our lives by causing us too many problems.

Jeremy Hunt said that he was going to put more money into looking after people with mental health issues. It is a bit bad when those of us who are working in the NHS are suffering with mental health issues as well. I am speaking for the people who are suffering with mental health problems. They need to come to us for help, but I don't think we are doing enough. I also don't think we are ever going to be able to do enough. We need to get these Tories out.

A senior family judge, when referring to a 17-year old self-harmer, has said that their blood is on our hands. Please support this composite motion, and continue to fight to achieve properly funded mental health services for the people who cannot do it themselves. Thanks. (*Applause*)

Pauline Collins (*UCU, University and College Union*) spoke in support of the composite motion. She said: Funding for mental health services must be kept high on our agenda. One in four workers will suffer from mental health problems in any one year. Admitting to having a mental health illness is one of the hardest things anyone can do, so we struggle and cover up, fearful that this will damage our career and that we will be seen as unreliable, unpredictable and just not up to it.

Recent research indicates that nearly half of academics show symptoms of psychological distress working within what has been described as “a culture of acceptance”. Increased work pressures, such as excessive workloads, fear of redundancies and working within an environment where bullying is endemic almost certainly impacts on those already receiving mental health support. Employers are often unsure how they can support employees and what reasonable adjustments can be

put in place. This lack of knowledge also means that employers and colleagues make assumptions based on stereotypes. Fear of saying or doing the wrong thing, as well as a lack of awareness, may stop employers even broaching the subject of mental health. Because of this, responsibility for gaining support often lies with the individual, not the organisation. We all have a role to play to ensure that the stigmas and negative stereotypes are challenged. We need a joined-up organisational response to promoting positive mental health involving all organisational participants. We need to encourage direct interaction with members who need mental health support to prevent discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. To achieve this requires willingness from all, the individual themselves, colleagues, management, legal protection and well-resourced mental health services. Let us be clear, whilst we need to keep the pressure on Government to adequately fund mental health services, our members continue to live and work in unacceptable situations. We need to ensure that our case workers have the training and support they need to support the increasing number of members in desperate need of trade union advice, guidance and representation.

Our UCU branches work with management to ensure appropriate support because we understand the issues and the impact. Our input is invaluable and our members trust us. This work makes a huge difference to our members when the professional help they need so desperately is not available when they need it most. Please support this composite. *(Applause)*

Jake O'Malley (*GMB*) spoke in support of the composite motion. He said: Congress, I am a first-time speaker. *(Applause)* Colleagues, despite Government assurances that mental health services would receive equal treatment to physical

health, just under half of all NHS trusts have suffered cuts to mental health services during 2015-2016. As a young GMB member, I was interested to hear the Tories pledge to focus on the mental health crisis among young people and wondered if this would be another empty promise. Unfortunately, it was.

Congress, the number of young people arriving in A&E with psychiatric problems has doubled since 2009, and despite the pledge mental health trusts in England had almost £600 million slashed from their budgets in the same time period. Many people who need support are being isolated and ignored. This situation cannot continue. We need proper policies and services in place to curb the growing mental health crisis among our country's young people.

Sisters and brothers, with one in six people experiencing a mental health issue at work due to increased pressures in the workplace, as well as cuts to services, the challenges have become more acute. Stigma still dominates how we see mental health at work, just as it does in wider society. We can assume that this stigma runs deep within the Tories as they seem hell bent on chipping away at our mental health services until there is nothing left.

Congress, the Tories do not care about mental health, and with little chance of an election soon we need to do something quick to try and save our mental health services. I, along with my GMB comrades, propose that we need to campaign on the following things to ensure that there is parity between mental healthcare and physical healthcare in the UK, the reversal of cuts to mental healthcare and support particularly in the area of children and adolescent mental health services, the creation of a Cabinet

Minister for Mental Health and Neurodiversity, a joined-up approach to mental health care provision and wider health, provided free at the point of use by our NHS and the passing of a Mental Health at Work Act, so that all the players know exactly what is expected of them in managing mental health at work. Please support this motion. Our NHS mental health services are in crisis at the moment. We cannot afford to sit back and let them disappear. *(Applause)*

Tam McFarlane (*FBU, Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 11. He said: On today of all days, where the thoughts of our delegation are with our sisters and brothers in the Fire Department of New York, as we remember the 343 fire-fighters, union members, who lost their lives when they entered the Twin Towers when so many others were trying to get out. *(Applause)*

Colleagues, we have probably all experienced members in crisis. In our own industry, the Fire and Rescue Service, our officials and members all too often deal with harrowing cases of post-traumatic stress and suicide among fire-fighters and emergency control staff. We lose too many members to the incidents we have attended, the sights we have seen and the experiences we have suffered, from cutting bodies free from car crashes to listening to people screaming and dying at the other end of the emergency call line. Too many of our people are suffering and we are absolutely determined to deal with it, but the scale of the issue is huge.

Last year, MIND, the mental health charity, released the results of an online survey which included the views of over 200 fire-fighters. The main results for fire-fighters were, genuinely, alarming. Over 90 per cent of fire-fighters had experienced stress

and poor mental health at some point in work. Nearly one-third of fire-fighters had experienced a mental health problem, and 40 per cent have been prescribed medication due to stress. So mental health is a huge issue for fire-fighters. Further research shows that post-traumatic stress really happens alone. It nearly always comes with depression, alcohol abuse, anger, inter-personal difficulties and thoughts or actions of suicide.

Of course, the issue of PTSD in the Fire Service has been underlines recently by the Grenfell fire and its impact on our members who intervened, so we are demanding action in support from our political leaders, but we are doing that against a background of cuts, cuts that have previously treated mental health counsellors as expendable. Many of their jobs have been cut in the Fire Service as politicians describe them as the “back room” and then got rid of them. Post Grenfell, it has been exposed that Boris Johnson, when he was the Mayor of London, cut the number of counsellors trained to help fire-fighters in the London Fire Brigade from 14 to two. Dear God, how they are needed now!

I am going to leave the last word to a London colleague who attended the Grenfell fire. He has asked to remain anonymous, but he said this: “It was absolutely horrific at Grenfell, and it is still very, very raw. I have seen some really horrible things, things that I have never experienced before and hope that I will never see again. It will stay with me all my life. We were offered a session with a counsellor, which I took up, and it did help, but nothing will get those images out of my mind”. Please support this resolution. Let’s work together, let’s get the investment and let’s tackle

this massive issue for our members and for millions of working people. I support.

(Applause)

Pennie Quinton (*NUJ, National Union of Journalists*) spoke in support of the composite motion. She said: The NUJ commends this composite, particularly the call for employers to increase support for the mental health of staff when working in stressful environments. The NUJ applauds the composite's call to review the HSE Management Standards on Work-Related Stress. The NUJ is concerned by the high incidents of newsroom journalists suffering higher rates of secondary post-traumatic stress disorder due to their routine exposure to the raw footage from war zones, terrorism and natural disasters.

While journalists working on the ground in conflict situations expect risks to their mental health, journalists in newsrooms are suffering in silence the unexpected consequences to their wellbeing following their editing day in and day out of extreme content from new reports. The NUJ urges employers in the broadcast and digital sectors to provide more support for their staff to protect against their developing long-term mental health problems that will impact not only on their individual wellbeing but also on their home and family life. Thank you. Please support this motion.

Roz Norman (*UNISON*) spoke in support of the composite motion. She said: Congress, as we all know, our entire NHS is under threat from a Government that is obsessed with austerity and determined to subject our health services to cuts. But within this, some parts of our services have suffered and are still suffering more severely than others. Mental health is one such area.

Congress, many of our staff working in mental health are truly at the end of their tether, struggling to cope due to staff shortages and poorly-funded services. Mental health services in the UK have been severely under-funded for many, many years. This has led to under-resourced teams and service users being unable to access the help that they need. In short, Congress, it is utterly and totally unacceptable.

Despite plans to bring the so-called parity of esteem with other parts of the NHS, there can be no doubt that mental health has not been prioritised at all. It has not been prioritised in the same way that physical health has, and this despite the fact that it is now widely acknowledged that there is a deep and important correlation between the two.

During the summer we learnt that the police are now dealing with record levels of phone calls relating to mental health. Our ambulance call outs for mental health patients have soared by nearly a quarter. This shows the damaging impact that failure to invest properly in these services has had, and not just for the patients, although that is very, very important in itself, but also in terms of the knock-on impact with other parts of the NHS and emergency services more widely.

The Government's Mental Health Workforce Plan, published recently, did at least acknowledge that some of the problems resulted from lack of staffing, but their promise of thousands more staff simply cannot be taken seriously. Where are they going to get them from? Congress, we have heard these sorts of commitments over

and over and over again in the past and we all know that they are not worth the paper they are written on.

UNISON surveyed our members in mental health last year and the results were quite frightening. The results show that the service is in crisis and is in fact getting worse. Over two-thirds of our members said that there was less access to services as a result of funding cuts. 85 per cent of their members said that their organisation or service had faced cuts directly, and more than two-thirds reported that there was no training around the mental health stigma provided for staff in their organisation.

Congress, our mental health services urgently need their funding protected and increased. We must have decent staffing levels as well to deal with our mental health services in crisis. We need to have the staff adequately trained to support the service users. Please support this composite. Thank you.

The President: That is the last of the speakers. As there was no speaker against, I assume that Community will waive the right of reply? *(Agreed)* Can we now put Composite Motion 11, mental health funding, to the vote. Will all those in favour please show? Will all those against please show? That composite motion is carried unanimously.

* *Composite Motion 11 was CARRIED.*

Medical equipment shortages

The President: I now call Motion 63: Medical equipment shortages. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by the Society of Radiographers and seconded by HCSA.

Steve Herring (*Society of Radiographers*) moved Motion 63. He said: Congress, good morning, I am the immediate past President and Chair of the UK Council for the Society of Radiographers.

He said: In 2000 current spending on healthcare in the UK was 6.3 per cent of GDP. The then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, committed his government to match the average health spending of the GDP for the other 14 countries in Europe, which was currently at 8.5 per cent. Since then there have been rises of spending in the NHS, but the gap between us and Europe has increased over time. The gap in 2014-15 was 15 per cent. In real terms, a percentage increase to bring us in line with those in the EU would have to be 30% or £43 billion to match EU spending in 2013, which currently in 2020 would be £185 billion.

The World Health Organisation identified the importance of medical equipment in delivering first-class healthcare. They identified that the shortages of functional medical equipment in lower income economies is a barrier preventing increases in life expectancy. They were, of course, looking at economies far less well off than ours, but nevertheless their report clearly identifies the vital role of modern equipment in sufficient supplies in improving the healthcare of the nation.

The current situation, whilst no-one claims that the UK is in the same position as many of those developing countries, according to the World Health Organisation, indicates that we are heading towards a crisis and that has an impact on the health of the nation. Earlier this year, Simon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, gave evidence to the Public Accounts Committee, saying that the UK's spending on medical equipment was behind other EU countries. That should not come as a surprise. The King's Fund has reported that the UK spends less of its GDP on healthcare than any other comparable nations. They found that by the end of next year this country, the fifth largest economy in the world, will spend £43 billion less per year on health when compared with the average of other EU countries, thereby putting us 13th out of the original 15. We cannot go on ignoring this situation and pretend it does not affect us and our life chances.

In 2014 I brought a motion to Congress on behalf of the SOR about the issue of the lack of modern radio therapy methods, in particular proton beam therapy. It was discussed building two centres in the UK to stop our patients being treated overseas, sometimes without their families. One family, in particular, was highlighted at that time. You may remember Ashya King, who travelled to Prague, for his life-saving treatment. Since then one of those centres has been built in Manchester and it is treating patients, and the one in London, the UCLH, is still being constructed. The delays are mainly due to the logistics of trying to build something like that in London. Some private centres have been built since. Proton Partners in Newport, south Wales, has eased the burden on that equipment.

This is only part of the story. Many CT and MRI scanners are being operated beyond their expected life span. This is a false economy, as good modern equipment can undertake advanced techniques and significantly increase the chances of picking up early cancers for patients and improving their outcomes. In the case of a CT scanner, they are newer, quicker and produce a significance into the patient being scanned. The demand on diagnostics is increasing year on year by 8 per cent to 10 per cent, with pressures on both equipment and the staff who operate them.

In a recent report by AXREM, the Association of Healthcare Technology Providers for Imaging and Radiotherapy, stated that 110 CT scanners are in excess of 10 years old. The European Society recommends that they should be at least no more than five years old. If the lack of investment continues, patients are certainly at risk. In my own region, there are hospitals that do not have significant contracts for making simple repairs, such as detectors for detecting images, because they cannot afford the contracts. I can tell you that equipment that is out in general use which is in excess of 15 years old, even in my own region.

This motion mainly talks about imaging and medical equipment shortages, but there are shortages in other areas of healthcare. My wife was a community midwife and her experience is that they had to share scales for weighing babies between the teams because they did not have the equipment. This situation does not just affect the patients, including blood pressure machines and thermometers, but it has a direct impact on staff and their wellbeing.

The President: Can you wind up, please, delegate?

Steve Herring: Colleagues, I move. Thank you.

Paul Donaldson (*HCSA, Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) seconded Motion 63. He said: The HAS is pleased to second this vitally important motion. The Society of Radiographers, in moving this motion, set out the appalling situation with regard to both imaging and therapeutic radiography equipment, which is short across all modalities. From breast screening to cancer treatments, the UK does not have enough equipment or up-to-date equipment. This situation, clearly, has a negative impact on the provision of services to patients. It can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment.

As has been said, the NHS spend on capital equipment is woefully inadequate and, frankly, a national disgrace. Equipment, of course, needs skilled practitioners to operate it, and the Faculty of Clinical Radiology in the UK, which is the workforce centre, in 2015, their report noted the following: “Insufficient numbers of radiologists in the UK, vacant consultant posts being the norm, significant concerns over the replenishment and sustainability of the consultant workforce, significant concerns over the sustainability of future delivery of radiology services”, and it called on the Government to make the necessary funding available for both equipment and the workforce. Across all grades, the UK has the second lowest number of radiologists per 100,000 people across EU countries for which data is available.

There is a significant mismatch between the small growth in the workforce and the significant increase in CT and MRI scans from 2012 to 2015. CT scans grew by 29

per cent and MRI scans grew by 26 per cent. The situation is even worse in Scotland. Nearly all radiology departments reported that they were unable to meet their diagnostic reporting requirements for 2015. The Society Radiographers, in its Diagnostic Radiography UK Workforce Report in 2016 noted that they had an average vacancy rate of 13.5 per cent, up from 7.8 per cent in 2014, and that the upcoming retirements are likely to exacerbate the situation. Across the radiographer workforce, the position is very similar to that of radiologists. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: As there have been no speakers against, the right of reply can be waived, so we will move to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 63 was CARRIED.*

NHS breast screening programme: moving forward

The President: I now call Motion 64: NHS breast screening programme: moving forward. It is moved by the Society of Radiographers, seconded by the BDA, and I also have indications to speak from the NEU and NASUWT. Just before you begin, the General Council supports the motion with explanation, and I will call on the General Secretary during the debate to explain the General Council's position.

Gill Hodges (*Society of Radiographers*) moved Motion 64. She said: Congress, I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) This matter was raised and debated at our own

delegate conference in April of this year. The National Breast Screening Programme, the world's first, was set up in 1988 and is used to identify females, who appear healthy, who may have an increased risk of breast cancer. This was identified as an intimate examination, and therefore is determined to be a genuine occupational qualification for mammographers to be female only. Approximately one in eight women are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, and there is a good chance of recovery if it is detected in its early stages. Patients are also less likely to need a mastectomy or chemotherapy if the cancer is detected early. Around half of all breast cancers are diagnosed through this screening programme.

This service is presently offered to women between the ages of 50 and 70 years every three years, and there is an age-extension trial current running in some areas assessing it as whether it is beneficial to screen women between the ages of 47 and 73. Currently, the service is screening just over two million females per year, but there is an impending critical workforce shortage over the next 10 years, which was highlighted in the 2016 UK Breast Imaging Workforce Survey by the Royal College of Radiologists.

Presently, mammography services are operating at a 15 per cent vacancy rate, but more concerning is that 60 per cent of radiographer/advanced practitioners in mammography are 50-plus years old. With demands for the service due to increase with an anticipated 8 per cent increase in women aged between 50 and 70 over the next 10 years and if the age-extension trial proves to be beneficial, this will, potentially, increase by 28 per cent. That is a lot of mammographs which will require a lot of mammographers.

Equality. All of here support equality, with everyone treated the same with the same opportunities as everyone else, no matter what creed, colour or gender. Males take an important part in other screening programmes, so why not breast screening? Why are there male gynaecologists, male breast surgeons and male radiologists but not male mammographers? Yes, mammography is an intimate examination, but men in other professions and disciplines carry out intimate examinations. Why can we have male midwives since 1983 but no male mammographers?

In response to a Twitter feed in April of this year on this topic, one response was, “I just want someone who knows what they are doing and treats me with respect”.

Congress, therefore, calls upon the TUC to support this motion to allow us to lobby for equality and to utilise an important asset by permitting male radiographers to apply for mammography jobs within the National breast screening programme. To quote our President, Dr. Bousted, “Let’s make this Congress the platform for our actions for fairness, equality and justice at work and for all our citizens”. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Annette Mansell-Green (*BDA, British Dietetic Association*) seconded Motion 64. She said: Good morning, Congress. I am happy to be supporting this important motion. On the face of it, it looks like a really straightforward and simple issue, and it is. It is common sense. There is not an awful lot more to say because we have heard about the importance of breast screening. We know about the incidents of breast cancer, we know about the age extension and we know that more women need to be screened. Put simply, if a man can do my smear test, which is a fairly intimate

examination, because they are health professionals, I am not bothered, although some women might be, but that is where patient choice comes in. This issue is symptomatic of the funding crisis in the NHS. It is an equality issue and it is something that needs to be sorted out and sorted out quickly. If we had enough trained professionals there now, we would not have this motion in front of us, but we do not, so we must get this anomaly sorted out now for the good of all women for the future of the profession. Thank you. We second. (*Applause*)

The President: I call upon the General Secretary to explain the General Council's attitude to the motion.

The General Secretary: Thanks very much, President and Congress. This motion covers an incredibly important issue for millions of women — breast screening on the NHS. As the SOR know only too well, it is a service that is under pressure because of staffing shortages. That is why this motion calls for the removal of the single-sex restriction for mammography in line with practice in gynaecology, obstetrics and foetal anomaly.

Crucially, it also supports patient choice for those women who want a female radiographer, but aspects of the motion require explanation. Firstly, under the 2010 Equality Act the scope for the Department for Health or NHS England to influence gender occupational requirements, set now on a case-by-case basis by individual employers, is limited. Secondly, evidence from other countries suggests that there could be a significant deterrent effect associated with the use of male radiographers for what are voluntary screening services for women. Thirdly, there is an equality

issue, too, because women from certain faiths or cultural backgrounds may be particularly deterred. So the General Council supports the motion but with these caveats and this explanation. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Frances. We will now hear from the NEU.

Kiri Tunks (*National Education Union*) spoke in opposition to Motion 64.

She said: Congress, I realise that most delegations will already have decided their position on this motion, but I would really like you to think very carefully and to consider opposing. I am aware that this comes from a profession that is affected, and I understand that there is a recruitment problem in the field, but I really do not think that the proposals in this motion are the answer. It is clear that the NHS, like much of the public sector, is badly hit by austerity policies of this Government, but the answer cannot be the removal of a right from women, nor does it do anything to address the current shortage or the causes of the shortage. For a start, redeploying men from one field of radiography could deplete the supply in another area.

If there are particular issues in recruiting issue to actually what is a women's dominated service, then we need to ask why? Why are women workers not attracted to the profession? Is it the pay restraint, is it the workload, is the inflexible working or is it poor conditions? If so, those are the things which must be tackled. We should not be accommodating them. (*Applause*) Why would men find them any more attractive? Instead, we need to build a campaign to recruit and support these women workers. The implication in this motion is that mammography is an anomaly and that women would, putting it crudely, rather see a male mammographer than die. There

may be some truth in this, but this service is exempted under equality law for a reason. Studies show, as has been mentioned, that significant numbers of women would not present for screening unless the mammographer was female. Mammography is a public health screening service aimed at preventing disease in women without symptoms who may find reasons not to attend. A mammograph is, actually, a very intimate and uncomfortable process which is ameliorated by the presence of a female practitioner. Most women who say they would present to a male radiographer also say that they would prefer a female, but significant numbers say that they would not present at all or not return. A study in Ireland found that 9 per cent of women said that they simply would not go if the mammographer was male. 17 per cent said they would not return and a further 18 per cent were unsure. This motion says that women will still have a choice but how can that choice be guaranteed, especially under the current circumstances. Services would do their best to offer that choice but, actually, you might get that in a urban centre with lots of mammographers, but what about in smaller centres. Staff rotas will need careful management, possibly impossible management, to try and ensure that choice. This is not a motion that is giving us choice or equality. We are in danger of worsening take up for a public screening service that practitioners have built up painstakingly over the years.

This permissive exemption exists in law for a reason. Removing it without fully considering the implications would, I think, be foolhardy and risks the health and wellbeing of millions of people. It does introduce a precedent for the removal of legal single-sex exemptions and can trigger a knock-on effect on other women's services which are already under attack. We are in danger of dismantling protections we need instead of fighting harder to keep them. Please oppose. (*Applause*)

Michelle Codrington-Rogers (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke in support of motion 64. Unfortunately, our name was meant to be called in the previous debate on mental health, which the NASUWT has conducted extensive research on and supports teachers in their schools and across the country. However, this is also an issue that is an important one for our members. As Frances stated in the GC's Statement, choice is crucial for a number of women, especially our women from the diverse communities who already find it difficult to access services because of the barriers put up through expectations and community expectations. Breast screening is an issue for all of our members who are increasingly accessing services, and we need to protect the service for those accessing it now and in the future. Please support this motion.
(Applause)

The President: I call the Society of Radiographers as a delegate spoke against the motion. You have the right to reply.

Gill Hodges (*Society of Radiographers*) said in reply: I do hear your arguments but this is an equality issue. The patient's choice has always and will always be respected, and patients are free to ask not to have a male perform any procedure within the Health Service or have a chaperone present. That is always the case in any procedure, including radiotherapy. Again, the quote of 9 per cent from Ireland and Australia have been very similar, but as far back as 1994 most women did not object to female or male students participating in the examination, and that women's opinions were not strongly influenced by the gender of their personal physician or

their age. This is 2017 and we should have equality in all healthcare professional disciplines. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: I now put Motion 64 to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? Can we do that again? All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show. The motion is carried.

* *Motion 64 was CARRIED.*

Development of mandatory allied health professionals (AHP) workload and workforce planning tools

The President: Congress, the next motion is Motion 65: Development of mandatory allied health professionals (AHP) workload and workforce planning tools. The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by the SCP and seconded by the BDA.

Leigh Holloway (*SCP, The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists*) moved Motion 65. She said: Congress will be aware that Scotland has led the way for the development of mandatory workload and workforce planning for nursing and midwifery. The Nursing and Midwifery Workload and Workforce Planning Project report outlined 20 recommendations, which laid the foundation for the development of a more systematic and standardised approach to workforce and workload planning to ensure valid and reliable outcomes. The project identified that tools and systems needed to be developed at the national level to take account of the dynamic nature of

health services. This led to the development of a suite of tools that measures all workload in the clinical settings. The nursing and midwifery workload tool has been developed over a number of years to support evidence-based decisions and risk management in relation to setting staffing establishments in a variety of service settings. The tools used are a rigorous and statistical analysis to calculate the whole-time equivalent of current workload. They have been tested extensively across NHS Scotland and have shown that the developed tools assist each health board in planning that they have the appropriate number of staff in order to provide the best possible safe care for their patients.

The application of the tool has resulted in the creation of new posts for nursing and midwifery with some additional investments. Allied health professionals make up 6 per cent of the NHS workforce, the third largest professional group, yet allied health professionals do not have access to similar mandatory workload and workforce planning tools.

Demands on the AHP services are due to the projected increase in the population. In 2016 the population of the UK was 65.6 million — its largest ever — and the UK population is predicted to continue growing, reaching over 74 million by 2039. It is also getting older with 18 per cent aged 65 and over and 2.4 per cent aged 85 and over. Whilst there has been a steady increase overall in age numbers during the past decade, a report last year by the Nuffield Trust showed that there are still major geographical variations in number per 1,000 of the population.

Difficulty in recruiting to some posts, inconsistencies in matching provisions to need and number may start to decline, due to an increase number in those coming up for retirement and issues with the introduction to university fees for healthcare students.

NHS Benchmarking's National Audit 2015 shows that access to all kind of healthcare services outside hospitals worsened last year. This is bound to impact on the transfer of care and a hospital's ability to discharge patients to prevent readmission or to help patients regain functional independence. AHPs, including podiatrists, physiotherapists, dieticians and OTs, play a key role in all of these areas. AHPs will also have a crucial role in Government priorities for service transformation in NHS England's new model of care, especially primary and acute-care systems, emergency care networks and improving healthcare for care home residents. All require input and leadership from skilled AHPs. Yet podiatrists and other AHPs are now regularly seeing double the number of patients in clinical sessions in efforts to maintain targets and KPIs. Whilst this means on paper that more patients are seen in practice, less and less time is being spent with the individual patients. This increased workload is also over-burdening staff and affecting their health and wellbeing, which is indicated by increasing sickness absence in many trusts. We hear all the time of staff shortages and difficulties in fitting patients in when needed. This means that patients are being put at risk due to systems, all of which may be helped by the use of the AHP workload and workforce planning tool.

If introduced, departments would be able to analyse properly the service, making sure that patients have appropriate appointment times and there is enough staff provision to ensure a safe and effective service.

Congress therefore calls on the General Council to assist in the development of mandatory AHP workload and workforce planning tools by: (i) entering into discussions with the Government to develop mandatory AHP workload and workforce planning tools similar to those for nursing and midwifery; (ii) campaigning to raise the awareness of the Government to the important role that AHPs play in the delivery of the best possible safe care for patients; (iii) ensuring the health and wellbeing of the NHS' dedicated workforce and (iv) putting quality before quantity when it comes to patient care. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Martin Jones (*BDA, British Dietetic Association*) seconded motion 65. He said: Good morning, Congress, I am a diabetes specialist dietician working in a busy inner London borough called Westminster. We have a highly complex patient group and often the members of that highly complex group need more specialist services, such as those of myself. I want to give an example of complex needs. In my group I have a lot of Arabic speakers, who have come from war-torn countries who are often dealing with the effects of mental health. You might think, "What's that got to do with a diabetes dietician?" The answer is a lot, because many of these patients are being treated with anti-depressants, which obviously is not enough. So when they come in to me and when they see me I realise that I can't treat the diabetes because they have not got their mental health problems sorted out. I am having to listen to a lot from the patient and trying to signpost them into already over-stretched services. How that impacts on my time is by me not giving the patient the proper care they deserve. I think this is all related down to the Conservative-Tory cuts. It is time for them to stop seeing human beings as machines but as complex beings with complex

emotional needs. What that means for us, as healthcare professionals, is giving us the time and all the specialist skills we need to be able, effectively, to deal with these client groups more properly. It is time that allied healthcare professionals are valued in recognising their problems and allocating AHPs the time they need to see the patients. We have to give the patients the complex care that they need. I second this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Gordon McKay (*UNISON*) spoke in support of Motion 65. He said: Congress, in the past 40 years I have been on a large number of demonstrations and marches. The next one I will be going on is in Edinburgh, Scotland, on October 7th to scrap the spiteful pay cap in the NHS. Over those years, I have heard a number of catchy chants and slogans on those rallies, but what I am still waiting to hear is: “What do we want?” “We want the development of mandatory AHP workload and workforce planning tools”. The reality, however, is that proper staffing levels in the NHS should be the fundamental issue that we are all shouting about. I don’t simply mean for the creation of jobs but because, if we want a high-quality NHS for our children, our parents and ourselves, we can only ensure that by having an NHS staffed on the basis on clinical need.

UNISON is the trade union in Scotland that represents the majority of nursing staff. UNISON were delighted with the introduction of mandatory workload and workforce planning tools for nursing in Scotland, but that doesn’t go far enough because we know that high-quality healthcare is not delivered by a single profession.

As a mental health nurse of 30 years, I am incredibly proud of my profession, but I know that I couldn't do my job properly without the highly skilled support of colleagues in allied professions such as occupational therapy, podiatry and physiotherapy. They are just as important as the clinicians, the cleaners, the porters and the admin staff, the people whose hardworking and dedication allows the clinicians to do the jobs they are trained for. That is why UNISON has always supported the one-team approach to healthcare. Doctors, nurses, midwives, AHPs, cleaners, admin, IT and catering all deliver our healthcare. If one part of the system is under-funded or under-staffed, all areas suffer, but far more importantly is the fact that people suffer. That is why UNISON is supporting this motion so that allied health professions are properly staffed in the NHS. For too long this Government's approach has been to get staff to do not only their job but the work of those jobs that they have cut from the service to try and save money. Well, you don't save money. You just get a poor service.

Fairly paid staff, a properly funded service and a correctly staffed service is what the NHS needs. That should be this Congress's priorities for the NHS in the next 12 months. Please support. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you. As there have been no speakers against the motion, I will put the motion to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 65 was CARRIED.*

Whistleblowing

The President: I now call Motion 66 on Whistleblowing. The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by the HCSA and seconded by BOS TU.

Paul Donaldson (*HCSA, Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association*) moved Motion 66. He said: Congress, the HCSA is a union for all hospital doctors. There are many things about working in the NHS that are hard. It means working in a high-pressure environment for long hours, informing patients or loved ones about bad news, but one of the hardest single things for an individual doctor, particularly a trainee doctor with an entire career ahead of them, is to stand up and blow the whistle on standards of care within their workplace.

In 2015 the Francis Report, following breakdowns in care at Mid-Staffordshire, warned of a culture of silence and advocated a new approach that would give NHS staff the freedom to speak up. In simple terms, following his wide-ranging review, Sir Francis said: “Giving staff the ability to speak out on concerns over care must trump all other matters”. It seems amazing, then, that doctors in training, particularly known as “junior doctors”, who blow the whistle on poor care still have no statutory protection. This, Congress, is an absolute scandal.

At its heart is the position that doctors in training find themselves. Every six or 12 months they will rotate to a new hospital. As with all NHS staff, they are under significant pressure to fill rota gaps. During this time the doctor is employed by the hospital trust, which provides the contract of employment, pays their salary and

functions in every other way as an employer. It is Health Education England, however, which allocates a doctor's national training number, oversees their education and offers placements that a trainee must fill. In effect, it is Health Education England which holds all the cards but without proper accountability. This has left doctors in training extremely vulnerable. The remedy that has been put forward to this glaring loophole is a recommendation that employers insert a model clause into a trainee's contract, acknowledging their relation with Health Education England. But, Congress, a clause in a model contract falls far short of the career-long statutory protection which we should demand for NHS workers who speak out on matters of safety and care.

Trainee doctors who have the courage to blow the whistle must be guaranteed the right to take organisations to an employment tribunal if, as a result, they are forced to leave or experience bullying, disciplinary action or a damage to their career prospects. A trainee doctor who blows the whistle on wrongdoing should be celebrated, not victimised. We believe that an amendment to the Employment Act is the only cast-iron solution to this issue.

Therefore, the HCSA calls on Congress to send a clear message to all parties that nothing less than mandatory and total protection will do. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Before I call the next speaker, what is happening this morning is that speakers are coming to the front row and they are not on my sheet, which means that the General Purposes Committee office has not been notified. Can every delegate make sure that if you wish to speak you have notified the General Purposes

Committee office so that we know how many speakers are on the sheet and how long the motion is likely to take so I can plan conference timings properly. I am very concerned that we get through the business and we are not pushed for time on the last day. Can every delegation leader make absolutely sure that if you want to speak that you have informed the General Purposes Committee office. Thank you. This motion is to be seconded by the BOS.

Jamie Spofforth (*BOS TU, British Orthoptic Society Trade Union*) seconded Motion 66. He said: Congress, there have been a number of high-profile cases where whistleblowers have been victimised having raised legitimate concerns. Examples include a doctor who grew concerned over a patient's safety, who thought it right to raise concerns to their employer. The outcome was that that person ended up without a job. A spokesperson for the whistleblowing charity, Put a Concern at Work, criticised the employer for their despicable behaviour. Another example is that of a nurse in an accident and emergency department who grew so concerned about the way in which patients were being treated that she raised more than 100 complaints. When she raised her concerns, she was met with threats and bullying from some of her most senior colleagues. However, things have changed. Most NHS employers have policies and procedures for individuals to follow which should protect the person raising concerns by putting them in a safe environment. But in many cases clinical and non-clinical staff feel that by raising issues they will affect their career prospects, and this cannot be right.

Having undertaken a survey through one of our universities, the British Orthoptic Society discovered that undergraduates found it difficult to raise concerns through

their clinical placement sites. To try and help this problem, we have been involved in the ethics and professionalism lectures to give examples of possible scenarios that may arise and how they should deal with them. Raising issues with those in training will change things, but it is taking a long time. We believe that those staff who raise matters of patient safety or staff welfare issues should be celebrated and supported in a workplace rather than being seen as part of the problem. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you. I call the NEU.

Hank Roberts (*National Education Union*) spoke in support of the motion. He said: When I was growing up, the UK had a reputation of being one of the least corrupt countries in the world. There were occasional big things, like Poulson, if you are old enough to remember that. Look at banks, for example. Banks were pillars of respectability, run by people like Captain Mainwaring of *Dad's Army*. Seriously, now mainstream banks are engaged in money laundering, with HSBC the biggest and fined for it; drug monies, no problem; Russian Mafia money, no problem, and top bankers fiddling LIBOR to pocket millions.

In 2004 the Government allowed alternative providers into the NHS. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 opened up practically anything and everything to be run by private companies, so we have Serco, G4S, Atos, Care UK, and so on. This allows for wholesale profiteering, legal highway robbery, and increasingly illegal. It is fertile ground for company fraudsters to steal from the NHS. In reality, it is stealing from the patients. Corruption invades all spheres of public life.

Take education. We see top academy CEOs earning £300,000 a year and more. We see BMWs given to top staff from funds meant to educate children. I and other union reps suspected our headteacher and a few of their top buddies of lining their pockets from school funds. We investigated, and they were to the tune, estimated now, of £4 million. We are still taking legal action to try and get the money back. Mary Bousted gave great support when I blew the whistle. First, we sent a dossier of crimes, but the Government ignored it. They hoped it would go away. The school reps were suspended. A second dossier was given with more crimes and detailed more evidence, and we threatened a third dossier. We didn't have anything left, by the way, but they did not know that. This forced them act. The headteacher was suspended, lost his knighthood and was given a suspended jail sentence, and we were reinstated. This happened in 2009, and it is still going on.

Whistleblowing is not easy, particularly if you are accusing those in power, but it is the right thing to do. Taking money out of the system which should be going to the care of patients, pupils, prisoners, care homes or whatever is directly causing harm. At least in education it is not a matter of life and death. Doctors and nurses have patients' lives in their hands. They must have total protection if they speak out against wrongdoing of any kind. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: As there has been no opposition, I will put the motion to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried unanimously.

- *Motion 66 was CARRIED.*

Respect and a Voice at Work

The President: Delegates, again, in a slight change to the published business, we now move to section 3 of the General Council Report: Respect and a Voice at Work. It is the section on Great Jobs from page 38. I call Motion 33: Trade union rights restriction. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by the POA, seconded by the FBU, and we also have UCU and PCS to speak.

Trade union rights restriction

Steve Gillan (*POA, The professional trade union for prison, correctional and secure psychiatric workers*) moved Motion 33.

He said: Congress and President, the POA believes that Motion 33 is a vitally important motion. We know the trade union restrictions through the Trade Union Act, which came to fruition last year, raising the ballot thresholds on the majority of trade unions. However, my union, since 1994, and amended again in 2008, under the Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994, section 127, has hamstrung this Government, in effect, for the last 23 years. The reality is that my union is breaking the law if we induce another prison officer to take any form of action at all.

On 15th November 2016 the POA took action in England & Wales to highlight the health and safety risks, such as the suicides within our prisons at record levels, self-harm amongst prisoners at record levels, assaults, prisoner-on-prisoner, at record

levels, assaults on staff at record levels, disturbances in our jails and 8,000 less prison officer grades with a record prison population of some 86,000 prisoners. I want to put that in context. In 1994 there were 43,000 prisoners with more staff looking after them than there is now. That shows you what a crisis our prisons are in.

In February 2017, seeing no further improvement, the executive determined that we would instruct or ask our members not to do any voluntary duties, duties that were non-contractual. As a result of that circular going out, we were enjoined by the Prison Service and the Secretary of State, taken into court and they obtained a temporary injunction. But more so, they moved then to a full trial to go for a permanent injunction. In the High Court in June, when we went there, even although the judge said all the rights things about the crisis within the service, on 19th July he granted a permanent injunction against the POA. So the reality is that it is a form of modern-day slavery in that we cannot even ask our members to withhold voluntary services that are non-contractual.

I will give you an example. Those prison officers that go into riots in our prisons are called “Tornado units” to sort them out. That is a voluntary task. It is not contractual. The reality is that we would always do it to preserve life and safety for both staff and prisoners in our care, but we wanted to demonstrate to Government that, in running a service with 8,000 less prison officers, the reality is that they rely on the goodwill of members of staff.

We call on Congress to support the repeal of not just the Trade Union Act but section 127. I was very pleased yesterday when John McDonnell openly said at the National

Shop Stewards' Network meeting that an incoming Labour government would repeal section 127. *(Applause)*

However, there is a wider issue here and we welcome the amendment by the Fire Brigades Union, because the terminology of an “essential service” goes wide. It could be that our plight today for the POA is your plight tomorrow because they could deem fire-fighters as an essential service, rail workers as an essential service, including nurses, teachers and ambulance workers. You could all suffer the same fate as the POA.

We campaigned hard in Scotland, and the Scottish Government have actually restored the right to strike for prison officers in Scotland, and I applaud them for doing so. *(Applause)* I do not think for one minute, though, that this Government will restore the fundamental, basic human right of the right to strike for prison officers. But the reality is that we might be restricted in law and by the courts — I am not standing at this rostrum to make any big speeches about I am happy to go to prison on contempt of court if I break the law, because that is not a reality — but if we flout the law and take further strike action, what will happen is that they will come and fine the union and continue to fine the union until such times as they take all of our money off us.

The President: Can you wind up, please, Steve?

Steve Gillan: I will round up on this particular issue. There is more than one piece of legislation. The Employment Rights Act of 1996, section 44, the health and safety legislation, is about leaving the workplace on serious and imminent danger. If any of

our members continue to do that, then this general secretary and our the National Executive Committee of the POA will never repudiate any action. We will stand up to the bullying employer and this bullying Government. I so move the motion.
(Applause)

Samantha Rye (*Fire Brigades Union*) seconded Motion 33. She said: Congress, the FBU wants to support the POA's long-standing campaign for full trade union rights, including the right to strike on matters of their choosing. It is inconceivable that a group of workers is prevented from taking any form of industrial action. The POA represents a body of people who do a difficult job, yet are rewarded with restrictions on trade union activities. Our position is clear. The right to form a trade union and to take industrial action is a universal right for all workers everywhere.

We submitted our amendment because we recognise that anti-union restrictions on the POA are creeping towards other workers in all sectors. As trade unionists, we have to stand with our sisters and brothers in every sector every time they take action. In the Fire & Rescue Service, we have also had that threat of strike. We faced that threat the first time the FBU organised national strike action in 1977, and we faced it yet again during our pay strikes in 2002 and 2003, and again during our strikes against the imposed changes to our pension scheme in 2013 and 2015.

In 2014 the Coalition Government launched a so-called "independent review" of fire-fighters' conditions of service. It was never a review but a stitch-up. It was not carried out by a consultant with any experience of our service. It was never about improving the fire-fighters' conditions. It was a stick to attack the FBU during our

dispute. The report was so badly written that it took until the end of last year — 2016 — to finally publish it. It was so far out of date that many in our sector seemed to have forgotten all about it, but it was out-dated in another significant way. The consultant recommended legislation to take away fire-fighters’ right to strike. He recommended that, in the absence of legislation, a no-strike agreement should be imposed. This was totally unacceptable to our members. We made our position very clear at every level, to politicians, to fire-service employers and to principal managers in our service. We are pleased to say that no-one has brought forward proposals for legislation and no-one else has proposed a voluntary strike ban. The threat remains and the FBU takes that very seriously. If it ever materialises, we will be back at the TUC to ask for your solidarity. We need to get behind every union taking industrial action and make sure that the right to strike is defended and extended to every worker. Please support. (*Applause*)

Rob Goodfellow (*UCU, University and College Union*) spoke in support of Motion 33. He said: Congress, I am so glad we have the Tories to be the party of the workers. Who else would promise to put workers’ reps on company boards and then perform a U-turn? Theresa May might. Who would place large fees on employment tribunals? David Cameron might. The Tories under Cameron and May seemingly hate being called “the nasty party”, yet they brought in the TU Act aimed at further and unjustified curbing of those nasty trade unions. Fewer days than ever are lost to industrial action, yet some commentators say that that is all the nasty unions are about. Even David Davis compared the restrictions on pickets to living under Franco in Spain.

So let's just clarify. The Tories are the nasty party and are anti-workers' rights. Without amazing trade unions, who would fight, like the POA, for their members' rights to withdraw their labour? Who would fight and win against employment tribunal fees? Who would take on fighting internationally and support organisations like Justice for Colombia. I am proud to be a lifelong trade unionist. It is not a dirty phrase. Workers need every right that has been fought for and won. Please support the motion, not the nasty Tories.

Gordon Rowntree (*PCS, Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Motion 33. He said: Congress, I am totally in support of the POA's right to strike and totally opposed to any further restrictions on other workers' rights. PCS has been very consistent in campaigning for the restoration and improvement of trade union rights, including the abolition of the Trade Union Act, the restoration of national pay bargaining, the restoration of facilities time, improving the statutory protections for all workers, including the banning of zero-hour contracts, for securing extra workplace rights, securing freedom of association and, of course, the right to strike.

We have been the focus of a lot of the Tories' attacks on the trade union Movement over the past hundred years, and we have felt the full effects of the Tories' austerity policies. Apart from the cuts to pensions, pay freezes, pay caps, privatisation and the loss of 110,000 jobs, we have seen the virtual ending of national pay negotiations within the Civil Service, our facilities time has been cut as part of a political attack against us, and something which is now in the Trade Union Act, which has given ministerial power to impose cuts in other public sector organisations. Our biggest challenge came when the Government tried to reduce significantly our income by

ending check-off and we were forced to spend huge resources to recruit tens of thousands of members to pay by direct debit. But even in that seemingly insurmountable adversity, our direct-debit campaign was a massive success, with HMRC and DWP recruiting 85% of their members, and in the Land Registry the figure was 94%.

The point is that whatever the Tory Government throws at us or the movement, whether through trade union legislation or personal political attacks, we will fight back. It might be difficult on some occasions, particularly around balloting thresholds. PCS has constantly exceeded 50% in local disputes, but it will be a challenge for most unions to reach that target for national action, but we must be committed to try and do that.

We already have the most draconian trade union laws in Europe, and workers are now threatened with even further restrictions on their rights. However, we now have a Labour leadership pledged to restore trade union rights and overturn the existing anti-trade union legislation, but the Tories may carry out that threat. It does not matter if that threat extended to the fire-fighters or to other workers, but it is an attack on every single one of us and we need to make sure that we oppose that in the strongest possible terms. If that means breaking the trade union laws, then so be it. If the POA are on strike, there won't be anybody to lock us up, in any case. *(Laughter)*
Congress, please support. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, I will put that motion to the vote. All those supporting the motion, please show? All those against? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 33 was CARRIED.*

The President: Delegates, in a slight change to the order of business, I will now be calling Motion 35, Worker representation on public sector boards, in the name of the FDA, after the General Secretary's address. I now call Motion 34, Wage protection. The General Council support the motion, moved by the BFAWU and seconded by ASLEF.

Wage protection

Ronnie Daper (*Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union*) moved Motion 34.

He said: As the last speaker has said, many of our members are absolutely sick to the back teeth of Theresa May saying that the Tories are now the party of working people, but at the same time, they have a track record of legislating against workers and trying to hamstring their representatives. The latest slight on working people surrounding the so-called living wage has seen many thousands of people in our society reduced to working benefits, food banks and poverty levels of pay.

Following on from the Trade Union Act, which was introduced with the sole aim of reducing the ability of aggrieved workers to fight back against their employers, the Tories bring in their version of the living wage, heralding it as a boost to the earning capacity of more than one million people. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to fathom out the failures of these boasts, not least the fact that it is 95p an hour lower than the Living Wage Foundation's rate and £2.25 an hour less in London. It

discriminates directly against young people who, depending on age, are between 45p and £3.45 per hour behind the Tories' modest offering.

The biggest con has been perpetrated in that there was no parallel legislation brought in to protect workers against unscrupulous employers who use the living wage as a means to rid themselves of premium payments, leaving hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of poverty. Overtime payments have been culled, Saturday and Sunday premiums done away with, Bank holiday enhancements taken from treble time down to single time, and attendance bonuses have been whittled away.

These are not just the actions of the very worst, unorganised companies where we seek to recruit to bring about change. This is endemic amongst some of the biggest household names: Marks & Spencer, B&Q and Samworth Brothers, to name just a few. Some of these businesses, our organised supermarkets, food producers, fast food outlets and retail houses, are particularly heavily hit. It has become common for these employers to buy out premiums with enhanced rates of pay, but also ask those who work in the public services how easy it is to erode longstanding enhancements by the imposition of wage freezes until we reach poverty rates of pay, with no chance of making your money up.

Congress, we need protective legislation that outlaws this deplorable undermining of the principle of having a living wage until we get a Labour government that offers £10.00 an hour for all. Next Thursday, along with other comrades, we will be giving evidence to the Low Pay Commission, but more importantly we will be engaging with MPs across the political spectrum to seek support to halt this downward spiral of

earnings by introducing primary legislation to ensure that the living wage is not a method of enhancing the profits of the big businesses, and neither should it be a conduit to poverty. Please support. (*Applause*)

Mick Whelan (*Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) seconded Motion 34.

He said: I am very proud to second this motion, but before I do, may I pay tribute to the McDonald's workers and their historic strike. (*Applause*)

As I often do, I am going to go slightly backwards to go forwards. We remember the minimum wage. We remember what it was going to do. It was not going to be a baseline for all workers; it was going to be where we start from and build upon. However, it became an excuse for employers to keep us down, to keep people low-paid and then to try and find ways around it.

Many unions have fought many great campaigns. There was the tips campaign to stop employers using tips towards the minimum wage. There were other campaigns in relation to the 359 named and shamed employers in February of this year who did not pay the minimum wage. There were the 253 major employers this year, named in August, who did not pay the minimum wage and the scandal of the lack of prosecutions for those who do not do it. Of course, we then had the Argos case whereby they were bringing people in, in their own time, to give them briefings or training and used that as an excuse not to pay what should have been a minimum wage. It is anything that allows employers to attack under the guise, "We can't afford it."

I remember many years ago, when the minimum wage came in, that I did a radio interview with a well-known hotel chain director on the other end. He was arguing that increasing the minimum wage by 10p an hour would deter American tourists from coming to London. What nonsense! If you can afford to fly to London, you can afford the 10p an hour.

So, the reality has to be that we bring forward the legislation that stops people abusing the national living wage or the minimum wage but, at the same time, we have to do much more on building what we have sought to do in the past by making sure it is fit for purpose. £10.00 an hour may not even be enough, Ronnie. Support the motion before you. *(Applause)*

The President: Thanks, Mick. I have no other speakers so I will put the motion to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously. Thank you.

* *Motion 34 was CARRIED*

General Secretary's Address including General Council Statement on Campaign Plan 2017-18

The President: Congress, it now gives me enormous pleasure to invite our fantastic General Secretary, Frances O'Grady, to give her address to Congress and to move the

General Council's Statement on the TUC Campaign Plan. Frances, I am absolutely delighted to ask you to address Congress. *(Applause)*

The General Secretary: Congress, I formally move the General Council's Statement and Campaign Plan and record my thanks to the General Council and to all of you, delegates, as well as, of course, to the President. At a time when women have to fight hard for respect at work and online, we could not wish for a stronger champion. Thank you, Mary. *(Applause)*

What a year we have had. We have had an election result that shook the Conservative Party to its core, a Labour Party on the ascendancy and strong public support for our call for a new deal at work. First, I want to say a word about our brilliant emergency service workers too because sadly, this year, there has been cause to show that they really are the best of us. Our sympathy and our solidarity goes to the family and friends of those lost and injured at Grenfell, Westminster, London Bridge, Finsbury Park and at a concert hall full of young music lovers in Manchester too.

Our pride and our thanks go out to those who helped: the first responders, paramedics and emergency control staff; our medics, nurses and hospital support staff; police and community support officers; not forgetting our local government and security staff who have to pick up the pieces when politicians fail. Let us not forget either our heroic fire-fighters, returning to that Grenfell blaze again and again, putting their lives on the line to save others. They are the best of Britain and, on behalf of the whole trade union Movement, let us say thank you to them. *(Applause)*

Now, when I last stood in front of you here, the EU Referendum result was just three months' old. One year later, the Government still has not come up with a proper plan. Like children who have not done their homework, they turn up to school on a Monday morning – Fox, Davis, Johnson and Gove – the Cabinet's answer to Grange Hill, playing up because they have got a supply teacher, pretending they are paying attention – we have all been there – while messing about at the back of the class! Yes, the clock is ticking on Brexit all right, but the Government still has not published any assessment of what it means for our industries. There is still no action plan to protect jobs and still no realistic negotiating strategy. In fact, from what I hear, there has been plenty of offensive but precious little charm.

Back home, the Prime Minister says that she will go on and on and on. She is sticking to that same old script that she can get whatever she wants. She can get the exact same benefits of the single market without playing by any of the rules. That is not a negotiating strategy; that is a letter to Santa!

Unions live in the real world. We say that whichever way people voted in the referendum, what we need now is a Brexit that puts jobs, rights and livelihoods first. The best way to do that is with a proper deal with the EU, calmly thought through and sensibly negotiated. We support a transition period, not out of principle but out of sheer pragmatism. During that time, Britain should play by the rules. It is common sense. The Government has hardly begun to sort out the divorce so there is no chance they are going to sort out brand new terms just for the transition arrangement in just 18 months. The advantages are these: lorries are not sat in Dover; our nuclear sites are safe; the workers' rights, which unions fought for, hold good; there is more

certainty for investment and a breathing space to negotiate the best possible long-term deal for the whole of the UK.

Our Movement has some tests of our own for that future deal. It must guarantee the rights of EU nationals who have made the UK their home and those of Britons abroad too. It must protect the Good Friday Agreement. It must guarantee a level playing field for workers' rights, now and index-linked into the future. There should be minimum labour standards, which Britain is sovereign and free, of course, to build and improve upon. It must also deliver barrier-free, tariff-free trade and investment because that protects good, skilled, export-linked jobs that produce the wealth that fund our public services.

While I am about it, here is another test, Mr. Fox. There should be no dodgy, backdoor trade deals to sell off our NHS. *(Applause)* That includes with a USA President who seems to think that local protesters are just as bad as the neo-fascists marauding through their town. Congress, let there be no mistake. The trade union Movement here in the UK stands with our US brothers and sisters in saying that we condemn those anti-Semitic, women-hating, white supremacist thugs. *(Applause)* If President Trump sets a foot on our soil, the TUC will be proud to lead a peaceful protest. Let us send a message: Donald Trump, you are not welcome here. *(Applause)*

So the TUC and unions have set out our clear test for Brexit. That is the shape of the best Brexit deal. That is the Brexit deal that working people need. Staying in the single market and customs union would deliver it, but if there is a better way to

deliver the deal, then we are listening. Some have said that single market membership means accepting unfettered freedom of movement. To them, I say this. Other members of the single market have different ways to manage migration fairly, such as guaranteeing local people good jobs; like making bosses respect the rate for the job and union agreements; like raising the minimum wage and stamping out exploitation. So, why doesn't the UK Government choose that?

Let me say this as I feel this strongly. We must never, ever fall into the trap of scapegoating migrant workers. *(Applause)* Migrants are not the cause of low pay. Just like millions of other people born and raised in the UK, they are the victims of low pay. The shocking fact is that only one in nine workers in Britain got a real pay rise last year while top bosses are still raking it in. Let me say this as well. If ministers really care about pressures on schools and hospitals then there is a simple solution to that: stop austerity and stop the cuts. *(Applause)*

I challenge all political parties that when it comes to Brexit, do not box yourselves in, do not rule anything out, keep all options on the table and put jobs, rights and livelihoods first. Tonight, MPs are debating the EU Withdrawal Bill and it is a chance to hold the Government to account. Will the Government guarantee to protect and enhance workers' rights, rights won by unions joining together across borders and over generations? I cannot see it in the Bill today. That means that if the Bill becomes law unamended, the Government can declare open season. Our rights will be open to attack, at a stroke, by this Government or any future government.

I know some people say that will not happen. Even if it is not in the Bill, the Prime Minister has said, on the record, that she would protect rights. But remember, this is the same Prime Minister who said that she would crack down on zero hours contracts, put workers on boards and tackle greed at the top. She has not kept a single promise. She has a Brexit secretary. He does not care about health and safety. We heard his response to the risk of workers' hearing being damaged by Big Ben's 120 decibel bell. He said, "Just get on with it." So we do not trust them. We put workers first and we do not want the deregulated tax haven that the Government has threatened if it does not get its way.

Instead of presenting us with some kind of Christmas list, the Government should be honest about what is at stake, practical about what is achievable, and recognise that the EU Referendum bitterly divided this country. It should be the Government's job to show some leadership and bring the country back together, not to rub salt into the wound.

In truth, the Prime Minister's top priority is not to defend Britain's best interests. The Prime Minister's top priority is to stop the Conservative Party falling apart. That is why the rest of us have to step up to the plate. It is because our top priority is to fight for what is best for workers. It is not easy, but we have to make the case that there is a better way and we have to stop this Government's Kamikaze Brexit.

Delegates, whatever happens, we still have work to do. We have to build towards the fair and equal society that we all seek, organising for the world that we want to live

in. In this Movement, we are proud to be working people. We know there is no such thing as an unskilled job. Every job and every worker deserves respect and dignity.

Just this year, as we have heard, we saw the power of unions to challenge injustice. When the last government brought in those charges for employment tribunals, faced with a fee of over £1,000, claims fell off a cliff. This was not because bosses suddenly stopped behaving badly, but because workers were priced out of justice. We all know what happened next. One of our unions picked up the cudgels, fought this Government all the way to the Supreme Court and, delegates, they won. (*Cheers and applause*) On behalf of our Movement, and for all workers who now have a chance of justice, thank you UNISON. (*Applause*)

As the world of work changes, we have seen the same old exploitation wearing new clothes. Tech giants, more powerful than nation states, have unleashed disruption across the globe with no care for the human consequences. We have heard it from the GMB with Amazon forcing shop floor staff to trek up to 14 miles a day; Apple sweating workers in China; and Uber screwing drivers it pretends not to employ. Not one of those companies, delegates, has been paying their fair share of taxes.

However, as someone once said, the best way to predict the future is to invent it and only stronger unions can invent the new deal at work that Britain so badly needs. Just this month, we have cheered on the brilliant McDonald's workers in the Bakers' Union. (*Applause*) They are out on strike for the basic dignity of fair pay, guaranteed hours and recognition of their union. They are brave young workers with the courage to win. They are proof that while we welcome Labour's pledge of repeal, that anti-

democratic, anti-trade union Act will not stop us fighting back. (*Applause*) In fact, to coin a phrase: “McStrike, we’re loving it”. So, let us hear it for the Bakers, let us hear it for Ronnie and let us hear it for all those young workers who deserve our support. (*Cheers and applause*)

It matters because of this. Every time we expose another bad boss and organise, that is more workers who know unions are on their side, more decent employers who will not get undercut by the bad, and more pressure on the Government to change the law. We call the deal that we want to see our Great Jobs Agenda for a voice at work, for fair and decent pay, for guaranteed hours, the chance to learn and get on in life, fair treatment and respect, and a safe place to work.

They are fair and reasonable demands, you may think, but nowhere near the reality for many. There are workers who still wait by the phone hoping for work, just as dockers once waited on the quayside. No regular hours means scrambling to pay the rent and pay the bills. The boss does not even need to go to the bother of sacking you. He can just deactivate you by app. They have precious little dignity and precious little control. They are treated as throwaway workers with throwaway rights.

I say this to bad bosses. You have seen what this union Movement has done in the last few years. It has exposed your nasty little schemes to avoid paying the minimum wage, holiday pay, sick pay, let alone overtime pay. Our eyes are on you. Trade unionists are standing by your gates, talking to your workers and organising. Either you come and sit at the bargaining table with us or we will see you in court and on the front pages. Change is coming indeed because this union Movement – the working

people of Britain – will not stand for it any longer. We are taking back control of our working lives. (*Applause*)

This year, we are taking the Great Jobs Agenda to every MP, every council leader, every mayor and every business and we are asking them to sign up for great jobs. The Great Jobs Agenda unites us all. Take it into your workplace and use it to bargain and recruit. Take it to shopping centres and leisure centres, wherever working people gather. Show them what unions can do.

What better place to start than the campaign for our dedicated public servants. A fire-fighter today earns £2,000 less in real terms than they did in 2010. A midwife's pay has been cut in real terms by £3,000. A prison officer, too often a dangerous job and denied the right to strike, has had their pay cut by nearly £4,000. All the while, the pound in your pocket is buying less.

Now, the Prime Minister has spoken. She talked about the sacrifice that public service workers have made – as if they had a choice. Public servants were not given a say in the matter. They have had seven years of pay freezes and pay cuts imposed on them. They have been forced to work harder for less while this Government has lined the pockets of corporate Britain with tax giveaway after tax giveaway. So much for a country that works for everyone!

On October 17th, we will rally in Parliament Square and we will send a message to Mrs. May. Five million hardworking public servants need it, the public backs it, so

now just tell the Treasury to get on with it. There should be no cherry-picking. All public servants deserve a pay rise and they deserve it now. *(Applause)*

I want to end with this. All of us stand on the platform that the pioneers of trade unionism built for us and this coming Congress year will be our 150th as a TUC. Imagine if our founders were stood here now. I think they would be proud of us, but I doubt they would be content. I am sure they would ask, “What are you doing to make sure that the Movement is fit to face the next 150 years?” You see, our founders were the true innovators. They were people who dared to stir it up and make waves. They shattered the conventional wisdom and they built a Movement that shaped two centuries. They lived through one industrial revolution. Our Movement lasted two more.

We now stand on the cusp of a fourth. Some call it the robot age when artificial intelligence will lead the way, making some jobs obsolete, yes, but transforming millions more. Workers are going to need new skills on a scale never seen before. So, unions have to change because capitalism changes, because business models change, and because working lives change too. We can reinvent a trade unionism that works for the digital age. That means we have got a pledge to become, once again, a movement of, as well as for, young people.

The staff who serve your coffee, clean your hotel room, deliver your parcels and look after your gran and the young mums and dads punished with zero hours contracts and shift patterns that make planning and paying for childcare nigh on impossible need unions, but most are not in them. It is not because they do not share our values, but

because too often we seem a little too 20th century maybe and too distant from their lives. We have spent the last 12 months stepping into the lives of younger workers to find out what kind of trade unionism would really work for them.

In our 150th year, we want to try something new, built from scratch and co-created with today's twenty-somethings, with new ways to organise, new ways to network and new ways to win. This is so we become a movement for everyone once more. I believe we are the custodians, if you like, of this Movement. For our working lives, it is in our care before we then pass that baton on. For me, to be a trade unionist is to remember, as the great Scottish Miners' Union leader, Mick McGahey, once said, that "We are a movement, not a monument."

So, while we celebrate our past, let us get to it. Let us fight for our future. Let us stay true to our values, but find the courage to change, to grow, to build and to win. Thank you very much, delegates. *(Applause and standing ovation)*

The President: Before she gave the speech, Frances said, "It's a bit boring this year." Never was she more mistaken. It was a fantastic speech, Frances. Thank you so much.

Worker representation on public sector boards

The President: I now call Motion 35, Worker representation on public sector boards. The General Council supports the motion, which is moved by the FDA and seconded by the GMB. I have also got speakers from Prospect, the CWU, the NEU and the

FBU . Would you please come to the front and get your passes scanned so you are ready to speak.

Dave Penman (*FDA*) moved Motion 35.

He said: Congress, I am going to start with a quote: “I want to see changes in the way that big business is governed. The people who run big businesses are supposed to be accountable to outsiders, to non-executive directors who are supposed to ask the difficult questions, think about the long-term and defend the interests of shareholders. In practice, they are drawn from the same, narrow social and professional circles as the executive team and - as we have seen time and time again - the scrutiny they provide is just not good enough.”

Transient shareholders, who are mostly companies, investing other people’s money, are not the only people with an interest when firms are sold or closed. Workers have a stake, local communities have a stake, and often the whole country has a stake. We should not just have consumers represented on company boards, but employees as well.

So who said that? That was not the words of our dear leader, Frances. It was not a quote from Red Ken McCluskey, suggesting workers’ control. This was Theresa May, setting out her vision for the economy during the Tory leadership election. Even after her coronation, she repeated the call for a boardroom revolution at the Tory Party Conference using the exact same words.

But that was all a year ago and, as we know, that is a very long time in politics. Under pressure from big business, she first back-pedalled a few weeks later in her

speech to the CBI, saying that any reforms would not be mandatory. Then the long-awaited Green Paper failed to include any meaningful proposals to deliver on the promise of workers on company boards. Now, only a few days ago, we have the Government's corporate governance proposals which fail abysmally to address the very issues the Prime Minister highlighted herself.

Congress, the rationale for boardroom reform is overwhelming. Workers have a long-term stake in the future of their employer. Unlike shareholders, they cannot cut and run when things go wrong. Workers have a unique insight into the functioning of an organisation that is impossible to replicate around the board table. Workers on boards would raise the quality of corporate decision-making, improve diversity in the boardroom and lead to a greater challenge to the sort of group think that comes from a board selected from the same narrow pool. If non-executives are failing to hold boardrooms to account -- the Prime Minister's very own words -- how can a proposal that would allow a company to appoint a non-executive director as the workers' representative have any kind of meaning whatsoever? It is simply more of the same. So, whilst a collective sigh of relief was heard across boardrooms, those who represent workers recognised it for what it was. The Prime Minister appears to like her boardroom reform like her '70s rock music: the status quo will prevail!

While the Government may have caved in to pressure from big business, there is an area where boardroom reform can be implemented and is in its gift. The rationale for boardroom reform is just as valid in the public sector as it is in the corporate world. Over five million public servants are working in tens of thousands of organisations, many with boards performing similar governance roles as in the private sector.

Whether it is a government department, an NHS Trust or a local authority, public sector workers have a vital role to play in shaping the services they deliver.

As in the private sector, workers at all levels of the organisations they serve have a unique insight into its functioning. They understand what helps deliver those vital services and what gets in the way. They can see the inefficiencies and bureaucracy which drain scarce resources from frontline services and, of course, they have a wealth of ideas on how to improve those services. Genuine boardroom reform in the public sector would help put a brake on the constant change for change sake, often politically-driven, which drains valuable time and energy from public services. Whether well-intentioned or more malevolent, ask any public servant about a reform agenda and they will tell you a tale of reorganisation, disruption and inefficiency.

My union represents some of the most senior public servants in the land, including many who sit on those boards. This is not about pitching one group of public servants against another. Senior managers and professionals are committed public servants and many have dedicated their entire working lives to public service. What this is about is better decision-making and giving all public servants at all levels an opportunity to influence the services they deliver.

I know this is no panacea, but what it would do, with representatives drawn from, and supported by, the recognised trade unions is to provide transparency and scrutiny to decision-making that is currently absent.

Congress, while the battle for corporate boardroom reform continues, this motion calls on the Government, without the distraction of vested interests getting in the way,

to immediately reform the thousands of decision-making boards across the public sector to include worker representation. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

Annette Drylie (*GMB*) seconded Motion 35.

She said: Congress, this has been an issue of genuine concern for GMB members. Many of you will remember the emergency motion we moved here last year on the disgraceful situation regarding the board of the Health and Safety Executive. The Government felt able to take a seat long-held by a TUC nominee and gave it to an employer who had no experience of representing workers. Thankfully, due to the lobbying and the hard work of the TUC and our sister trade unions, this ludicrous decision was finally overturned and an appointment process for a new worker representative has just closed.

Congress, it should not take a year to find a suitable candidate to represent workers. This room is filled with eminently-qualified people from all walks of life. A May Government seems incapable of learning from their mistakes. In August, Sarah Veale, the former head of Equality and Human Rights here at the TUC, was informed that she would no longer be reappointed to the Equality and Human Rights Commission even though the chair of the EHRC had publicly commended her contribution. So as I stand here today, we are short of one worker representative on the HSE board and there is no worker representative on the EHRC board at all. However, one woman, Susan Johnson, the employer appointed to the HSE board to represent our interests, sits on both. Nice work if you can get it!

It came as no surprise when Theresa May pathetically broke her promise to appoint workers to corporate boards when the Government published their proposals at the end of last month. She was just following a well-established pattern of behaviour which puts business interests first and marginalises the worker's voice. For the few, not for the many: what else would you expect?

Congress, this truly matters. The next ten years will see profound change in the workplace as automation becomes a reality and whole sectors of our economy are altered beyond recognition. This may pose a severe threat to workers' livelihoods, but it can be mitigated and managed if the workers have a seat at the very top tables so that dignity and fairness at work can be kept on the agenda at all times. The public sector has been at the forefront of that to set an example to everyone else. Congress, please support this motion. There is no need to repeat the disgraceful situation at the EHRC and at the HSE. I second. *(Applause)*

Gordon Hutchinson *(Prospect)* spoke in support of Motion 35.

He said: I am asking for your support for a motion which will build on what we have already gained. As a member of a trade union branch that already enjoys individual representation on our board, and has done so since we became a government agency, we can provide a very good example and evidence that this form of additional interaction between an organisation's democratically-elected employees' representatives – that would be us, their trade union – and the governors' board is beneficial to all. We are a good UK public sector precedent.

With our full-time national officer invited to executive board meetings, we can support the executive and non-executive directors to fully understand the aims and concerns of staff, but it could be better. We, the staff, have a very large, professional investment in the continued success of the Met Office and of a branch that includes a number of members with doctorates, degrees, a few professors as well as some world-technical experts. We are a skilled consultancy resource for the executive and we have valid opinions.

We strongly believe that expanding upon this proven valuable worker representation to what was promised – a legal right to elect a non-executive director to represent staff – needs to be achieved. It has worked here and in other countries – 18 out of the 28 in the EU, for example – and it is to the clear financial benefit of employers and employees. We pride ourselves on supplying informed, practical support and, if needed, challenge to our employer and its strategic guidance process for the benefit of all, most especially ensuring that, as far as practicable, the consequences of all actions are considered and thought through prior to their application. So, for all of these reasons, please support Motion 35. (*Applause*)

Maria Exall (*Communication Workers Union*) opposed Motion 35.

She said: We are concerned that this motion is a blank cheque for any form of workers' representation. We are worried that this would include forms that have no real credibility and would undermine the role of trade unions in collective bargaining. Also, the motion starts by talking about all board rooms and then shifts to a positive demand on public bodies. These are two issues and we think that mixing them up is unhelpful.

When Theresa May said that she supported the worker's voice in the boardroom, she was not talking about trade unions. Trade unions are not even mentioned in the proposals in the Green Paper on corporate governance or in the Government's response to the Green Paper published last month. The proposals that are there – stakeholder advisory panels and individual stakeholder representatives – will not give a robust or effect employee voice at board level and could end up undermining the roles of trade unions.

Token representatives on this basis will not give a proper voice for workers and workers will notice. We do not, as a trade union, want to be caught up in trying to defend the indefensible. We recognise that the motion says that workers' representation should be through recognised trade unions, but the motion leaves too much unexplained. We believe that many things would have to be in place to even start thinking about boardroom representation that is in any way meaningful. First, you have to work out what percentage of workers there should be on boards to have genuine influence. Secondly, you have to have detailed provisions so that the role of trade unions is not undermined or circumvented. Thirdly – and this is a big issue – you have to sort out the legal consequences of workers' representative actions. You would have to change the statutory duty there is to remote shareholder interest or workers' reps will be stuck in the middle between the calls for immediate profits against the long-term interests of the firm and its workers.

Congress, there is no short cut to a worker's voice: it is trade unions and collective bargaining. That is what delivers for workers and for workers' interests. (*Applause*)

This Government is not on the side of working people. Let us not let them off the hook. Instead, let us renew our efforts to gain the trade union rights we need, let us campaign to repeal the Trade Union Act and let us have positive rights for working people that underpin and advance collective bargaining. Please oppose the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Graham Easterlow (*National Education Union*) opposed Motion 35.

He said: While we fully respect the sentiment, the wording of this motion leads us to have major reservations and unfortunately we are opposing it.

A worker on a board is not trade union representation on a board. I am a staff governor, a position which gives me the full respect of my school, and I am fully supported. I am not there as a trade unionist or in a trade union capacity. I am a single individual there at the beck and call of the governing body, to be removed or circumnavigated at any stage. Indeed, the position is so vulnerable that the current Government has even legislated for academies to be able to remove a staff governor at will.

In view of their track record, we have good cause to be cynical about the Government's commitment, policy and motives towards trade unionism. The Tory's Trade Union Act is designed, at its very core, to strip us of power and restrict our ability to act. We fear that, in its current wording, this motion does not give us sufficient reassurance to guarantee the position of any trade union to act effectively on behalf of its workforce. We are concerned that workers on boards could supersede trade union representation, replace meaningful negotiation and undermine the right to

free collective bargaining. As such, we are regrettably left with no option but to oppose this motion. (*Applause*)

Matt Wrack (*Fire Brigades Union*) opposed Motion 35.

He said: We have discussed this motion at our executive. We understand that there are some complexities and sometimes difficult, tactical issues that trade unions need to consider, but our view is also to recommend that Congress opposes the motion.

We know that the Tories are under pressure. The comments that Theresa May made, which have already been referred to, about the need for workers' voices on boards are because of the political pressure they are under. We need to be under no illusion that this is an attempt to provide a sop to working people about the anger that is being increasingly felt in the workplace. The reality, as we all know, is that we face an extremely anti-union, anti-worker government, as demonstrated by the Trade Union Act that this Congress opposed. (*Applause*) We should not take anything they say on workers' rights for granted.

I will come on to the public sector in a moment, but in general, things such as advisory councils are, in reality, a toothless mechanism for workers to bypass collective bargaining. They avoid the issue of election and accountability. On the question of directors, again, the same problems arise around their legal responsibilities in terms of profitability of organisations, confidentiality and how those can be squared with someone's accountability to the workforce they are supposedly representing.

We then come on to the public sector. I think there is some confusion between the question of people sitting on boards in some sort of employer capacity and the boards that were referred to in terms of the Health and Safety Executive and other government-established bodies that oversee or make recommendations on policy in certain areas. We believe there is a difference.

Again, the traps exist in the public sector as in the private sector. They include the trap of responsibility without power, such as overseeing a service whereby cuts are being made without an ability to properly influence those. We have seen some examples of this in the fire and rescue service, dressed up as so-called partnership arrangements, a drawing in of workers or trade union representatives as a way of making them take some responsibility for the cuts that are being imposed by that employer. We should not fall into that trap. *(Applause)*

We have also seen this in terms of some corporate management boards and fire and rescue boards where either the individual ends up in permanent opposition to the majority or getting sucked into taking some responsibility for decisions over which, in reality, they have no real control. In our view, Congress, this is a blind alley and we urge you to oppose the motion. *(Applause)*

The President: The FDA has a right of reply.

Dave Penman *(FDA)* replied to Motion 35.

He said: Congress, clearly, if you look at what the motion says, it is regarding public sector boards. It is not in any way endorsing the words of Theresa May or trusting in

this Government. It is about the choices we face as trade unionists and how we influence on behalf of our members. The opportunities would be there for representatives, drawn from recognised trade unions, to sit around the table on decision-making boards in the public sector where they can scrutinise those decisions. They do not necessarily have to agree with them, they do not necessarily have to be drawn into decisions around cuts, but it gives us, as trade unions, another opportunity to influence, to understand what is going on and to oppose, if necessary, through those representatives. Congress, I urge you to support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you. We now move to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? The motion is carried.

* Motion 35 was *CARRIED*

Respect and a Voice at Work

The President: Congress, we are now going to move to Section 3 of the General Council Report, Respect and a Voice at Work, the section on Great Jobs from page 38. I call paragraphs 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7 to 3.9 and Composite Motion 8, Great Jobs.

The General Council supports the motion, moved by the GMB, seconded by USDAW, supported by the CWU, Prospect, the NUJ, Accord, Unite, Equity and Community. I also have an indication that PCS, UCU, NASUWT and UNISON wish to speak to the motion. Can I ask that all speakers come up to the front and get their

cards swiped so we are not kept waiting. Can I also say that if we are going to get through this motion, speakers must keep to their time. If it is getting really late, highlight the key parts of your speech. You do not have to take the three minutes. Thank you very much.

Great jobs

Neil Derrick (*GMB*) moved Composite Motion 8.

He said: Congress, insecurity at work is chewing up and spitting out millions of working people across the UK. The consequences of precarious work are both heartbreaking and enraging: the young working couple who feel they cannot start a family because they do not know if they will have a job or a regular wage coming in; those suffering harassment at work who know that if they rock the boat they will never get another shift; the migrant workers who are deliberately kept apart from other workers in unions on the same site; the bogus self-employment, where workers are not just denied the minimum wage, but lose basic rights at work too.

We all know the fundamental importance of this battle to our Movement, but it is also crucial to what type of economy we want to build. Of course, this Tory Government has not challenged this manmade insecurity. In fact, it has colluded with it and, in many cases, it has celebrated it. GMB research shows that seven in ten insecure workers have experienced mental ill-health directly as a result of their jobs. If ministers want to know why we have an explosion of stress and falling productivity in our country, they only need to look around at the nature of work today and what millions of our people have to endure.

We should be clear too that insecure work has a strong equalities dimension to it. GMB analysis of official figures show that 10% of black workers in the UK are employed on a temporary contract, almost double that of white workers. Black workers are also twice as likely to be employed on zero hours contracts. Women are more likely to be on an agency contract than men. Young workers are three times more likely to be on zero hours contracts than older workers. Disabled workers are more likely to be employed on insecure contracts than non-disabled workers. Discrimination in society leads to disadvantage in the labour market so, Congress, we should not let anyone crudely present the argument that insecure work is somehow a virtue.

The GMB is proud to be at the forefront of this fight for decency and respect for working people, whether it is taking on corporate giants like Uber or exposing the reality of warehouse work hidden from the home pages of online retailers. The GMB thanks every union which has shown solidarity with its campaigns. We will do the same for our sister unions who share our values and determination. Insecure work is not confined to any one sector, as unions in the hall will testify. Whether it is in further education or in factories, in the care sector or in construction, too many working people are experiencing the sick taste of insecure work week in, week out.

The GMB wants to salute the courage and the conviction of those members in the Bakers' Union who, last week, took strike action at McDonald's. (*Applause*) Yes, we do want to go large on union organisation in McDonald's and we should all be helping the Bakers' Union to super-size its membership across the sector. We are

proud of the young people who took strike action. We are inspired by you and we stand full-strength behind you.

Congress, we need a 21st century movement to tackle this Wild West economy which is straight from the 1800s. We need strategy, we need vision and we need guts. This motion is about much more than a list of legal demands, important as they are. It is about something bigger. This is about basic human dignity and a determination to create a better life for all. To listen to UK employers and Tory ministers, you would think that stronger rights and regulation in the workplace were as unnecessary as they are unappealing, but we only have to look overseas to see what is possible.

Governments of all persuasions are taking strong action. New Zealand is a country with many of the similar employers that we see on our high streets in the UK. It currently has a right wing government. However, it is worth noting that the bill brought to the New Zealand Parliament which outlawed zero hours contracts was passed unanimously by all parties, but that only came in response to hard campaigning from unions, building awareness in communities and with the voters, and then the politicians followed.

Congress, here in the UK, we have precarious workplaces, but we also have a precarious government. Let us help them on their way. As a TUC, let us raise our sights and ambition, double our determination and take inspiration from each other's actions. Please support the composite. *(Applause)*

Paddy Lillis (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) seconded Composite Motion 8.

He said: Congress, we hear so much in the press about the strong jobs market and about record low unemployment, but it is all too clear that for too many people, this work does not pay. We know from talking to our members, from hearing stories of workers forced to rely on food banks, from witnessing the rise in child poverty among working families and from seeing people holding down multiple jobs but still being unable to make ends meet that the system is broken. It is no good having an employment contract if that contract does not guarantee proper hours of work.

Congress, the misuse of short hour contracts, zero hours contracts, bogus self-employment and agency contracts is rife. Part-time work can be a good solution for some workers juggling with all their needs. However, we know that there are 2.6 million part-time workers who want longer hours. Combining this with the 1.7 million workers on zero hours contracts and many more in insecure agency contracts and, in total, 15% of the workforce do not have secure employment.

Congress, it is our duty to tackle this injustice head-on. It should be a worker's right to have a contract that reflects the hours they work. All too often, we see that workers are beholden to the whims of bad bosses, who use the threat of reduction in hours and a reduction in pay as a tool to bully their workforce. Where rights and protections are available (i.e. through the Agency Workers Regulations) it should be clear that these rights should be enforced.

The Taylor Report into modern employment practices may not have delivered the progress we had all hoped for, but where the Report did make sensible recommendations, such as closing the Swedish Derogation loophole, we must ensure that these are delivered. Congress, USDAW wholeheartedly supports a call for the TUC to highlight the issues faced by workers in insecure employment and looks forward to a significant campaign focused on tackling that issue. On behalf of USDAW, I second the composite motion. (*Applause*)

Dave Ward (*Communication Workers Union*) supported Composite Motion 8.

He said: Every year when I come to Congress, I sense a growing understanding that what we need more than anything is a call to action. The CWU thinks that the issues of insecure work, growing in-work poverty, low pay and all the issues spoken about in every proposition we have in front of us needs to be pulled together. We need to find a way of putting together a simple plan which leads workers in this country and is a serious strategy to fight for a new deal for them.

We have a four-point plan which we have put to you within this composite to which we believe every union can sign up. First, let us agree a common bargaining agenda. It is in the Great Jobs campaign plan. Let us make that a reality. Let us go back to employers everywhere and say, “We are not going to have insecure employment any more. We are going to take you on on that issue.”

Let us publish a manifesto on what constitutes a new deal for workers. We can pull all of the issues together within that. Let us have a national demonstration. We have been calling for it for three years now. We could get one million people out on the

street. (*Applause*) We all go to different demonstrations organised by fantastic organisations, but I want to be on a platform with all of you. I want the TUC and all its affiliated trade unions to lead this fight for a new deal for workers. It is our job to do it.

Finally, let us have a plan for deliverable action. I am not talking about putting your head down and running at them. I am talking about a plan which goes further than we have ever gone before. We work it out ourselves, we bring it back to the General Council, we all sign up to it and we deliver it.

Corbyn has delivered a new kind of politics in this country. We have spent years telling the Labour Party what they need to do and they are doing it. My point is this: what are we going to do about it as a trade union movement? We do not need to wait for Labour although they have put forward a great platform on workers' rights. We need to make sure that we are the people who are leading the fight for a new deal for workers and we are on the front foot.

Can you not sense, as we sense, that workers want us to lead them now? This simple four-point plan contained in this excellent composite, with all the input from other unions, is what is going to lead us forward. So, let us commit to this. Let us make the 150th year of the TUC the one where Corbyn delivers a new kind of politics and we deliver a new kind of trade unionism. Please support. (*Applause*)

Mike Dick (*Prospect*) supported Composite Motion 8.

He said: I am a member of the BECTU sector of Prospect. This is my first time at Congress. (*Applause*) While I was sitting here waiting, I figured out that I joined my first trade union when I was a teenager so it has taken me 52 years to actually stand on this platform. As they say, “Better late than never”!

Over the years, I have watched with alarm and great anger as Britain systematically followed the path of labour market deregulation – easy to hire; easy to fire – leading to a land of insecure jobs, low pay and long hours. These are deeply-ingrained problems which urgently need to be tackled. We need legislation to end this insecurity at work. Changing the world of work for good is the key message of this Congress. It gets to the heart of what the trade union Movement is about and boy do we need urgently to change things now. The gig economy is wide open to abuse: zero hours contracts, bogus self-employment and no job security.

The essential question for workers in the BECTU sector is their employment status. We have over 40,000 members working in the media, entertainment and communication industries. Approximately 10,000 of our members identify themselves as freelance, predominantly in the film, TV broadcasting, theatre and events sectors. Their working relationships can consist of periods of short contracts as provision of service as self-employed sole traders is through personal service companies or any permutation of these arrangements.

Most of our freelance members would welcome more stability and predictability, particularly at moments when family or caring issues arise. Whilst the freelance members have control over whether to accept work or not, the nature of the work is

often excessively long and antisocial working hours, with unpredictability of actual working time and engagements which are offered on very short notice. This militates against carers and those with health issues and BECTU has long campaigned that, for example, there should be greater efforts by industry associations to increase the engagement of women, who often have to drop out of the industry when starting families.

The pattern of our workers' activities comprises a large number of separate short-term engagements. Getting work is not easy. Our industry shamelessly exploits young people in particular. The worst thing is that it is not struggling little independents which do this out of desperation, but is part of the cynical business planning of some of the richest companies in the industry. Recently, there have been some harrowing reports from the freelance sector of tough (and occasionally illegal) working conditions in terms of long hours, low pay or both, especially for entry-level employees, young people working for independent producers with low budgets.

That is why I support this motion. I believe that good work is work that is engaging, it gives people a voice, it treats them fairly, it is good for their wellbeing and it helps them progress. There is an old Labour Movement maxim saying, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work." It seems fair to me in 2017. Congress, please support this motion. *(Applause)*

Sian Jones (*National Union of Journalists*) supported Composite Motion 8.

She said: This composite is about great jobs, something we all want. Precarious employment affects many parts of the economy, as we have heard, but we, in the

NUJ, are most concerned about the lack of rights for freelancers. We are not anti freelance working. Freelancers often choose to work in this capacity because it suits them. However, there is a shocking anomaly in the way employers can treat freelance workers in comparison to their directly-employed staff.

By way of example, I would like to tell you about Thomson Reuters, the international news agency, which last year decided to change its contractual relationship with some of its editorial workers. This involved Thomson Reuters moving from a freelance arrangement of sole traders to requiring them instead to operate through limited companies. Some of our members were not keen on the change, not least because that change cost them up to £600 a year in accountancy and compliance costs. They asked their union, the NUJ, to step in.

However, the company, with whom, I should point out, the union has a longstanding, constructive relationship, including the recognition to negotiate on behalf of staff journalists for decades, politely declined, i.e. they refused to talk to us about it. Freelancers have no right to collective representation regardless of what proportion are union members. This is just one example of people being treated differently because of their employment status.

Other rights lacking for freelancers are working time regulations, minimum wage laws and, of course job security. People are working in the same way at the workplace, in the newsroom, doing the same work, but because of their employment status, i.e. directly-employed staff versus freelancers, they are treated differently by the employer. The NUJ wants to see rights for freelancers and atypical workers

improved and we believe that improving the rights of freelancers is the best way of reducing false freelancing – our sector’s example of bogus self-employment – which takes the cost of employment away from employers and puts it onto workers. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Richard Joyce (*Accord*) supported Composite Motion 8.

He said: Good afternoon, President and Congress. My name is Richard Joyce and I am attending Congress for the first time. (*Applause*) I am a member of the Accord Executive Council, but my day job is to work in a high street branch of what is now the largest digital bank in the UK, in which the pace of change is unprecedented.

Undoubtedly, many customers prefer to interact with their banks at the times and through the channels which suit them, but let us not be fooled into thinking that all of these changes are demand-led. The self-service technologies in the banking and retail sectors are presented as a reaction in changes to customer behaviour when, in reality, it is the banks and retailers which are driving the changes, often to unenthusiastic customers, to save costs by shedding jobs. Technology does not want a break, it does not want a holiday, it will not fight for fair pay and it will not join a union. Often, the rush to implement these technologies and cut jobs lead to poor rollouts of technologies which are not up to the requirements of staff or customers, causing more problems than they are meant to be solving. Technology does have a place in our lives, but should it not be making it better and not more stressful?

There has been a huge impact on employment in banking since the first iPhone was launched just ten years ago. Technological change is having a bigger impact on

employment in a traditional, secure and stable sector than the financial crisis did. John Cryan, the Chief Executive of Deutsche Bank, said at a conference in Frankfurt recently, “The sad truth for the banking industry is that we will not need as many people today.” In 2015, the former chief executive of Barclays said that the industry was heading for its own Uber movement, with hundreds of branches closing and the potential number of jobs in the sector halving. In addition, Andy Haldane, Chief Economist at the Bank of England, said that up to 15 million UK jobs could be at risk through automation.

The gig economy and self-employment will not create the future employment opportunities that our children and grandchildren deserve. The Government must work with unions to address these issues and develop clear policies on the impact of new technology on employment as we approach a technological age which will have long-term implications on jobs for generations to come. Congress, this must call for a new industrial strategy that addresses the employment needs of the UK population as technology and innovation disrupt organisations and employment models. Please support Composite Motion 8. *(Applause)*

Tony Burke *(Unite)* supported Composite Motion 8, referring specifically to digital technology and automation.

He said: Congress, the scale of the challenge before us may be greater than any faced by our Movement since the first industrial revolution two centuries ago. It took around 50 years for the world to install its first million robots. The second million will take just eight years. If it goes unchecked, the automation of work could lead to a third of decent jobs being lost by 2030.

Other speakers have talked about the gig economy and zero hours contracts. In Unite, we recognise the problems. They are the old problems, but in new guises: casualisation and precarious work. It is the return to workers queuing up at the dockyard gates to get a day's work, only this time they are doing it with an iPhone.

Automation and the digital transformation of industry is like electricity: we are not going to be able to un-invent it and that is why our union has decided to try and grasp it. From smart factories to the internet, we must negotiate technology agreements on our terms. It starts with understanding the new technology and how it can be harnessed by our members and by our unions, but the real threat comes from who controls it and whose interests it serves.

In Unite's view, working people must have a democratic oversight into the adoption of digital technology. That includes the extension of collective bargaining, limitations on the collection of big data and the creation of policies which benefit working people, including a shorter working week, shorter hours and a shorter working life. It will also include some form of flexible working and job-sharing.

Congress, we believe that employers and the Government have to take a leaf out of Germany's book at the moment by sitting down with the trade unions and working through how this digital revolution is going to affect the world of work. Unite is committed to being at the forefront of this change. In doing so, we have recognised that there is no one-size-fits-all answer to automation and the digital economy. We have put automation and the digital economy at the centrepiece of what we believe is

a genuine, long-term, manufacturing, industrial strategy and securing technology agreements with employers as a priority. That is why we support the composite and we ask Congress to do the same. (*Applause*)

Adam Burns (*Equity*) supported Composite Motion 8.

He said: Freelance workers must not be denied employment rights and our right to rest. Equity are disappointed that the Taylor Review neglected the creative industries and the challenges that we face, despite employment growth and £87 billion a year to the economy.

Equity have led the way in organising, representing, campaigning and bargaining for atypical workers in what is the original gig economy. We have extensive experience in navigating issues now prevalent in both traditional and emerging economy sectors. These include employment status, low pay, no pay, benefit entitlement, parental rights and holiday pay. Sadly, Taylor's recommendations implemented would undermine the rights of atypical workers. Recommending rolling up holiday pay by simply increasing our pay by 12% is an appalling idea.

There is already transparency lacking in non-union contracts in our sector. Holiday pay is often non-existent. So why is holiday pay so essential? It is because it is about our health and safety, our right to rest and the benefits of a holiday. As a stage manager, health and safety is my job. Managing a company of 60, responsible for their safety, and moving heavy and potentially dangerous scenery requires extreme concentration. Actors, dancers and variety performers put considerable stress on their bodies and voices and, in the low pay sector, often find themselves working in damp,

cold venues eight times a week or more in pantomime season. We need and we have a right to rest and recovery. To ensure safety, I have got to be rested and I need holiday pay to do that. To roll it up simply aids unscrupulous producers in breaking the law to increase their profits at the expense of our health.

Congress, if implemented, the Review's recommendations will undo much of the strong work done by this Movement to protect atypical workers. It will hurt freelancers and it will deny us our basic rights. We must not allow our right to rest to be stolen by politically-motivated changes to our employment status. The Review rightly stated that all working people, regardless of the nature of their employment relationship, are entitled to the same decent flow of employment rights. However, in threatening essential rest for atypical workers, Taylor may well achieve the opposite. Please support. (*Applause*)

Chris Rice (*Community*) supported Composite Motion 8.

He said: The latest wave of automation will bring changes that will impact on every single one of us. Already, colleagues from my union are sharing experiences of automation in their workplaces. In our justice sector, there are now machines that process prisoner casework and questions on our prison wings, removing the need for face-to-face contact and strengthening the employer's case for fewer officers at risk of prisoners and staff alike.

My union colleagues in the finance sector have shared their experiences of the development of software that is so advanced that it can analyse and respond to a

solicitor's letter about a claim. It can decide if the solicitor is bluffing, take a decision in response and send it. It seems it is now capable of decision-making.

Companies continue to find ways to drive down the cost of labour. First, they shipped labour and production abroad. Now they are replacing labour with automation. Automation poses profound questions for every one of us and we would be foolish if we believe that we can stop or slow the process of this, but we would be irresponsible if we did not get ahead and ensure that there are protections for workers now. We must not wait until swathes of workers are made redundant. We must have a plan and that includes education from an early age and plans for redeployment and training and those employers who have profited from automation should pay for it.

It essential that British workers have a dominant voice and lead the agenda for the betterment of life through good work. These seismic changes go to the heart of who we are and they will shape our country for decades to come. We cannot afford for the Tories and the bosses to lead the debate and nor can we forget the people of Britain. Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

Ian Albert (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) supported Composite Motion 8. He said: The PCS has always stood proudly in defending and improving employment rights. We have just celebrated the 20th anniversary of the end of the union ban at GCHQ. President, to add to your list of legal victories, the PCS has just won an important decision over the Government in the courts on the Civil Service Compensation Scheme, where the Government attempted to exclude PCS members from negotiations unless we signed up to preconditions.

So, why is this relevant to Composite 8? It is because we know that our employment rights are hard-won and under threat from this Government's drive to the bottom. We cannot take them for granted. We also know that many workers do not have those basic employment rights. We are a Movement of nearly six million members, but there are 30 million people in work. That is the challenge for us, Congress, and that is why we believe it is important that the TUC sets out a new trade union manifesto which will really change the world of work for good.

Of course we support a proper minimum wage, indeed a living wage, and an end to exploitative zero hours contracts, but as we said – and it is relevant to Motion 34 – you cannot do this on the cheap. Proper enforcement is necessary. We said back in April that 20% of our minimum wage inspector roles are vacant with only 399 staff in post. There are over 200,000 jobs where they are paying less than the minimum wage. No wonder rogue employers are getting away with it.

Congress, please support this composite motion. It is right that we cannot let insecure work be the norm. It is not right that there is the excuse that businesses cannot run properly without exploiting workers. We recognise that in doing this, we need to stand together and support together. In supporting this motion, we know that you are going to need coordinated and planned campaigning work for its future delivery. It is not words; we need to stand together and work together. We can make a difference, Congress. Go forward and support this motion. (*Applause*)

Joanna de Groot (*University and College Union*) supported Composite

Motion 8.

She said: I am very glad to be part of such a broad range of unions coming in behind Composite 8. I just want to throw a few examples at you and show how they affect people in the sector in which my union recruits, bringing us alongside the other sectors you have already heard about.

Insecurity – waiting for that phone call and being summoned at maybe a few hours or a day’s notice to deliver or contribute to a course without having had the chance to prepare adequately. Poor wages and conditions – worrying if you can pay the rent. Travelling between jobs – in one case it was three jobs, three locations and having to sleep in your car because, hey, you cannot afford to pay for overnight accommodation when you travel. Exclusion from links with your colleagues and proper recognition for the work that you do in teaching, research or other professional work in colleges and universities – you may not even get a pigeon hole, you may not be included in discussions and there is a sense that you are not fully involved.

I have to say that the phrase “a typical worker” can be rather worrying in that way. In this day and age, what is typical? What is typical ought to be exactly the things that are proposed in the composite and that Frances spoke about in her speech. These things are part of the experience of literally thousands of people providing teaching and research in both higher and further education. We can see elements of a Sports Direct version of colleges and universities.

This is not right for the people who work as teachers, educators, researchers and supporters of education and research, it is not right for students and it is not right for

the colleges and universities that we so badly need. That is why I am proud to be alongside people in the hospitality industries, in other administrative jobs, in health or wherever, who have formed this composite to say that we need to do better than this. I support. (*Applause*)

Ruth Duncan (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) supported Composite

Motion 8.

She said: The NASUWT welcomes this motion, which seeks to highlight the worrying growth of insecure working within the UK and the detrimental impact it is having on the lives of working people, including supply teachers employed as agency workers. There seems to be an increase in the opportunity for the abuse of workers. In the education sector, the NASUWT is concerned about the growing trend towards casualisation of work, the use of zero hours contracts and the negative impact that these practices are having on teaching standards, teachers' morale and the entitlement of children and young people to a high-quality education.

The NASUWT's latest survey revealed that 79% of supply teachers obtain work through supply agencies. For many, the use of private supply agencies operating for profit is now the only way to obtain work in a sector where the local authority role has been drastically reduced. The NASUWT's research highlights that agency and umbrella companies benefit rather than the workforce or the service provision, particularly when agencies are charging £10,000 in finder's fees and up to 30% in commission charges. These extortionate and inappropriate finder's fees have restricted or removed the right to work for many supply teachers, denying them the chance to gain permanent employment. This has effectively reduced opportunities for

women, BME and disabled workers, who are disproportionately represented as agency workers.

Congress, we must campaign to end the use of such perverse, exploitative and discriminatory practices that effectively stop individuals from gaining the security of a permanent role if they desire one, especially at a time when there is a recruitment and retention crisis in the education sector. We must also continue to campaign to prohibit the use of finder's fees, which deny agency workers their right to access permanent employment. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Lilian Macer (*UNISON*) supported Composite Motion 8.

She said: Congress, as a health worker, there was one moment in the General Election campaign I will not forget. That was Theresa May telling a nurse that she could not have a pay rise because there was not a magic money tree – the arrogance of this statement when public sector workers are forced to pay the price for the political and economic failures of this Government! Working people are at breaking point as the pay gap grows between their take-home pay and household costs.

Congress, public sector workers are not asking for favours; they are asking for fairness. Workers are on wages that cannot be lived on, with insecure jobs, short-term contracts, temporary and zero hours contracts, and an economy built on our sleepless nights. 1.5 million people in the workforce are missing out on essential workplace rights, including protection from unfair dismissal. Nearly 500,000 workers are missing out on sick pay, full maternity pay and altogether on parental pay.

When employment tribunal fees put workplace justice out of the reach of individual workers, we fought for them. When governments refused to prosecute unscrupulous employers, we put pressure on. Across the UK, UNISON has been organising to end the use of zero hours contracts to improve the conditions of the most vulnerable in our workplace. We are seeing councils signing up to our Ethical Care Charter, making a real difference in advancing a fair work agenda. In Scotland, in 2016, the Fair Work Convention published its framework, which sets out what it means by “fair work”. The Convention believes that fair work is work that offers an effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect. It balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers and that can generate benefits for individuals, organisations and society.

For too many workers, the insecure economy comes at a cost – a cost to their health, to the cost of living, to their families and to their future. Congress, please support the composite. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you. As there were no speakers against, there is no need for a right of reply. I am now going to put Composite Motion 8 to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously. Thank you.

* *Composite Motion 8 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, that completes our business for this morning. May I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this lunch time. Details

of these meetings are displayed on the screens and can be seen on pages 11-13 of the Congress Guide or in the leaflet included in your Congress wallet.

Congress, this hall will be closed now until 1.30 p.m. Please make sure you take anything you need with you when you leave. You will not be able to access the hall before 1.30 p.m. Delegates, we have a special feature celebrating public service workers at the beginning of this afternoon's session. Please be sure to get back on time. Congress is now adjourned until 2.15 this afternoon. Thank you.

Congress was adjourned for lunch

MONDAY AFTERNOON PROCEEDINGS

(Congress re-assembled at 2.15 p.m.)

The President: I call Congress to order. First of all, I would like to say many thanks to Pianjo & Co, who I thought were absolutely brilliant. Let's give them a round of applause. *(Applause)* I now call upon Linda McCullough, Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to report to us on the progress of business and other Congress arrangements.

Linda McCullough (*Chair, General Purposes Committee*): Good afternoon, Congress. I can report that a further composite has been agreed. Composite 14 on Health and social care transformation, integration and cuts, will be moved by UNISON and seconded by SCP. I can also report that the General Purposes Committee has approved a further emergency motion. Emergency Motion 2 on Birmingham refuse collectors and upholding ACAS agreements will be moved by Unite and seconded by PCS. The President will advise when it is hoped this motion will be taken. The GPC has also approved a request to hold a bucket collection in support of the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire. The President will indicate when this collection is to take place. I will report further on the progress of business and other GPC decisions when necessary throughout Congress. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Linda. Congress, in her report, Linda reported agreement on Composite 14: Health and social care, transformation, integration and cuts, to be moved by UNISON and seconded by the SCP, and Emergency Motion 2: Birmingham refuse collectors and uphold ACAS agreements, in the name of Unite, seconded by PCS. I will let Congress know when I hope to be able to take the composite and emergency motion.

Linda also reported that the GPC has agreed a bucket collection in support of the victims at the Grenfell Tower fire. That collection will take place at the end of this afternoon's session. Buckets will be at the door to the hall.

Let me just mention to Congress, there are many women delegates here, and we want women to play a full and active role within their unions and within the TUC. There is

a networking event tonight, to which all women delegates are welcome. It is at Hotel Du Van on 2 Ship Street, and it is from 6 o'clock till 8 o'clock. It is a networking women's event. All the women who attend will be very welcome. Thank you very much.

Colleagues, I mentioned the response of our emergency services this morning. We are starting this afternoon's session by paying a tribute to those emergency service workers who have been directly involved in the tragic events in both London and Manchester. I would like to ask Frances to welcome our colleagues from the public and emergency services. (*Applause*)

Special feature — Celebrating Public Service Workers

The General Secretary: Congress, I am incredibly proud to welcome emergency service workers to our Congress. These are workers who, in the course of their jobs, have had to deal with the most unimaginable situations; the terrible bombing in Manchester, the atrocities at Westminster Bridge and London Bridge, the van attack at Finsbury Park and the shocking fire at Grenfell Tower. Their professionalism, humanity and bravery in the most demanding of services is profoundly humbling. Thanks to them people are alive today who otherwise would not be. They put their lives on the line to save the lives of others. But it is not just our paramedics, fire-fighters and police workers who deserve our admiration, but it is the entire public service team; the nurses, doctors and NHS support workers who care; the teachers who educate and inspire; the council staff, criminal justice workers and civil servants who make our communities better and safer places to live.

Congress, this summer has underlined what we have always known, that day in and day out public servants make a difference. Their labour enriches all of our lives. That is why it is such a huge honour to welcome six emergency service workers today: Bob, Natalie, William, Kathryn, Dave and Jo, who have joined me on the stage.

Bob is an incident response officer and a UNISON member. He was working for the London Ambulance Service during both the Westminster and London Bridge attacks. Natalie is an operations manager, and GMB member, who was in-charge of the London Fire Brigade control room on the evening of the London Bridge attack. She was also in a support role during the Westminster Bridge attack. William is a chaplain at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital and at the London Fire Brigade. He is a Unite member. He supported families and staff members after the London Bridge attack and the Grenfell Tower fire. Kathryn is a clinical psychologist and a Unite member who provided support to patients admitted after the Manchester bombing. Dave is a fire-fighter and an FBU member. He was working on the night of the Grenfell Tower fire. Jo is a nurse and a UNISON member who went into work on the night of the Manchester bombing and treated victims of that atrocity. Delegates, I now want to invite Joe, Kathryn and Dave to address Congress. Please give them a warm welcome. *(A Standing Ovation)*

Joe: Thank you. Hello. My name is Joe. I have worked at Stepping Hill Hospital in Stockport for 32 years. I have been a senior sister in anaesthetics and recovery for just over a year. I first joined NUPE as a student nurse and then became a member of UNISON. I heard what happened at the Manchester Arena on the radio. It was

around midnight. I rang into work and spoke with the sister on night duty in theatre, and I went into work at around 1.30, where I co-ordinated our theatre response, and we looked after four casualties and their relatives. My lasting memory of that evening is the wonderful lady that I looked after in theatre that night. She had really serious injuries but she was smiling and thanking people for looking after her. The kindness and goodness in people shone through for me that night, despite what they had been through and what had happened. Staff who heard about the incident did not hesitate, to call in, to ring in, to come into work on that night and the next day during their nights and days off. Their dedication to their profession and their patients was appreciated but then they show that every day. I love my job. I love working with and helping people and learning from them, and, most importantly, being a part of the NHS, which is, surely, one of the greatest organisations in the world. (*Applause*)

Kathryn: Hello, Conference. My name is Kathryn. I am clinical psychologist. I work in health psychology in an acute hospital setting. I have been qualified for five years, and I have been a Unite member for nine years. The morning after the attack I provided one-to-one support to patients and their families. They were all in significant distress as a result of the attack. When I got into work that morning, I remember the first referral coming in and feeling an overwhelming sense of wanting to help because of their distress. I am a Mancunian and I live 15 minutes' walk away from the Arena. I felt a great sense of loyalty and responsibility towards supporting patients, families and the staff working on critical care. I love my job because it puts me in a privileged position. Patients share their traumatic life stories and the most difficult and intimate thoughts and feelings. By providing a safe and containing environment, they are able to process the trauma that they have been left with and a

gain a sense of hope for change, enabling them to take steps to improve the quality of their lives. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Dave Horman: Congress, my name is Dave Horman. I am a station officer in the London Fire Brigade in charge of the Blue Watch at Battersea Fire Station. Aside from our regular call outs, we also cover water rescue, line rescue and urban search and rescue. I am also chair of the South West London Fire Brigades' Union and I have been a committed union member throughout my 26-year long career. I love what we do; the camaraderie and bringing some order back to the lives of those we help. I attended the Grenfell Tower fire, but I can't talk about it in depth as we have to be interviewed by the Metropolitan Police before we are allowed to do so. But, please, don't associate me with the visual imagery of Grenfell Tower. Like you, I watched it on TV in disbelief that my comrades were entering that vision of hell. They were being committed to that fire time and time again. I was sent there after the fire was extinguished to recover the victims. I have never before seen the looks on the faces of fire-fighters that I saw that day. They were battle-worn, wide-eyed and with a thousand yard stare. None have spoken of it, but as I climbed the stairs of Grenfell Tower the following day, I got a flavour of what they had experienced. I saw the complete incineration of anything flammable and the terrible human cost. It is miraculous that all of my comrades survived that day. Please don't associate me with the bravery that was exhibited on the day of Grenfell Tower. That recognition belongs to the fire-fighters who were first to arrive on the scene. That was the Red Watch of the London Fire Brigade. I am proud and humbled to call them comrades. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: Thank you, very much, Joe, Kathryn and Dave, and thanks, too, to Rob, Natalie and William. I think all of us will feel moved and humbled by the stories that we have heard told but also inspired. It is a reminder that emergency-service workers really are the best of us. It is only right now that we join together to show our appreciation for their outstanding work from each and every one of us, from every trade unionist in Britain, thank you. (*A Standing Ovation*)

The President: Thank you, Frances, and thank you to the public sector emergency workers who have come to be with us today. They have given us a glimpse of what they do every day to protect our society and our citizens. I know from Congress's reaction that you absolutely recognise that.

Regulation and Safety

The President: Delegates, we turn to Section 1 of the General Council Report: The Economy, the section on regulation and safety. I call paragraph 3.6 and Motion 4: Grenfell Tower fire. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by the FBU and seconded by Unite. Other indicated speakers are PCS, NEU, Equity and the TSSA. Please come to the front and get your speaking badges swiped so that we can get through the motion in a smooth way.

Grenfell Tower fire

Matt Wrack (*Fire Brigades Union*) moved Motion 4. He said: The 14th June 2017 should be marked in history. It was a date of nightmare of death and destruction.

Everyone in this Congress will have shared the sense of horror at the appalling loss of life at Grenfell Tower. The accounts of the survivors and the stories of those who did not survive are painful to read or to listen to, of loved ones speaking to their families, knowing they could not escape but saying goodbye and the terror of not knowing whether other members of the families escaped. Among that horror there were some remarkable accounts of heroism and humanity.

If you visit Grenfell Tower, look at the pictures or watch it on the TV, it looks like a war zone, but this wasn't Syria. There's no act of war and nobody is hunting any terrorists for it. No. This happened in one of the richest boroughs, in the capital city of one of the richest countries in the world, a country which, it appears, cannot keep people safe in their own homes. As we have heard, fire-fighters, ambulance staff, NHS staff, local authority workers and other public sector workers were on the front line during that night and afterwards. I do want to say a little bit about the people who I represent: fire-fighters.

First of all, mention has been made of control staff. Think about those for a minute, the people who were on the phone to the people inside Grenfell Tower for hours dealing with that horrific situation. Think of the fire-fighters who were sent to a fire that should never have happened, but their normal procedures, developed over many decades, for dealing professionally and effectively with a fire in a tower block, and for which they are highly trained and highly skilled, could not be put into action. Teams became split, teams became lost and crews entered the incident again and again. This strikes me every time I think about it. Knowing the risk, knowing that those procedures were not able to be implemented, they very deliberately and consciously

entered that building, putting their own lives at risk. They did so in order to save the lives of others, and they did save many lives in truly remarkable circumstances.

I have said it and I will say it again, those people entering that people to fight the fire were members of the Fire Brigades Union. It is not a job I do any more, but I can say that I am incredibly proud of them and to represent them. The other workers who have been mentioned are also members of trade unions. So it strikes me that the next time we come under attack in the press or elsewhere for asking for a pay rise or asking why our pensions are under attack, and when we are described as “militants”, we should remind those people to look at the pictures of the queues of fire-fighters in their breathing apparatus queuing up to be sent into Grenfell Tower. We should tell them: That’s what trade unionists look like! (*Applause*) They worked wonders but they didn’t save everyone, and that weighs heavily with all involved. This Congress is right to pay tribute to all the public servants who performed their duty in such difficult circumstances that night and afterwards. We saw heroism and we saw humanity.

The truth is that we also saw failure and neglect. We saw failure and neglect by the local authority, Kensington & Chelsea, and in my opinion we saw failure and neglect by central Government, too. We saw a complete failure and abdication of responsibility by those who were supposed to take care of the victims and the survivors. We saw a remarkable community effort to save, clothe and assist people, but questions have to be asked. How can this even happen? How is a building clad in flammable material? How is a block of flats housing working people turned into a situation where it becomes a Roman candle? Who made those decisions?

We come to the question of the public inquiry. We demand a thorough public inquiry with the survivors, the victims, the local residents and those on the frontline at the heart of it, where we can hold people to account. They say “Don’t politicise this”, but behind this lies a chain of decisions, and those decisions are political decisions made by people in power at local and at national level — (*Applause*) — that have deregulated public housing, that have deregulated the Fire & Rescue Service, that have eliminated research in fire and rescue on a scale that we have never seen before, where local authority funding has been cut to pieces and where the Fire Service has been cut to pieces on a scale never seen before.

If you visit Grenfell, there is tension and anger in the air, and it is entirely justified tension and entirely justified anger. That community is crying out for answers and crying out for justice. We stand with them. We in the FBU, and I am sure everyone in this room, stands side by side with the community of Grenfell Tower. We will leave no stone unturned to get to the bottom of what happened, why it happened and who made the decisions that led to it happening. Just for Grenfell! (*Applause*)

Jim Kelly (*Unite*) seconded Motion 4. He said: Congress, Unite, like, I am sure, other unions here have members who were resident in Grenfell Tower. Some, thankfully, survived; others, sadly, were amongst those who lost their lives and there remain some not yet accounted for. On the morning of the fire, our West London & Camden Community branches went to Grenfell to volunteer. As clothing and food began to be provided in sufficient amounts, our members began organising with other members of the community to give other areas of practical support. Unite is now

concentrating on providing counselling and legal and financial support to our members, and is working closely with the residents. Many also have acute housing and financial needs, nearly three months after the fire. As a trade union, we are aware of where this tragedy sits within the broader context of deregulation and the barriers that ordinary people face in getting justice.

In 2014 David Cameron boasted of scrapping over 3,000 regulations, most in the building industry as part of his housing standards review. This crude and reckless attack by the Conservative Party had the clear motive of increasing the profits of large firms in the construction industry. Many of these firms are the biggest donors to the Tory Party. Privatisation and deregulation is scarring our housing market. Just a week after Grenfell, Haringey, a Labour council, privatised its housing stock. That's £2 billion of public assets, comprising of council homes, libraries, schools, community centres and sports centres, all privatised and given to a bunch of spivs and speculators from Australia called Land Lease, a company with a dodgy record of tenants' rights and building in Australia and New York. Privatisation, insufficient oversight of complex sub-contracting, the face to the bottom in regulations, lack of accountability and a dysfunctional housing market all contributed to the tragic and avoidable loss at Grenfell. Like Matt said, the public inquiry needs to address this wider context of the tragedy at Grenfell to prevent a repeat of the fire and a further loss of life! It must involve community representatives and trade unions so the residents get the justice and the answers they deserve after their own complaints about safety were ignored.

We now have to act to ensure justice and the needs of the residents are met, and for the election of a Labour Government that will end the race to the bottom in deregulation and privatisation, with a firm commitment to providing a safe, secure home and access to justice for all. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Zita Holbourne (*PCS, Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Motion 4. She said: Congress, PCS, like other unions here, have members who lived in Grenfell Tower and who are now displaced and members who lost loved ones, and our hearts are with all. We should, quite rightly, pay tribute to the emergency services and public sector workers, including members of PCS, who responded to the fire and in the aftermath, but we must also acknowledge and thank the local community who immediately stepped up to provide practical and emotional support to survivors and families and who continue to provide that support.

Since the fire, I have been working with survivors, those who have lost loved ones, local residents and others in the community. Residents of Grenfell Tower repeatedly raised a broad range of health and safety concerns with TMO and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. They were not just ignored, but some residents were threatened with legal action in an attempt to silence them. They died in the fire.

Whilst the Government has been self-congratulatory since the fire, the account of what has been provided is very different to the account from those who are impacted. Austerity and cuts have amplified the discrimination that already existed in access to social housing and deepened poverty and housing inequality. It is an established fact that BME children live in the highest floors of tower blocks, and we know that there

was a disproportionate number of black and minority ethnic families with babies and young children, disabled people and elderly people living on the highest floors and less able to escape. The cheaper and more flammable cladding used on Grenfell has now been identified as that used on many other tower blocks, including the tower block I once lived in with my young child. Whilst austerity and cuts have impacted, we should not forget that Kensington & Chelsea is one of the wealthiest boroughs not just in the UK but in Europe, and there is a complete disparity between working class and wealthy residents in the borough. It is disgraceful, given the wealth of that borough, that its leadership has failed to permanently house the vast majority of the 158 displaced families three months on.

The post-traumatic stress and depression experienced has really impacted on survivors but also on the wider community, and no offers have been made. We have heard a whole host of issues around re-housing, but with no offers made by the deadline that the Government promised. People have been offered housing in high-rise blocks with no lifts out of the borough, away from their communities and away from their families.

The public inquiry and consultation over the summer have been riddled with multiple families. Of three meetings, two were not in the community, there were no interpreters and no councillors present. They were disorganised. There was a lack of empathy towards people who were visibly distressed. I had to hold the hand and comfort a woman who was weeping and traumatised throughout one of the meetings, and one of the inquiry panel members shouted at attendees to be quiet. The community has repeatedly raised concerns that the scope of the inquiry is too narrow

and that there needs to be a diverse expert inquiry panel and team of advisers. It has also come to light that local residents and survivors were unaware of the deadline for core-participant status because of the inconsistency of communications and lack of language services needed. Those impacted need proper and specialist support, which should be brought to them without requiring the navigation of bureaucracy.

If the true extent and impact of the fire is to be known, then there needs to be a full immigration amnesty, not just the 12 months offered by the Government. All voices of those impacted must be heard and all those impacted deserve justice, but justice takes many forms and a good start would be urgently responding to the wellbeing and essential needs of survivors and families who have lost loved ones and permanent housing that meets individual needs. The public inquiry going forward must also address the underlying causes of the fire, the impact of cuts, discrimination, neglect, health and safety, housing inequality and gentrification. There needs to be accountability and justice in all its forms. There needs to be investment in workers in the public sector in social housing. The Government need to stop the cuts. There must never be another Grenfell. To end, the impact of the fire will have a lasting impact on those who experienced it. Like the survivors and families of Hillsborough, our solidarity will be required long-term, not just in the immediate aftermath. Justice for Grenfell! Please support. (*Applause*)

Melissa Hind (*NEU, National Education Union*) spoke in support of Motion 4. She said: Congress, I am from the Kensington & Chelsea branch of the NEU, supporting this motion. When I awoke on 14th June to the news of the Grenfell Tower fire there

was nothing that could have prepared me or anybody else for what the consequences of that fire would be.

When I got to work — I teach young people in hospital — not only could we see the blaze from our hospital, which is about three miles from Grenfell Tower, but also the casualties started to be brought in. They brought in children whose names they did not know. We were to find out that they had lost members of their family. Lots of the NHS workers there came in during the night when they were not supposed to be working, and I really do applaud all of the people who work in that hospital.

(Applause)

By the end of that day, I learnt that at least two members of my union, the National Education Union, were residents of the tower, and the tower was also home to many young people who attend our local authority schools. Two nurseries and a primary school were closed because they were within the fire zone and they had to be cordoned off. Kensington Aldridge Academy, which is immediately adjacent to Grenfell Tower, was damaged during the fire. They were forced to relocate. The students in that school still have not gone back to school this term. They won't start until next Monday because a temporary structure has had to be built on an alternative site. On top of that, many of the students are still in temporary accommodation. Some of them were moved back only for there to be a gas leak and had to be moved out again. All this is just not good enough. As well as that, schools in the area are having to deal with a loss of students, and this is something that staff and students alike are still having to come to terms with.

The residents of Grenfell Tower and the surrounding area, all the emergency service workers and those in the local authority, and all the other people directly affected by the Grenfell fire, will be feeling its effects for years to come. This is not going to go away quickly. We need to make sure that the Government are not allowed to forget this, that they do not sweep all of this under the carpet, that a meaningful public inquiry is carried out, cuts to public services are stopped and reversed and nothing like this tragedy is ever allowed to happen again. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Stephen Spence (*Equity*) spoke in support of Motion 4. He said: I am the deputy to the General Secretary of Equity. In December 2013, when the *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* was scheduled at the Apollo Theatre, in Shaftsbury Avenue, London, the ceiling fell in, quite literally. It injured 80 patrons and the fire and rescue services were amongst the first on the scene. I ensured that our members and audiences left that theatre safely and kept the number of injuries down, I have no doubt. Since then we have seen closures of London fire stations and we have seen severe cuts to the fire and rescue service. In Surrey fire-fighters have passed a vote of no confidence in the local fire authority. In Farnham, where I live, I visited the fire station and I heard first hand the concerns of those who put their lives at risk to ensure our safety.

The Grenfell Tower fire was a dreadful tragedy, an event, as you have heard and many people believe, that has its roots in the austerity attitude that many local authorities have adopted in response to years of central Government cutbacks. It is the same local authority austerity that also affects the arts budget in places like Bath and Bristol. Arts and entertainment workers include in their ranks some of the most

vulnerable workers in the land. They work one freelance gig after another, long hours, low pay and limited access to benefits. They are the kind of people who often rely heavily on social housing, affordable housing, often managed by local authorities. Artists live in places like Grenfell. Whether in their workplace or in their homes, arts and entertainment workers need fire-fighters, they need properly funded fire and rescue services. The UK is the fifth largest economy in the world. Don't tell me we can't afford it. It is about what we prioritise our spend on. The best of luck to Northern Ireland. The magic money tree found £1 billion that was badly needed, but if 10 DUP MPs can take home £1 billion extra for supporting the Tory Government, what are the 11 Surrey MPs getting for supporting the Tory Government? What are the London Tory MPs getting for their communities for supporting the Tory Government?

Cuts to fire and rescue services by local government affect us just as arts cuts do. Members of Parliament need to give the local authorities the money they need to do the job properly. It is not just a matter of solidarity, although it is that. It is also a matter of enlightened self interest that the movement of tenants and owner-occupiers that the motion calls for should take forward. We want residents' movements against these kinds of cuts, linking with trade unionists and progressives of all stripes, educate and agitate at the community level, in conjunction with direct workplace engagement, and workers united with communities can change the world. Please support the motion.

Fliss Premru (*TSSA, Transport Salaried Staffs' Association*) spoke in support of Motion 4. She said: In 2003 we supported the FBU motion against the criminal

countryside closure of fire stations, including the 10 London fire stations closed by former mayor, Boris Johnson, selling out to free schools and luxury developments. So here we are in 2017.

Congress, the tragic and shaming Grenfell fire draws a line. It draws a line for deregulation, privatisation and social cleansing. It is time for social justice. It is time not only to reverse the cuts to the fire services but to re-open or replace local stations where the old operating sites have been sold off, frequently to the detriment of poor and marginalised communities.

Following on from the UNISON motion, we must roll back marketisation and reinstate council housing as a priority, with residents' needs at the centre, and return to in-house local authority construction maintenance and regulation. More than this, it is time to demand a moratorium and a review of all housing regeneration projects and stop social cleansing in its name. Unfortunately, we also have to hold some of our local Labour authorities to account, as has been mentioned by the Unite comrade, and stop schemes in conjunction with developers against the wishes of residents, not exclusively but including the viable and vibrant communities, such as the estates as Cressingham Gardens in Lambeth, and to echo the Haringey Development Vehicle, which is current the subject of a court case, where possibly the residents will not be able to return to seven out of nine of the estates.

We must fully support ballot rights for residents on all current and future projects, as well as the full rights of the day-to-day running of their housing. We want there to be no demolition of high-rise or social housing without the clear and uncoerced consent

of residents. Let's demand justice for Grenfell and social justice for all. Please support the FBU motion. *(Applause)*

The President: As no one is speaking against, so I presume the FBU does not want the right of reply. *(Declined)* Can we put Motion 4 to the vote on the Grenfell Tower fire? All those in favour, please show? All those against? That motion is passed unanimously.

* *Motion 4 was CARRIED*

School buildings (safety)

The President: I now call Motion 5, School buildings (safety). The General Council supports the motion. It is moved by the NAHT, seconded by the National Education Union.

Anne Lyons *(NAHT, National Association of Head Teachers)* moved Motion 5. She said: Congress, this is my first time attending Congress. *(Applause)* Thank you.

As we have heard already today, the country was profoundly shocked by the dreadful fire that consumed Grenfell Tower in west London. As a London head teacher, I regularly drive into London and see the reminder of the tragedy just off the Westway, where at least 80 people died and hundreds more were left homeless and uncertain about their future. NAHT took particular note of the impact this event had on the children and young people who lived in and around the tower. Right across the

country at that time people working in schools, along with the young people they teach, tried to come to terms with what happened. I would like to take this opportunity myself to thank all the staff in schools for the work they do in helping young people and their families make sense of the things they see around them and, of course, to commend those brave public servants for their selfless actions on that day and for every day they work.

There are many things which need to happen now. There are many lessons that must be learnt. There are many questions about the safety of public buildings that need to be answered. The safety of school buildings is critically important. The Government and local authorities must be made aware of the condition of all school buildings regarding fire safety, particularly the existence of asbestos, which we know is a toxic substance that can lie undiscovered in the structure of school buildings.

This motion calls on the Government to do three important things. First, they must undertake an urgent audit of all school buildings to determine whether they meet fire-safety regulations and to determine the existence of cladding similar to the type used on Grenfell Tower. Secondly, they must undertake an audit of all schools to determine the existence of asbestos and the likelihood that it could become harmful to children and those working in the school. When I say “audit”, I mean a proper professional conversation and site visit, not a remote tick-box exercise. Thirdly, they should initiate an action plan to ensure that issues identified through fire safety and asbestos audits are dealt with appropriately and safely. There can be no short-cuts in this process.

The cost of these audits cannot be denied but they must happen and they must be fully funded otherwise we cannot truly and confidently say that our children and young people are safe. If we fail to properly understand the condition of our school buildings and fail to put in place a proper programme to modernise and repair, we will be putting lives at risk, and doing so in the knowledge that it was only the cost and the inconvenience that held us back. I do not want that kind of thing on my conscience, and I am sure neither does anyone here.

It could be said that Grenfell Tower was a rare occurrence, but it is a disaster that should never have happened and it is a warning we must heed. This motion calls upon the General Council to apply pressure on the Government to see that these actions take place without delay. NAHT wants to see the General Council lobbying the Government to ensure that the safety of all school buildings is assessed and issues are addressed as soon as possible. We would also like to see pressure on the Government to set out funded capital investment plans to ensure that all schools are safe and that children are taught in an appropriate environment. I say, again, no short cuts, no delays and no cheap solutions. This is not just an issue about older school buildings. Let us be sure that recently-opened or expanded buildings, and those to be built in the future, comply with the very best safety standards. Public sector workers and those in their care deserve nothing less. Every member of the school community, be that student, parent or staff is entitled to feel safe and to be safe. I urge you to support Motion 5. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: The next speaker is the NEU. Also we have speaking NASUWT, FBU and the RMT.

Louise Regan (*National Education Union*) seconded Motion 5. She said: Congress, we have heard already of the devastating and completely avoidable fire at Grenfell Tower. We fully support all those fighting for justice affected by that fire. We have stated clearly and will continue to support those families who wish to remain in the borough, to access appropriate housing that enables children and young people to remain in their schools and also to receive appropriate counselling and support.

What you may not know is the school that sits at the base of Grenfell Tower is covered in the same cladding. It does not have sprinklers or proper compartmentalisation. This is not the only school in the country where this is the case. In October 2016 the NUT and FBU wrote to Justine Greening asking her to reconsider the department's decision to no longer fit sprinklers in all new-build schools. The benefits of sprinklers are numerous. They suppress the growth of fire, helping safe and early evacuation of buildings, they reduce fire damage to asbestos-containing materials present in most schools and they prevent damage to buildings. Therefore, they enable students and young people to return to school as soon as possible. That is why we are asking for a review of safety regulations for schools, in particular, to require sprinkler systems in new and refurbished schools, safe compartmentalisation and cladding of limited combustibility. We are also calling for a phased removal of all asbestos in schools, starting with the most dangerous first. We know that asbestos in our schools is a silent killer. We are working with other organisations to put pressure on the Government to organise the safe removal of all asbestos from our schools. We are also working with our members to ensure that they know where asbestos is in their schools and that they can ensure it is safely managed

until it is removed. We also know that the children are more at risk from asbestos exposure. A child exposed at the age of five is five times more likely to develop mesothelioma than someone exposed at the age of 13.

How shameful, then, that in March 2017 it was reported to the Public Accounts Committee that pupils at a school in Sunderland had to be hosed down on more than one occasion because asbestos fibres were released from ceiling tiles on to them. We also know that in 2014-2015 £300,000 was spent removing asbestos from royal households, and £150 million has been earmarked for further work including more asbestos removal. Likewise, with restoration works for the Houses of Parliament, scheduled to cost between £3.5 billion and £5.7 billion, it is a sum which includes asbestos removal. Congress, if asbestos removal is good enough for royal households and politicians, then surely it is good enough for our children, students and staff? *(Applause)* Please support this motion.

Russ Waters (*NASUWT*) spoke in support of Motion 5. He said: Congress and delegates, if I were to ask you what is your most treasured possession or your most valuable assets, would it be the Mercedes on the drive, would it be the caravan for the holidays or would it be the camera or any other material possession? If I direct my comments particularly to you family members, I am sure the answer would be a resounding no. Our most valuable assets are our children. Our children for the centrepiece of our lives, and yet every single day what do we do with our children? We deliver them into the hands of the education system. In loco parentis, the most powerful law in the country, where we have an expectation that when our children go into the care of the teachers they will be safe, they will be looked after and treasured

in the way that you, as the parents, would indeed look after the children yourself. Isn't that expectation our right of citizens in this country? I am sure that, in the hands of the professionals, that expectation is fulfilled. But, sadly, in the case of the buildings that expectation is far, far from reality.

Throughout this country, we have evidence of schools in states of disrepair, and, as has already been alluded to by the previous speaker, asbestosis continues to be a problem. If it is affecting teachers, it is affecting the pupils. We have had many reports of teachers suffering lung disease through working in mouldy, cold, damp and dark classrooms. If the teachers are affected and go off on long-term sick, what is happening to the children?

The NASUWT has been warning since the Coalition Government in 2010 scrapped the Building Schools for the Future Programme of the possible consequences of not maintaining our schools or our school buildings. Now we start to see the results. One of our recent surveys showed that a third of teachers said their building was not fit to teach in. 38% of teachers responding said that the children were working in an unsafe environment. How can that be with our most treasured assets? Yet it is the fact. What does that statement say? It says that two-fifths of our schools are not fit for our most treasured asset: our children! It's intolerable.

However, it is not just a case of the maintenance. It is not just a case of the bricks and mortar. We have also had to face the fact that this Government have neglected the regulations. So much so that, recently, one of the first acts of the Coalition Government was to replace the School Premises Regulations, the very regulations that

ensured the safety and wellbeing of your children in those buildings. We have had this contentious revision to the Bulletin 100, removing the right to have sprinkler systems installed. That is intolerable. All sorts of arguments were put forward, but the one fact that comes through is that in a report, following the Grenfell Tower, it was established that there has never been one single fire-related death in a building which has been fitted with sprinkler systems. That fact alone says our most valued treasure, our children, deserve that entitlement.

There is a wide scale lack of enforcement with the HSC having been ravished to the point where they are not able to give the kind of attention to our school buildings as we would have expected.

The President: Please can you wind up now?

Russ Waters: The days of the fire engine calling in have gone. Our assets are being neglected. We call upon you to support this motion and see that things are put right. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Tam McFarlane (*Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in support of Motion 5. He said: Congress, I want to thank the education unions on behalf of the fire-fighters for bringing forward this motion and for the prominence they have given to fire risks in school buildings. However, this is an on-going fight because teachers, education workers and, indeed, fire-fighters have been and still are being exposed to hazards in schools. Talk to almost every fire-fighter in the UK and they will tell you of the sheer frequency of large fires in schools. The Fire & Rescue Service turns out to between

600 and 800 incidents every year. Most are accidental but 20% are started deliberately and, of course, they can be absolutely devastating. In terms of finances, the Fire Protection Association reckons that their average cost is around £1.3 million for every large school fire. But, of course, the societal cost is also incredibly destructive by disrupting our kids' education, closing buildings used by the wider community for years at a time and, most of all, though, they are life threatening, endangering teachers, school workers, children and, of course, fire-fighters who risk their necks to go into the buildings to fight the fire. So this is a real issue. It's a real risk to our communities.

You will have noted the anger in the voices of all of us who are involved in these issues, because we regard the regulations we are fighting for as life-saving, money-saving and they protect the wider community. But we are having to fight against this Government with an ideology which denigrates regulation, dismissing it as red-tape and championing this appalling "one-in and two-out rule", which cuts important protections in an arbitrary and unsafe manner. You have heard how the Government tried almost to sneak through a cut in the regulations requiring sprinklers in new schools. Removing the need for sprinklers in school? Seriously! As a fire-fighter, let me tell you something that should be obvious. Sprinklers aren't red tape. They aren't an obstacle to growth. Sprinklers save lives and protect properties. They limit fire spread. They give fire-fighters time to tackle fires. They prevent large-scale loss. They prevent tragedies. Have this lot in government learnt nothing? Sprinklers shouldn't be cut, they should be expanded. We don't want to see sprinklers retro-fitted to only new-build schools. I want to see sprinklers retro-fitted to old schools

and to all high-risk buildings. Of course, I want to see sprinklers retro-fitted to all high-rise tower blocks. Surely, we don't have to wait for an inquiry to tell us that.

As trade unionists we are here to warn all the Ministers in good time that action needs to be taken. Protect the children who attend these schools. Protect the teachers and other education workers who work there every single day, and protect the fire-fighters who may be called upon to intervene. I support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Christopher Davidson (*RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke in support of Motion 5. He said: Congress, I support this motion with one big reservation. This motion calls upon Congress to ensure that the safety of all school buildings is assessed, and issues are addressed as soon as is practicable. What is practicable? Surely, the TUC and every union have been fighting for years to get "as reasonably practicable" outwith the health and safety legislation. So when this motion is passed, and I hope it is passed, when it is taken back, let's ignore "as practicable" and put in "must". Please support this motion and please continue to support the campaign to get "as reasonably practicable" outwith the health and safety legislation so that our children and everybody can go to work and is safely protected by legislation. (*Applause*)

The President: There have been no speakers against, so we are going to move to the vote. All those in favour of Motion 5, School buildings (safety), please, now show? All those against? That is carried unanimously. Thank you.

* *Motion 5 was CARRIED*

The safety risks of light-touch regulation

The President: I now call Composite Motion 2: The safety risks of light-touch regulation. The General Council supports the composite motion. It is moved by BALPA, seconded by the CWU and supported by Prospect, the RMT and Aslef. PCS has indicated that it wishes to speak. I will allow those speakers.

Leo Nugent (*BALPA, British Air Line Pilots Association*) moved Composite Motion 2. He said: Congress, we need to challenge the idea, deeply held by the Government, that “regulation” is a dirty word. It isn’t. Regulation is a vital part of the aviation system that keeps hundreds of passengers and crew safe whilst I am in command of the passenger jet that I am licensed to fly. Regulation should ensure that my aircraft is safe and that I am, too. Regulation is what prevents employers from taking liberties with the safety of passengers and staff.

Currently, airlines and airports are given the freedom, essentially, to regulate themselves, and we are seeing more and more of this in the UK aviation industry, as well as in other sectors of the UK economy as well. What is needed is a complete shift in the Government’s appreciation for what “regulation” means to safety-critical industries. The regulation governing pilot duty hours are a prime example. Newer and more liberal flight-time limitations recently came into force and flying hour maximum limits are now seen as targets. They are often all too routinely exceeded to accomplish normal flights that are not affected by unforeseen disruption.

Another example of the lack of adequate regulatory enforcement and investment is in the area of pilot training. Both recurrent and pilot-type training are increasingly seen as onerous costs to be managed to a minimum, all whilst maximising profitability. If we look to the North Sea and the helicopter pilots that BALPA represents we are deeply concerned about the number of fatal accidents there have been in the last few years. The commercial pressure that doubtless exists to cut corners is very present. Worst of all, this is happening right under the nose of the UK's Civil Aviation Authority, who either cannot or will not act. This lack of oversight, this light-touch regulation, has without doubt resulted in a significant worsening of the parameters that govern flight safety.

Lastly, we, like many colleagues here are concerned about the effect of Brexit. Could Brexit be used by the Government to further water down our health and safety legislation and protection? This must not be allowed to happen. This motion calls on Congress to reject the myth that light-touch regulation works. Light-touch regulation means self-regulation, which means no effective regulation at all. I want a robust Civil Aviation Authority to support me when I go to work and to know that they are regulating UK aviation fairly, competently and effectively. Pilots are the last line of defence when it comes to flight safety but there are many other professionals working in their own field doing similar work. Therefore, we also share the concerns of the CWU, RMT, Prospect and Aslef who brought forward important amendments to BALPA's original motion. We support this composite as well as the need to properly fund the Health and Safety Executive. Congress, "regulation" and "enforcement" are not dirty words. They are lifesavers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Katie Dunning (*CWU, Communication Workers Union*) seconded Composite Motion

2. She said: Congress, this Government have made it crystal clear their contempt for working people in this country. During the past decade, ministers, successive ministers and pro-business political influencers have been obsessed with removing the red tape they claim has been a burden on business. Since 2010 the Cabinet Office has charged ministers across Whitehall with finding not one, not two but now three regulations to ditch for every new one made on the grounds that red tape stifles growth and reduces productivity and profits. This so-called red tape is what has kept greed and exploitation in check since the industrial revolution and is a constant reminder to this Movement on its achievements and successes. It has meant that the food and drink we consume does not kill us; it has meant that the landscape and the green spaces around us are protected, and it means that our transport systems, homes and workplaces are kept as safe as they can be.

Earlier this year, 70 leading health and safety agencies wrote to the Government about the attacks on de-regulation and the slashing of fundings for inspections, prosecutions and law enforcement, claiming that enough was enough. Congress, enough is enough! Placing profit before people is not only immoral but it is unethical as well. That is the tragic lesson of Grenfell, and we have heard a lot about the events that happened on 14th June.

In an era of pre-Brexit uncertainty and insecurity, this climate could be set to get much worse. The European Union, for all its faults, has played a critical role in protecting the health and safety of working people in the UK, particularly with the Health and Safety Framework Directive. The Government have promised that they

will maintain EU rights at work following Brexit, yet their record speaks for itself. It was only two years ago that they removed millions of self-employed workers from health and safety protection, so it seems that it is more of a case of when, not if. Light-touch regulation is little better than no regulation. We must do everything in our power to stop a post-Brexit Tory bonfire of health and safety laws, regulations and standards. I ask you to support the composite motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Neil Hope–Collins (*Prospect*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 2. He said: Congress, this is a motion that encapsulates two issues very close to my heart: fighting the de-regulatory agenda and supporting my members, the inspectors working for the Health and Safety Executive. The deregulatory agenda is based on the myth that social and labour protections are expensive for the employer — too expensive. Then you add austerity, which is based on the myth that society, the economy, is too poor to pay for these same protections. So when an employer decides that they can't afford to protect your health and safety and the social protections that are in place, austerity looks over its shoulder and says, "That's okay because society can't afford them either". In short, under austerity, your life is worth less.

Congress, deregulation and austerity are two sides of the same coin. They are not two issues. They are a single issue and we should be fighting them as a single campaign in all the ways we can.

Under-funding in the public sector is a second problem that austerity brings. All the regulators are fighting this, but I am here to talk my members in the Health and Safety Executive. It was David Cameron who chose health and safety as the battleground

when he declared war on us in the battle of Telford safety. Let's not forget that there are other regulators in the Health and Safety Executive. It is just the example that is used to illustrate. I am grateful to Congress for highlighting that in this motion.

When David Cameron walked into 10 Downing Street in 2010 the Health and Safety Executive employed 3,700 people. That's it. That was the total. That was the inspectors, the support and everything. That was my members, that was our colleagues in PCS and FDA as well, without whom my inspector members cannot do their job. Now, after a 32% cut, just 2,500 are left working in HSE. That is it. Of those 2,500, over the past five years the inspectors who actually go out and inspect the factories where the bulk of your members work have faced a 36% cut. As a result, only 300 are left to cover the factories and workplaces — its traditional workplaces — in England, Scotland and Wales. That is a disgrace, and that is nowhere near enough. The pressure on my members is growing because deregulation also emboldens those employers to challenge more. The work gets harder every day. Just to bring the simple regulatory framework in place is more and more work.

Congress, there was a lot of talk yesterday about Brexit and the legislation that we need to protect and fight for. You can save as many laws as you like, Congress, but if you don't have the boots on the ground to enforce them, it is meaningless, and this Government know that. Support my members so that they can protect your members. Support this composite, please. *(Applause)*

Karlson Lingwood (*RMT, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*)

spoke in support of Composite Motion 2. He said: Congress, I am very pleased to speak for the first time and to attend my first Congress. (*Applause*)

The offshore sector was mentioned. In 2016, 716,000 offshore workers were transported in that sector, accounting for almost 89,000 flight hours. What you may not realise or understand is that since 2009 there have been five helicopter accidents in that period, two of which were fatal, leading to 18 lives lost. That is 18 workers who went to work and never went home to their families. Last year, in April, for the first occasion in the Norwegian sector, a helicopter accident occurred with a loss of eight lives. Immediately, the Super Puma, known as the workhorse of the North Sea, was grounded. It is known both to the regulators in Norway and in the UK that the cause of these accidents and the loss of life are gearbox fatigue. However, suddenly in July both regulators re-introduced and allowed the use of these helicopters. That's unacceptable. It's been said that we need regulation but, obviously, we need enforced regulation. We need to be properly resourced and we need the boots on the ground, as the previous speaker said.

What is unacceptable to us all, I am sure, is for workers to go to their place of work and not to come home safely. What we need is a proper and full public inquiry into the causes of these helicopter accidents. RMT, alongside our sister unions in the offshore sector, continue to call for this public inquiry. If we look at the 150 year anniversary that the TUC is celebrating, next year will mark 30 years since Piper Alpha, where in two hours 167 souls were lost. Thankfully, 61 survived, but can you imagine the terror of throwing yourself 175 feet into the darkness of the North Sea, as

that's the only option to save your life? Quite simply, we need robust regulations that are enforced and we need a public inquiry into these helicopter accidents, which would be carrying out the recommendations of the Cullen report. The current situation is not acceptable. What price do we put on a life?

Prevention is better than a cure. These are measures that prevent that loss of life. Are we simply going to say that we will have an inquiry? That is unacceptable. I urge delegates to unanimously support this composite and join with us, join with BALPA, RMT, Nautilus, GMB and Unite to call for the public inquiry that is required, because nothing less will do. Please, support our actions in the North Sea in support of our offshore workers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Dave Calfe (*ASLEF, Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 2. He said: Congress, Aslef is deeply concerned about the replacement in some sectors of the economy of high-quality standards and safety with light-touch safety regulation. The weakening of safety standards by firms that regulate themselves and put profit before safety is inherently dangerous. Other unions have spoken about the effects that light-touch regulation can have on their sector. I would like to speak about its effect on rail.

We have in rail the Rail Safety and Standards Board, called the RSSB. It was established following the horrific crash at Ladbroke Grove. The organisation's objective is to facilitate improvement in the health and safety and performance of the railways in Britain. It is responsible for defining technical standards and operating procedures for a more efficient and safer rail system, and it provides advice about

maintaining about health and safety performance to the Office of Rail and Road, Network Rail, the Rail Delivery Group and other bodies associated with the rail network.

However, the RSSB is owned by the rail industries' stakeholders. Trade unions and the Office of Rail and Road only have observer status within the organisation. Aslef believes that the RSSB should be separately funded and truly independent of industry. The Office of Rail and Road is the economic and safety regulator of Britain's railways. Until 2015 the ORR was known as the Office of Rail Regulation, but since then the department has responsibility for monitoring the performance and efficiency of our road network, too. Yet, since 2009, the ORR has reduced its costs by a third. As a non-ministerial government department, the ORR is operationally independent of central government and is funded by the rail industry through licence fees and safety levies. It regulates health and safety standards and compliance across the whole rail industry and monitors Network Rail's upkeep of rail assets to make sure that the rail industry is competitive. However, the enforcement of safety standards sometimes conflicts with economic concerns, and this raises questions about how independent this body can be while working alongside other companies in the industry.

As train drivers we want a safe, efficient and modern railway, delivering for passengers and business in Britain. We do not want to see the safety of our railways compromised by a desire to cut costs and increase profits for the privatised train operating companies. Aslef has concerns that the Government will manipulate Brexit to have a negative effect on health and safety regulation in this country. The health

and safety of those who use and work on our railway is driven by UK and EU legislation, and there is uncertainty around the future of this legislation. We want assurances that the UK Government will not use Brexit as an opportunity to water down or remove valuable health and safety legislation on the railways and across other sectors.

Congress, we want the Government to take a robust and direct approach to regulation and inspection on our safety critical railways. Let's not allow our railway to return to the 1980s and 1990s when we had the Clapham, Purley, Southall and Ladbroke Grove rail crashes. Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

Paula Brown (*PCS, Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 2. She said: Congress, on the face of it, many people out there think that health and safety is an issue that is sorted and an issue that we need to do no more about because we all know risks are over-reported, aren't they? Well, in this hall, we know different. We represent members who face unnecessary risks because of their work every day.

The World Congress on Safety recently reported that an estimated 742,000 die annually from work-related cancer. HSE's own statistics show that last year 1.3 million workers in Great Britain suffered from a work-related illness, and there were 621,000 non-fatal injuries to workers in 2015-2016. The estimated cost to Britain as a result of all this is £14.1 billion, and that excludes the cost of long-latency illnesses like cancer. Why is it, then, that our Government continue to deregulate and

underfund vital public services responsible for our members' health and safety? It's simply a false economy.

I work at the Health and Safety Executive, and I can honestly say that I am sick and tired of being reviewed; red-tape reviews, blue-tape reviews, triennial reviews, spending reviews, one-in-and-one-out deregulation reviews. The list is endless. Now, of course, we face Brexit at a time when HSE's resources are lower than ever before, where PCS members' jobs are under threat and where we have a chief executive who tells us that he is simply not interested in staff loyalty.

You have already heard from Neil from Prospect speak about the effect that the HSE funding cuts have had on inspector numbers. I believe that the situation is only going to get worse because HSE still needs to save around £4 million a year on its staffing budget. That is why I urge you to support this motion and, in doing so, protect your own members and their families. Our health and system needs properly funding, not more cuts.

While I am here, can I ask you to go and visit the Dying to Work campaign stall downstairs? This is an excellent campaign. It aims to protect workers diagnosed with a terminal illness. It is something that every workplace and all of our members could benefit from, and I urge the TUC representatives on the HSE board to promote this campaign and ask HSE to get involved. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you for that. Can we put Composite Motion 2 to the vote: The safety risks of light-touch regulation. Will all those in favour please show? All those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Composite Motion 2 was CARRIED*

Public Sector Pay

The President: Delegates, we now start with section 4 of the General Council Report: Good Services, the sector on Public Sector Pay from page 46. I call paragraphs 4.2, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10 and Composite Motion 9 on Public sector pay. The General Council supports the composite motion. It is to be moved by UNISON, seconded by PCS, supported by EIS, CSP, FBU, RCM, POA, Unite, GMB, NASUWT, SOR, FDA and UCU, and the NEU has indicated that they want to speak. All those are unions with a direct industrial interest in public sector pay.

Dave Prentis (*UNISON*) moved Composite Motion 9. He said: Congress, for UNISON members and millions of public service workers, many of whom are struggling to survive, many of them low-paid women, there is no more pressing issue. After years of brutal austerity, vicious attacks on our public services, overseen by a Government that doesn't seem to care what damage it causes, a Government that does not value public service. In the first six years of Tory rule, public sector pay rose by just 4.4%, yet the cost of living in that time rose by 22%. To rub salt into those wounds, the pay of top company bosses rose by a third in one year alone. While the rich feathered their nests, public sector workers struggled to afford the basics. The

Government call it prudence and restraint. I call it inhuman. Yet every single year it gets worse. It's a poverty trap, sucking in hardworking public service workers, victims of austerity, poverty and misery. Look at the care worker who can't afford the bus back from work; the healthcare assistant, walking home from her shift via the local food bank; the teaching assistant, secretly applying for payday loans, ashamed and frightened that if her boiler finally packs up this winter her family is a cold snap away from disaster.

The tragic effects of a petrifying pay freeze are such that we, as a trade union Movement, have a duty to fight. Congress, a quarter of UNISON members, 300,000 public service workers, do not know how they would pay for an unexpected expense. More than three-quarters are buying less food. One-in-10 are missing entire meals to feed their children. It's an outrage! Congress, it's getting worse.

Inflation is three times the level of pay rises, spiralling debts that are impossible to repay. It is immoral. It is an indictment of a cruel Tory Government attacking our people and protecting their own. Congress, the noises we are hearing, of course, are encouraging, but scrapping the cap is not enough. We must fight for much more than that. This is a fight for real pay increases. This is a fight for real funding. This is a fight for real change. Congress, be in no doubt, this Government cannot be trusted. They will divide us, they will cherry-pick and they will try to buy some of us off at the expense of others, dangling a carrot in the hope that we will back down, perhaps with rises for those in uniforms, when it is rises for all public service workers that must be uniform. (*Applause*) We must not fall into their trap. It's a trap we must

avoid. We stand together or we fall together. We need unity, one plan of action to demand real pay rises for every public servant.

Yes, this is about the police officer, but it is also about the police community support officer. Yes, it is about nurses, but it is also about care workers, social workers, ambulance workers and healthcare assistants. Yes, it's about teachers, but it is also about school staffs, teaching assistants, school meals staff and caretakers. This composite commits us to action, to marching, to demonstrating and to lobbying, not just in Westminster but in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. It is about committing your union to campaigning, to co-ordinating across the trade union Movement, to having public events in every major city and town across the country, changing the face of politics, holding the Tories to account in their own backyard. You are committing your unions to co-ordinating and campaigning activities. If it all fails, we want joint ballots for joint industrial action. Congress, we are not here just debating choices. This is our time.

For the past century, our Movement has been shaped by history. Now it is our time for our Movement to make history, to fight unfairness, to fight injustice and to fight for a pay rise for all public service workers. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Mark Serworka (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) seconded Composite

Motion 9.

He said: Just before I start, Mary, can I just take a few moments to thank Congress. At this time last year, I was not here. I had been rushed into hospital where I stayed for four months until I had a heart transplant at the end of December. I just want to

publicly thank all the people who supported my family and I during a very difficult time. I would obviously like to thank my wife and my children, my comrades in the PCS on the staff, and my comrades across the whole trade union Movement. I would also like to publicly thank my organ donor and their family for giving me the greatest gift of all. I urge all those who are not registered as organ donors to do so because it saves lives. *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank those trade union members in the NHS who kept me (and thousands like me) alive. I do not just mean the nurses and the doctors, but also the physiotherapists, the radiographers, the community nurses who came out every day over Christmas to change my dressings, the healthcare assistants, the catering staff, the cleaners, the transplant coordinators and the whole NHS team. Let me say this: they all deserve a pay rise. *(Applause)*

Congress, in seconding this motion, I want to make it clear that my union completely agrees with the sentiments of Dave when he moved the motion on behalf of UNISON. In the civil service, the pay statistics are appalling. They have had a 10% pay cut in real terms. The average PCS member is worse off by £3,500 a year as a result of pay policy. By 2020, if we do not challenge and defeat the cap, we will be 20% off in real terms.

Damian Green, in a disgusting letter to us, telling us that civil service pay was at a very generous level, claimed that by having a pay cap, he was saving jobs. This is at a time when this Government has also cut 120,000 civil service jobs, giving us 10% pay cuts, increasing our national insurance contributions and increasing members'

pension contributions. Congress, there is a crisis in public sector pay and, in seconding this motion, I do not want to focus on the justice of our case as we all know what it is. I want to focus on the fact that we have a weak government with no mandate to implement further public sector pay restraint. Now is the time not just for resolutions, but for the action required to defeat this Government's pay cap and put real-term pay increases in the pockets of our members. *(Applause)*

Congress, Dave was absolutely right. We know there are concessions coming. They are going to cherry-pick and they are going to attempt to divide and rule. Our message is simple: scrap the cap and we all deserve a pay rise. Every public sector worker deserves a pay rise of at least 5% to keep up with inflation and to make up some of the money that we have lost. Yes, Dave, I could not agree with you more: yes to our prison staff, but also to the PCS members who are admin workers in our prisons; yes to teachers, but also to the canteen staff and the caretakers; yes to all of our NHS workers; and yes to our council workers. There are no deserving and undeserving public sector workers. They all deserve a pay rise wherever they work. *(Applause)*

Congress, we have got to scrap the cap, but we have also got to tell them that it is no good scrapping the cap without putting the funding in. We want funding so they do not tell us it is pay rises for jobs. They must put funding into local authorities, the devolved administrations and central government.

Congress, I will finish on this. We have a united demand: pay rises for everybody and scrap the cap. We have now got to do something about it. I am proud to announce

that last week my union agreed to ballot every single public sector member in PCS between 9th October and 6th November. We are asking them two questions: do they agree the cap should be scrapped; and if the Government fails to do it in the Budget, are they prepared to take industrial action? We are aware of the anti-union laws so this is a consultative ballot. We are going to do it by post, by email and by telephone. We are going to put every effort into finding out where our members are at. We are not going to say that the ballot restrictions mean we cannot take action. We are going to analyse the results by workplace, by branch and by employer. We will flood resources in where we need them to ensure that when we have a legal ballot, we can win.

This is our call to Congress: carry the composite, support the pay lobby and support the demonstrations. Wouldn't it be great if we all had consultative ballots in the run-up to the Budget to give May and Hammond something to think about. If they do not scrap the cap and give rises to us all, we will take united, coordinated strike action to defeat this Government and put money in our members' pay packets. Support the motion. *(Cheers and applause)*

The President: Thank you, Mark. It is fantastic to see you back at Congress and that speech shows just how much you have been missed. Can we now have EIS.

David Baxter (*Educational Institute of Scotland*) supported Composite Motion 9.

He said: For too long, the public sector has been under the cosh of a restrictive pay cap driven not by economics but by a right wing narrative, a narrative that seeks to

dismantle and demoralise the public sector and which scorns the hard work that our members put in 24/7. This narrative has seen the gap between the rich and the poor increase, giving rise to the prevailing use of food banks by our members, and has left many hardworking employees in in-work poverty. The time to fight back starts now.

In our case, Scottish teachers have seen a real-term cut to their wages of 16.4% as measured against RPI. This is at a time when Scottish schools are finding it hard to recruit teachers, where workload-related pressures are increasing and teacher stress levels are increasing. More stress for less. As an independent survey published last week by Bath Spa University shows, 40% of Scottish teachers surveyed are looking to leave the profession in the next 18 months.

Let us be clear: even though the current Conservative Government is weak and desperately clinging on to power, the chances of them simply rolling over and giving us a public sector pay rise above inflation or a restorative pay rise is slim, but success is possible. I want you to consider this. After considerable pressure and lobbying from the STUC and public sector unions in Scotland, the Scottish Government has announced an end to the public sector pay cap. The EIS, like all our colleagues here in this hall, are building a pay campaign, buoyed by the success of our colleges' branch, FELA, who took six days of industrial action this year to secure equal pay across their sector.

A national campaign is going to take a concerted effort from all of us. Our Movement needs to work together. We need to organise, we need to coordinate and we need to show this Government our collective strength. Now is the time to stand together and

deliver the pay rise that our public sector deserves and our members need to survive.

Please support the composite motion. (*Applause*)

Claire Sullivan (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) spoke in support of Composition Motion 9. She said: Congress, I want to talk to you about the NHS although Mark has more or less covered it. Mark, I just want to say that we did really miss you last year, but I do hate speaking after you!

Next year, the NHS will reach its three score years and ten, for a long time considered to be the reasonable span of a life. These days, of course, many people can expect more than that, but what about our NHS? Whether or not it will reach its milestone is surely not in doubt, but will it be allowed to do so in good health, in good heart and in good spirit?

Our NHS is many things: it is the biggest employer in Western Europe; it is 300 organisations; it is 1.3 million employees; and it is 350 different jobs. However, most of all, Congress, it is the five million patients that it sees every single week. Yet for being all these many things, it is also one. It is one in its dedication to treating people who are sick. It is one in its commitment to helping people to stay well. It is one national health service, available free, universally, at the point of need. Sad to say, it is also one in having cut the pay of its people by more than 12% in real terms in the last decade.

It is because public servants are dedicated to public service that people in the NHS are expected to be above needing decent, fair pay. It is somehow not seemly to ask for

more. Well, seemingly or not, in the NHS, we are over being reticent or apologetic about demanding fair pay. NHS staff have the same bills to pay, the same rent to meet and the same children to feed and clothe as people anywhere else. The Government holds down the pay of its NHS staff, along with others across the public sector, not because it has no choice but to do so, but because it can. Congress, this is not the society we want to be.

It is true that the NHS cannot be all things to all people. It cannot successfully cure everyone who is physically sick. It cannot stop the turmoil for everyone with a mental health problem. It cannot prevent the fear of the loss of a loved friend or family member. What it can do is make sure that people do not face these things alone. It does this tirelessly day after day, but to do so effectively – and, yes, efficiently – to deliver high-quality 21st century healthcare, the NHS has to be properly funded. We must continue the fight for a society with strong public services, fully staffed by decently-paid people and properly funded, both for the present and for the future.

There was a reason why the visionary architect of the National Health Service, Aneurin Bevan, called his essay on a free health system “In Place of Fear”. Congress, we have a duty to make sure we protect that vision. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Ian Murray (*Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in support of Composite

Motion 9. He said: We support the composite and strongly endorse the comments from the previous speakers. We welcome the TUC’s research, which shows the extent of pay cuts that public sector workers have faced since the Government’s pay

restraint was imposed on us seven years ago. The FBU has also conducted our own research. It shows that firefighters have lost around 12% in real terms over the last decade, which amounts to about £5,000 a year if they had simply had their pay increased in line with the CPI.

Congress, our members are telling us that they are fed up with paying for a crisis they did not cause. They want their union to break the pay cap and get them a decent pay rise. The FBU negotiate firefighters' pay and conditions via our National Joint Council. This is made up of employer representatives from across the UK. Firefighters and our control members have been subject to the same pay cap as other public sector workers. For the last four years, we have had a paltry 1% pay rise, not to mention the additional two years of a pay freeze prior to that. It has not even covered how much they have put our pensions up, never mind cost of living expenses.

Currently, we are engaged with our employers on the potential of widening the firefighters' role, recognising that our job has changed over the last decade and it is likely to change a lot more in the future, a strategy that we, as a union, embarked upon to try to stop the decimation of the fire service. We have lost 11,000 frontline firefighters since 2010 but, importantly, it was a strategy to try and get our members a decent pay rise. In July, we were pleased that our employers announced that they would make our members an offer that would break the pay cap. It is a two-stage offer but, as you would expect, it comes with strings. It includes stage 1, an immediate 2% pay rise, backdated to 1st July of this year, and stage 2, which includes a further 3% increase paid within this per year. Also, there is a long-term pay deal over the next three years.

Now let us go on to the strings. First, our members have to agree to contractual changes to broaden their role. That will not be easy because the employers will want the world and our FBU members are not willing to give it to them. Secondly, it is dependent upon central government funding being provided for stage 2 of the deal. I will tell you this, Congress: if they do not fund it, they will get nothing from FBU members.

We are currently consulting our members on the offer and our executive meet later this week to discuss the outcome of that consultation and plan our next steps. Congress, while our negotiations continue, we want the TUC to coordinate and campaign with other unions. We want to see national and regional events all across the UK. We want the TUC and affiliates to have a serious discussion about coordinated action. We know this Tory Government is under pressure on pay and a whole range of other issues, but we all know that a Tory government will give working people nothing without a fight.

Congress, no matter which way our own consultation goes this week, now is the chance to step up campaigning; now is the time to get better organised; now is the time to get better coordinated; and now is the time to get all of our members the pay rises they deserve. Please support. *(Applause)*

Janet Ballentine *(Royal College of Midwives)* spoke in support of
Composite Motion 9.

She said: I am a midwife in the NHS and I am here to tell you that fair pay is overdue. It is not enough to end the policy of the public sector pay cap just on paper. This must result in a real-term pay increase for NHS staff. The Government must reflect the changes in policy in the evidence they submit to the NHS pay review body and they must make the case for a fully-funded, real-terms pay increase for NHS staff. The NHS staff will expect a pay rise if the cap is lifted. We must not let the Government pull the wool over our eyes and announce that they will scrap the cap, but actually still tell the pay review body that there is not enough money for a real pay lift.

The RCM research shows that the pay of an average midwife has dropped over £6,000 since 2010 and, with inflation increasing rapidly, the value of that pay is set to drop even further. There is currently a shortage of thousands of midwives in the UK and the NHS needs to ensure that they pay enough to retain and recruit enough midwives to give high-quality and safe care to women and families. We have said it many times, but it does bear repetition.

Investment in the NHS is an investment in high-quality, safe care. We have consistently demonstrated the impact that pay restraint has had on care. In 2014, the RCM took industrial action for the first time in its 134-year history because the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, took the unprecedented decision to reject the recommendations of the NHS pay review body. We won our dispute and the recommended uplift was paid. The NHS pay review body was reinstated to make recommendations although the Treasury-imposed public sector pay cap remained in place.

We want to see the NHS pay review body free from the political influence of the public sector decision on the pay cap so that they can make an unfettered recommendation for NHS pay. The Government must commit fully to funding real-terms pay increases for NHS staff. Anything less than this will damage the employment relations in the NHS. Midwives and maternity support workers work incredibly hard, with increasing challenges, to give the best care to women and their families. All we are asking for is for them to be fairly treated. Midwives are calling on the Government for fair pay. This is long overdue in the NHS. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Joe Simpson (*POA*) spoke in favour of Composition Motion 9. He said:

Congress, the POA agrees with the call on the General Council in action points 1-5 at the end of this composite motion. However, I must remind Congress that although the Government think they have the POA under control with their permanent injunction, we still have the right to ballot our operation support grade, which are the lowest-paid uniformed grade in the prison service, to ballot for industrial action. We can also ballot our colleagues in the special hospitals. The National Executive Committee agreed last week that they will hold those indicative ballots, the same as for PCS, ready for any coordinated industrial action that the TUC call for.

Congress, I am sure you have seen from the news that the Government are going to lift the pay cap for prison officers. We welcome that, but they have not said if that is across the board. We have two tiers of prison officers within our system. We have Fair and Sustainable and what are called the Closed grades. Fair and Sustainable,

over the last couple of years, has attracted a higher pay award while the Closed grades have received nothing. For us, that is totally unacceptable and that is why we have taken unlawful industrial action in order to get better pay terms for our Closed grades. That is also why we are supporting this composite.

Whilst we welcome it, we believe that it will be in the areas where they are having difficulty in recruiting and retaining prison staff because, Congress, while we have been sitting here today, 16 POA members have been assaulted in your prisons, four of them seriously. That happens every day in our prisons and that has got to stop. It can be stopped through investment back into the whole prison system. The Government can pay back some of the £900 million they have taken off us over the last seven years to make our prisons safe, decent and secure.

Congress, no matter what happens to our pay, we will stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters to smash the pay cap and achieve a pay increase which is acceptable to our hardworking public sector workers. Congress, please support.
(Applause)

Gail Cartmail (*Unite*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9.

She said: Congress, what is so galling about the Government's public sector pay policy is the rank duplicity of their rhetoric. We have been told that the public sector workers have gold-plated terms and conditions and that their pay should be capped to help the private sector prosper. We know that is complete and absolute nonsense and, in fact, the exact opposite has happened with public sector pay policy contaminating the wider economy.

Cutting public sector pay has sucked out demand and added to the woes in the private sector during, and following, the 2008 crisis and recession. Worse still, the poisonous public sector pay policy has polluted many private sector firms, who have treated it as a green light to follow suit. Shamefully, many organisations benchmark against public sector pay agreements, such as social care providers, charities and advice organisations, who have also applied the pay freeze and cap, thus making a very bad situation much worse.

Congress, the Government is also playing games with what it defines as “the public sector”. We have seen a wave of privatisation, rolling back the State at a rate not seen since the 1990s, selling valuable assets like the Royal Mail, which was sold off on the cheap. At the same time, they have sought to hook in supposedly independent organisations and contractors within the public sector pay cap with new draconian anti-union legislation. It is public when it suits their purpose.

Unite faced just this in recent disputes with Serco at Barts Health NHS Trust and at the Bank of England and with pensions disputes at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Unite’s Bank of England strike was not won in the boardroom. Unite won that strike by the actions of the brave men and women who, for the first time in 50 years, walked out, took to the picket line and won overwhelming public support. In Threadneedle Street and on the streets of Whitechapel, Bank of England and Serco workers were joined by the Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, because he knows that a bottom-dollar, low-wage economy is bad for workers, bad for communities and stifles economic growth.

Yes, Britain needs a pay rise and, yes, a real living wage, but not the phoney imitations of Cameron and May. Unite's £36 million strike fund is our promise that our members will not be starved back to work, not by the Government and not by any other employer. Enough is enough. We will organise, we will mobilise, we will win and, yes, Mark, let us coordinate. Support the composite. (*Applause*)

Amanda Burley (*GMB*) supported Composite Motion 9.

She said: I am a first-time speaker (*applause*) proudly speaking on behalf of the GMB in support of this important composite on public sector pay. Congress, public sector living standards are under the worst assault since the 1930s, worse even than under Margaret Thatcher and John Major. I am proud that the GMB has led the campaign to lift this wicked and self-defeating pay cap. I am proud the whole union Movement is united on behalf of the people who risked their lives at Grenfell, at the Manchester Arena, at Borough Market and at Westminster Bridge.

The people who regularly work eight hours unpaid overtime every week because they care about our public services have been let down for far too long. As colleagues from sister unions have said, do you remember when Theresa May told nurses they could not get a pay rise because there is no magic money tree? However, they found £1.5 billion just to save her own job!

Congress, it is time to consign this pay cap to the dustbin of history where it belongs. With the Budget coming along, these are going to be crucial weeks because I will tell you this: the Tories are pulling a fast one. You have all heard ministers talk about

listening to pay review bodies, but we know that 55% of public sector workers are not even covered by a review body, including some of the very lowest paid. Even after they pinched at least £750 million out of local government wage budgets to enforce the 1% pay cap, they are saying that their policy review will only look at the people on the front line. I challenge Theresa May and Philip Hammond to tell the PCOs, the social workers and the teaching assistants that they are not on the front line.

Congress, they all deserve a real pay rise. That is why the local government unions have submitted a claim for at least 5% next year. We will not stop campaigning until the cap is dropped for every last one of our members. I am proud to give GMB support to this motion and I urge affiliates not to rest until this pay cap has been ended across the sector as a whole. Please support. *(Applause)*

Patrick Roach (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9.

He said: Congress, we all know that over the last seven years, Conservative-led governments have imposed savage pay restraint on public sector workers. Teachers have seen their pay fall in real terms by an average of 15%, but the Government has imposed pay reforms on teachers that have not only created financial hardship for many, but also growing inequality. For many teachers, these reforms have meant no guarantee of a pay award or pay progression. Instead, research by the NASUWT has demonstrated that in too many schools, they are simply diverting money away from teachers to fund inflation-busting pay rises for senior managers.

Last year, the combined effect of the Government's pay cap and discretionary pay in schools meant that the average pay award for classroom teachers was just 0.6%. Meanwhile, across the board, schools sat on £2.1 billion, unspent in cash reserves, claiming they could not afford to pay teachers. At the same time, the exploitative practices of some senior managers in schools have continued. They have seen their pay rocket with salaries now in excess of £400,000 a year. Congress, this is unacceptable.

Beneath these headlines, the picture is made even more shocking with growing inequality and institutionalised discrimination. Today, it is disproportionately the case that women are paying the price of the Government's pay cap and reforms to teachers' pay. On average, women teachers earn just 85% of their male counterparts. Our research also shows that teachers in all black and minority ethnic groups have lower earnings than their white counterparts. That is why the NASUWT is putting pay injustice at the centre of our ongoing campaign of national industrial action and our dispute with the Government.

Congress, for the sake of our children's education, we must challenge the view in schools which says, "Pay teachers (and indeed other public sector workers) as little as you can get away with." The fight to end the pay cap on public sector workers must be our priority, but our fight must not end there. We must continue our fight to secure substantial pay increases to end discriminatory pay practices, to challenge the Government's agenda of injustice and inequality, and to deliver pay justice for all workers and not just the few. Congress, support the motion. *(Applause)*

Richard Evans (*Society of Radiographers*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9.

He said: Congress, for the first time in recent years, we are having this debate in a context where there is a feeling in the political arena that at last we might be seeing some movement. Signs of progress, of course, are to be welcomed, but, sisters and brothers, we have got a long way to go yet, as we have heard. Lifting the pay cap is not the same as awarding pay increases that match inflation. Progress reported for some parts of the public sector is not the same as restoring levels of pay for all.

It does not put right years of unfairness and neglect of those who work to support the fabric of our society. The damage done to morale, recruitment and prospects for millions will not be mended by a few headlines or warm words from a government that no one trusts anyway.

Society of Radiographers members have responded in large numbers recently to provide details of the effects of diminishing real-terms pay. They tell the depressing story that a huge proportion of their income is disappearing on keeping a roof over their heads and in servicing debts (including student loans). There is little left over after utilities, commuting and council tax to spend on the needs of a family. There are increasing instances reported of reliance on food banks among radiographers.

Every statistic is a stark reminder of the struggle that clinical professionals are facing, along with sisters and brothers, right across the public sector. Recently, new evidence – this time from the Office of Manpower Economics – shows that radiographers, along with some others in the private sector, are now also being paid less per hour on average than they were five years ago. That is an actual pay decrease in addition to the real-terms pay reductions which we all know are a reality. Why is this? It is

because of austerity policies affecting the NHS. These result in senior posts being frozen and the lack of opportunity for radiographers to train to become advanced practitioners. This is damaging and demoralising for radiographers, but it is disastrous for patients. It is disastrous for patients waiting to have their disease diagnosed. It is disastrous for patients waiting to receive treatment, such as for cancer.

Lifting the pay cap today will not solve the problem. Patients will continue to be at risk until we see some sustained improvements to pay settlements that at least match inflation, as we have heard. We need to see an end to suffocation of public services through austerity policies. Austerity and the pay cap are causing real harm to the most vulnerable in society. We must not rest or let up in our efforts to fight for fair treatment of public sector workers and for better services for everyone. Please support the composite. *(Applause)*

Vicky Johnson (*FDA*) supported Composite Motion 9.

She said: It is really difficult to prepare a speech when you are coming at the end of a long line of people who are in violent agreement. I do not think anybody truly believes that this pay cap was ever a good idea and a good way to solve a financial crisis that we did not create, but for which we are being made to pay.

Re-imposing the pay cap in 2015 was nasty, to be frank, especially when you consider that there was never any intention to impose it on that other set of public sector workers, known as MPs. It is all very well Theresa May noting the sacrifices that we have all made, although I am fairly sure she would not have noted those sacrifices

were it not for the disastrous General Election result. (*Applause*) She needs to back her very fine sentiments with some very fine actions. This cap has to break, but it has to break for everybody because if it does not break for everybody, they will cherry-pick us off and set us against each other, which is not right.

Last year, we also carried out a pay survey of our members and the results were stark. Since 2010, members who have worked the same hours and have not been promoted, (so they could do a true comparison) reported that following a two-year pay freeze and four with a cap, they were probably at least 20% worse off in real terms. Following the increases in deductions for pension contributions and national insurance rises, some have not yet reached the same level of take-home pay that they had in 2010. This is wrong. It is wrong across the public sector and it has to stop. The cap has to break and it has to break now.

When it breaks, the Government has to make sure that there is enough money to put right the flaws in the pay systems. This Government has spoken of its intention to solve the gender pay gap. I say that this Government should put its own house in order before it lectures others. In the FDA, we have taken HMRC to the Employment Tribunal because, due to flaws in the system that have been exacerbated by the pay cap, women, doing the exact same work as men, sometimes earn thousands of pounds less and that is wrong. If the pay cap continues, this will also become an issue on an age basis, which will also need challenging.

In supporting this motion, we say please break the pay cap, break it fairly across the whole of the public sector, put your own house in order re equal pay, and give us the pay rise we deserve. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

Sean Vernell (*University and College Union*) spoke in support of Composite

Motion 9.

He said: Pay cuts have been one of the main central pillars of the Government's austerity programme for the past few years. Yes, benefit cuts are important to them, but cutting our wages is where they really make their money. That is why this debate is going to be so important. By breaking the Tory pay freeze, we can also put a real dent in their austerity programme as a whole.

What does it mean for us in further education? I work in the further education sector. Year after year, we have been told by our employers (and by government ministers for that matter) that if we argue for a pay rise, we will price ourselves out of a job. I am sure we have heard this argument time and time again. What does that mean in reality? In the further education sector, since 2010, we have lost 15,000 jobs. At the same time, our pay has been cut by 21%. That is £9,000 for every single lecturer in further education. It is having a tremendous impact on the ability to recruit new teachers and lecturers to a sector which teaches some of the most vulnerable young people in our society.

That is why UCU is very much in agreement with both the movers of this composite and, as Mark said, the need for coordinated action. We were there back in 2011 regarding pensions. We have done this before, Congress. We have been successful at

coordinating workers. We got 29 unions out. It is possible to do it. If the McDonald's workers (a less organised group of workers) can do it then so can the more organised sectors inside our organisation. *(Applause)*

We understand the dangers and concerns about the 50% threshold, but we must not allow the Government to bully us from taking strike action. I am utterly convinced that if we have got the support of the likes of John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn to campaign alongside those who decide to take an industrial action ballot then we can smash threshold easily, as they showed us when they campaigned in the General Election. UCU are proud to say, alongside the PCS, that we are consulting our members at this moment in time in preparation for an industrial action ballot in October. There are two of us at this moment in time, but I am sure there will be more who will do the same. Coordination is the key.

It is clear there is a mood and an appetite to fight over pay, Congress, but if that is not connected to real coordinated action, it will disappear and, once again, we will be back here next year, scratching our heads and moaning about lack of pay rises. Yes, indeed, Britain needs a pay rise. Let us coordinate, let us strike together and let us march together. *(Cheers and applause)*

Jackie Baker *(National Education Union)* supported Composite Motion 9.

She said: Congress, our members stand firmly with other public sector workers in urgently wanting to see an end to the public sector pay cap and what goes hand in hand with that, such as the cuts, the blight of austerity, deregulation and privatisation. We want to play our full part in challenging this injustice and join in a coordinated

approach, as the other speaker has just said, to fight for an end to these heinous conditions.

We support fully the five action points of the composite. Branches in London are already coordinating a national campaign and mass demonstration to coincide with the TUC lobby on 17th October. In fact, we have changed the date. If you have got the earlier flyer, we are so keen on coordination that we are going for 17th October so that we can link up with everybody else.

In supporting this composite, however, we do wish to register a slight note of caution regarding just one or two points. It is the question of whether we should be supporting pay review bodies plus the reserved seats on them for those with relevant employee representation experience. Elsewhere, the motion mentions the fact that the public sector pay policy has contaminated the wider economy and eroded collective bargaining. We would just like to take this a step further and remind everybody that pay review bodies are also a part of this erosion.

Teachers have had 30 years of pay review bodies and, quite frankly, look where they have got us! As a part-time teacher, mulling over my pay slips the other week, I could barely notice what the pay rises were over the last ten years and I am sure this is true for many of you in this hall. We feel that collective bargaining is the way forward and do not want to look towards pay review bodies in this area.

Having said that, we are fully behind the thrust of this composite motion and we look forward to working with other affiliates and the General Council to move forward so

that together we can make these words come alive. We want a coordinated action to bring about the changes that the workers of this country so desperately need. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: That is Composite Motion 9 and as all the speakers were for the motion, I am now going to put it to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Composite Motion 9 was CARRIED*

The President: As the last speaker said, the TUC will be organising a Parliamentary lobby and rally on 17th October in Westminster, bringing public sector unions together to press our case for fair pay for all public sector workers. You will be able to find details about this and other regional rallies, as well as a link to email your MPs, through the TUC's website. Please join us on 17th October and show your support: Britain's public sector workers still need a pay rise.

Children and Young People

The President: Staying with Section 4 of the General Council Report, Good Services, we move to Children and Young People. I call paragraph 4.11 and Motion 54 on child poverty. The General Council supports the motion, moved by the NASUWT and seconded by USDAW. Other speakers are UCU, Unite, NEU, NHC and UNISON.

Child Poverty

Chris Keates (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) moved Motion 54: Child Poverty.

She said: President, Congress, four million children are living in poverty in the UK, 2.6 million of those in working families. Homelessness is at an all-time high. On Christmas Day last year, over 122,000 children were homeless. In-work families are struggling to make ends meet. New food banks are opening daily. Of those that receive food aid, almost 500,000 are children.

Children are coming to school so hungry that they lack energy and are unable to concentrate. Children are without proper footwear and clothing for the weather conditions. Teachers are mending students' clothes so that they look and feel better about themselves. Teachers are using superglue to mend children's shoes. Teachers are regularly buying food for hungry pupils and giving increasing numbers of children clothes and equipment at their own expense. Young girls, unable to afford sanitary products, are left feeling isolated and missing school because they feel ashamed, embarrassed and robbed of their dignity.

Head teachers, teachers and support staff face this heartbreaking litany of poverty and inequality every day, which has been exposed by the NASUWT's annual survey of the impact of financial hardship on children and young people, and research by End Poverty Now, Shelter and the Trussell Trust. But the misery does not end there. With poverty a key inhibitor of educational progress, it is simply unacceptable that, as a direct result of the fragmentation, the privatisation and the excessive freedoms and

flexibilities in the school system, even higher barriers to educational progress are erected and access to educational provision is now based on parents' ability to pay.

The NASUWT's Cost of Education Survey, now in its fifth year, reveals the shameful truth that the fundamental principle on which our public services are built – that they are free at the point of use – no longer applies in education. A quarter of parents now say that they select their school for their child on the basis of affordability. Is it surprising when the cost of school uniform can be as much as £400.00 a year and every day yet another letter comes to light that parents have received, asking them to sign direct debit mandates for anything from between £30.00 and £300.00, to maintain the quality of education. Letters are sent out, targeting parents of pupils taking particular subjects, advising them that if they want the best chance for their child to secure higher grades, they need to pay £50.00 for additional tuition sessions.

More and more young people in secondary schools are choosing options not on their skills and aspirations for the future, but whether their parents can afford the books and the equipment. Children and their families are being crushed with their inability to meet the cost of educational visits, textbooks, equipment and school lunches. Art, drama, music and many creative subjects are becoming the preserve of those whose parents can pay. This is selection by wealth and it is rife across the school system. It is a national scandal. No child should be denied access to education because their parents cannot pay.

Congress, child poverty costs us £29 billion per annum. It is a disgrace that here in this country, the fifth largest economy in the world, our children and our young

people have become victims of the most callous fiscal and social policies this country has endured since 2010. Poverty is not a lifestyle choice. Poverty is not something that people impose on themselves. We cannot allow the continuation of these economically-sadistic policies, which are driving families into poverty, poisoning the optimism of our young people, and derailing and degrading the life chances of our children. Congress, support this motion. (*Applause*)

Jeff Brown (*Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers*) seconded Motion 54.

He said: Congress, this Government is committed to eradicating child poverty by 2020. It should go without saying that it is simply unacceptable that, in one of the richest countries on the planet, we have children living in poverty.

This most recent round of cuts to in-work welfare, such as the four-year freeze on working age benefits, means that 60% of people in poverty live in a household with someone working. Clearly, to thousands of families, work is not providing the much-needed route out of poverty. This is, in part, caused by the Government's refusal to tackle poor employment practices such as zero and short-hour contracts, agency work and bogus self-employment. Many people on short-hour contracts want to work more hours, but are unable to do so.

Families in this type of precarious work need the additional support of work benefits. However, as a result of the Conservative Party cuts, just as these working practices are becoming more prominent, the financial safety net is being removed. Changes to universal credit mean that 2.1 million working families will lose on average £1,600 a year. The Child Poverty Action Group has estimated that universal credits alone will

push a further 200,000 children below the poverty line. Families with three children could lose an additional £2,870 a year because welfare payments will only be made to the first two children.

Congress, this is appalling. Government policies are forcing children into poverty. The official annual poverty figures in March of this year showed an increase in child poverty for the second year running. Around 100,000 more children fell into relative poverty last year, making it a total of four million. Without serious changes to Government policy, this situation will not improve. Far from reaching the target of ending child poverty by 2020, the Institute of Fiscal Studies projects that the number of children living in poverty will rise to around five million. I will say that again – five million children living in poverty in one of the richest nations in the world.

Congress, we ask you to support this motion. (*Applause*)

Rhiannon Lockley (*University and College Union*) supported Motion 54.

She said: I am supporting this motion on behalf of the University and College Union, but also as a mum.

I live in the Black Country where I also work at an FE college. Some of you may have recently seen controversy over the Black Country flag. My Tory MP for Dudley South, Mike Wood, attacked our sister, Eleanor Smith – the same Eleanor Smith who has just been elected as a black woman MP in Enoch Powell's old constituency in Wolverhampton – for speaking out about colonialism and slavery. Mike Wood claimed that he was proud of the heritage of the Cradley chainmaker women strikers,

who took historic action for the minimum wage a mile from my college in Halesowen. These were women who fought for their jobs and their children.

The hypocrisy of this was astounding given that in that same week at my kids' school, just around the corner from Mike's office, we lost our head teacher, a brilliant leader, who always supported the teachers in taking the many strike actions they have taken to stand up for our kids over recent years. She said she cannot put any more pressure onto staff and children. At the same time, we lost six teaching assistants. This cut will be felt most keenly by the children who experience the most poverty and disability. For many kids in that school – and, I am sure, in all schools – the TA is the rock which gives them the stability to stay in the classroom. What happens to them now?

Congress, to bring families out of poverty, we need fully-funded access to education at every stage of life. We have lost a million adult learners since 2009 and 15,000 lecturers and a similar number of support staff. In my college, I work with access students, who are adults returning to education with the hope of progressing to university. A large proportion of access students are lone parents or parents who are returning to education to raise their families out of poverty.

Further education is often referred to as a second chance for adult learners, but for my students, the course is a first chance because of the obstacles and structures that shut them out of education in the first place, which they have overcome in order to fight for a future for their families. I could tell you many stories of the battles that my students have overcome to make it into the classroom. It is more common than not

for my students to have mental health problems and many of them either have or are experiencing domestic violence. I could tell you about students being attacked in front of their children, students who have been locked out of their homes, students who skip meals in order to feed their children, and students who fall asleep in class because they have done night shifts.

To end the misery poverty brings for children and families, we need fully-funded access to education from the cradle to the grave and a national education service. This is not just to meet business needs, but education for emancipation in colleges, communities and prisons, which does not just give them their skills, but allows them to question the capitalist system which puts families in poverty in the first place. Education is for the masses, not just for the ruling classes. Please support this motion.
(Applause)

Bob Collins (*Unite*) supported Motion 54.

He said: Congress, there is a great deal that can, and should, be said about child poverty and the misery and hopelessness it causes. Growth in child poverty is the consequence of many of this Government's actions, from the increase in zero hours contracts and insecure work to austerity and the cut in real wages, which continue to be the worst in recorded history.

However, I have a personal reason for speaking to this motion. I am doing so on behalf of a close friend and fellow activist. Lynne Baird should have been here today as a Unite delegate and wanted to speak herself on this motion, but she is now arranging the funeral of her son, Dan. In early July, Dan was out at a Birmingham

pub and found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time. Dan and his friend were stabbed and Dan's injuries proved fatal. This waste of life could have been prevented on many counts. There used to be 50 licence inspectors, but because of cuts that number is now zero, which allowed this pub to go unchecked for far too long. There have also been cuts to the West Midlands police force. Unfortunately, Dan's killer is still at large.

I know this motion is about child poverty and I have spoken about other things such as austerity and the low-wage economy, but I believe they are all linked. Child poverty disfigures our society and the hopelessness it causes helped contribute to events like the one that took young Dan. That is why it is important that we, as a Movement, support all campaigns against child poverty and do everything within our power to get rid of this nasty, evil Government.

I will just finish by saying that Lynne now campaigns against knife crime with the "Dan Baird – Stop knife crime" campaign. Thank you for listening. Please support.
(Applause)

Anne Swift (*National Education Union*) supported Motion 54.

She said: This motion brings a shameful situation into sharp focus. It should not be necessary to have this topic on our agenda. The Government should be thoroughly ashamed that 25% of children in the UK are living in poverty. The Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts that this will rise to 35% by 2021 if policies do not change for the better.

Children are bearing the brunt of Government austerity measures. Teachers and other professionals are telling us that they have seen a rise in the number of children coming to school hungry and the consequential impact on learning. Children are changing schools because of unaffordable rents. Children are living in families where their parents are holding down several low-paid jobs just to make ends meet so they hardly ever see their children and good-quality childcare is unaffordable or unavailable.

As a former head teacher of a large primary school in a Yorkshire coastal town, I have seen at first hand the impact of poverty on children's lives. I have met parents who are anxious and worried that they cannot give their children what they need. I have sat with parents as they have described their unmet health needs and those who are so worried that they cannot get a CAMHS appointment for their child for months. I have met parents who could not put money in their meter or heat their homes or have hot water for washing and bathing. At my school, we were very aware that our families were using food banks and needed help to navigate the benefits system. What they also needed were subsidised school trips, services available when needed, and affordable school clothing, not an expensive branded uniform favoured by some academies.

In my school and those of my colleagues, we try our best to support our families, but with diminishing funds, this has become more and more difficult. The Government expects schools to produce better and better outcomes for our young people but, at the same time, has cut funding and dismantled services so essential to improve those outcomes. Many of you here will be parents and grandparents and you may not have

noticed the invidious choices that head teachers have to make to try and balance their books. Should they resurface the playground or employ a member of staff to support a child's learning? The vast majority of schools are having to cut activities, reduce subject choices and freeze the purchase of resources. Schools can no longer afford to offer clubs or after-school activities and we know that whole departments for creative subjects are disappearing. We are in danger that only children who attend private schools will have access to music, drama and PE facilities. What a scandal!

Teachers and other staff have been made redundant as class sizes rise and schools try to balance the books. We have to lay the blame for the rise in child poverty and the under-funding of schools and other services which support families firmly at the door of this Government. Schools cannot fix the impact of living in poverty by themselves. Children are paying the price for this Government's disregard and heartlessness. Please support. (*Applause*)

Paul Whiteman (*National Association of Head Teachers*) spoke in support of Motion 54.

He said: Congress, whilst we support the motion, there are a couple of lines within which do cause us some concern. The NAHT simply does not recognise the situation of schools building huge reserves whilst, at the same time, making cuts as the motion suggests. For decades, schools have prudently managed budgets to ensure that children receive the very best care and provision possible. By managing a small reserve, schools are able to smooth the uncertain funding path year on year. Indeed, I was at a school last week which has been able to maintain all of its support to pupils in the face of the huge cuts brought about by this Government by utilising their

reserve. Many schools have already exhausted their reserves, but there is no assistance from the Government; in fact the reverse. School leaders in this situation are already making the toughest of choices.

NAHT research demonstrates that only a limited and prudent level of reserves were maintained up until March 2016 and over half of the nationally-reported figure was actually contractually committed even at that point so the figure presented a false picture. Since March 2016, £600 million has been removed from the schools' Education Services Grant, additional cost pressures of over 6% have been placed on school budgets, and all of this as restrictions in local authority health and social care services to support pupils begin to bite.

The NAHT's 2017 Breaking Point Survey shows that the number of schools currently in deficit has more than doubled since our 2015 survey. Nearly three-quarters of school leaders are only able to balance their budgets by using reserves and 72% of school leaders say their budgets will be unsustainable by 2019. All of the independent analysis supports the picture of a completely under-funded education system, which was exposed to the electorate this year. The electorate agreed in their hundreds of thousands. Voters know who to blame – they blame the Government and not the schools.

Amongst other things, this motion asks for the General Council to press the Government to take action to prevent schools from contributing to the increasing stigma, hardship and misery on children and families. I totally agree, but the only

way to do this is to fairly and fully fund all schools and provide proper support to families. The answer is not further regulation on the activity of the profession.

Congress, this is a powerful motion. In pursuing its objectives, let us not fall into the trap of suggesting that somehow the schools are to blame for increasing poverty. On the contrary, I witness every day examples of school leaders, teachers and all staff in schools doing more than can reasonably be expected of them to support all children. Let us keep the blame firmly where it belongs. That is with a government which uses the political choice of austerity as an excuse not to care. We all know that education is not a burden on the Exchequer; it is an investment in all of our futures. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

Sian Stockham (*UNISON*) supported Motion 54.

She said: Even prior to the downturn, work was not providing an antidote to poverty. As we have heard, the majority of poor children now live in households where only one parent is in work. Wages are failing to keep families afloat and this is putting a greater burden on tax credits and other forms of transfer payments to make up the shortfall.

It has been shown time and time again that income gains from work is the most significant factor to support children for the growing number of families in work in poverty so we know that one of the most effective policy initiatives the Government could take to reduce child poverty would be to ensure that all workers receive a wage that takes them out of poverty, in other words, a genuine living wage.

However, we know that income is not the only factor that determines child live changes. Children from poorer backgrounds will also have less access to social wage, the value people gain from the society they live in, their community and access to both cultural and social experiences that create shared values. They are things like local parks, funded play schemes, free swimming, public libraries, local initiatives for youth services, reduced or free entrance to galleries, all things that are currently being cut or threatened.

Fundamental social networks such as family ties are also harder to access when you are poor. Rising inflation means that travel costs are going up as salaries and benefits are going down. If children are not able to experience their own and other communities fully, where do they see their place in it and how do they gain the tools necessary to find their way successfully into it as adults? It is indisputable that the family wage and material resources have the biggest impact on child outcomes.

However, research has repeatedly shown that higher levels of social and cultural capital are associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes and lower crime rates. In other words, those with extensive networks and broader cultural experiences are more likely to be housed, healthy, hired and happy. Schools play a vital part in providing many of the aspects of a social wage that deprived children lack. They must be enabled to continue to do so. Thank you, Congress. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

The President: Thank you very much, Congress. I now put Motion 54, Child poverty, to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those, please show? The motion is unanimously carried.

* *Motion 54 was CARRIED*

The President: I now call on Composite Motion 13: Health and wellbeing of all children and young people. The General Council supports the composite motion. It is moved by the BDA, seconded by AEP and supported by CSP. Unite, the GMB and the NEU have indicated that they wish to speak. Can I take this motion in good order because then we have one more motion before the end of Congress and I do want to finish on time. Can we start with the BDA.

Health and wellbeing of all children and young people

Martin Jones (*British Dietetic Association*) moved Composite Motion 13: Health and wellbeing of all children and young people.

He said: Congress, the BDA is delighted to be moving this motion on what is a vitally important issue for us all. Our children deserve decent care and reinvestment now for the sake of our future society.

The BDA originally submitted this motion because we strongly believe that unless there is a real and meaningful national strategy in place which tackles the serious issues that are now affecting the health of our children and young people, we will be facing a national crisis. Last year showed that nearly one in four or nearly four

million children in the UK live in poverty. Think about that for a moment – four million children. The UK is seemingly comfortable with the fact that, as one of the richest countries in the world, we carry on accepting that our children are very poor. They are so poor, in fact, that millions of them do not have enough to eat. If we carry on the way we are, this figure is predicted to rise to five million by the end of the decade.

This dreadful rise in poverty is having a devastating effect on children's health. A recent survey by 250 paediatricians across the country revealed the following: poverty and low income contribute significantly to the ill-health of the children they treat. Housing problems or homelessness were of grave concern. More than 60% of respondents said that food insecurity contributed to the ill-health of the children they treat and 40% had had difficulty in discharging a child, in the last six months, because of concerns about housing or food insecurity.

Children living in poverty experience significantly higher levels of respiratory illness, mental health issues and obesity than children in more affluent areas. As dieticians, we know this only too well. We see the huge problems, for example, with childhood obesity and the record numbers of young children being treated for Type 2 diabetes, which is a risk factor for obesity. We know that malnutrition can cause many problems for children. They can have growth failure, stunting, delayed sexual development, reduced muscle mass and strength-impaired neurocognitive development. We have seen an increase in old-fashioned Victorian diseases such as rickets on the increase.

We know that breast feeding can have long-term benefits for babies lasting into adulthood. In particular, the risk of Type 2 diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease can be reduced. Breastfeeding is a choice for mothers, but it must be an informed choice, with the freedom to feed babies whenever and wherever required, including at work. So far we have seen a piecemeal approach from the Government with inadequate measures which are supposed to tackle issues such as calorie content in food and the advertising of junk food and fizzy drinks. All of this is welcome as far as it goes, but we need a proper strategy and the input of the relevant health professionals if we are to make a real difference to the lives of our children and young people.

This issue has to be taken seriously and it must be a priority. It is totally unacceptable to be in a position of having to deal with these dreadful effects of government policy and the so-called austerity agenda. We need a totally new approach, an end to austerity, social policy for all and prioritising of the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. The measures called for by the BDA and the AEP are a good place to start. We cannot expect to have a healthy future for the UK if we leave our children behind. Please support this composite. (*Applause*)

Lisa O'Connor (*Association of Educational Psychologists*) seconded Composite Motion 13.

She said: I am a first-time speaker at Congress. (*Applause*) President, Congress, every day in my work as an educational psychologist, teachers, other professionals and parents tell me about children who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

Every day, we hear about the need for more mental health professionals to help our children, but is that the only way in which we can help them? Children are not born with mental health problems, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, poor body image and lack of self-esteem. Frequently, many of these problems develop in response to the environment in which the children are growing up.

Children need to be loved and safe and secure, with opportunities to play, learn and develop. These needs are not met when they live in poverty, when they live in poor housing, when they live in unsafe housing (as we so shockingly saw at Grenfell Tower), when their parents have poor health, struggles with addiction and need to be cared for themselves. These needs are not met when there is poor air-quality, when they have poor diets, and when there is a lack of space and opportunity to play out and enjoy childhood.

Children develop difficulties with mental health when their needs are not met. The causes of this can be many and varied and so should be the response. Children's mental health is not just an issue for mental health services, nor for schools, nor for parents and nor for educational psychologists. Children's mental health is an issue for us all. It is an issue that can be influenced by governmental departments at national and local levels by their policies and by their practice, be that housing, planning, leisure, parking and immigration. They should all be planning and working together towards improving the health and life chances for all children and young people, with all policies underpinned by the impact they will have upon children. There should be a strategy for children and young people.

We used to have children's strategies at national and local levels, with a shared belief that every child matters. Different departments had begun to work towards a joined-up approach. Now we see fragmentation caused by cuts and structural changes in national and local departments by changing priorities. The AEP believes there is an urgent need for a new cross-government children's strategy with the goal of making sure that every child has good mental and physical health. Congress, we must say again with one voice – and so loud that every government hears us – “Every child matters”. Please support this composite. (*Applause*)

Michelle Slack (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: Physical activity is an essential part of good health and has a positive impact on both physical and mental wellbeing. As a physiotherapist, I am only too well aware of the impact of a sedentary lifestyle on children and adults with more and more time being spent sitting in front of computers, televisions and games consoles. Both in our working lives and leisure time, we are starting to pay the price with our health,

Even pre-school children are getting into these bad habits, spending an average of more than four hours a day looking at screens. British children are among the least active in the world with fitness levels plummeting. Only one in five of our children are meeting the Government's guidelines of being moderately active for at least an hour a day. The combination of poor diet and lack of exercise means that obesity amongst school children is continuing to rise. One in five children are obese when they start primary school, rising to more than a third by the time that they leave, and

the problem only gets worse as children move into the teenage years. The outlook is even worse for girls with half as many reaching the minimum activity levels as among boys and the poorer you are the more likely you are to be obese.

We know that obesity significantly increases the risk of serious long-term health conditions as we age: diabetes, cancer and heart disease are just some of the illnesses that have a clear link. Even more troubling is the link between lack of exercise, obesity and good mental health. A recent survey by Public Health England looked at the effects of physical activity on children's emotional wellbeing. It found that among 5-11 year olds, being active made the majority of children feel happier, more confident and more sociable. Nearly 90% said that they liked being active, but part of the problem was finding the opportunity to take part in sports or activities that they enjoyed.

We need the Government to invest in our children by reversing the cuts in public health that have had such a devastating impact on funding for children's services. We need more investment in the provision of spaces to exercise and good facilities with a variety of sports and other activities made available. We need a properly-funded, well- thought-out child health and wellbeing strategy that reaches across government departments in each UK country to ensure that our children get the start in life they need.

“Britain should be the best country in the world for children”: that is a direct quote from the last Conservative Party manifesto. Let us see them put their money where

their manifesto is and invest in a fair and healthy future for our children. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Tracey Young (*Unite*) supported Composite Motion 13.

She said: President, Congress, I work as a health visitor, a specialist community public health nurse, and my union, Unite, has been campaigning hard against the public health cuts which have been so devastating to all public health and community services such as health visiting, school nursing and other community practitioner roles that are so important to the positive development of children's health and wellbeing and therefore must be fundamental to any child health strategy. Health visitors and school nurses are key to promoting child health through working in a proactive way at key points in a child and family's development. These are core public health preventative services promoting healthy lifestyles, identifying difficulties and help give children the best start in life yet they are under threat.

In 2015, when the commissioning of children's public health services was transferred from the NHS to councils, there were large in-year funding cuts to budgets made. Since then, health visitor numbers have already fallen by nearly 9%. The tendering process has not only led to cuts, but also to privatisation, with no proper public scrutiny of the professional and skill mix of those services. New service contracts agreed between local authorities and private providers often prevent the high-level, more intensive support that some children and women with new babies need, for example, in supporting women through the breast feeding process. We have already heard that breast feeding is one of the main factors in preventing ill health, obesity and diabetes, not just in infancy but throughout life.

Let us be clear, Congress, breast feeding rates in the UK are appalling with only 0.5% of babies still breastfeeding after a year, and that is in any form. This is not just the worst in Europe, but the worst in the world and will not improve until we have a well-funded, appropriately-commissioned public health service. Unite members have complained not only of cuts to services and excessive workloads, but also the down-banding of their role. The cost of illness and disease is higher than public health and early intervention, work that our members carry out with dedication.

These cuts and changes to commissioning of our community services are short-sighted. They will not save money in the medium to long term and they will have a detrimental effect on population health now and in the future. Yes, we need a child health strategy, but we also need the professional workforce to deliver it. Congress, please support this composite.

June Minnery (*GMB*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 13.

She said: Congress, I speak today in memory of GMB's national president, our own Mary Turner, who sadly died earlier this summer. Mary was also the honorary president of the BDA, with whom the GMB has close ties. If Mary were here today, we all know what she would be speaking up for. It would be for free school meals because healthy meals and the habits formed from healthy eating of nutritional food are essential in ensuring that we have healthy, happy kids.

Throughout Mary's life as a working dinner lady, a mum, a grandma and a trade unionist to her core, she campaigned to stop kids going hungry. She campaigned to

end the stigma attached to free school meals. She campaigned to make sure that hunger did not stop kids getting on at school. She campaigned because at a very basic and human level, it cannot be right that any child goes without a warm meal in their belly every day. Good children's health goes to the heart of so many other issues – doing well at school, development, reaching potential and good health later in life. Free school meals will not only help tackle the child obesity crisis, but they would pay for themselves many times over. Fewer instances of diabetes and obesity-related illnesses would save the NHS millions.

At Mary's funeral a few short weeks ago, Jeremy Corbyn told us all that Mary's life's work would continue to be honoured in Labour Party policy, something Mary was so proud to say about her party at the last election and someone we will all think of when Labour make it a reality in government. I am glad we continue to honour Mary Turner's work in a small way here today. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Kim Knappett (*National Education Union*) supported Composite Motion 13.

She said: There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child and, Congress, we need to admit that, in our country, our village is failing our children and young people in so many of the areas covered in this composite motion. The most popular CPD course that we have run for educational professionals over the past 18 months has been mental health first aid. Our members are queuing to get on it and those who have attended are enthusiastically sharing their learning with their colleagues. The course and the role of those educational professionals is exactly what it says – first aid. It is identifying that there is a problem. The issue is that once a child or young person has

been identified as requiring support, we hit a brick wall or an extremely long waiting list.

Only yesterday, I heard of a young man who has complex mental health issues and who is not only out of school, but whose family are struggling with him. He has been told that the wait to receive professional support is nine months – yes, nine months. That means nine more months out of education, nine months of increased stress and disruption for his parents and his siblings, and possibly nine months of further detriment to his mental health. What is the point of first aid if we have no services to back it up? What would be the point of sending out first responders or ambulances if there was no service to back up those who need further care?

We have heard this morning many eloquent speakers make an excellent point about the funding crisis in mental health and the pathetically small amounts of funding which is available to CAMHS. We have heard about the issues of child poverty this afternoon and we know that money which is invested in our children and young people is money invested well and invested in our future. We need new money, not money recycled from somewhere else. We need a joined-up service for children and young people so that their mental health needs can be met by the best professionals working together in a timely manner.

Congress, it is up to us to stand up for our children and young people. They are our future members. We need to act now to prevent storing up long-term health problems for the future. Congress, let us be the village that our children and young people need

and deserve and together let us build for the future. Please support this composite motion. (*Applause*)

The President: I am now going to put Composite Motion 13, Health and wellbeing of all children and young people, to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Composite Motion 13 was CARRIED*

The President: We now return, Congress, to Section 3 of the General Council Report: Respect and a Voice at Work; Pensions. I call paragraphs 1.9 to 1.14 and Motion 36, Expanding auto-enrolment. There are two speakers on this. It will be moved by Aegis and seconded by the GMB. Those are all the speakers I am going to take.

Expanding auto-enrolment

Fiona Steele (*Aegis, the Union*) moved Motion 36: Expanding auto-enrolment.

She said: As I am sure most of you are aware, auto-enrolment is a Government initiative designed to encourage workers to save for their retirement. By next year, all employers must enrol their eligible employees into a workplace pension scheme and employers must contribute into it. Employees can opt out if they wish, but the reality is that very few do.

Since its introduction in 2012, over seven million workers in the UK are now saving into a workplace pension as a result of auto-enrolment. By the time the rollout is complete, the majority of workers in the UK will have access to a workplace pension, which will include an employer contribution of at least 3% of salary by April 2019.

The Government review of auto-enrolment is currently taking place. However, there is no requirement to change anything as a result of this review. As we all know, Brexit negotiations will extend well into 2018 and beyond, taking up much of the UK Government's time. However, we cannot allow them to use this as an excuse to stall long-term domestic pension policy.

Despite the general consensus that auto-enrolment has been a success, changes have to be made. It must be made simpler, fairer and open to all. In particular, the review must address the discrimination against the low paid and bring more people on low incomes into auto-enrolment. A major problem with the current approach is that to be eligible, you need to earn at least £10,000 a year in one job. This excludes many part-time workers who earn over the threshold, but from more than one job. We need action to either change auto-enrolment eligibility criteria or to scrap it altogether so that more low-paid workers qualify. By bringing together low-income multiple jobs, it would allow workers with more than one job to benefit from an employer contribution that they currently do not receive. At the moment, these workers are exempt because their earnings are looked at individually rather than combined and they are considered to be below the threshold. Hundreds of thousands of low-paid workers would immediately benefit if this changed.

Since the financial crash, there has been a massive increase in part-time roles and Government policy on pensions must reflect this. Widening the scope of auto-enrolment must be at the heart of the review so that more low-paid workers can benefit from an employer contribution and start saving for their retirement. It is completely unacceptable that someone with a job which pays £15,000 a year could, over time, build up a relatively decent pot whereas someone earning the same salary from two or more jobs gets absolutely nothing. It is an injustice that discriminates against the lower paid. As the majority of part-time workers are women, it is yet another contributory factor to the continued widening of the gender pensions gap.

We therefore call on the TUC to campaign that the 2017 review addresses ways to stop the low-paid falling through the cracks of auto-enrolment. We need a pensions policy that works for everyone. Please support this motion. Congress, I move.
(Applause)

John McDonnell (*GMB*) seconded Motion 36.

He said: Congress, pensions are vital to our members so we are proud to be seconding this motion. Auto-enrolment has brought millions of workers into saving for their retirement. Importantly for the GMB, it has brought thousands of employers to contribute towards the retirements of millions of workers. However, Congress, there is still much room for improvement. Our members are the real wealth-creators in our economy and we want to see employers do more to contribute to the retirement of their hardworking staff.

This motion rightly raises the concerns that part-time workers with multiple jobs currently do not meet the criteria for auto-enrolment and therefore miss out on the mechanism that has made it so successful. The GMB supports this motion, but believes it could go forward. Rather than seeking to count all jobs towards the criteria, why not scrap the criteria? The GMB believes that all staff should be auto-enrolled regardless of wage or age from day one of their employment. No worker should miss out on contributions towards their retirement from their employer.

There is also need for an improvement in the definition of “pensionable pay”, most often used for auto-enrolment. Using a qualified earnings definition unduly against the lowest earners removes a large proportion of their pay from being pensionable. The GMB demands the default definition of “pensionable pay” for auto-enrolment to be all pay. The TUC must campaign for better contribution rates from employers. Expecting employees to find more money to put into their workplace pensions rather than the employer is simply not on and unheard of before auto-enrolment.

We cannot let auto-enrolment drag workplace pensions down this slippery slope. Merely accepting the legal minimum for our members is not what trade unions do. The GMB will be campaigning across the workplace for improvements above and beyond the auto-enrolment minimum for all its members. That is our duty and our members deserve no less. We call on the TUC to back this campaign to ensure an auto-enrolment system worthy of working people in our country. I second. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: I am going to put Motion 36 to the vote. Those in favour, please show? Those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 36 was CARRIED*

The President: Congress, that concludes this afternoon's business. May I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this evening. Details of these meetings can be found at page 13 of the Congress guide.

Delegates, the General Council are keen to ensure that we maximise the equality information that we gather about Congress so that we can ensure that we can continue to try and make Congress more diverse and more reflective of our Movement. All delegates are encouraged to complete and return their equality monitoring survey that was sent to delegates by email before Congress. You still have time to return the survey and also have the opportunity to enter the data on a tablet on the TUC information stand in the exhibition area.

Could I also remind delegation leaders that the ballot for Section C of the General Council takes place tomorrow morning. Unions eligible to vote for Section C should collect their ballot papers from the TUC information stand, which is situated on the lower ground floor of the Brighton Centre, from 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. Ballot papers will only be provided in exchange for the official delegate form. Please note that the ballot closes at 12 noon tomorrow. Congress is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning. Thank you.

Congress adjourned at 5.28 p.m.