THE 158TH ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

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Held at:

The Brighton Centre, Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2GR

on:

Sunday, 13th September 2026,

Monday, 14th September 2026,

Tuesday, 15th September 2026

and

Wednesday, 16th September 2026

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Congress President:

STEVE GILLAN

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PROCEEDINGS – DAY THREE

(Tuesday, 13th September 2026)

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THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS:

TUESDAY, 15TH SEPTEMBER 2026

(Congress assembled at 9.30 a.m.)

The President: Will delegates please take their seats and would Congress come to order, please.

Video shown to Congress

The President: Good morning, Congress. Congress, please join me in thanking Leeloo Creed, whose wonderful viola performance has accompanied us throughout this morning's session. (*Applause*)

We will now see another short video celebrating union wins this year. Please do cheer. Delegates, please note that some of today's videos, may contain flashing and strobe-like effects.

"Union Wins" video shown to Congress

The President: Congress, can I remind you of our Statement of Conduct which is now on the screen.

Congress - I now call upon Rab Donnelly, Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to report to us on the progress of business and other Congress arrangements.

Rab Donnelly (*Chair, GPC*): Thanks, President. Good morning, Congress. The General Purposes Committee has approved a further emergency motion:

Emergency Motion 4, on exposing employer attempts to ban zero-hour contracts, will be moved by GMB.

Congress, the General Council has agreed a statement on Cleaner Politics. The President will advise when it is hoped to take the emergency motion and the General Council's statement. I will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decisions when necessary throughout Congress. Thank you.

The President: Thank you very much, Rab. We are also aware that this year several TUC affiliates are celebrating their 50th anniversary as registered trade unions. This includes the Royal College of Midwives, (*Applause*) the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists, (*Applause*) the Society of Radiographers (*Applause*) and NAPO. (*Applause*) Congratulations comrades, thank you for your contribution to our movement.

Congress, I would like to welcome Ivanna Khrapko, Deputy Chair of the State Employees Union of Ukraine and President of the Youth Council of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine. You are very, very welcome. (*Applause*)

SECTION 2 (CONTINUED): STRONG RIGHTS AT WORK AND PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION

The President: Congress, we will be starting this morning's session with the General Council report Section 2: Strong Rights at work and protection from discrimination, from page 22.

I now call paragraph 3.6 and 3.9, Motion 34, Public sector pay. The General Council supports the motion. I will call General Secretary, Paul Nowak, to explain its position. It will be moved by PCS, seconded by UNISON. I now call PCS as the mover.

Public sector pay

Beverley Laidlaw *(President, PCS*) moved Motion 34. *She said:* I am proud to move Motion 34 today on behalf of the Public and Commercial Services Union. This motion is more than about pay, though; it is about the future of our public services, it is about our economy and it is about the living standards of all working people. The research commissioned by PCS shows

that increasing public sector pay can drive the economy and it can strengthen our public services.

Congress, public sector workers have endured years of real-terms pay cuts while the cost of living has continued to rise. Teachers, health workers, civil servants and local government workers have all paid the price for those policies that have held our wages down and our living standards back. Despite this, the workers are once again being told that pay awards of 3.3% or 3.5% are enough. But our members know that is not enough. Energy bills are rising, council tax is rising, water bills are rising and food prices remain extremely high. Many workers this year will see pay awards swallowed up by those rising costs almost as quickly as they arrive, when they do.

Congress, PCS members tell us what this means in real life for them. One member told us, "Every year we are told we are valued. Every year our pay falls behind. Respect means nothing if all you get is applause and a thank you message."

Congress, that voice could come from any workplace represented in this hall. It represents the experience of our workers who have kept our public services running only to see their living standards squeezed year after year. Motion 34 is not simply an argument about fairness. It is an argument about economic common sense. The research commissioned by PCS shows that increasing public sector pay, especially for our low-paid workers, acts as an engine of growth and more than pays for itself through increased tax revenues, higher

spending in local economies and reduces reliance on the benefits that our members serve to the public. The research concluded that boosting pay can generate income for the government rather than cost the government. The message is very clear: if you boost pay, especially low pay, you grow the economy. Workers with more money in their pockets spend it in the local shops, the local cafes, the local pubs, the local businesses. That creates growth, that supports jobs and that helps revive the communities across the country. Low pay is not saving money. Low pay is creating recruitment and retention crises across our public services. Low pay is driving experienced workers out of the jobs that they love.

That is why the PCS has launched a new national campaign for pay justice. We are demanding a 10% pay rise as a first step towards restoring the value of public sector pay. It is not the end of the process. It is just the beginning of it.

Congress, as we make this case today though, I also want to send our solidarity to PCS members taking action in our outsourced areas, and that includes members employed by Sudexo on the HMRC contract in Northern Ireland. (*Applause*)

So, Congress, we sit here and we all look at this sign up here - Unity Works - and earlier in Congress delegates held up placards reminding us that we can achieve more working together than we can apart. This is not just a slogan for Congress. It is a strategy for winning.

Congress, Motion 34 is exactly what that is about, because when public sector unions act alone, we can be ignored. When we campaign together, we become impossible to ignore. So, when unions campaign together we are that harder to ignore and when the labour movement speaks with one voice we can win real change. Let's send a clear message from this Congress. Public sector workers do not need more restraint; they need more pay restoration. They do not need more warm words; they need fair pay. That is exactly what we are demanding today. The PCS says to the Government: invest in the people who deliver our public services because if you boost that pay, you grow the economy. Congress, please support Motion 34. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Bev. I now call UNISON.

James Robinson (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 34. *He said*: Congress, President, UNISON are proud to second this motion. Our members across the public sector have continued to be battered by the cost-of-living crisis, sky rocketing food prices, energy costs going through the roof, rental rates out of control. And Congress, across far too much of the public sector our pay awards are doing nothing to help us out. We cannot accept the myth that public sector pay restraint is needed when the very same Government invests billions in warfare. It is not enough to demand that the government invests. It is not enough to mobilise workers on a demonstration. We must meet this with a credible strike threat.

We have heard lots about the Employment Rights Act but less so about one of the fundamental changes required and, arguably, the most important change of all: the draconian measure that has prevented an all-out national strike for the past decade, locking down national bargaining units, with few exceptions, leaving the government to apply wage restraint by making worse offers in areas across the economy such as local government, health, school support and higher education staff.

In case you hadn't guessed, I am talking about the 50% threshold. We need to speak loud, clear and often, which the General Secretary of our union knows I very much do. A ruthless piece of Tory anti-union legislation which has not been met with the ruthless and uncompromising response we should have expected from a Labour Government with a 170 majority. I hear concessions have been made around participation rates. How dare they? That is not the Government or the employer's job to regulate workers on their fundamental right to strike. It is for us workers to decide if we have a mandate or not. While thresholds remain, we do not have a credible strike threat in national public sector pay ballots and without this, we do not have collective bargaining; instead, we have collective begging. We cannot continue to beg for government and employers to do the right thing. The 50% threshold must go now. Not tomorrow. Not on some fictitious assessment around participation levels, electronic ballots, or whatever excuse they come up with next. Our demands must be for them to go - today.

Make no mistake, Congress, a successful united campaign on pay and, if necessary, co-ordinated industrial action, will happen only if public service workers are freed from the anti-trade union laws that prevent collective action. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, James. I now call Paul Nowak to give the explanation.

The General Secretary: The General Council fully support this motion. It builds on existing Congress policy calling for public sector pay restoration and sustained public investment. We know that pay was held down year after year in the public sector. It still has not been fully restored and that has directly harmed our public services, causing severe staff shortages, burn-out and high staff turnover. That is bad for the workers but it is also bad for every single person who relies on our schools, our hospitals, our care homes, and it is in all of our interests for the government to negotiate better settlements, restoring both lost living standards and the quality of our public services.

But although the General Council supports union action to support better pay and conditions, specific decisions, whether that means taking co-ordinated industrial action or demanding that pay talks be re-opened, rests entirely with individual unions. Every worker has a fundamental right to negotiate their pay collectively with their colleagues in their union. It is a matter of fundamental union democracy that it is members who decide their own industrial strategy and their own path through democratic ballots. It is not for me or anyone else at the

TUC to make plans about whether workers go out on strike. That power rightly belongs to union members.

Finally, regarding the request in this motion and elsewhere on the agenda for a national demonstration, the General Council carefully considered these in line with our available resources. Our goal has to be making sure that any event delivers maximum impact while keeping the focus firmly on restoring our public services. With that, the General Council urges you to support the motion. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Paul. I am now going to call UCU.

Sean Vennell (*UCU*) spoke in support of Motion 34. *He said*: I work in the further education sector. In the last decade in the further education sector wages have been cut by 29% in real terms. We also suffered a situation during that same period where we have had 25,000 jobs disappear and one million adult education places have disappeared. This is a crisis which we need to resolve if we are to be able to teach and train our young people for the future they deserve.

The conference this year talks about unity. It is absolutely right the slogan is Unity Works, but it has to be unity in action. This motion clearly argues, and rightly so, that we need a national demonstration. We need to be visible as a movement at this moment in time. When you

think what has happened to the Labour Government in the last two years, the pressure has been from the right, the far right on this Government. From this Congress onwards we need to turn this round. It needs to be our moment for the principles and the progressive policies of this trade union movement to pressurise this Government to do what ordinary people need and want. That is why we call for co-ordinated action.

Last Friday, at the Further Education Committee in UCU, we voted for an aggregated ballot over pay. (*Applause*) Thank you. But we know that if we take that action we would be much stronger if others were doing the same. The idea that we can fight this Government college by college, workplace by workplace, section by section is not going to happen. Yes, we can get wins, and they are important ones we need to do so, but we need to do more than that. We need to organise and co-ordinate our resistance and be visible. When I look to what happened in Germany, with the AFD winning victory there, the usual stereotype of a bunch of old people who voted for far-right fascists in Germany, it is not true. When you look at what happened, unfortunately, it was the young people, who are desperate, without hope, without jobs. It is they who have been hoodwinked by the fascists and the far right.

We have one million unemployed 16 to 24 year-olds. We have not heard enough about this, Congress, this week so far. We have to do something for them. They need a future and we are the ones who can give them that future, if we are prepared to organise and resist and act collectively. Today we have an opportunity to not only support this motion but make sure that we fight for everybody, and we will fight because we are stronger together.

Finally I would like to say this. When it comes to the question of war and whether it is a priority, this Government has a choice; it is either war or wages. We say we want wages not weapons. This is something we can argue for across the movement and be successful in doing it. Solidarity. I support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Sean. I am now going to go to the vote for Motion 34. Will all those in favour please show? Those against please show? The motion is carried.

Motion 34 was **CARRIED.**

The President: I now call Composite Motion 9, Delivering insourcing across the public sector. The General Council supports the composite motion. Moved by UNISON, seconded by PCS and supported by RMT, UCU and FBU. Thank you.

Delivering insourcing across the public sector

(*Composing Motion 35 plus amendment, motion 36 plus amendment and motion 37*)

Andrea Egan (*General Secretary, UNISON*) moved Composite Motion 9. *She said:* I am proud to move this composite to ask for your support to send a clear message out of this hall today. A message for the Labour Government. A message for every local authority, NHS trust,

university, school, central government department and our railways. A message for all those companies that have been extracting billions of pounds in profits from our public purse. The message is this: the working people of this country have had enough. We demand the change that we were told would come. That starts with the Government delivering the massive wave of insourcing promised in its manifesto. (*Applause*)

Many of you at Congress will have some experience of outsourcing. You might have been at the sharp end of it yourselves. You have maybe represented members fighting it or dealing with its consequences. Or you may have taken part in campaigns against it. We have all seen where outsourcing leads: the inevitable erosion of terms and conditions, insecure contracts, union derecognition, the breaking up and decline of services, as the workforce (especially our black members, women, already the lowest paid) struggles to do more with less, at the same time as the outsourcing companies extract huge eye-watering profits. Let's remind ourselves of those profits. Serco made a profit of £78 million last year in the UK and that is up 35% on the previous year. The chief exec was paid a whopping £1.6 million, up a staggering 78% on the previous year.

There is nothing unusual about that. The public sector is littered with huge companies making huge profits on our backs. Compass, Sodexo, ISS, Mitie, HCRG - all making millions from public service contracts. And they do not make this money by doing things better. They make it by making the lives of working people unbearable.

So, let's be clear, Congress, these companies are not providing value for money for the taxpayer. The opposite is true. Outsourcing means that we waste money on obscene profits for shareholders and private equity companies and on the cost of managing these contracts. So often when we demand the services and the standard of living our communities need, we get asked, "Where's the money going to come from?" I am bored with that. We should be asking, "Where's the money going?" (*Applause*) And there is a clear message and a clear answer to that. It is being sucked out of the public sector purse by those greedy private profiteers, left, right and centre.

I think we can see from what the new Prime Minister has said that he shares our analysis that something has gone fundamentally wrong in this country and that at the root of the problem is the private ownership and running of services and industries. We agree with that but now we need to see action. What we need as a first step is for this Government and public sector employers to sit down with all our unions and go through service by service, contract by contract and bring those services back in house. If they do that then I do think over time accountability will be restored and so will the public's belief in public services and in democracy itself.

Congress, we stand for a country that looks after its people. We stand for services run for communities and not for profit. And we stand for policies that strengthen the public sector instead of stripping it back. All of these points lead to the fact that we do need an insourcing revolution. Congress, it is now time to start that. Insource now. I move. Solidarity. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Thank you very much, Andrea. I now call PCS who are seconding the motion.

Fran Heathcote (*General Secretary, PCS*) seconded Composite 9. *She said:* Congress, last year a group of our members in PCS scored a massive victory. These workers are employed as cleaners, as security guards and as caterers. They work for multi-national corporations such as G4S, OSC and ISS, with CEOs on seven-figure salaries, working on outsourced government contracts, and they were not even paid the London Living Wage. They were working-class people who had never been on strike before. Some had never joined a union before. Some were born in Britain, some were migrants to this country. They united together, they went on strike for months and they won. They forced the government to drag bigger outsourcing companies back to the negotiating table to broker an agreement across several different contracts. They got an inflation-busting pay increase to meet the London Living Wage, and not just their pay but also an increase in annual leave, contractual sick pay from day one, paid parental leave for the first time, bereavement leave and so much more. (*Applause*) Thank you.

We continued our campaign for the government to bring those contracts back in-house and from 2028, those 2,000 workers will be insourced. That is what can be achieved when we unite working-class people, but there is so much further to go, and so much more to do. The administration of the Civil Service pension scheme has been outsourced to Capita and we have members who have retired and have not been paid a pension for more than six months

in some cases, and members coming up to retirement or considering redundancy who cannot get a statement and plan their finances. Bereaved families and ill-health retirees have been left without vital support at some of the most difficult moments in their lives. Capita's incompetence and woeful performance has been bailed out by our members. A search team of HMRC workers seconded to help to clear the backlog. Now volunteers from the DWP have been drafted in, too. We see the same story time and again with outsourcing and privatisation with profitable corporations being bailed out by the public sector.

The Government have a choice: does it reward Capita for its failure and allow it to carry on regardless at the expense of retired or retiring civil servants? While Ministers are now saying publicly they are making plans to insource the pensions contract, Capita has now been handed a £900 million 10-year contract for running the payroll for a quarter of a million civil servants. What could possibly go wrong?

PCS is really, really proud to have joined the RMT and UNISON and signed up to the Insource Now campaign this week. (*Applause*) Hence the t-shirt. Congress, let's work together across our movement to end outsourcing across the board and protect jobs, workers and services. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Fran. I call next RMT.

Eddie Dempsey (*General Secretary, RMT*): Congress, it is fantastic now to be working with the PCS as well as UNISON on the Insource Now campaign. We were told for decades that outsourcing would deliver efficient public services and would save money for the taxpayer and improve things overall. What it has delivered in reality is a fragmented workforce, massive profit-taking out of our public services and worse public services overall. Outsourcing is a racket. We all know the employers - Mitie, Churchill, OCS. They organise right across all of our sectors, including health, transport, the lot, for profit, so, we have got to organise right across those sectors together, to defend our people and our public services.

We are here today to say that the era of outsourcing is over. We are coming for the multinational companies who have been eating our public services alive and have been driving down the terms and conditions of our members. They have created a two-tier workforce. They have destroyed the labour force in this country. And what is worse, you only have to look at who employs workers directly, including in my industry in the railway, train-operating companies, where some of them have 25% of the workforce from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. If you look at their supply chains, you are talking about 60%. Let's call that what it is: embedded systemic racism. Meanwhile the employers at the top get the Investor in People awards, they get all the plaudits for that, they never stop talking about ED&I but they are managing a two-tier workforce and that has got to be addressed.

We estimate that in Network Rail alone £290 million has been taken out of our industry and gone in profits to the outsourcers. Mitie had a turnover of £5 billion. The majority of that they told their shareholders came from government contracts. Rachel Reeves has said one in

three pounds of public money is spent on outsourcing. It is time to get that money back to reinvest in our public services and our people and it is time to bring the jobs back in-house and bring our people back to where they belong.

Our demands are fairly simple. We want the Prime Minister and the Secretaries of State of the various departments to direct their people to sit down with us and identify contract by contract where we can bring workers back in-house. Because if the job is permanent, the work should be permanent. If the public puts money in, the public should get value out. It is time to end the scourge of outsourcing and bring our people home. Solidarity! (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks, Eddie. UCU.

Andrew Feeney (*UCU*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9. *He said*: President, Congress, yesterday, in moving the motion we heard the UCU President describe the impact of an effective funding freeze across post-16 education since 2010. One consequence of this has been a greater reliance on outsourcing. UCU members in adult and further education, in prison education, in higher education, have long experienced fighting with our fellow unions against what Paul Nowak yesterday rightly called the outsourcing rip-off - a title familiar across the public sector.

A more recent development among education employers has been the creation of wholly-owned subsidiary companies across post-16 education, which enable these employers to evade both union agreements and their legal obligations to staff. This is a particularly pernicious problem currently affecting the post-92 higher education sector. These are the newer universities, often former polytechnics. When these polytechnics moved from local government control to become independent institutions, this was done on the basis of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which imposed a statutory obligation to automatically enrol all academic and teaching staff in the teachers' pension scheme. Despite the best effort of Capita, TPS remains a high-quality defined benefit pension scheme. It provides security for workers who are planning for and like myself beginning retirement. However, a growing number of institutions are now creating these wholly-owned subsidiaries to circumvent these obligations. This typically involves splitting the workforce; for example, splitting teaching-focused staff from active research staff or splitting current employees from potential future employees. One group is retained with union grade terms and conditions and a defined contribution pension scheme. The others are hived off into these bogus subsidiaries with inferior terms and conditions and far inferior defined contribution pensions.

We at UCU will fight locally every institution that seeks to undermine the security of our members. We are also asking the Government, though, to live up to its promise to halt outsourcing, to ensure that union agreed terms and conditions are available to all workers, and to immediately heed the recommendation of the House of Commons Education Select Committee to prohibit the creation of wholly-owned subsidiaries that are used to avoid the requirement for TPS membership. Please support this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks, Andrew. I now call FBU.

Maria Buck (*FBU*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9. *She said:* The fire and rescue service has been subjected to privatisation, outsourcing and contracting out for more three decades. Public assets have been sold and essential services have been fragmented. Workers' voices have been ignored and public safety has been placed behind private profit. In 2013, the Westminster Government sold the world-renowned Fire Service College at Moreton, to Capita. The college had state-of-the-art facilities and had helped train generations of firefighters yet it was sold off and it remains under private ownership and control. Now Ministers are considering the creation of a new College of Fire Rescue. The principle is right but the new college must be publicly owned, publicly funded and democratically governed. It must involve firefighters and their trade unions in its development and operation. It cannot become another private body operating within our public fire and rescue service.

The FBU makes the same argument about the Building Research Establishment (BRE) which was privatised under John Major's Government. The Grenfell Tower inquiry exposed serious failures in the testing and certification of building materials. We need a publicly owned independent testing and research facility. One that puts safety before commercial relationships, one that raises the alarm when dangerous materials are being used and one that ensures hazardous products are identified before they end up in people's homes.

Two decades ago, the Westminster Government attempted to impose regional control rooms on the fire and rescue service. That project failed but it still led to the creation of combined building controls in new buildings. Control staff are often the first point of contact for someone facing the worst moment of their life. Their work must not be outsourced, fragmented or delivered for profit. In London we saw the farce of the capital's fire engines being sold to AssetCo with the support of senior fire service managers. That company collapsed and its business reportedly offered for sale for £2. After that, London's fire engines and other services ended up in the hands of Babcock. These private companies have been responsible for training our firefighters and control staff. Our members have repeatedly raised concerns and the answer is clear - bring firefighters and control staff training back in house. It should never be shaped by market imperatives or the need to generate profit. Workers must have a voice.

But, Congress, insourcing must be done properly. Restructuring cannot mean moving names around on an organisational chart while workers carry the risk. And it should never be imposed through sham consultation. Public services belong in public hands. Bring our public services back in house. Congress, let us bring our public services back where they belong. Support the Composite. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Maria. I now call the final union, Unite to speak in this debate.

Suzanne Abachor (*Unite*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 9. *She said:* President, Congress, my story as an outsourced worker. I work in a London NHS hospital. I am an outsourced worker without an NHS pension. Every day I push and pull heavy beds with patients, moving equipment and helping keep patients safe. Sometimes we work for hours without stopping, especially when we are short-staffed. Congress, my question is: why are we outsourced? Is it simply to pay less or to worsen our conditions? No, Congress. The main reason is outsourcing divides workers and weakens trade unions. Outsourcing is an iron cage separating workers from workers. Insourcing a million public sector workers will not be easy, but difficulty must never become an excuse for injustice. The Government cannot promise insourcing in all areas while only making small changes on the margins. We must keep up the pressure not only for better pay but for better sickness pay, and to shift back towards the workers their rights.

Congress, I finish with this quote: If my hands are good enough for NHS patients, why are they not good enough for NHS fairness? Thank you. Support the motion. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Very well delivered, Suzanne. Before I go to the vote on this motion, I would just like to say the POA have had discussions with Andrea, Fran and Eddie from RMT about the POA joining in on this campaign and I can announce that is what we will be doing. (*Applause*) Mark Fairhurst will be speaking to a PCS fringe later regarding insourcing. Thank you.

I will go to the vote on Composite 9. All those in favour please show? All those against please show? That motion is clearly carried unanimously.

*Composite Motion 9 was **CARRIED.***

The President: I now call Motion 38, Defending professional autonomy in public services. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by AEP and seconded by the Royal College of Podiatry.

Defending professional autonomy in public services

Donna Wiggett (*General Secretary, AEP*) moved Motion 38. *She said*: Professional autonomy is not a privilege; it is a safeguard. It means being able to give an honest professional opinion about what a child needs, what a patient needs or what will keep a vulnerable person safe, even when that opinion is inconvenient, and even when acting on it will cost money.

Educational psychologists are regulated by the Health & Care Professions Council. We must exercise independent judgment, use evidence and clear ethical standards. You cannot hold someone accountable for their professional judgment and then deny them the time, resources, or freedom to exercise it, yet staff shortages, excessive caseloads and restrictive management systems are doing just that.

I have the evidence which the Government and some directors of local authority children and family services are choosing to ignore. Our members need time to work with children, listen to families and teach support teachers and collaborate with other professionals. Too often the pressure is to complete the assessment, meet the deadline and move on to the next case. The chance to help early before difficulties escalate is squeezed out.

I worked with a child whose difficulties in school were initially viewed as a behavioural issue. A standardised approach could have resulted in a quick intervention and little further investigation. However, through professional assessment and independent judgment, it became clear that the child had significant unmet communication and sensory needs. Appropriate recommendations were made and the child received the support they needed. Had professional judgment been overridden by a target-driven process, those needs might have remained unidentified and unmet.

When professional judgment is constrained, workers suffer, they are compromised. Children, young people, families and communities suffer, too. Decisions risk being driven by finances, performance indicators or organisational pressures rather than professional evidence and identified need. Of course services need timely decisions and accountability. Families waiting for help deserve both. But a target must never become a reason to overlook a child's need or change professional advice.

Colleagues, teachers, social workers and healthcare professionals will recognise these pressures, as will you, comrades. Professional autonomy and trade union values go hand in hand. We cannot uphold professional standards if our expertise is disregarded. We cannot act ethically if we are prevented from giving honest professional advice. We cannot deliver high-quality public services without adequate staffing, manageable workloads and the freedom to exercise our professional responsibilities. No worker should have to defend these principles alone. We need strong collective bargaining and protection for those who raise concerns.

This motion asks the General Council to work with affiliates to defend independent judgment, to press government and employers for practical protections, to challenge targets and systems that undermine ethical practice, and to continue to campaign for properly funded public services.

Congress, everyone who relies on our public services should be able to trust that professional advice reflects their needs, and everyone giving that advice should be given the freedom and support to speak honestly and act in the best interests of those they serve. Defending our principles is our responsibility as professionals and our strength as trade unionists. I move. Please support Motion 38. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Donna. I do remember you asking me to get you into Magilligan Prison for a park run. I will make those arrangements but I cannot guarantee you will get back out! Seconded by the Royal College of Podiatry.

Jodie Lucas (*RCPod)* seconded Motion 38. *She said*: Congress, we are proud to support this motion. Daniel H Pink reported that human motivation is driven by autonomy, mastery and purpose. Professional autonomy is not a perk, it is not a privilege, it is one of the foundations of safe effective public services. Professional autonomy means having the power to make independent expert decisions. It does not mean working in isolation. Professional autonomy does not work without a supportive and connected work community. Across our healthcare services highly trained professionals make decisions every day that affect people's health, well-being and lives. Technology, protocols and new ways of working all have an important role to play but they must support professional judgment, not replace it. No algorithm can substitute for the knowledge, experience and critical thinking of a trained professional.

I work in the NHS as an inpatient podiatrist in the acute sector. I work with a range of healthcare professionals including doctors, specialist nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, amongst others. We all have professional autonomy but our decisions regarding discharge planning for our patients are made as a team. These decisions must be guided by professional expertise, evidence and ethical responsibility. This ensures that our patients are discharged from hospital safely and effectively. This should not be affected by arbitrary targets, financial pressures or managerial interference.

Let's be clear, autonomy does not mean a lack of accountability. As healthcare professionals we are regulated and work within clear standards, governance frameworks and professional codes. We are accountable for our decisions. But accountability and autonomy go hand in hand. You cannot expect professionals to take responsibility for outcomes while denying them the authority to exercise their professional judgments. When skilled professionals are trained to do the jobs that we are trained to do, services work better, patients receive the right care sooner, problems are identified earlier, risks are managed more effectively and the pressure on overstretched services is reduced. Yet too many workers tell us that their judgment is being overridden by targets, restricted by bureaucracy and constrained by systems that prioritise process over people. Professional autonomy also matters for recruitment and retention. People want to work in environments where their expertise is valued, where they can develop their skills, influence services and provide the best care. Several studies have revealed that a lack of professional autonomy and professional recognition is a major factor for professional burn-out. How is that good for our staff? How is that good for the public using our services? If we want to retain experienced staff and attract the next generation into our professions, we must create workplaces built on trust and respect.

Congress, this motion is about protecting standards, protecting staff and protecting the people who rely on our public services. So, let us support our health and care professionals to continue to work with autonomy, mastery and purpose and ensure that professional voices are heard, professional judgment is respected and professional autonomy is protected. We

are pleased to support this motion and we urge Congress to do the same. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Jodie. I am now going to be to vote on Motion 38. All those in favour? All those against? Thank you, that is carried.

*Motion 38 was **CARRIED.***

SECTION 3 (CONTINUED): A FAIRER ECONOMY AND STRONGER PUBLIC SERVICES

The President: Delegates, we continue with Section 3 of the General Council report: A fairer economy and strong public services. Before we begin I will outline how I intend to take the debate on Motion 55 and Motion 56. I will take this as a group debate. I will take Motions 55 and 56 together as a single debate along with paragraph 3.7 of the General Council report. First, I will call the mover and seconder of Motion 55. I will then call the mover and seconder of Motion 56. I will then call the unions that have indicated the wish to speak. We will then vote on the motions in that order. In respect of Motion 55, there is only the mover and seconder and, in actual fact, the same for Motion 56. I call ASLEF to move Motion 55.

Dave Calfe (*General Secretary, ASLEF*) moved Motion 55. *He said*: £2.9 billion - that is the amount of money that has left our railways in dividend payments to the shareholders of

rolling stock companies (or ROSCOs as we call them) in the last five years. That is £2.9 billion which instead of being reinvested back into our rail network, has left the UK to go to shareholders in multiple countries, some of whom, unsurprisingly, are based in tax havens.

Part of the legacy of privatisation in 1993 and the creation of ROSCOs is the fact the Government sold the publicly owned trains to the big three newly created ROSCOs. These trains were initially bought with public money. Some of the stock sold off at the beginning of privatisation is still in use on the network today, over 30 years later, with ROSCOs still profiting from us paying the leases. Not a bad investment for private equity but a rip-off for the taxpayers and passengers, who are paying twice for the same assets. ROSCO profiteering did not even cease during the pandemic, with £299 million being paid out in dividends on top of profits made of over £450 million. Congress, this is all money which should have been reinvested back into our railways, with our research showing it could reduce ticket prices by 25%.

Now Congress, this Labour Government is taking positive steps on public ownership of the railways, which we warmly welcome and have long lobbied for: bringing the franchised passenger service back into public ownership and bringing the track and train back together under Great British Railways. This is part of the puzzle but we still see scope for ownership to go further with open access services and freight too, but, most importantly, we need to ensure that the trains themselves are publicly owned. There is no real control without full ownership of the assets and the infrastructure.

We were disappointed to see this week that the Trans-Pennine Express is using the wasteful ROSCO financing model for its most recent £1 billion order for new trains. This £1 billion is the cost for the order on top of which the ROSCOs financing the deal will make a handsome return via leasing fees. These new trains will not be in operation until GBR is established, meaning these are the first trains to be procured for GBR yet, despite this, these trains will be owned by private profiteers, with taxpayers and the travelling passengers paying the leasing fees.

Congress, this is a negative step, one which will lock GBR into a long leasing contract and restrict GBR's flexibility and complete control of the assets it needs to run services. This ROSCO farce is why we have launched Own Our Trains. With a Labour Government overseeing the creation of GBR, we must continue to push for alternative financing models whether buying directly, as Labour Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotherham has done or using government-issued green bonds, which, as our 2024 report revealed, could provide a minimum of 40% savings.

There is also a third option utilising not-for-profit financing by the UK signing up to the EUROFIMA Convention. The Convention was established in 1955 but yet we have never signed up. We need the UK Government to sign up to the Convention to give the UK and devolved Governments another financing option which delivers public ownership.

Congress, for too long we have seen money leave our rail network in profits and dividend payments to privateers or at times going offshore. It is time to end this practice and deliver true public ownership. It is time we owned our trains. Let us keep money on the track, not offshore. Conference, please support. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Very well delivered, Dave. Seconded by GMB.

Dean Ismay (*GMB*) seconded Motion 35. *He said*: I am proud to second this motion in solidarity with railway workers. GMB members make some of the rolling stock of trains that run on our network, including in my own region at the CAF depot in Newport. Because of privatisation our members' jobs rely on the middle man leasing system for the trains they make. This middle man is the privately owned rolling stock leasing companies. The current system inflates the industry cost of existing rolling stock, reduces funding available for new trains and acts as a drag on investment. This drains money out of railways before the trains even leave the depot. It also holds back our ability to create more trains and create more unionised jobs here in Britain. That means less incentive to keep our members in work, making new and better trains for our comrades in the rail unions to work on, and for passengers to use. It is no wonder the costs of leasing rolling stock of trains have risen by a quarter in the last year alone when you look at the dividends that private rolling stock owning companies pay out. We should keep that money on the track, not send it to the shareholders.

The GMB fully supports the public ownership of railways and the rest of the transport system. It is time to nationalise the middle man and create a properly publicly owned railway system that delivers for working people, whether they make the trains, drive them, maintain them, clean them or travel on them. Congress, please support. I second. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Thank you, Dean. Motion 56, A Great British Railways that works for all. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by TSSA and seconded by RMT.

A Great British Railways that works for all

Maryam Eslamdoust (*General Secretary, TSSA*) moved Motion 56. *She said*: Congress, when the Government pushed its plans in Opposition to create Great British Railways, this was a huge victory for the trade union movement. Our years of campaigning against privatisation had finally paid off. It was not exactly what we wanted. Freight and rolling stock, as we have just debated, would remain in public hands and open access would still be allowed to operate, but this was a significant step towards the public ownership of a railway that put people before profit. GBR is an historic opportunity, not only to begin building a transport system fit for the 21st century but for the workers who keep Britain moving. Public ownership of the train operating companies should be the time to right the wrongs of privatisation, ending fragmentation of industrial relations and the erosion of pay and conditions. It is also an opportunity for this Government to prove it is serious about not only passing legislation on

rights in the workplace but modelling and embodying what it means to be a good employer and not only protecting but levelling up pay, pensions, travel facilities, terms and conditions.

But Congress, the Government is squandering that opportunity because that is not what we have seen in this transition. To be crystal clear, we support GBR and have been the most vocal champions of public ownership of the railways, but we cannot support a process that puts our members' jobs on the line, one that has derecognised trade unions in the transition, or sees our members facing uncertainty over the new structures, their travel facilities or their pensions. Before the movement that GBR had begun in earnest, our members had been threatened with 870 job cuts at Network Rail. With thousands more jobs being taken out of the organisation, cuts at Network Rail for infrastructure works have also had knock-on effects in the infrastructure companies where job losses have followed. We have also seen job cuts as a direct result of the GBR transition at South Eastern where the functions of the train-operating companies and Network Rail have been combined in anticipation of the new company.

Congress, our people make the railways what they are. Handing out redundancies before the new organisation is even on its feet is no way to build a railway that works for anyone, let alone for the workers at the heart of the networks. Even before moving into GBR, some of our Network Rail members were TUPE-ed over into a wholly owned subsidiary Platform4, where TSSA was unilaterally de-recognised. Platform4 is a public company. A public company! For the Government of the Employment Rights Act and Make Work Pay that should be a source of shame. Congress, you cannot build a public service on the back of cuts and job

losses and you cannot build support for that public service if you lay off the people with the expertise to make it work. So our demands are simple:

1. Guaranteed job protection throughout the GBR transition.

2. Protection for pensions.

3. Level up pay, terms and conditions and travel facilities for all staff.

4. Collective bargaining agreements covering every worker in the company including management grades.

We will continue to fight against cuts and job losses for railway investment and a just transition for our members, but we need the support of our movement in taking that fight to the Department of Transport. Please support Motion 56. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Mariam. RMT.

Eddie Dempsey (*General Secretary, RMT*) seconded Motion 56. *He said*: Great British Railways is a fantastic thing. We have been campaigning for this for many, many years, but we want to make sure that the public and the workers get the very best out of this opportunity. We do not want to see Great British Railways having been set up, recognising the problems that fragmentation has created in our industry over the past decades of privatisation, remerge within the structures of GBR. In order to get the full benefits out of it, we want to see a single employer, we want to see a single company and we want to see the

supply chain looked at, too. The many, many thousands of workers who sit outside the proposed structures of GBR at this time, we want to see those people brought in-house. We have estimated there are tens of millions of pounds still leaking out of our industry through contracts in the supply chain. This is money that we should have to reinvest in our infrastructure. We want to see GBR used as the engine to kickstart manufacturing in Britain. We want to see the secondary supply chain developed. We want to see it developed to the point where we are using the purchasing power of GBR to once again manufacture and build trains in Britain. Those are the opportunities that are in front of us. We do not want to see them lost through decisions to maintain fragmentation and to avoid setting up a single employer.

We also want to see Labour's plan for rail delivered in full. We want an integrated collective bargaining framework that covers the industry so that we can make the best out of a genuine workforce plan to look after the industry. There are 50,000 skilled workers due to retire in rail over the next period. Those people have got to be replaced. We want a national apprenticeship scheme, making sure we are getting school leavers, particularly from areas that have been deindustrialised and where there is high youth unemployment. We want to see a nationally promoted transfer/reorganisation/redundancy scheme so that we can retain skill in our industry and move labour to where it is needed, rather than the situation we see at present where you can have a redundancy situation in one depot and they are crying out for skilled labour in another depot two miles down the line. This is the logic of GBR. It is to eradicate those inefficiencies that existed under privatisation. What you are being asked to do, Congress, is to support the transport unions in making sure the opportunities of GBR are

not lost, that the benefit is felt by the public, that the benefit is felt by the workers and that we get what we signed up. So, please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks, Eddie. I will now take the votes on each motion in turn. So, on Motion 55 vote, all those in favour please show. All those against? Then I will go to the vote on Motion 56. All those in favour please show? All those against? Those motions are carried.

*Motion 55 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 56 was **CARRIED**.*

The President: I now call paragraph 3.14 and Motion 57, Hands off collective bargaining. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by NAPO and seconded by UNISON.

Hands off collective bargaining

Ian Lawrence (*General Secretary, NAPO*) moved Motion 57. *He said*: Thank you, President. I have been to this rostrum a few times over the decades and I cannot remember ever starting a speech with a rhetorical question which is simply: what the hell am I doing here? Because

the notion of bringing a motion of this nature at a time when we have a Labour Government which is committed to re-establishing the principles of collective bargaining is concerning.

As the motion says, we are in a time where we have seen a Government commit itself again to the idea of tripartite discussions through the Public Services Forum, and I wish our sectoral representatives well in their deliberations, but we saw during the Probation Service pay negotiations covering 2025/26 involving NAPO, UNISON and the GMB an agonising farce, where it took something like 11 months before a final offer was able to be put to those unions. Fair enough, some might say, that's the way the cookie crumbles, the nature of pay negotiations being an imprecise science means that these things can be delayed, but in our view, that was intolerable. Even if that were entirely true, it has always been my understanding and experience that when a best and final offer is made by an employer, in this case a Civil Service department, that that would be put before the members of the respective unions and our own governance structures would determine how that was presented to our members.

Essentially, the three options, as you well know are: to recommend rejection, to recommend acceptance, or to put that offer to members on a neutral basis. But we saw something different at the end of those pay negotiations, something quite sinister, in that someone, somewhere in the dark corridors of the Treasury and Cabinet Office decided that that offer could only be put to NAPO members. By this time UNISON and GMB had recommended acceptance and we respect that decision and I am not questioning that at all, but, as far as NAPO was concerned, we had to recommend acceptance or the offer would be taken off the

table entirely. That is disgusting. I could understand that under a Tory Administration given the tricks that they played over the years. That was unacceptable and hence the nature of this motion. It was a blatant attempt at coercion, you might say blackmail as well, and it is unacceptable. It was through the good offices of the General Secretary of the TUC that Paul, myself and Ben Cockburn met with David Lammy, the then DPM, to broker some arrangement where we are able to put that offer to our members on a neutral basis. It should not have taken that. The reason for the motion is that if we are going to take part in the Public Service Forum, which of course we welcome, we need to make it clear we cannot see this sort of behaviour taking place in terms of collective bargaining.

Here is my conclusion. If the Government wants to allow its officials in the Cabinet Office and Treasury to interfere in collective bargaining, then I say get them in the negotiations and let's hear what they have to say for themselves so we are clear and certain about what we can say to members. The idea that some faceless bureaucrat is basically able to determine what happens to an offer is unacceptable.

The other thing they should know is no one tells my union what it should say to its members. Nobody determines that. Our members determine what the decision will be on the pay offer. Nobody should be under any illusion that they can treat any trade union with such disrespect going forward. They came for us, they tried to undermine us and they failed.

I call on Congress to provide a clear steer to our sectoral representatives in the Public Service Forum that we need a fresh approach to the concept of free collective bargaining so that our respective members are confident this Government will do what it says it will do on the tin. We need confidence restored in collective bargaining and no interference through back door methods. I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Well done, Ian. UNISON.

Neil Richardson (*UNISON*) seconded Motion 57. *He said*: UNISON is pleased to second NAPO's motion. You have heard from Ian the farce that happened to us in those negotiations. He is putting it lightly to say that the 2025/26 pay talks were extremely challenging. And although the unions work well together as we always do, and we have comrades in NAPO, the role of the Cabinet Office and the Treasury in directing Civil Service pay talks lacked and lacks transparency. It left us feeling that we do not get to engage with the real decision-makers. Congress, both this and the staffing crisis in probation are the direct result of poorly conceived and poorly executed centralisation in the Civil Service.

The 2024 Labour Manifesto acknowledged that the centralisation of probation had not been a success and this was backed up by subsequent reports from the Public Accounts Committee, the National Audit Office and HM Inspectorate of the Probation Service. We were promised a strategic review. Probation was once a successful world-renowned award-winning local service. We were run on the footprint of local government, police forces and the NHS and we

were managed by independent chief probation officers. Yes, we got these Tory privatisation policies which have failed to endure, but the centralisation under the Ministry of Justice persists and central government has shown itself ill-suited to run probation, and yet despite its Manifesto, so far the Labour Government has kept faith with the Civil Service as the best place to run probation. UNISON believes that probation should be devolved to local areas again, managed by chief probation officers and overseen by democratically elected mayors. We want the service back in touch with local statutory partners who are properly able to define and address local need.

Congress, our members have borne the brunt of unmanageable workloads for many, many years. There has been an abject failure to properly estimate the staff need for a proper probation service, to the extent that we are now short of the more than 5,000 full-time staff needed to meet sentence management demand, demand which our members are expected to pick up. It is not safe, it is not sustainable. Vacancy levels in key roles are alarmingly high. We all know what we need to do. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Neil. I now call PCS.

Hector Wesley (*PCS*) spoke in support of Motion 57. *He said*: Congress, like many other unions present, in PCS we recognise that there are emerging indications that the current Labour Administration wants to do business in a different way to what we have become used to for far too long. That is welcome but we do have disputes and I will perhaps mention that

a little later in my contribution. We have long since argued that trade unions working across every sector in the economy have a valuable role to play in shaping and delivering government policy. This is particularly the case in the public sector where unions representing millions of people can bring the collective experience of their members in every field to the table.

Congress, the reference in the motion to negative attitudes towards trade unions and our primary function to protect and improve the interests of our members reflects our experience in PCS. Over many years, meaningful negotiation with a view to reaching agreement became consultation at best with employers and then the government informing us of what they intended to implement, rather than any genuine attempt to reach agreement. Not only have previous governments undermined trade unions in collective bargaining, in the case of my union, the previous Tory Government unsuccessfully tried to smash our union financially when we resisted tax on low-paid members. I work in an organisation where a decade ago, senior management actually drew up a written strategy to bust our union. That strategy got leaked to the union and we used it to campaign among our members.

A change of approach is welcome, and we need to participate and engage on behalf of our members, but we share the concerns of the mover of this motion that participation in the Public Service Forum must never replace genuine collective bargaining. We congratulate NAPO on achieving improved offers for members despite the attempts of the Treasury and the Cabinet Office to restrict their ability to engage with their own membership. Any return to genuine collaboration must recognise the fundamental necessity for unions to both represent and consult with trade union members across our democratic structures. They

must also respect our right to, where necessary, take industrial action and ballot our members in that regard. I am very glad that my executive made a decision that we will be balloting our members on 20th October for industrial action in a wide-ranging campaign to protect our members' interests. (*Applause*)

Workers trust trade unions. We decide through our democratic processes what is in the best interests of those we represent. For the Public Service Forum to work all parties must recognise that principle. No government can be allowed to interfere with, veto or have the final say on how and what we communicate to our members. These are fundamental issues I hope we all endorse. Please support the motion, Conference, thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Hector. I am now going to go to the vote on Motion 57. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 57 was **CARRIED**.*

The President: I now call Motion 58, Insufficient staffing threatens major reforms to probation and Cafcass services. The General Council to support the motion. Moved by NAPO, seconded by POA.

Insufficient staffing threatens major reforms to probation and Cafcass services

Ben Corbyn (*NAPO*) moved Motion 58. *He said*: The Probation Service and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) - both groups of members have seen two separate government actions this year which it is important we positively support, in the form of the passing of the Sentencing Act and the national roll-out of child-focused courts. Unfortunately, both agencies are affected by longstanding and linked issues of insufficient staffing and excessive workload. These problems have not been addressed over the course of years by the employers involved and now jeopardise the aims of the Sentencing Act and child-focused courts. For Cafcass this threatens the safety and welfare of children in that their best interests might not be met and their voices might not be heard in family courts. For the Probation Service this affects the fundamental ability of our members to do rehabilitative work that is meaningful as well as to protect prior and potential victims of offences.

In Cafcass, many practitioners routinely work over their contracted hours, with a NAPO survey indicating four out of five employees did so each week without pay. The same survey clearly stated that most staff who responded have workloads above levels they considered safe, for some practitioners by approximately a third more. Where vacancies remain unfilled for extended periods, due in no small part to poor pay in relation to other comparable areas. Where existing staff are called on to take additional work while new staff are recruited and trained.

Members working for Cafcass report what they believe to be an increasing reliance on the use of one-off payments for new staff to incentivise them to join rather than remuneration at a level sufficient to retain existing workers.

The Probation Service continues to exist through many of its employees doing thousands of hours - thousands of hours - of unpaid overtime each year. This is the result of the exploitation of the strong vocational values of many of its member workers combined with an established culture of fear and bullying across much of the organisation. Vacancy rates of 25% or more have existed in key roles - probation officers, case administrators, victim liaison officers and unpaid work supervisors, or, as you might know them community services workers, across much of England and Wales for years. Work-related stress is, in our view, the key cause of thousands of days of sickness absence caused by mental ill-health and a prominent driver behind the decision of many staff, relatively new and more experienced, to leave the Probation Service.

This motion calls for two separate forms of support for our members. First, to require the government to review the impact of child-focused courts on current staffing levels, together with the urgent allocation of resources to ensure that Cafcass has the staff in place it needs to ensure the guaranteed success of the programme. Secondly, to press the Government to honour its Manifesto commitment to review probation governance and endorse NAPO's call for emergency investment in the service to remedy the current workload and staffing crisis.

To finish, in August, more than 90% of NAPO members in the Probation Service who voted in an indicative ballot supported the move to a formal ballot on industrial action, given the lack of a sufficient response by the Government and/or employer to the workload crisis. This crisis has destroyed members' lives and threatens our professional identity. If voted for by members, we will begin action short of strike action working contracted hours, before progressing to rolling days of strike action. Such is the level of exploitation of our unpaid labour by this employer, many members believe that action short of strike action in and of itself threatens the existence and operations of the Probation Service. Our plans for this formal ballot, including the expected timescale involved, will be shared with all members by the end of this week. In addition to calling for Congress support for this motion, we call for your support and solidarity as NAPO members in the Probation Service move to this planned formal ballot on industrial action. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Ben. POA.

Jackie Marshall (*POA*) seconded Motion 58. *She said*: There is much in these reforms we should welcome. The Sentencing Act, if implemented properly and supported by a properly resourced Probation Service, has the potential to make a real difference. We have an opportunity to reduce unnecessary pressure on the prison estate, support rehabilitation and ultimately reduce reoffending. But we should be clear, legislation does not deliver these outcomes on its own. It is probation staff that make rehabilitation happen. It is probation staff who manage risk. We are the people to address the causes of offending and protect the public. And those staff are already under enormous pressure. We cannot expect the

Probation Service to deliver more with fewer staff, increasing workloads and inadequate resources. If government genuinely wants reforms to succeed then it has to invest in the workforce needed to deliver them. That is why this motion is right to call for an urgent review of the future of the Probation Service within HMPPS and for the emergency investment that NAPO has been calling for.

Congress, the same principle applies to Cafcass. We all understand why child-focused courts are important. Family proceedings can be incredibly stressful and damaging for children, particularly when disputes become prolonged and entrenched. Anything that helps families reach earlier, more constructive and mediated resolutions has to be welcomed, but again, the success of the policy depends on the people delivering it. We cannot create new approaches and new expectations without asking whether Cafcass has the staffing and resources to meet them. If we want child-focused courts to work, then Cafcass must have the capacity to do the job properly. That means enough staff, manageable workloads, proper support and the resources necessary to attract and retain the professionals we need, otherwise there is a real danger that a positive policy becomes undermined by the very pressures that our members are experiencing every day.

Congress, this motion is not opposing reform, quite the opposite. It is saying that good reforms deserve the resources necessary to succeed. We should be ambitious about what Probation and Cafcass can achieve, but we should also be honest about the conditions required to achieve it. Our members should not be expected to carry burdens of government policy through ever-increasing workloads and inadequate staffing. I urge Congress to support

this motion, to secure an urgent review on Probation's future, to endorse a call for emergency investment in the Probation Service and to demand the resources and staffing review that Cafcass needs. Because if government is serious about reducing re-offending, protecting children and improving outcomes for families, then it must also be serious about investing in professionals who make these outcomes possible. Please support the motion. Sorry, Steve. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Jackie. You just avoided a prison sentence there! There are no other speakers on this motion so I will go to the vote on Motion 58. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? The motion is carried.

*Motion 58 was **CARRIED**.*

SECTION 4: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

The President: Congress, we now move to Section 4 of the General Council report: Meeting the challenges of the future, from page 48. I now call paragraph 4.3 and Composite Motion 14, Climate heat emergency. The General Council supports the composite motion with an explanation, and I will call Sue Ferns to explain the General Council position. Moved by NEU, seconded by ASLEF, supported by FBU and there will be other speakers as well. Thank you. NEU to move.

Composite Motion 14, Climate heat emergency

(*Composing motion 66 plus amendments and motion 67*)

Daniel Kebede (*NEU*) moved Composite Motion 14. *He said*: Congress, the climate emergency is no longer a warning whispered from the future. It is at the classroom door. It is in the lungs of the firefighter. It is in the rail that buckles under the sun. It is in the cracked earth, the flooded street, the exhausted worker. And it is asking if we have the courage to tell the truth.

This summer children lost more than 15 million hours of learning during the June heatwave. More than 1,700 schools closed or finished early. In some classrooms, temperatures climbed above 40 degrees. Staff and pupils fainted. Children lay on the floor clutching their water bottles. Early years children cried for their mummies and daddies. Congress, that is not education. That is endurance. And when a classroom reaches 40 degrees even the most optimistic Minister must struggle to call it a "warm learning environment", though no doubt somewhere in Whitehall there is a working group asking whether a child's exercise book can double up as a fan. But behind that joke is a question of power. What kind of a country let's children swelter, firefighters face wildfires, rail workers manage danger and disruption and then tells working people there is no money to make our buildings, our services and our communities safe. We are told there is always money for weapons, the next procurement plan, the next military announcement, the next theatre of force, but when we ask for a green new deal, for insulated schools, cool classrooms, safe hospitals, reliable transport, flood

protection and public buildings fit for the century we are living in, suddenly the national purse becomes very shy.

Congress, security is not only measured in missiles. Security is a classroom that does not cook. Security is a hospital ward that can function in a heatwave. Security is a public transport system that does not buckle under the sun. Security is a home where an elderly person can breathe through the night. Security is a planet on which our children can live. We must be honest about why this happens. The climate crisis is not simply a failure of policy, although there has been plenty of that. It is not simply a failure of imagination, although Westminster has no shortage of it. It is the failure of an economic system that has made profit God and treated the living world as a sacrifice.

Capitalism looks at a forest and it sees timber. It looks at a river and it sees a drain. It looks at the atmosphere and sees a dumping ground. It looks at a child in an overheated classroom and asks not is that child safe but what will it cost. That is why we must name the cause. If we describe the symptoms, the heatwaves, the wildfires, the droughts, but refuse to name the economic order that produces them, we are like doctors diagnosing a fever whilst protecting the infection. And the infection is an economy organised around extraction, exploitation and endless accumulation. An economy that demands growth even when the soil is exhausted, the rivers are poisoned, the classroom are turned to ovens and the planet itself running out of breath.

Motion 66 answers that danger with practical demands:

- A legally enforceable maximum indoor working temperature.
- Protections for workers most at risk.
- Proper risk assessment.
- Investment in schools, hospitals, transport and critical infrastructure.
- Solar panels on public buildings.
- Community cooling hubs and green reps with paid time off, training and recognition.
- a wildfire summit (and rightly so)

And whilst we feel the crisis here in Britain, Britain is not at the centre of the suffering. Across the Global South, people are already living through the future that the rich world created - floods tearing through southern African, droughts breaking crops and livelihoods, heat making outdoor labour dangerous, hurricanes battering Caribbean communities. Those who did the least to cause this crisis are too often forced to pay first and pay most.

Congress, not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced. So let us say plainly that climate crisis is not an optional extra. It cannot wait until after growth, after security, after the next spending review, after the next election, after the next child faints in the classroom. It is an indictment of a system that has mistaken profit for progress and consumption for civilisation. We cannot greenwash our way out of this. We cannot offset our way out of this. We cannot leave the same corporations that burnt the house to the ground in charge of selling us the fire extinguishers. We need public ownership,

democratic planning, strong unions, climate reparations, a green new deal and a transition led not by profiteers but by workers and communities.

So Congress, let's be the labour movement that tells the truth when others sell illusions. Climate resilience is working-class security, the safety of a child in a classroom matters more than any weapons contract.

The President: Daniel, can you wrap up, please.

Daniel Kebede: The choice before us, Congress, is realism not radicalism. The fantasy is to pretend that it can be business as usual. Support Motion 66. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Well delivered. ASLEF.

Andrew Hood (*ASLEF*) seconded Composite Motion 14. *He said*: I want to congratulate the last speaker on a brilliant contribution, but I am going to be selfish and contribute on the maximum temperatures. Train drivers carry a huge responsibility for the safety of their passengers, their colleagues and every other train on the network. They have to maintain high levels of concentration while operating and monitoring multiple pieces of onboard equipment and safety systems, often at high speed, often in complex signalling areas. The effects of heat stress on our members are obvious. It increases fatigue, it affects

concentration, it affects alertness and it damages the health and well-being of the individuals concerned. But more than that, fatigue can directly affect the safe operation of trains and the safety of the thousands of passengers who rely on us every day to get us to their destination. Driving cabs are mostly glass so they can become extremely hot even in the mildest of summers. One summer, some years ago I must add, when driving, the train I was working in became too hot, I was forced to leave the cab, pour water over my head and sit in the shade on the station for a few minutes. There was no legislation to protect me. I have also seen members involved in incidents where heat stress was a contributing factor. Those incidents affected the safe operation of trains, put passengers and members at risk and could have cost those members their jobs.

Modern trains may have decent air-conditioning systems installed as standard, but there are still many older trains where the cooling system does not meet those standards or does not exist at all. And because of the way the companies lease and procure rolling stock, it can be extremely difficult and expensive to retro-fit decent cab cooling or air-conditioning into older trains. ASLEF has raised this issue with the industry for as long as I can remember and through our Better Driving Cabs campaign, we have made significant gains in getting cab cooling and air-conditioning fitted into a lot of the older trains, but there is still a long way to go. Driving cabs should have the same legal status as an indoor workplace. After all, for our members, the cab is the only place they work in for extended periods of time. A maximum temperature for workplaces like ours would not mean the railway simply grinds to halt if it gets to 26 degrees or more. It would mean that there would be proper mitigations put in place so that the welfare of our members and the safety of our passengers are protected. That could mean

the provision of water stations, more frequent breaks away from the cab and the relaxing of uniform standards, for example. But what is clear is this: as temperatures rise, protections for workers must rise with them. We cannot allow workplaces to continue to operate without maximum temperature legislation to protect the people who work in them. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Andrew. I now call the Fire Brigades Union.

Dwight Williams (*FBU*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 14. *He said*: I am a first-time delegate and first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, the FBU support this motion and are proud to do so. Climate change is not a problem for the future, it is here, and firefighters like myself are already on the front line of it. This summer firefighters across the UK have faced an extraordinary wildfire season with more than a thousand wildfire incidents in England and Wales alone. There were nearly 100 very large wildfires covering more than 30 hectares. In Scotland more than 500 firefighters tackled wildfires in the Cairngorms for more than a month, covering 25 kilometres. In Northern Ireland, firefighters dealt with two wildfires covering more 1,000 hectares each. And in Derbyshire, a wildfire at Tintwistle required 41 days of intervention. Across the country hundreds of firefighters were brought in for mutual aid to help.

This is not a handful of isolated incidents. This is a national emergency, and our members have done an incredible job, but they have faced exceptionally long working days, inadequate

relief, unsuitable PPE and in some cases inadequate welfare facilities. Regular fire kit is not suitable for wildfire operations. T-shirts are not sufficient.

Congress, the FBU has brought together our members and set out 10 demands to make the UK better prepared for the challenges ahead. Put simply the message is this. We need 5,000 more firefighters as a minimum to begin reversing 15 years of cuts. Every firefighter must have specialist lightweight PPE, specialist resources and nationally recognised training to tackle these incidents safely. We need suitable welfare facilities, a UK-wide wildfire strategy and investment to restore resilience and ensure safe crewing levels. We need a nationally co-ordinated national firefighting capability that complements, not replaces firefighters and we need better land management, prevention and public awareness, with an end to the postcode lottery.

The Government has now agreed to convene a national wildfire summit, chaired by the Prime Minister Andy Burnham with the FBU and other fire and rescue stakeholders. This is very welcome but, Congress, the summit must lead to action, because we cannot continue to respond to the growing climate emergency when the fire and rescue services have lost thousands of firefighters over the last 15 years.

That is why Motion 66 matters and we need to mitigate climate change, but we also have to adapt to the climate we already have. Our members are already fighting the consequences. Climate change is here. Our communities deserve resilient public services and firefighters

need the resources to protect them. Thank you for your solidarity. Support Motion 66. (*Applause*)

The President: For a first-time delegate that was very composed and very well delivered. Well done. I now call Sue Ferns to give the explanation on behalf of General Council.

Sue Ferns (*General Council*): Congress, we have just heard very powerful testimony about the health and safety impacts of climate change, especially in schools, on railways and in the fire service. The motion centres climate change as a priority for unions and calls on the TUC to campaign for greater infrastructure investment, solar panels on public buildings, legal rights for green reps, more resources for firefighters, action against far right climate denialism and centrally, for a legal maximum workplace temperature and stronger protections for those who are vulnerable to extreme heat.

The General Council already supports progress towards a maximum working temperature and the TUC came campaigns for employers to act when indoor working temperatures reach 24 degrees centigrade and for indoor work to stop at 30 degrees or 27 degrees for physical work. That is in line with World Health Organization and ILO guidance. This Composite asks the TUC to reference 26 degrees in this work, which we will do in line with existing policy and of course in consultation with workers in industries who have collectively agreed approaches to deal with high temperatures. We ask you to support with that explanation. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Sue. I am now going to call two further unions, the Bakers' Union and PCS.

Nick Mead (*BFAWU*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 14. *He said*: President, Congress, as climate change drives record-breaking temperatures worldwide, retail workers face increasingly unsafe conditions without a legally binding maximum working temperature. Rising global temperatures have transformed standard store floors, bakeries and stock rooms into severe heat hazards. While current health and safety guidelines establish a minimum indoor temperature, they fail to set a legal upper limit, leaving workers reliant on vague requirements for a "reasonable" working environment. Prolonged exposure to high heat leads to exhaustion, reduced concentration and heat stress, directly impacting employee health and safety.

I work for Greggs and Greggs took a decision this year to shut 10 shops where they could not fix the air con. They made that decision within days of the weather warning coming out. They also threw in other things such as telling us to wear shorts, take off aprons, have extra breaks and then looked at rotating staff through working on ovens. We are just one company but we did it.

Retailers must have a clear written action plan ready to be put in place when weather conditions indicate 24 degrees. Protecting retail workers from extreme heat is no longer just

a matter of workplace comfort. It is necessary in adapting to the realities of the climate crisis. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Nick. PCS.

Rose Baker (*PCS*) spoke in support of Composite 14. *She said*: Congress, sometimes the word "emergency" is used to the point of meaninglessness so that a real emergency is not treated seriously. Well, Congress, this is a real emergency and we need to take it seriously.

PCS supports the campaign for a maximum workplace temperature. We are fortunate enough that many of our workplaces are cooled, but also many are only passively ventilated and many facilities management members are working in dangerous conditions. We send solidarity to all workers who are working in the extreme heat in other sectors also, particularly those in the transport sector, who are ferrying people all day and only told to drink plenty of water.

Congress people have died in Britain this summer due is excess heat with the UK HSA reporting that 2,877 excess deaths were caused about by the May and June heatwaves. Action is needed urgently to prevent this happening again next year.

In PCS we are developing practical guidance for reps to respond to the issues, including a model heat agreement and a heat risk assessment that can be used in workplaces across

government. But as the largest body representing working people in the UK, the TUC must co-ordinate, if campaigning alone does not change the Government's mind, and consider an industrial approach, if this is needed. We must also press the Government to meet its commitment to achieving Net Zero and the full delivery of the Green Deal, with a just transition. We must be vigilant. We must not allow the new Government to backtrack or to be lukewarm on this issue. We must campaign for new well-paid jobs in the renewable energy sector as part of a just transition. We need to invest time, liaising with the relevant unions, and the Government needs to invest money in providing these workers in the renewables energy sector opportunities.

And I know just how we can obtain some funding - tax the rich! (*Applause*) Congress, we know who the villains are here. Farage told us all, "Enjoy the lovely weather", and the far right are threatening to cut existing green policy. It is all right for them, they are billionaires: they don't have to lift a finger in hot weather. It is the most vulnerable across the world who pay the price. We cannot separate class struggles from climate change. It is the fight of the working class against billionaires. So let's tax the rich, invest in renewable energy infrastructure and ensure a just transition for all workers, with climate change mitigating strategies so we never have workers dying because their workplaces are too hot. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Rose. We will now to go the vote on Composite Motion 14. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Motion 14 was **CARRIED**.*

Presentation of Awards

The President: We now turn to page 56, paragraph 5.3 of the General Council report. It is time for one of the highlights of Congress when we celebrate the incredible work of our workplace reps who bring the benefits of trade unionism to millions of workers every single day. To begin we are going to watch a short video celebrating their work.

Video shown to Congress

The President: Congress, I am sure you will agree it is always inspiring to see our lay reps in action. As our winners come forward, please show your appreciation and congratulate them. Please feel free to applaud loudly and let's raise the roof for them.

I now invite Paul Nowak to present this year's Women's Gold Badge award. This year's recipient of the Women's Gold Badge award is Jane Stewart from Unite. (*Applause and cheers*)

The winner of this year's Health and Safety award is Trevor Harris of PCS. (*Applause and cheers*)

The winner of this year's Youth award goes to Lynn Henderson of the Musicians' Union. (*Applause and cheers*)

This year's Learning Rep award goes to Wendy Aitman of UNISON. (*Applause and cheers*)

This year's Organising award goes to Gerard Kelly of USDAW. (*Applause and cheers*)

Before we close, I would like to congratulate all of our winners and thank every union rep whose work strengthens workplaces, supports members and improves lives. Thank you. (*Applause*)

SECTION 4 (CONTINUED): MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

The President: We continue with Section 4 of the General Council report which includes Motion 68 and the General Council Statement on Cleaner Politics. I now call Motion 68. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by Accord, seconded by Prospect.

Cleaner politics

Ged Nichols (*General Secretary, Accord*) moved Motion 68. *He said:* Congress, our movement has a proud history of standing up to the far right. As they sow division, we bring workers together. Where they exploit economic insecurity, we organise to tackle it. In our politics and in our media, the far right claim to be representing working people but they vote against workers' right and oppose our collective action. And as they rail against elites they take billions of pounds in donations from them.

Generations before us have fought their tactics, but today we face new challenges. Far-right actors anywhere in the world can broadcast hate directly on to our phone screens and their wealthy backers are pouring money into our politics, enabled by weaknesses in our laws which are meant to uphold accountability. Congress, we cannot allow workers' needs and voices to be crowded out. When politics is captured by the super-rich it is our members who lose out. It is their livelihoods and their communities that are on the line, but those who have no stake in their successes or their hardships should be able to dictate the terms of our politics.

Congress, it is not only our members who lose out. This is a threat to our very democracy. Those who have no stake in our country, who pay no taxes in our country should not be allowed to shape the politics of our country. This summer we have watched as Farage has evaded questions, changed his story and stood by his dodgy donors. First, his £5 million donation was a personal gift, then it was for his security and then it was a reward for campaigning for Brexit. The eye-watering donations made to Reform last week by crypto

billionaires have exposed gaping holes in our legislation and the far right will stop at nothing to exploit them.

So let's be clear, these people are no friends of this movement and our movement must respond to this threat. That is why I am moving this motion which calls on Congress to champion cleaner fairer politics. As the Government seeks to strengthen our laws, we call on them to be firm. We need online advertising rules fit for a digital age with stronger regulation of overseas funding. We need a permanent ban on untraceable crypto donations and the will to enforce it. We need to be clear those who refuse to pay taxes in our country have no right to distort our politics. (*Applause*) Please join me by supporting this motion. Defend our movement and our democracy against the far right. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Very well delivered there, Ged, and some excellent points, thank you. Prospect,

Sue Ferns (*Prospect*) seconded Motion 68. *She said*: This motion could not be more timely. When vast individual donations can outweigh the collective contributions of millions of working people, make no mistake, our democracy is under attack. Last week, £72 million was given to Reform by two wealthy cryptocurrency investors; the biggest political donation in history. Prospect is not affiliated to any political party, but we are proud to have a political fund because our members and working people everywhere deserve a voice in politics. Their

collective contributions are fundamentally different from the vast sums provided by Reform's offshore mega donors.

The latest figures show that every trade union political fund combined, affiliated or not, is worth less than half the amount given to Reform in just 48 hours. Now think about that. Trade union political funds represent the small contributions of millions of working people. These are trade union members who work here, pay their taxes here and rely on our public services. They are real people with a real stake in our society.

Let's just compare that to Nigel Farage's. We have heard about the £5 million donation given by Christopher Harborne (a gift, by the way still under investigation by the Parliamentary Standards Committee) Harborne says he was inspired by Margaret Thatcher and has a duty to fulfil her vision. Then there is Ben Delo. He pleaded guilty in the United States to failing to maintain an adequate anti-money laundering programme in violation of the Bank Secrecy Act. He was later pardoned by President Trump. Both live abroad and both have made massive amounts of money gambling on cryptocurrency. That is why action is needed on crypto donations.

The motion goes further. It calls for an end to overseas donations from people who do not pay tax here and tougher rules on foreign funded digital campaigning, including AI and social media. These are practical steps to expose dark money, tackle disinformation and restore trust in our democracy.

Congress, the voice of working people must not be silenced. We cannot allow massive individual donations to distort our democracy. Our politics must not be for sale. It is time for the Government to act. It is time to clean up politics. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Sue. Before I go to the vote on Motion 68, I will call the General Secretary to move the General Council's statement.

The General Secretary: Congress, President, the scale of donations made to Reform in recent days is unprecedented in British political history. It is a blatant attempt to effect a corporate takeover of our politics and it is now clear Reform is a party bought and paid for by billionaires totally opposed to the interests of working people and rolling in dodgy cash. That should ring alarm bells for anyone who cares about the health and integrity of our democracy. As I said yesterday, we should utterly reject the idea that this is in any way the same as millions of workers across this country contributing a few pounds to year to have their interests represented by their union. How that money is spent is democratically controlled and heavily regulated. Let me be clear, it is laughable that the likes of Lee Anderson are trying to make a comparison between billionaires buying influence and small contributions from care workers and fire fighters and so many more. "30p Lee" might not like it, but trade union funding is the cleanest money in our politics. (*Applause*)

In the years since corporate donations became unrestricted in the United States, we have watched with horror the corporate capture of that nation's democracy. Now we are seeing the Americanisation of British politics and the flagrant corruption of British politics and our movement will not roll over and allow Reform to sell off our democracy to the highest bidder. As unions, we will continue to work with government to clean up our politics, to protect our democracy and to strengthen public trust.

Congress, Reform has got the billionaires but we have got millions of workers. More than that, we have got right on our side and we have got the British public on our side. My message to Ben Delo and Christopher Harborne and any other would-be kleptocrats is this. Our movement was founded by and for working people. For over a century we have fought for working people to have a political voice and we will never let you drown it out. Please support Motion 68 and the General Council's statement. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Paul. I will now go to the vote on Motion 68. All those in favour please show? All those against? Motion 68 was carried. That is unanimous.

*Motion 68 was **CARRIED.***

The President: I will now go to the General Council's statement. All those in favour please show? All those against? That is unanimous as well. The General Council's statement was unanimously supported.

I now call Motion 69. The General Council supports the motion moved by Nautilus and seconded by RMT.

Cabotage, coastal community wealth building and resilience

Sascha Meijer (*General Secretary, Nautilus International*) moved Motion 69. *She said*: Sascha Meijer, General Secretary of Nautilus International, a UK and cross-border trade union for everybody with a maritime career. I am proud to move Motion 69.

Congress, almost everything that we rely on arrives by sea. Around 90% of the UK's trade is carried by ships: the food on our tables, the fuel that powers our economy, the goods in our shops, the components in our factories all depend on maritime transport. Yet the workers who make this possible, our members, are too often out of sight or out of mind or even forgotten. We call that sea blindness. For decades we have witnessed the steady erosion of our maritime workforce. Skilled jobs have disappeared. Training opportunities have declined. Communities which once relied upon high-quality maritime employment have been left behind. But this is not inevitable. Around the world more than 100 nations have recognised

that maritime capacity and capability matter. They have introduced cabotage laws and domestic employment measures to support local jobs, strategic resilience and economic security, yet the United Kingdom, an island nation, remains an outlier.

Congress, this is not about nationalism or populism. It is not about excluding workers from elsewhere. But this is about ensuring that public investment delivers public benefits. When taxpayers support ports, offshore energy, shipping or maritime infrastructure or training, there should be clear expectations attached, quality jobs, quality opportunities, collective bargaining and decent standards, because if government investment merely subsidises a race to the bottom then workers lose, communities lose and the economy loses. The trade union movement understands that resilience matters. We saw it during the global supply chain disruption and we see it in unstable international conditions. We see it in the growing recognition that strategic infrastructure cannot simply be left to market forces. A nation that loses essential skills becomes dependent upon others. A nation that loses its seafarers weakens its resilience and a nation that neglects its coastal communities leaves huge economic and social potential untapped.

Congress, cabotage is ultimately about fair work. It is about using economic policy to support workers rather than undermine them. It is about creating opportunities for the next generation. It is about rebuilding strong coastal communities with a level playing field and it is about ensuring that vital maritime capability remains part of the UK's future. I ask Congress to stand with seafarers, stand with coastal communities, stand with fair work and support this motion. I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Sascha. I now call the RMT.

Darren Proctor (*RMT*) seconded Motion 69. *He said*: Very well moved by Nautilus and the General Secretary, Sashca. I want to build on what has been stated. As a seafaring nation, we have been hoodwinked for a generation. We have seen the decline of seafarers and for those who may well not know (and I am not going to go into the technical aspects of cabotage), we have vessels around our coast where the vessel is country A, the seafarers on board might be country B and country C, the crewing agent, is country D, and then you have the UK.

So, what legislation is used to protect those individuals on board? Well, industry has hoodwinked us to say that it is too difficult so let's not apply anything, let's not give them any protection. No wage protection, no pensions, no health and safety, no maternity, no paternity, no ED&I - everything that has been spoken about in this room today. At the same time we have coastal communities that are deprived. I walk around the towns and cities where we have seafarers and port workers and I see the total decimation of those communities because of the lack of jobs. If we are a true seafaring nation, we have got to stop accepting the crumbs and we have got to get greedy. (*Applause*)

This is where it starts because no seafarer, no worker, and I said it yesterday, it is about all workers, should go to work and not expect that. No worker should expect not to go home.

We have seen fatalities around the UK coast and seafarers sent home in body bags with no investigation into their deaths because of the lack of regulation. Let's give hope to poor communities. Ports like Aberdeen, Glasgow, Holyhead, Dover, Liverpool that were once proud maritime cities. It is laughable now when we see the standard of work, the standard of pay and the lack of job security. Let us work and let the TUC facilitate where we can work together and go into schools and identify a career; not a job, a career that can span decades if we get it right. But I said it yesterday and I will say it again, we cannot claim to be a proud seafaring nation or a proud maritime nation, or a proud island nation until the individuals that deliver the goods, deliver the people and work around our coasts are working on decent terms and conditions. We will not continue to allow this to happen. We do not want the crumbs, let's get greedy. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Darren. Congress, we are going to move to the vote on Motion 69. All those in favour please show? All those against please show? The motion is carried.

Motion 69 was *CARRIED*.

The President: I now call Motion 70, The future of financial services, delivering shared prosperity for workers and communities. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by Aegis, seconded by Advance and I will be calling Unite as well.

The future of financial services, delivering shared prosperity for workers and communities

Brian McDaid (*General Secretary, Aegis*) moved Motion 70. *He said*: Believe it or not (with my youthful looks), I have been coming to Congress now for over two decades, and sometimes being a delegate from a financial union here or any union conference, meeting or training feels a bit like turning up at Glastonbury wearing a suit. Nobody can quite make sure what you are about. There is a perception that finance workers are different, that they are all highly paid bankers so do they really need a trade union. Our members wish someone would tell their payslips that, because our members are not just investment bankers in Canary Wharf. The vast majority are call centre advisers taking a call from someone who has just lost their job. They are fraud investigators stopping an elderly customer losing their life savings. They are mortgage advisers helping a young family buy their first home. The apprentice trying to build a career. The complaints handlers dealing with people at the most stressful moments of their lives. They are the IT engineers keeping systems secure and they are the cleaners opening the office before everyone else arrives. The majority of these people are low paid and on minimum wage. Like every worker represented in this hall, they deserve dignity, respect and a fair share of the wealth they create.

Congress, financial services employ well over one million people across the sector and it is one of our country's most productive industries. It generates enormous wealth. And who is it that creates that wealth? It is not the executives, it is not the shareholders. It is our members, the workers. Yet whilst many workers have experienced restructuring, rising workloads and wage restraint, we have watched executive rewards continue to climb.

Following the removal of the bankers' bonus cap, some of the UK's highest-paid bankers received annual packages of more than £16 million. Across the FTSE-100, median chief executive pay has now reached over £5 million a year, around 130 times the pay of the average worker in our sector.

Congress, this motion is not about attacking success. If a business succeeds, we should recognise it. If someone is rewarded for success, good luck to them. But there is a fundamental difference between rewarding success and rewarding inequality because if a company can afford multi-million pound executive rewards, it can afford decent pay, it can afford investment in skills, it can afford secure jobs; and it can afford to invest in the workforce that made that success possible. That is what fairness looks like.

Congress, this motion is not just about financial services. It is about the kind of economy and the kind of trade union movement we want to build. Today we are asking the TUC to do three things. Firstly, make financial services a strategic organising priority. More than one million workers keep the sector moving, yet too often their voices are overlooked. We need to organise where the economy is growing, not just where it has always been. Second, become the national voice for workers through this period of transformation. Whether it is AI, automation or restructuring, workers must help change, not simply be expected to live with the consequences after decisions have already been made. Third, lead the campaign for the fairer distribution of the wealth workers create in our sector. Let's loudly challenge the growing gap between boardroom rewards and front-line pay. When billions are returned to the top while workers are told budgets must remain constrained, that is a political choice.

Let's champion stronger collective bargaining. This will provide workers within the sector enormous potential power and let's make the case that when financial services succeed, the benefits should not only be felt in annual reports and executive accounts here or overseas but in workers' payslips and in the public services every community relies upon.

Congress, trade union solidarity should not stop at the school gate, it should not stop at the hospital door and it certainly should not stop when someone walks into an office. Because whether someone has a hardhat, a nurse's uniform, a supermarket apron or even a call centre headset, they are workers. They deserve dignity, they deserve fairness and they deserve the full solidarity of this movement.

Congress, this is a simple request we make today. To ask for a united voice from here and across our movement that the future of financial services will be shaped not only by markets or board rooms but by the working people whose skill, commitment and dedication make that success possible. I move this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Very well delivered, Brian. Seconded by Advance.

Leonard (*General Secretary, Advance*) seconded Motion 70. *He said*: I am a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I rise proudly to second this motion. Let's start with an unarguable truth: financial services is one of Britain's most vital industries. It is built and run and

sustained by a million workers up and down this country. Every day they serve customers, manage risk, drive innovation and generate the wealth that powers their economy. They are the backbone of this sector. Not the executives in the board rooms, not the shareholders collecting dividends. It is our members.

But look at the deal we are getting. While executive pay and bonuses keep climbing to new heights, the reality for most members is constant restructuring, ever-rising workloads, years of wage restraint and the permanent shadow of job insecurity hanging over our teams. Let us call out the deep inequality running right through this industry. Women workers are still stacked in the lowest-paid roles - customer service, operations, entry level positions - and they continue to carry the heaviest load of unpaid caring work, which blocks progression, holds back pay and denies them the chances they have earned. And that is not right.

As AI and automation and digital change sweep through our workplaces, we are clear, these changes must not be allowed to make these inequalities worse. They must not become an excuse to cut jobs, hold down pay and shift ever more power to the top. The truth is simple. The prosperity our members work to create is being hoarded by a tiny few. That is bad news for our communities and for our workers and in the long run for our sector itself. You cannot build a successful sustainable industry on the back of a burnt-out, insecure undervalued workforce.

That is why this motion matters. It sets out the roadmap we need: a proper national strategy for the future of financial services, built in real partnership between government, employers and trade unions. Strong collective bargaining so workers have a real say in pay and conditions. Fair profit-sharing so the wealth created is shared more equitably. Action to rein in the scandal of excessive director pay and bonus inequalities. And a real investment in our pay, our skills, our quality and public services that rely on the revenue our sector generates.

Congress, the future of financial services should be a future that everyone who works in it benefits from, not just those at the top. Please support this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Very well done, Jim. I now call Unite.

Shital Pau (*Unite*) spoke in support of Motion 70. *She said*: Workers in the banking sector, those of us that work in branches, people who support ordinary members of the public - we are a union workforce. Even before the introduction of AI digital tools put a wall between us and our customers. You have all noticed bank branches closing down. You might not see the way older people, more vulnerable people are shut out. Technology should help humans, not remove them from the equation. And now with the introduction of AI even more jobs are on the line. Our employers want us to use AI to open accounts, approve loans, provide insurance but customers also want the personal touch. They are humans and they want to feel like humans. They want to be able to trust the person helping them with their finances. But what jobs are going at entry level for young people? Customer-facing roles, part-time roles for

people with family and caring commitments. The role of the union is to negotiate for jobs, pay and conditions but the union is also the anchor that keeps our industry in the service of the public, and not just the shareholders.

I am very proud to be part of the Unite finance combine. This is a rep-led initiative organising workers from across the sector, sharing information, co-ordinating negotiations and getting real results. Unite fully supports the call for a national strategy for financial services. We stand ready to act in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other banking unions. Our finance combine shows that co-ordinated action works. Our combine shows that unity works. Please support this motion. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Well done, Shital. We are now going to put Motion 70 to the vote. Will all those in favour show? Will all those against show? The motion is carried.

*Motion 70 was **CARRIED.***

The President: Delegates, because of your discipline this morning we have made good progress with Congress business. If time allows we will take Emergency Motion 1 after Motion 74. Can speakers please be ready.

I now call Composite Motion 15, Protecting public service broadcasting. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by NUJ, seconded by WGGB and I will be calling two other unions, Equity and Prospect.

Protecting public service broadcasting

(*Composing Motion 71 and Motion 72*)

Fran Nulty (*Joint President, NUJ*) moved Composite Motion 15. *He said*: Congress, I earn my living, like many of you, serving the public. I do it on television. I work for the national broadcaster in Ireland RTE. We have talked a lot in this room since Sundays about the rise of the far right, about the damage being done by dis and misinformation. Delegates, a properly funded public service media is the antidote to that, if only those making the decisions realised there. Sadly, the reality is that the BBC has seen its funding cut in real terms by 30% in the last 15 years. Some 2,000 more job cuts are on the way, maybe more. The Comcast takeover of ITV is a threat too, reshaping the commercial broadcasting landscape here in the UK. STV has cut jobs and programmes. Now Channel 4 is to cut its staff by a quarter.

Each cut to public service media is a cut to our democracy, and it impacts us all. Protecting democracy is so important. God knows we have seen the cost when it is undermined. But it is not just about that. Many unions in this room have members who earn their living in or around the BBC and that is why we need your solidarity. Every cut reduces the ability of actors to enchant us, musicians to entertain, journalists to expose, camera operators to capture, painters to paint, carpenters to build sets, writers to broaden our minds. The electricians, the

cleaners, the cooks and the dozens of other trades keeping public service broadcasting on the air every hour of every day.

But the BBC is not just what we see or hear on the radio. It is not just the vital news that it delivers. Public service broadcasters seek to inform, to entertain and to educate, and to question. Delegates, can you imagine a world without that? It would be a world that is much darker. Because we have all seen what happens when a tech billionaire buys a social media platform on a whim, albeit a $44 billion whim. A platform that can quickly descend into a cesspit of hate, racism, abuse and misinformation.

There is a frontier beyond public service media. It is called social media - a wild west with little regulation, zero editorial scrutiny. It is not here to serve us. It is here to serve the shareholders. As the General Council said in its statement this morning, the Government must protect democracy from being captured by the super-rich and public service broadcasters are part of that campaign. The current Charter which governs the BBC ends in December of 2027. A new Royal Charter takes effect from 2028. The NUJ as part of its Back the BBC campaign is joining sister unions in calling for the resources and reforms the BBC needs to provide a quality public service to serve communities all over the UK. That includes addressing institutional issues, ending political appointments on the BBC board, introducing worker representation and providing proper universal funding, yet in the dying days of the current Charter, the knives are out. A new leadership team is dissecting services, cutting spending and cuttings jobs. These very decisions must not be allowed to dictate what comes next. In the coming months, the Government is due to publish its White Paper on the future

of the BBC. We need urgent intervention now, to stop the damage to our public service broadcaster. The forthcoming Budget is an opportunity to send a practical signal backing workers at the BBC. It is an opportunity as well to address the swingeing funding deficit created by successive raising of the licence fee created by requiring the BBC rather than the Government to fund free licences for over 75 year-olds, created by cuts to the BBC World Service funding. Workers at the BBC need to know their commitment to serving the public is valued and that means real meaningful urgent intervention.

Congress sends this clear message to the Government: Stop. Stop the cuts, invest to inform, invest to entertain and invest to protect our valuable democracy. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much. I now call WGGB.

Emma Reeves (*Chair, WGGB*) seconded Motion 71. *She said*: Congress, I am Emma Reeves, Chair of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain and a full-time professional writer. I am very concerned about the effect of the brutal cuts on BBC journalism, but as a writer I want to talk about how scripted drama and comedy have also been badly hit by the cuts. The BBC is the largest scripted commissioner in the UK, but commissions are in free fall and the shows which are made are not fully funded. Budgets are scraped together from international investors and tax credits from various countries and all of these competing voices have a detrimental effect

on the final product. There is a lot of watering down, a loss of what is individual, unique and surprising - the very qualities which make our industry so valuable to the economy.

When the industry is in crisis, commissioners are under pressure to play it safe. This leads to creative stagnation, and, ironically, a loss of audience as they seek more innovative content elsewhere. Dramas and comedies that resonate with us give us a shared language, a sense of our shared humanity, whether it is Shakespeare and Chaucer or *Gavin and Stacy* or *Adolescence*, and this is especially important for young people. Co-viewing with family and friends encourages active participation, dialogue, contextualising and confidence checking. It builds the foundations for emotional self-regulation and well-being. It is so important for our young people and in these divisive times we need to bring people together. We have just heard we know what happens when people are isolated in their own echo chambers. It is not good. But it is our BBC. We pay for it. If we allow it to die a slow death of a thousand cuts, we will miss it when we it is gone. We are already losing valuable skills. Talented workers are leaving the industry and there is no pipeline to replace them. We are constantly seeing the BBC forced to axe shows or make them into cheaper shadows of their former selves. Meanwhile, as we keep hearing, Reform are taking donations of tens of millions from crypto giants. We will be left with a culture where the only voices we hear are those of the privileged and wealthy who can literally pay to make us listen. Please, don't let that happen. Support the BBC, protect the BBC and support this motion. Congress, I second. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Emma. I now call Equity.

Vivienne Parry (*Equity*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 14. *She said:* I am a first-time speaker at Congress. (*Applause*) Thank you very much. It is such a privilege to be here. Right, crack on. I am here to speak in support of this incredibly important composite.

In 1989, I secured my first job as an actor at the BBC, a series called "Take Me Home". It went on to become a classic. It sold all around the world and, most importantly, it made the BBC a huge amount of money. It was a reminder that the original 1028 Charter which emphasised the objective of the BBC was not only to educate and inform but as importantly to entertain. That job allowed me, a young broke actor, to begin and have a bit of financial security in a perilously insecure industry. It allowed me to build a career that I have managed somehow (I don't know how) to sustain for nearly 40 years. Therefore, as the BBC Charter comes up for renewal and rumours swirl of reductions in budgets, we are calling on our Government to urge intervention to stop these cuts. The BBC must continue to frame and reflect the rich diversity of our regions and our nations, and currently there is a shocking disparity in opportunity.

I want to concentrate on the Midlands as four of my fellow delegates here from Equity are from the Midlands. For example, as a region, only 3.4% of the network's spend comes to the Midlands and yet it is home to 25% of the licence fee payers. The BBC drama "Doctors" was filmed in the Midlands but was axed in 2023, taking away vital jobs. And as some of you may be aware, and I am pretty sure there are some secret "Archers" fans in here, "The Archers" is

recorded in Birmingham. However, not every 25% of those licence fee payers want to know the secret recipe for Clarrie's jam. I have had a really good career but it has only been possible because of work at the BBC. And I want the people coming after me in this industry not just to survive but to thrive. So, I am angered when I hear that cuts might be the way forward to remind us of just how vital it is: let's get rid of it and then they'll really miss it. Madness.

At Equity we are encouraged that Lisa Nandy has said that the Government is "almost certain", her words, to pursue worker representation on the Board at the BBC. I hope this is true. Without workers, and in particular from my world without actors who entertain you, the BBC cannot fulfil its remit to educate, inform and entertain, and you the public and me, we lose a vital public service. Please Congress, I ask you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you Vivienne, and for a first-time delegate absolutely brilliant. Prospect.

Seynam Kluvitse (*Prospect*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 15. *She said*: First-time attendee and speaker. (*Applause*) I am speaking on behalf of BECTU, a sector of Prospect, and my colleagues across the BBC group. I am speaking for the first time but in very strong support of this composite. BECTU is the largest union at the BBC. Our members working there and others across the union movement are a core driver behind the BBC's status as an economic and creative power house that underpins the wider creative industries in the UK

and globally, through its commissioning, training, investment and support for independent production, the workforce at the BBC helps sustain thousands of jobs.

Economic analysis from KPMG has shown that for every BBC job a further 1.7 jobs are supported elsewhere in the economy. But the latest round of cuts announced, cutting an estimated 1,800 to 2,000 jobs over the next three years, starting with 500 jobs this year, is the latest development in a series of sustained attacks against staff at the BBC and the benefits they bring to the creative sector and independent public service broadcasting. To compound this the proposed cuts come at a critical moment as the future role, funding and governance of the BBC are being considered through Charter renewal.

By voting for this motion the TUC can stand up for workers at the BBC and for the wider creative industries which stand to lose out from a weakened workforce. Because, Congress, these job cuts are wholly counterproductive. Repeated rounds of restructuring and cost cutting have already reduced capacity across production, journalism, technical operations and support functions, including my own role, 12 plus years in the making, which closed in May of this year. Evidence from BECTU members demonstrate how these reductions have resulted in intensified workloads, loss of specialist expertise and increasing pressure on the workforce.

The central question should not be how much the BBC costs but how we fund the kind of BBC that the UK wants and needs. Let me be clear, Congress, these cuts do not stop at the BBC.

They affect independent production companies, freelances, suppliers, local economies and the wider creative workforce. The sector relies on the BBC as a creative indicator. Its public service remit allows it to back new talent, experiment with new ideas, commission distinctive UK content that the market alone may not support. The BBC needs a sustainable long-term funding settlement, protection of and investment in its workforce and freedom from political pressure and stronger protections for its editorial independence. It does not need more nonsensical demoralising cuts to its best asset: its staff. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Seynam, and again for a first-time delegate, a very confident speech. I am now going to go to the vote on Composite 15. All those in favour please show? All those against please show. The motion is carried.

*Composite Motion 15 was **CARRIED.***

The President: I now call paragraph 178 and Motion 23, Keep music alive. The General Council support the motion. It will be moved by the Musicians' Union, seconded by Equity and I will also be calling the WGGB.

Keep music alive

Alice Angliss (*Musicians' Union*) moved Motion 23. *She said*: Musicians' Union delegate and West End drummer and percussionist. Motion 73 concerns a critical threat to musician' jobs in the theatre sector, an industry in which the UK is truly a world leader. The West End in London is the pinnacle of global theatre but its impact extends much further than that. Nationally, theatre contributes nearly £2.4 billion every year to the UK economy in gross value added and it supports over 230,000 jobs. It also helps to keep many towns and cities alive and thriving, while bringing important messages, inspiring art, empathy, community and just pure joy to everybody in different regions in this country.

I would like to start by explaining what KeyComp is because probably nobody has heard of it and with the TUC's support, we would like to keep it that way. Many of us will fondly remember year 7 music lessons. Piling in to a room full of keyboards, pummelling the DJ/DJ button when we were supposed to be learning about harmony. Frankly, teachers deserve a pay rise just for putting up with that! On a more restrained day we might have got as far as selecting a harpsichord or a cello from the list of options on the keyboard and making up a tune. I hope this works. So you know when you press a key on a keyboard it might sound like this (*using mobile phone*) or it might sound like this. But using KeyComp software you can press that same key once and it might sounds more like this. It will actually sound better than that. I made that in 10 seconds on my laptop and they have spent 10 years developing this software. This means that a musical written for dozens of instruments might only feature a couple of those instruments in the pit alongside one KeyComp operator, triggering all the rest like I did just then.

A recent tour of a much-loved Disney musical has reduced the band size down to six live musicians plus KeyComp replacing a further 20. No wonder Disney is the richest media and entertainment company in the world. Not only this, but the actual job of triggering all these chunks of music in quick succession is very difficult, very dissimilar to playing the piano in the way that we are trained, and so stressful that it is difficult for people to find cover for holiday or sick days. I have heard of more than one person having to quit their job as a result of this. After all, if they mess up, it is very obvious to the audience there has been an absolute car crash. Even worse when they nail it, it actually sounds quite good.

Last year, Northern Ballet declared they were going to replace all live music with recordings for all their performances going forward. The MU led a successful campaign and managed to get this decision reversed. But as a smaller union this took a huge amount of our resources, staff time and funds to pull it off. We need the TUC to help fight this issue every time it resurfaces. Any musical aficionados in the room might have recognised the tune I just played as “Solidarity” from Billy Elliott, and that is exactly what we need.

Congress, as much as AI terrifies me as a musician, it is my firm belief that people will want to see impressive things done live by humans, in fact more and more, as they are fed endless AI generated slop. I consider myself lucky that I work in theatre, a sector where the very fact that everything is coming together perfect in real time in the magic that people are paying to see. More people are now attending theatre shows than at any point on record. Last year, 17.6 million people came to a West End show, which is just shy of a 15% increase on pre-Covid pandemic figures. And 37 million people went to a UK theatre show elsewhere in the country.

This is the glimmer of optimism that keeps me going. But KeyComp is replacing us in droves and it feels like tech is coming for our jobs from every angle and audiences are being sold a cheap artificial version of the advertised show. The existential threat posed by KeyComp is clear. It has been banned on Broadway, banned in several US cities, banned in Hamburg, the very city where the software company is based, and the Australian media union are now pushing to ban it there, too. For us this is like the Starlight Express running as a driverless train.

Congress, I ask two things of you. Next time you go to a musical or a pantomime, please show your appreciation for the incredibly talented musicians in the pit, but do not just clap. Turn to the stranger next to you and say, "Wow, the band sounded great, didn't they?" Just a tiny favour to keep our existence in people's consciousness. Secondly, please support this motion. I move. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Very well done, Alice. Equity.

Marie Kelly (*Equity*) spoke in support of Motion 23. *She said*: It is my first time at Congress and first time speaking. (*Applause)* Good morning, everyone. Live theatre productions and some West End musicals are increasingly using technology to replace live musicians or reduce band sizes. This motion affects me personally. I trained as an opera singer then actor and musician and I currently work in a wide gamut of genres. I play the Celtic harp both as a soloist and in an ensemble and as a sound track to many live events. As an actor and singer I work

with other musicians and I am honoured to evoke the fighting spirit of the great Marie Lloyd and her part in the struggle to secure rights for those working in live theatre and the music hall working in 1907. Now more than a century later we are facing new challenges.

The public recognise that theatre and the creative arts are vital institutions - forums for education, shared values, communal identity, innovation and enjoyment. Alice has mentioned the 37 million people that went to the theatre last year. The creative arts have huge economic benefits.

However, enjoying a visit to the theatre is again becoming a privilege of the elite. Universal access to arts and entertainment is disappearing at an alarming rate. Drama and music are disappearing from the school curriculum. University courses are being slashed. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to make a living as a performer. All this as a result of over 20 years of central government austerity in the arts and entertainment sector. We wholeheartedly agree with the call on the TUC to write to the Secretary of State for Culture to underline the importance of an increase in arts funding. This is a basic necessity. We support the MU's Keep Music Live campaign. Also artificial intelligence must be regulated to protect and reward human creativity. We need digital sovereignty now. Please support this motion. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Thank you, Marie, and again as a first-time delegate great delivery. WGGB.

Ellie Peers (*General Secretary, WGGB*) spoke in support of Motion 23. *She said*: Congress, WGGB members are the writers who work in theatre. They are the writers of plays, plays with music and musicals and pantomimes. They work collaboratively with composers to write the book, music and lyrics. They do not work with composers to write the book, recording and lyrics. There have been cuts to funding in the theatre sector, resulting in venues closing and fewer commissions, but that is no excuse. The quality of what is being produced should not be diminished. Theatre is live. It is a live performance and live music is an integral part of the whole performance. Keep music live. Support the motion, thank you. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Thank you, Ellie. We are going to go to the vote on Motion 73. Will all those in favour please show. All those against? The motion is carried.

Motion 73 was *CARRIED*.

The President: I now call Motion 74, Europe. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by Prospect, seconded by Community and I have identified one other union to speak, the RMT.

Ele Wade (*Prospect*) moved Motion 74. *She said*: Brexit has created a drag on growth, trade and investment. The OBR estimates that our current trading relationship will leave

productivity 4% lower and trade around 15% lower than it would otherwise have been. Recent research suggests that GDP is already 8% smaller than it would have been without Brexit, while business investment is 18% lower.

But, Congress, this motion is about much more than statistics. It is about the world we want to live in; one where rules and democracy matter, where problems between countries are resolved peacefully and where working together is recognised as a strength, not a weakness. At its heart this motion asks a simple question: Will Britain continue to stand aside while decisions that shape our jobs, industries and rights are made elsewhere or will we re-build a serious worker-focused relationship with Europe. The European Union was forged from the wreckage of the Second World War as countries torn apart by conflict found a different way to live alongside one another. It has helped deliver something truly remarkable - decades of peaceful co-operation between its member states after centuries in which Europe was repeatedly at war. The EU is not perfect but imagine a world without it. Without it, Trump and the MAGA right would face a weaker and more fragmented west. Ukraine would have less support against Russian aggression and Europe's industries would have far less chance of responding together to the pressures of Chinese trade policy.

Britain's decision to walk away from the EU was an historic mistake, one that weakened our economy, reduced our influence and left working people paying the price. (*Applause*) The British public have realised this. Poll after poll now shows that more people think Brexit was the wrong decision than think it was the right one and support for a closer European relationship is growing. This motion does not ask Congress to settle every question about

the route back. It asks us to start moving in the right direction towards the deepest possible partnership with Europe, with workers' interests at is heart and no arbitrary red lines standing in the way.

So, I want to ask Congress this. If you believe, as Andy Burnham has argued, that Britain will rejoin in the end, then why would we wait to start down the path now? In 2024, the Government was right to end the war of words with Brussels and take our relationship out of the deep freeze, but it has become clear that the red lines just won't work. The Government has said that it is concerned that joining a customs union would put trade deals that the UK has negotiated since Brexit at risk. But take the deal with the Gulf states, it took nearly four years to negotiate but adds just 0.1% to our GDP. That is a drop in the ocean compared with the benefits of being closer to the biggest single market in the world, a market just 21 miles (or 34 kilometres) across the Channel. Civil servants are working hard on trade deals to deliver tiny gains when the time and expertise could be focused on rebuilding our public services. And all the while UK workers risk being left behind on rights, from collective bargaining, to pay transparency, to a European social partnership model that is often far ahead of what we have in the UK.

Some in this hall are worried about the EU state aid rules and argue they block public control. I say tell that to the workers of EDF or Vattenfal: state-owned companies that are successful enough to be here in the UK helping to deliver our energy system. Tell it to the workers at Airbus where the French and German Governments remain major investors. Or look at the railways in France, Germany, Spain Austria, Belgium, where public ownership and public

operators continue to play a major role. Europe is not a theoretical issue. It is a trade union issue through and through: about jobs, rights, voice and power.

Congress, the choice is simple. Stand aside while others shape our future or stand together with working people across Europe to build it ourselves. Because unity works - for jobs, for rights, for peace and for solidarity. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Eleanor. I call Community.

Alistair McDiamid (*AGS, Community*) seconded Motion 74. *He said*: Congress, it is self-evident that Brexit has not been working out too well for our country or for UK workers. We are poorer as a consequence and crucial industries have suffered. That is certainly the case for our steel industry. State-subsidised imports of steel, produced with no regard to carbon emissions or workers' conditions, are flooding our market, undercutting UK producers and putting steelworkers' jobs at risk. Compounding this challenge is the fractured relationship with our closest trading partners in Europe. Our ability to export products to the European Union friction free has a been a core pillar of our steel industry's success, but now limitations on market access and misalignment on key regulatory measures threaten to fatally undermine that pillar. In spite of Brexit, the EU remains by far our most important destination for our steel exports, and we in turn are significant buyers for Europe. Whatever your views on Brexit, surely we can all agree that mutually beneficial trade which underpins jobs on both sides of the Channel should be protected.

But instead of strengthening that relationship, trade between us is being diverted. A trend that increases our reliance on strategic rivals for steel that feeds our advanced manufacturing, our defence industries and our energy infrastructure. This cannot continue. We must align ourselves with our neighbours, our allies and our friends in the EU who share our interests to combat global over capacity and reindustrialise our steel communities. Across Europe there is growing support for a made in Europe approach, backing domestic industry and high-quality jobs. It would be devastating were British Steel to be excluded from that future. Be in no doubt reckless Euro scepticism does tremendous harm to our steel industry. The failure of the last Tory Government - to align our carbon border adjustment mechanism with that of the EU has left us open to cheap steel imports that would have gone to Europe but instead will end up on our shores, threatening our jobs because of our weaker protections.

The Labour Government has begun to heal the wounds by linking our emissions trading systems, but if wider CBAM policies remain misaligned, the differences will continue to damage our steel industry and its workers.

The difficulties of navigating the global energy crisis and the transition to a low-carbon economy should not be exacerbated by unneeded and self-inflicted trade barriers. Congress, the is a path to renewal and reindustrialisation in our country but that path does not lead away from our European neighbours, it runs beside them: a UK and EU aligned together in partnership. Please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Alistair. I now call RMT.

Eddie Dempsey (*General Secretary, RMT*) opposed Motion 74. *He said*: Yesterday, Congress, we unanimously passed a composite on a new economic and political strategy for Labour and in that, Congress was clear on four points in relation to our possible future trading relationships with the EU. Firstly, we agreed we would respect the result of the EU referendum. Secondly, we said we would avoid divisive debates around the EU and Single Market membership. Thirdly, we said any new European trading relationship should give us the maximum possible flexibility to use state aid, fiscal policy, investment and public ownership. And fourthly, we agreed that being in the Single Market would still reverse the progress to rail public ownership in Great British Railways.

So, when this motion says no options should be left off the table, we are clear that yesterday's vote means EU and single market membership is not being supported. I also believe that the General Council position on today's motion means that EU and single market membership is not being supported. So let's be clear, the last thing we want is to plunge our class into a divisive debate around the EU and the Single Market and let's focus on what unites us - the need for a progressive economic agenda that supports our people instead of handing the initiative to Reform and starting a divisive debate about EU and Single market membership. We oppose. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Eddie. I now call on Prospect to exercise their right of reply.

Ele Wade (*Prospect*) exercised a right of reply on Motion 74. *She said*: I am exercising my right of reply and I have not done one of these here before, so it is quite exciting. I am not going to say very much. I think I covered most of what I wanted to say in the original speech, but what I do want to say is the threats to public services, the threats to public ownership and the threats to the public services that we all rely on, the threat to that is not Europe. The threat to that is engaging in a race to the bottom on labour rights, on environmental and consumer rights and all of that has been made so much worse by Brexit, not better, so please support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much Eleanor. In respect to that I would like to point out I think it is worth thanking all unions in this debate for the comradely discussion and respectful contributions as well. Thank you for that. I am now going to go to the vote on Motion 74. Will all those in favour of please show? And will all those against please show? The motion is carried. (*Applause*)

*Motion 74 was **CARRIED**.*

The President: I now call Emergency Motion 1, The sale of DB Cargo UK. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by ASLEF, seconded by RMT, and I am going to call TSSA. (*Pause*) The train is late again!

Simon Weller (*AGS, ASLEF*) moved Emergency Motion 1. *He said*: If anything, President, we are running slightly early which is as bad for timetabling. The emergency motion in front of you is to deal with a private freight company, DB Cargo, but I think it is worth mentioning a little bit of history, because there is a lot of talk that the railways have been renationalised. This is not the case with the freight sector. The reality is the only bit that has been renationalised is the passenger sector and that itself is not all of it.

But a little bit of a history lesson. What on earth is DB Cargo? As I say, it is a private freight company, but it was previously British Rail freight operations that were bundled up into a company called EWS. It was English, Welsh and Scottish, although if you worked for them it was known as "Engines, Wagons and Slaves". It was all of BR's wagons, all of BR's engines, all of BR's drivers that operated the freight and the important bit, all of British Rail's land that was in freight operation. It is bought by an American company Wisconsin which was then subsequently sold to a German company Deutsche Bahn, which is the German state operator of rail. So we had Conservative governments very opposed to state operation but not if they were a foreign state. But that is an aside.

DB Cargo has contracted. When I took over as the lead officer some years ago, they had 2,700 drivers. The number of drivers is a useful metric for how much work they had because pretty much all the freight operators have the same sort of systems, so if they had 2,700 drivers' worth of work, they were a pretty big player. They now have 650 drivers' worth of work. Me being the lead officer and the massive decline in their fortunes, these two events I would say are not related!

That contraction is not about their failure. This is about the failure of how the private freight market works within the railway. Because there is no new work; it is just the same work doing a merry-go-round between the operators. Even with 650 drivers, it is still the second biggest. The fire sale that we are now seeing is there to break up DB Cargo, to sell off the good bits and dispose of the bads bits. There is a lot of land, and I cannot emphasise this enough, up for sale. And now with the changes to the planning regs there is a predisposition to agree planning on disposed land. There is a huge amount of money in this sale, in redevelopment, but once railway land leaves the railway, it never comes back. If you have built houses on it, you will not be shunting freight trains on it. We have just talked about the climate emergency. How are we going to shift to Net Zero when the railway is completely contracting?

This is not the only problem. The freight operators maintain the railway, work that we call ballasts, but the engineering trains which repair the track are provided by the freight operators. The drivers that move those engineering trains which repair the track are provided by freight operators. If that freight operator disappears and is broken up and sold off and asset stripped, who is going to be maintaining the railway then? Even as we speak, we do not

have the capacity to maintain the railway correctly. This would reduce that capacity even more. There is a way forward. There is one of the freight operators of the six or so that exist that is state owned. That is DRS - Direct Rail Services. They operate the nuclear trains. There is a path to solve this and that is by putting the freight operations through DRS. I have seen the red light and I will ignore the red light, and you can have all your train driver jokes as much as you like, because this is important. Support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Simon, very informative, thank you. Seconded by RMT.

Eddie Dempsey (*General Secretary, RMT*) seconded Emergency Motion 1. *He said*: It is important to point out why this is happening. State aid rules forced the German state to restructure dB Cargo to sell off its assets and its locomotives and to outsource much of its work as part of the price for allowing public financial support for the operator in Germany. The result of that here in Britain is that 2,200 directly employed jobs are at risk in DB Cargo and across the supply chain.

It is very important we understand what is at play here. Being outside of the Fourth Railway Package, the Single Market and EU liberalisation diktats have allowed us to set up GBR as a publicly owned railway and it gives us the opportunity, as has been mentioned by Simon, of using DRS to absorb some of the freight services that are now at risk, which include aspects of Network Rail. So, there is a part of what is to become the Great British Railways workforce that is also placed at risk as a result of this decision under EU state aid rules forcing the

restructuring, break-up, selling of assets and outsourcing of a piece of our freight infrastructure. It is very important we support this. It is no good us having the freedom of setting up a publicly owned railway if we are still in a position where market rules are forcing a break-up, sale and outsourcing and putting at risk of jobs here in Britain. So please support this important motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Eddie. Now TSSA.

Mary Sithole (*TSSA*) spoke in support of Emergency Motion 1. *She said*: O Congress, an expansion of publicly owned rail should be central to the industrial strategy of the country in our efforts to reindustrialise and decarbonise our economy. That is why rail unions are united in calling for this. The threat of job losses and asset stripping at DB Cargo takes us in the opposite direction. The company and wider freight sector are hugely important to the British economy, servicing multiple sectors and industries. It cannot and should not be broken down and pulled apart to make a quick buck. The 2,200 workers at the company need strong assurances that their jobs are secure.

Congress, we have seen commitments from the Government on freight expansion which form an important part of its agenda for rail. These are welcome. After talking the talk, Ministers now have the chance to walk the walk, and demonstrate that they mean what they say about future of rail freight in Britain. Congress, it is time for Ministers to step up to the plate and back the growth of the sector. They can start by backing the contents of this motion,

insourcing Network Rail operations contracted to DP Cargo, calling for the protection of jobs and integrating freight into GBR. Congress, I urge you to support this emergency motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Mary. I am now going to go to the vote on Emergency Motion 1. Would all those in favour please show? All those against please show? It has been carried unanimously.

*Emergency Motion 1 was **CARRIED**.*

The President: Our colleagues at Brighton UCU are facing the threat of derecognition in the latest of a long line of acts from management at Brighton University. UCU have arranged a lunch time rally at the university at 1.15. The location is 58 to 67 Grand Parade, Brighton and Hove. It is a 20-minute walk from the Congress centre. If anyone fancies joining that demo that would be absolutely superb, but in case anybody cannot, and I personally cannot, we offer solidarity to UCU. (*Applause*)

Congress, that concludes this morning's business. Can I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this lunch time. Congress, this hall will be closed between now and 1.45. Please make sure you take anything you need with you when you leave. You will

not be able to access the hall before 2 pm, but please be back promptly for this afternoon's session. Thank you.

Congress adjourned for lunch.

The President: Will delegates please take their seats and would Congress come to order.

We will now see another short video celebrating union wins this year. Please cheer if you see your union and feel free to loudly cheer others.

Video on "Union Wins" shown to Congress

(Applause)

Thank you again to Leeloo Creed, for providing such wonderful music throughout this afternoon's session. (*Applause*)

SECTION 4 (CONTINUED): MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

The President: Delegates, we begin this afternoon's session with a group debate on AI - Section 4 of the General Council Report: Meeting the challenges of the future, from page 48.

Before we begin, I will outline how I intend to take the debate on Composite Motion 13, Motion 63 and Composite Motion 16. First, I will call the mover, seconder and supporters of Composite Motion 13. I will then call the mover and seconder of Motion 63, AI - the need for workers protection. I will then call the General Secretary to explain the General Council position. I will then call the mover, seconder and supporter of Composite Motion 16, New rights to address AI-generated digital replicas, enforce and strengthen existing UK copyright legislation, and to protect jobs in the creative industries, together as a single debate. I will then call unions that have indicated they wish to speak. We will then vote on motions in that order.

I would like to remind delegates that in a group debate, unions may only speak once, including movers, seconders and supporters, unless exercising their right to reply.

I now call paragraph 4.1 and Composite 13 - Artificial intelligence at work, a just transition through worker's voice for the benefits of workers and society.

The General Council Support the motion. It will be moved by the CWU, seconded by Aegis and supported by UNISON, NEU and USDAW. I call CWU.

Artificial Intelligence at work – a just transition through worker voice for the benefit of workers and society

(Composing Motion 61 and Motion 62 with amendments)

John Chadfield (*CWU*) moved Composite Motion 13. *He said*: Congress, President, let's be under no illusion that when it comes to artificial intelligence, the big tech companies are spending hundreds of millions on lobbying influence and regulatory capture. They are not doing this because they have our best interests at heart. There is a political project behind the current AI marketing hype bubble and it is one that seeks to permanently disenfranchise working people and weaken the organised labour movement globally. This is clear not only from the ever-evolving Washington and Westminster doors into big tech but, as our comrade Esther Lynch from the TUC said on Sunday, it is clear that the far right want the grip of the tech bros to be tightened. Don't be distracted by the sensationalist headlines on the catastrophic future risks. We already have concrete and present harms. These are not future risks and the big tech companies would prefer that we did not try to hold them to account right now. From private sector companies, to local government, to job centres, schools, universities and prisons technologies marketed as AI are here with us now. Untested for the large part, unregulated, embedding bias and entrenching inequality and injustice. Alongside postal and logistics workers, telecoms and financial services workers at my union the CWU, we represent the largest group of unionised tech workers in the country, as seen on the video

before this. These concerns are echoed in conversations with those workers throughout the AI supply chain: from Frontier Labs workers (who Google deep mined) concerned about the weaponisation of their research and its application against innocent civilians in the ongoing genocide in Gaza, to TikTok content moderators recently laid off under the false pretext of being replaced by AI, when, in reality, their employer took an opportunity to simply outsource and offshore that work to someone with weaker unions and lower wages.

To be clear, as trade unionists we are not taking an anti-growth or an anti-innovation position. We are simply stating our belief that public and private investment of this magnitude should not be siphoned off for billionaire pet projects. As a movement we must work together on this across unions. As a movement and a country we are in desperate need of developing an industrial strategy which recognises the interests of workers and the general public when considering AI deployment. We need worker-first AI policies, regulation and enforcement. And that last bit is really important, the enforcement bit. There is no point having these laws if the enforcing body are hamstrung. So we can ensure at a national and regional level jobs are protected, workers' concerns are heard and AI is a benefit not a hindrance. The moment for putting a line in the sand is long overdue. Now more than ever we must be sounding the warning bells of big tech's looming influence on our future. A serious plans needs to be crafted focusing on workers' rights and public safety as well as economic growth and national security.

Congress, we believe that with a change of government we are in a space to achieve a framework where we don't have to accept a future of deskilling, exploitation, increasing

surveillance and deepening inequality. Both the Government and our movement have the opportunity to shape a decent strategy based around AI roll-out that is socially responsible and useful to people. It is up to us now to make this happen and on this we must work together. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, John. Aegis.

Brian McDaid (*GS, Aegis*) seconded Composite Motion 13. *He said*: I want to focus on what AI already means for the workers we represent across financial services. As I mentioned in Motion 70, predominantly our members are customer service advisers, administrators, mortgage advisers, fraud investigators, complaints handlers, IT workers and apprentices, and AI not something coming to their workplaces; it already here. We have to admit we are behind the curve here. It is creeping in every corner of the workplace and we need to do a lot more.

Earlier this year our union surveyed our members about their experience on AI and new technology. 85% told us that AI or new technology had already been introduced into their area of work and yet only 38.5% said workers had been consulted or engaged before its introduction and more than eight in 10 were concerned about the impact on their jobs. Every day at the moment in our sector we are seeing it in every union, every workplace, cuts are happening to jobs and it is all down to AI.

Congress, that tells us something that technology is already here and will continue to sweep at a fast pace into our workplaces. But our members and workers do not have a voice in how it is introduced, embedded and managed. And our survey showed something else. Our members are not anti-AI. 71.6% supported using AI to reduce repetitive admin and 70.2% supported using it to help employers work more effectively. That will help another issue we are seeing every day in our workplace and that is increased work-related stress and impact on mental health. So, our workers are not saying stop AI. They are saying give us a voice in how it is used. That is why this composite is so important. We want employers to engage, consult and negotiate with trade unions before AI is introduced. This legislation is happening in some parts of America and in other parts of Europe. We want that to be legislation here as well. Not after the contract has been signed, not after the technology has been purchased and certainly not when redundancy consultations begin. We must also think about the next generation. Customer service, admin and processing roles have traditionally provided thousands of young people with their first step into financial services and the workplace. If we automate that first rung of the career ladder, how does the young worker ever reach the second? And with women taking roles in many admin roles and customer-facing roles, badly managed technological change risks reinforcing existing inequalities.

Congress, AI can improve productivity; it can remove repetitive work; it can create opportunities, but workers must share in those benefits. Technological change must not be something that is done to workers; it must be something shaped with workers, so let's establish a simple principle across our movement. The future of work must not be done to

workers; it must be shaped by workers collectively, not because we fear technology. but because the people who do the work deserve a voice in shaping the future of work. AI starts with workers. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Brian. UNISON please.

Andy Chaffer (*UNISON*) spoke in support of Composite 13. *He said*: Congress UNISON support this composite. Our original amendment was to add another dimension, but the Government should be leading by example when it comes to digitalisation and AI, because Ministers cannot credibly tell private employers to consult their workforce on AI while public bodies are bringing in the same system on their own staff with very little warning and often no consultation at all. It is happening in councils, it is happening in schools and it is happening across the NHS. Too often staff only find out about a new system when we are told to start using it. Hardly any of them get proper training and when it goes wrong it is our members who have to deal with the consequences. Congress, public services are built on people. Digitalisation will only improve services if it strengthens the expertise of the workers deliver them. A lot of what keeps people safe is a member of staff noting that something "isn't quite right". And that is the sort of thing that gets lost when employers cut posts in the hope of efficiency savings.

We want to see: a statutory duty on public bodies to disclose where AI is being used; consultation with recognised unions before deployment, not after; and proper training for

every member of staff. Procurement roles that embed the workers' voice and avoid big tech being locked in.

Congress, that last point matters more than it might seem. Once a department has handed its systems and its data to a single supplier, the bargaining power leaves public hands for a decade. Just ask anyone watching what is happening to NHS data, where NHS England made the mistake of choosing to use American spytech company (and you can boo!) Palantir, to set up the Federated Data Platform.

Congress, we want government to regulate AI at work and we also want it to set an example. Government should model what good implementation looks like in its own services and with its own workforce. Thank you, Congress. Please support the Composite. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Andy. I now call NEU.

Paula Burgin (*NEU*) spoke in support of Composite 13. *She said:* Let's be clear, AI is already here. Teachers are using it, support staff are using it: it is our children who are the experts who are teaching us in its use. The question really is controls it, who benefits from it and who gets a say in how it is used. Our members are not anti-AI. They are only using it to create resources and reduce their workload. But, Congress, they are worried. They are worried because decisions are being made faster than the safeguards. Almost half of schools still have

no AI policies. We are already seeing the impact on our young pupils. In our last member survey, 66% of secondary school teachers told us that they believed that critical thinking has declined because of AI use.

As educators, our role is not simply to help children find answers. It is to help them to learn how to think, how to question, how to analyse and how to create. If we lose these things, we lose what education is truly about. That is why we are sceptical about the Government's enthusiasm for AI tutors, especially for our most disadvantaged pupils. Children who need the most support need real people and real relationships. At a time when children are spending more of their lives online, there has never been a greater need for human connection, regulation and worker's voice.

The NEU's Robbed: Big Tech's Little Victims campaign shows us what happens when powerful technologies are allowed to develop unchecked. Children have been exposed to toxic content, harmful algorithms designed to maximise engagement rather than protect well-being. The consequences are huge. The lesson is clear, when technology develops without the safeguards, without the regulation or without listening to those who see the impacts first hand, it is children that pay the price. That is why workers' voices matters. The teachers and support staff must be involved in every single decision about how AI is introduced and used in our schools. We cannot afford to make the same mistake again. Congress, we cannot celebrate advances in tech if it comes at the expense of our children and our professional autonomy. Our members have seen enough reforms sold as innovation when the real aim is saving money. AI should never be used to cut costs, reduce staff or

undermine professional judgment. Technology should support workers, not replace them, and teachers and support staff must always decide when and how to use these tools. Congress, progress without protection is no progress at all. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Paula. USDAW.

Jo Crumplin (USDAW)speaking in support of Composite 13. *She said*: President, Congress, Jo Crumplin, USDAW National Executive, speaking in support of the composite on artificial intelligence at work. Let's be absolutely clear, the impact of AI and how employers try to use it should concern this movement, because the jobs that are being replaced are the jobs where workers learn, they gain experience and develop the skills that allow them to progress. If the first rung of the ladder is removed, the consequences will extend far beyond today's workers. You cannot remove the entry-level jobs and then expect an experienced workforce to appear 10 years from now. You cannot take away people's chance to earn a living and expect the economy to grow. And you cannot allow bosses to have all the power and expect a fair deal at work.

We all know that the impact of these changes won't be shared equally. Women, young workers and black workers are disproportionately represented in many of the most exposed jobs. Without intervention, these changes will reinforce the inequalities that already exist for so many. That is why the protections around equality, impact assessments, apprenticeships and entry-level jobs matter.

But Congress, this is not just about protections; it is about power. Too often new technology is introduced as a management decision and workers are only consulted once a system has been bought, the decisions have been made and the consequences for their jobs have already been determined. This is not meaningful consultation. Workers and their trade unions have a say before the decisions on AI are made, not after. We need collective bargaining over how these technologies are deployed, how workers' data is used, how algorithm decisions are made and what happens when technology changes jobs or removes tasks altogether.

If AI genuinely delivers the productivity revolution we have been promised, then workers have a right to ask where is our share. Higher productivity should mean higher wages. If technology saves working time, workers should benefit from that time. And if jobs change, employers should invest in retraining and redeployment rather than simply reaching for redundancy. And government needs to end the situation where redundancies are both too easy and too cheap, making it an easy option for employers. Workers must not carry the risk of technological change while employers keep the rewards.

Congress, AI is here now. Workers are being affected now. The time to act is now. Please support this composite. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Jo. I now call motion 63, AI - the need for workers' protection, transparency and justice. The General Council supports this motion with an explanation and

after the mover and seconder, I will call on the General Secretary Paul Nowak to explain the General Council position. It is moved by AUE and seconded by UCU.

The need for workers' protection, transparency and justice.

Lorraine Monk (*Joint Chair, AEU*) moved Motion 63. *She said*: What a week for AI. Creative unions have been raising the issues of artificial intelligence for years now, but it is certainly in the news at the moment, although not necessarily about how it steals our art, our work, our images and our voices. AI is not sci-fi. It is not all space travel and the cures for everything we need it to be. It is also simple lists. It is a key to big money, made in seconds by wealthy tech CEOs and perceived by some governments as an easy answer to stimulating depressed economies. This week we saw various ex-employees of major AI firms suddenly discover the end-of-the-world risks they knew for years.

Yesterday a cross-party panel of MPs urged for the creation of a new Artificial Intelligence Bill to address the scale and seriousness of the threat. It is grim. However, hope comes in the form of Donald Trump - assuring everyone he can protect us. Okay then! The only control or guardrails that AI needs apparently is a strong and smart (high IQ) President. Well, that is a reassuring. But we are actually demanding more than his little grey cells.

This motion is calling for regulation and legislation, working together with other countries, to control and even restrict the speed of the development of AI. This motion notes the threat to democracy particularly by powerful individuals and corrupt governments. We know it can misrepresent, distort and lie. The insane push for huge profits will inevitably lead to collapse. The bubble will burst on the speculation but what will be left? In a year of wildfires and drought, the insane mad scramble is also risking environmental disaster. Building huge data centres that consume vast levels of resources of energy and water. The number of data centres in the UK is set to increase by almost a fifth. Many data funders are privately funded by US tech giants such as Google and Microsoft, yet because the government has designated them national critical infrastructure that label makes it almost impossible for workers, residents and councils to object to. Vast buildings where few people will work, but will generate unbelievable profits for the few, while the centres consume the equivalent of 10,000 people's daily needs of water in a single day. This while the UK has had the worst summer drought we have ever experienced.

Labour when elected in 2024 (was it only '24?) followed Trump's lead on AI. They failed to deliver the Bill they promised that would regulate AI. They refused to sign a global agreement agreed by 58 countries. Governments should be moral as well as pragmatic. Instead our Government appears to be accepting any proposal to encourage investment without assessing the risks. AI has the potential for good and evil like steam-powered electricity, combustion engines, everything that that has been invented before, but it has to be controlled, regulations introduced. Our trade union history is built on our campaigns,

demanding legislation to protect our rights. It has never been a more important time it make a stand.

New technological developments have happened at a frightening speed. I won't list them all, just two. The World Wide Web began in 1989, wi-fi 1999. That is just a twinkling of an eye in history. Governments have not caught up with that speed and the void has been filled by greedy individuals. It must ensure the rights of all workers are protected. It must sign international agreements. It must do the things it promised to do.

Today ex-President Obama said the Americans should have laws and regulations in the US recognising safety concerns, recognising the impact on jobs. We need the same. Workers today and our future generations need international collaborations across the labour movement, between the governments to work globally with other unions, campaigning to develop AI that is open, transparent, ethical and safe. We know we need a healthy economy but we believe the price of unbridled uncontrolled AI is too high. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Lorraine. Seconded by UCU.

Pauline Rattery (*UCU*) seconded Motion 63. *She said*: I am an English teacher in the FE prison education sector. I would like to begin by commending the Artists' Union for bringing forward

this important motion. The concerns put forward by the Artists' Union in relation to the creative industry are acute and urgent, as we have all heard so far this morning and also this afternoon, and indeed, have been felt across a range of sectors including our own at UCU in post-16 education. Last year, we published a set of 10 principles for the use of AI. These principles arose from feedback from members and branches. Our members had a lot to say both for and against but there was key agreement across a range of domains. Our members are alarmed at the ways in which copyright generated by educators, researchers and professional services staff have been used to train AI systems, without consent or fair compensation, to the benefit of companies who are introducing AI.

Government regulation is urgently needed to support workers in the creative industries and in the academic community to defend their intellectual property rights. We know that AI systems are already disrupting employment and so we say that AI should only ever be used to enhance employment conditions and never be used to erode job security, increased workload or undermine well-being.

We also need government legislation that calls for transparency in how these systems are used, including equality impact assessment with human rights oversight. This is essential to observe and challenge the algorithmic biases that often result in sexist, racist, homophobic and other outputs, threatening to undo the work we as trade unionists have been doing for decades.

We know that AI systems are expensive and we are increasingly concerned about the divergence of public money away from the sector towards billionaires and environment-harming technologies. We are already seeing psycho-economic disparities in access which will only serve to further widen existing gaps due to disproportionate means, access and training.

I just want to finish by saying we need transparency and provenance to support workers in the creative industries, to protect and consent to defend their rights. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Pauline. I now call the General Secretary Paul Nowak for the explanation.

The General Secretary: Thank you, President. Congress, the General Council supports Motion 63 with the following explanation. As the motion rightly recognises, AI is a growing concern for all workers, especially those in the creative sectors. Their work is too often hoovered up by AI companies without consent and without credit or remuneration.

This motion calls on government to do more to protect creatives and their work, to enforce our copyright regime and to protect workers from the growing inequality of a billionaire-led AI agenda. The motion also calls for restrictions on data centres. The General Council agrees that an unbridled data centre build-out is not justifiable, but with the right conditions on

energy, on water, on jobs, union membership and local impacts, data centres could help meet the motion 's goal to develop AI that is open, transparent, ethical and safe. As the motion notes, reaching that goal will also take international collaboration across the labour movement and between governments. So, with this explanation, the General Council supports the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Paul. I now call Composite Motion 16, new rights to address AI generated digital replicas, enforce and strengthen existing UK copyright legislation and to protect jobs in the creative industries. The General Council supports the motion and it will be moved by Equity, seconded by WGGB and supported by NUJ. I have various unions that have indicated they wish to speak in this debate, starting with CSP, Prospect, Musicians' Union, PCS, NASUWT and Unite. That is quite a few to get through.

New rights to address AI generated digital replicas, enforce and strengthen UK copyright legislation and to protect jobs in creative industries

(*Composing Motion 64 plus amendment and Motion 65 plus amendment*)

Jassa Ahluwalia (*Equity*) moved Composite Motion 16. *He said*: I am an Equity councillor and this is my first time speaking at Congress. (*Applause*) Let me start by saying this. Equity's position will always be to champion human-centred creation. We are not ideologically opposed to technological progress but AI is no substitute for the power of human creativity. This motion seeks to protect the real people, the artists, the original thought and imagination which AI consumes and reassembles. AI companies have been scraping the data of creative

workers from the internet, stealing our work at an industrial scale and feeding it into their perpetually thirsty machines so it may vomit up a glob of purported creation. One such creation is AI generated digital replicas, imitations of a person's likeness, mimicking physical appearance, voice and mannerisms. Once generated, they can be used to edit a human performance or create entirely new synthetic media. Last year an Equity member was on a Scotrail train when she heard hear voice making announcements that she had never recorded. It turned out a Swedish company she had worked with several years ago had been selling her voice without her consent. Such behaviour is the stealing of work done. It is the robbery of future earnings. It is an indignity and it cannot be tolerated. (*Applause*)

Equity members are responding. On an HBO production, cast members were asked to have their likenesses scanned on set. Their contracts contained no safeguards to limit the use of the data so the cast, with the support of Equity officials, collectively refused, forcing negotiations. They became the first group of performers in TV and film to secure explicit contractual AI protections - an historic win. We are building on this, securing protections through our collective agreements, mostly recently in Welsh Independent TV. But these are protections we should all have at all times. This is why Equity is calling for the government to introduce new personality rights which each individual would have in their likeness, including physical appearance, voice mannerisms and movement. Such rights exist in other countries but the UK lags behind. Their introduction would provide a robust and targeted legal framework to protect individuals from abuse while offering an economic right that performers and other workers could license. Our proposal is for a hybrid right that would provide:

- A non-property right, enabling individuals to object to unauthorised AI-generated digital replicas;
- A property right, enabling individuals to license the use of their AI-generated likeness for agreed purposes; and
- A specific period allowing workers to secure financial remuneration similar to copyright.

A consultation on personality rights will be published in the coming months. Comrades, our opportunity to secure a line of defence for workers in the face of AI is on the immediate horizon.

To be clear, digital replicas do not mean photographs or videos legitimately taken in the course of news gathering. We thank the NUJ for its amendment which emphasises that new rights should support news gatherers. We also extend our thanks to the Writers' Guild for proposing transparency measures to enforce and strengthen copyright. Our proposed personality rights supplemented by these measures, would have societal and industrial significance beyond the realm of performance. They would help to combat AI-generated sexual content, for example, as well as deep fake videos falsely depicting public figures. This motion recognises that AI is not simply a powerful tool, it is a tool of power. It is designed to extract wealth out of society and into the hands of billionaires. We must fight back. We must demand the right to choose how and by whom this technology is used. It is not this or that tangible steel and brass machine that we want to get rid of, but the great intangible machine

of commercial tyranny which oppresses the lives of all of us, so said William Morris in 1884. Our machines will never become human but if we are not careful we will make machines of ourselves. We must imagine the future that our machines cannot. I move. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Jessa, thank you very much for that great contribution as a first-time speaker. WGGB.

Ellie Peers (*General Secretary, WGGB*) seconded Composite 16. *She said:* Over the past few years we have seen global streamers come into the market importing terms and conditions that include buy-outs or partial buy-outs with few or no royalties for our members. Writers are continuing to experience a downturn in the amount of work being commissioned, meaning that more script writers are competing for fewer jobs. And now we add AI into the mix. AI is detrimentally impacting writers. For example, in video games some writers have had clauses added to their contracts stipulating that their work will be scraped to feed the company's AI models. Effectively, the work they do now will be used to enable the company to contract fewer writers in the future. Writers who rely on regular income from writing stories from magazines are increasingly being told, "We are no longer going to contract you. We will get AI to write the stories", and of course we have seen the wholesale theft of existing work by AI companies to train their large language models.

So, what would our industry look like if everything was created by machine? Who would tell the stories that reflect your life, tell your story. Who would be providing trusted news and who would be acting on your screens? Creative industries are worth billions to the UK economy. Our stories, our music, our theatre, our television is sold worldwide. These are human created. Governments have repeatedly stated a commitment to the creative industries, but this commitment is worthless unless it recognises that human creation takes precedent over machine creation in the UK. We are not fundamentally against new technology and AI if it is regulated and ethically produced. Regulation formulated in agreement with unions and creators that financially incentivises the creation of ethical AI in the UK where the models adhere to our copyright laws and include transparency so we know what is being used, permission to use that work and payment for that work. And a regulatory body with teeth to enforce that regulation. If AI companies cannot operate lawfully in the UK then they should not be allowed to operate in the UK. The Government is listening but they are not acting on copyright and AI. Regulate now not after the horse has bolted and run the Grand National and is now out to pasture. We are actively campaigning and lobbying government. We are working with the other unions and making the case for ethical AI in the UK to protect jobs and strengthen copyright. Support the motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Ellie. NUJ.

Natasha Hurst (*NUJ*) spoke in support of Composite 16. *She said*: New rights to address AI-generated digital replicas (I know it is mouthful) are urgently needed. There are too many

gaps in legislation which fail to address the challenges that impact on our livelihoods and also on our safety at work.

The NUJ represents members many professions, staff, casuals, freelances from traditional news publications and broadcasting, to photography, videography, PR and communications magazines, the digital media. It is really broad. The campaign for new rights outlined by Equity benefits NUJ members too. News presenters are also at risk of deep fakes and harmful disinformation generated using their likeness without their consent. This can be horrific for individuals but it also damages trust in broadcasting and journalism more widely. It is deeply harmful to our movement's fight against division and hate and it harms communities and destroys lives. We thank Equity for supporting the NUJ's call to ensure that there are no unintended consequences from new legislation. It is really important to be clear that personality or likeness rights have a very specific purpose and definition. The creation of digital replicas does not refer to the publication of legitimately gathered photographs and videos. This composite relates to the use of digital material to form AI-generated outputs: events that have never actually taken place, no matter how convincing they might seem.

We know that introducing new concepts to politicians and the wider public can be challenging and our photographer and videographer members already report being obstructed and threatened when working by members of the public when misunderstand privacy, copyright and ownership laws, and it is really important that new laws don't go adding to that confusion.

As you have heard throughout Congress, workers and freelances in the creative sectors are frequently let down by gaps in legislation and regulation, with fewer rights and too few routes to justice or compensation when we experience harm. The NUJ is proud to stand in solidarity with the other creative unions to fight the rise of AI-generated disinformation and protect safety and livelihoods, but the bigger picture is what is at risk in here, what we have been talking about today. It is about protecting ethics, public trust and our democracy. That is what is at stake. Please support. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks very much, Natasha. I now call CSP.

Nell Bennett (*CSP*) spoke in support of Composite 16. *She said*: Congress, President, I am speaking on behalf of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy as a first-time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, artificial intelligence is evolving faster than we can respond. It is embedding itself into our workplaces with employers increasingly using it under claims of helping employees by enhancing productivity and improving health and safety. However, our members at the CSP are reporting differently. We hear about AI being introduced without consultation, leading to a mistrust from staff about its ambiguous uses. We hear about concerns over monitoring, lack of privacy and collection of personal data; about who designs these systems and who benefits from them. We hear about the replacement of jobs, particularly in entry-level positions in an already challenging job market for young people. And we have examples where these technologies have increased division and discrimination, lessening inclusivity. Congress, this area is largely unregulated and our reps are struggling to challenge the use of AI due to lack of clarity and information. We need legislation that

safeguards workers. We need it to protect the public against the interests of tech companies and we need frameworks that give voice and enforcements that hold employers to account. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Nell, and very well delivered as a first-time speaker. Prospect.

Sarthak Kumar (*Prospect*) spoke in support Composite 16. *He said*: We support all motions as well as this composite. I come to this debate as a trade unionist but also as someone who has spent most of my career in tech, working directly with AI and specifically AI governance components. One of the things that I think AI teaches you very quickly is (a) humility but (b) the very big difference between a system looking impressive in a demo and actually working reliably in the real world. It takes discipline to make AI work - on designing data, testing rigorously through evals, monitoring deployments, making sure there is clear human accountability. I think that same discipline should apply to the impact that AI has on workers. When it changes how somebody does their job, how their performance is assessed or how decisions about them are made that impact should be understood properly too. I think we can trust workers because they have the operational knowledge that is need to identify where a system will work and not work, where it will create fiction and where it creates opportunity and where safeguards are needed. In essence, worker involvement makes deployment of technology a success and, as these systems become more capable, the questions around transparency and skills and their use in creative work only become more important. So Prospect represents people who develop, operate and use advanced technology across the economy as well as creative workers, which is why we are confident about the opportunities

that AI creates while equally confident that good tech need good governance. The future of work is something we all have a stake in so let's make sure that workers have an opportunity to shape it. Please support the motions. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Sarthak. Musicians' Union.

Martin Jeremiah (Musicians' Union) spoke in support of Motion 16. *He said*: First-time delegate, first-time speaker (*Applause*) Like my colleague Alice this morning I am wearing another of our T-shirts. On mine, incorporated into a brilliant piece of human design are some words and the words say, "Big tech eats art". UK Music - this Music 2025 research - asked musicians and music creators how they felt about AI- generated music and the use of AI tools in music making. It revealed that 93% agreed that AI companies should pay if they used musical compositions and recordings to train AI. Only 1% actually disagreed. The rest of the research ws equally overwhelming. 95% wanted their voice and image rights to be protected. 92% believed that AI-generated music should be labelled so people knew exactly what they were listening to. 91% agreed that consent must be sought before musical compositions and recordings are used to train AI and 91 % of music creators believed they needed protections from AI to stop their work being used without permission or payment in other words people consistently wanted strong and effective AI regulation to protect their work. So we need consent. Successful campaigning by creatives and creative sector unions led to the Government doing a U-turn on its attempt to allow companies to use the work of creatives to

train their models without consent, but we are still concerned about the long delay in legislation. Tech firms should be legally bound to uphold strengthened copyright laws and get explicit consent from human creators to use their works. We need transparency from clear labelling and we need transparency from effective regulation, too.

AI firms should be required by law to keep regularly updated records of works used so creators can easily find out if their work has been used and take easy action, with a legal obligation on tech firms to quickly respond and do the right thing on a timely basis. Particularly we need fair remuneration appropriate mechanisms to secure a fair share of the revenue created from AI generation.

Congress, it is only what is fair, it is only what is right and it is only what is beneficial for the overwhelming majority, not for the very few. The MU supports the motion, please support it too. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Martin, and very well delivered again as a first-time speaker. I will now call PCS.

John Moloney (*PCS*) spoke in support of Composite 16. *He said*: PCS support this composite and in fact support all the motions in this section. The debate around AI and the world of work is part of a wider debate around AI's impact on society more generally. That debate is

becoming increasingly concerning. In the past few weeks we have had AI insiders and serious academics soberly talk about the use of AI could lead to the extinction of humanity. It is clear that the general public in this country, and many other countries, are becoming increasingly worried about the unrestricted use of AI and they would welcome its use being regulated and controlled.

This motion and the other motions are going with the grain of public opinion. In other words, we are representatives of that public opinion. We live in a deeply flawed democracy and certainly the forces ranged against us in arguing for regulating AI or banning its use in certain circumstances, or allowing workers and unions to have a say in how it is implemented, are powerful. That said, the organised workers movement represented in this hall is powerful as well. If we throw that power alongside all those seeking AI regulations and AI control then we can win the provisions not only on this motion but all the motions in this section. We can move the Government. The trade union movement has dealt with many new technologies over the long history of the movement and the lessons of the past can be applied here as well. Particularly the lesson that you need an industrial response where necessary. Therefore, it is with some pride that I say that in our ballot that we are beginning on 20 October, one of our key demands is around a collective agreement on AI.

Just to close, we are now it seems to me, at a crossroads. AI while obviously fairly embedded in many industries is not so heavily embedded that the future is completely fixed. If we pass this motion and other motions, we can change how the future pans out. So let's pass this motion and let's win the future. Thank you, Congress. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, John. I now call NASUWT.

Kath Oliver (*NASUWT*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 16. *She said:* Hello President, Congress. I am Kath Oliver, NASUWT, The Teachers' Union and this is my first time at everything here. (*Applause*) We have just heard so eloquently the worrying stories about the risks of AI not only to workers but to the whole future of humankind: end of the world type stuff. As someone who remembers the old BBC computers in the classroom and thought they were great, thought the internet was ridiculous and would never catch on, texting - who the hell would bother with that? Why wouldn't you just make a call? Beta Max was definitely going to be the winner, not that VHS stuff. I am most definitely not the best person to judge whether the end of the world really is nigh, if AI is that serious, but I do know, and I am seeing every day, the serious concerns about what is happening right now across all our industries by also within education.

I am not anti AI. When I first discovered it, I thought it was brilliant. It was described to me as a calculator for words and as a maths/science teacher, a calculator for words is really, really needed. I could immediately see the opportunities for teaching, for my union work and, frankly, just for playing around with it. I still love taking photos of my husband and changing them. He really does suit long hair! (*Laughter*)

But we need to ask: who benefits? AI can help with planning, with resources, with adapting learning and for personal learning in our schools but who does benefit? Who gets those benefits of the efficiency gains? Because efficiency doesn't automatically mean reduced workload. Sometimes it just means we are expected to do more, faster and for less. There is a real danger that AI is just used to justify employing few workers, including teachers. If AI saves teachers' time and gives us more time to plan and support teachers, fantastic. But if it means teachers' work is being stolen to feed this monster and one teacher is expected to do the work of two, or children are being taught by a computer instead of a qualified teacher using those stolen resources, this is not progress. Teaching is about relationships. We are already seeing AI being used in the classrooms to analyse that teaching. Imagine a camera recording you, your pupils and everything you are doing. And then an algorithm (which is happening in our classrooms today) judging your teaching. What happens when it gets it wrong.

The President: Kath, you have a red light, can you finish off, please.

Kath Oliver: I will definitely do that but could you put your hand up. (*Applause*)

The President: Very clever.

Kath Oliver: Thank you. Technology should serve us the workers; workers should not serve technology companies. Let's make sure we support all this and we get it right because it is the future. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Kath, for a first-time speaker that was exceptional. Well done. Please see me later. I will now call the final union Unite, please.

Pat Dowling (*Unite*) spoke in support of Motion 63. *He said*: President, Congress, Unite the Union, Construction sector, speaking today on Motion 63 about AI. First, I would like to express our solidarity with workers in the creative industries for whom AI is a clear and present threat to their vocation and their jobs.

Congress, we know how employers use AI - to monitor us without our consent and turn our work into data and use that data to replace us. In our delegation we have port operatives who work on the cranes and their work is monitored every single day and analysed and used to teach AI models how to automate those cranes going forward. We have HGV drivers who are under constant surveillance in their cabs. We have finance and IT workers whose employers see them as a cost to be saved and AI as the tool to do it. But a word of warning to all of us. This is a massive change which we can't just put in a black box. We need to find ways to control it and not wish it away.

This motion calls for a campaign to restrict the development of data centres. Unite agrees that the process needs to be controlled. Our movement should campaign that data centres be built by union labour. Those projects must be covered by Unite's two national agreements in the construction sector, the Construction Industry Joint Council and the National Agreement in the engineering construction industry. This motion correctly identifies the need for more water, more power, so bring those whole sectors into public ownership, (*Applause*) build new reservoirs and upgrade the grid.

Construction employers are notorious union busters but large-scale projects are a key foothold of the union power in this sector. We know tech giants hate us so we must seize this opportunity here. Elon Musk can tweet nonsense until he is blue in the face but he can't pour concrete without us. So yes, support creative workers, support the spirit of the motion but let's not throw up our hands and wish this problem away. Let's take control of it. I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Well done, Pat. I will now take the votes on each motion in turn. So all those in favour the Composite 13 please show? All those against please show? The vote now on Motion 63. Would all those in favour please show? Any against please show? The vote on Composite Motion 16, all those in favour, please show? Any against? The motions are carried.

*Composite 13 was **CARRIED**.*

*Motion 63 was **CARRIED**.*

*Composite 16 was **CARRIED**.*

SECTION 4 (CONTINUED): MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

The President: The General Council report, Section 4: Meeting the challenges of the future (continued) We start with Section 4 of the General Council report, from page 48. I now call paragraph 3.15, Composite Motion 12, Strengthening procurement for reindustrialisation and backing steel communities. The General Council supports this motion, moved by GMB, seconded by Community, supported by Prospect and Nautilus. I call GMB.

Strengthening procurement for reindustrialisation and backing steel communities

(*Composed of Motion 59 and 60 plus amendments*)

Connor Parkinson (*GMB*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 12. *He said*: It is my first time speaking at a TUC event. (*Applause*) Today I am proudly representing Wigan 87 Branch of GMB's North West & Irish region. I grew up in Skelmersdale which is a working-class town just outside of Liverpool. I am proud to be the son of an engineer and the grandson of a

draftsman, and yes, I am proud to be part of a town with an industrial heritage. However, despite the pride I feel, I think it is time we talk about our industrial future. Why are blue collar workers like my members and me losing our jobs? Why is it that despite warm words from politicians, we see one factory close after another in the North West alone. Redland Tiles, Nippon Glass, Batchelor Foods, all companies with factories inside the Prime Minister's constituency in Wigan, have announced closures in the last two years.

My own company ContiTech is competing against heavy imports from abroad. We have had two rounds of redundancies in the past year alone. It is the same story in the energy sector. GMB and Unite members who are making wind turbines at BiFab in Fife were long promised green jobs but the company said, "No more work", the politicians said, "No can do", and our members had no jobs. After they lost their jobs our members saw wind turbines being planted just a few miles off that coastline; turbine made and shipped in from abroad. Why Congress? Why when Labour were elected on a manifesto commitment to align procurement rules with industrial strategy, are we still seeing contracts for things that Britain needs that can be built in Britain being awarded to literally anywhere else but Britain? If Labour is still the party of the workers, it must think less about the cost on markets and more about the costs on our working-class communities.

These costs include poor labour standards and human rights abuses. That is the sad truth behind the claims that imported materials from countries abroad is cheaper. That is not even to mention the carbon emissions from shipping something across the world. This is a false economy, Congress.

Many of our unions were built in these working-class industrial communities which used to vote Labour, and may vote them again if they receive this desperately needed work. Labour's plan for procurement must close all loopholes and get-out clauses so that public money - our money - is invested in our jobs, our industries and our communities.

We must be clear, Congress, that when public money is used, it must go to employers who respect and engage the trade union collective bargaining system. When you invest in growing one industry, it grows the supply chain of others too. In the North West alone we have shipbuilding, defence, chemical, fuels, fabrication and firms that supply them all, just like Conti-Tech where I work. All rely on each other and if Labour does not deliver on its promises, then towns like mine and blue-collar workers like me will disappear from our great trade union movement and so will the white-collar workers whose industries rely on my own.

Top table, Congress, I leave you with this. This composite offers a lifeline for the future of our country and we, the unions in this hall, can work together to promote investment for the reindustrialisation that will benefit the supply chains of both the private and the public sectors. It will grow decent unionised jobs across the UK, so, Congress, I ask you to please support this motion. I move. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Connor, thank you very much as a first-time speaker and I am sure your union GMB will be very proud of you. Seconded by Community.

Andrew Gutteridge (*President, Community*) seconded Composite Motion 12. *He said*: Congress, the new Prime Minister told us that reindustrialisation is at the heart of this Government's mission to secure economic growth in every postcode. It is an admirable ambition that is long overdue. For too long, manufacturing has been neglected, undermined and offshored. Often they replace it with emissions, intensive production methods and a dismissive attitude to ethical labour standards.

A driving force behind this reindustrialisation must be our steel industry. As my union has stated on this stage countless times before, steel is the bedrock of communities across this country that are most in need of economic renewal. Workers in steel have endured years of uncertainty, underinvestment and unfair competition that has left its mark on towns like mine in South Wales, where opportunities for meaningful employment have been decimated by this neglect. To obtain growth in these postcodes requires political upheaval. It requires an active state of working effectively to combat the forces of decline, by securing the future of production and bolstering demand for domestic steel goods.

Congress, this Government has taken admirable steps to realise these goals since 2024. They have strengthened trade measures against dumping. They have exempted more manufacturers from energy levies and they have passed the Steel Industry Act and used it to bring British Steel back under public control. The other policy lever that the Government's steel strategy identifies is a familiar one: public procurement. Although action has been taken

to update national security guidance, placed greater requirements on departments to work closer with domestic suppliers and publish justifications when steel is not being bought from British manufacturers, there is more to be done. While these policies are a welcome step in the right direction, they will not cover projects delivered by private companies. Even when we receive support from the taxpayer, as the Steel Strategy highlights, strengthening procurement in state-funded projects that do not fall under the public procurement regime is critical to protecting British jobs in steel.

Over recent years we have seen too many examples falling into this category, where foreign steel has been procured with little concern for the consequences on British workers. Giants of UK industry such as British Petroleum and Rolls Royce have all been willing to take hand-outs from the taxpayers worth hundreds of millions of pounds and then siphoning it off to unfairly subsidised steel suppliers abroad, the proceeds of which are invested in strengthening the competitiveness of their industry, further undermining our steel communities and this Government 's mission of reindustrialisation.

Congress, Community is therefore calling on the TUC to campaign for a stronger steel procurement framework that extends requirements to procure steel strategically to all types of benefit from public money, whether subsidies, grants, government-backed loans or contracts for difference, and ensure public investment supports domestic jobs, strengthens national security and enhances our economic resilience. I support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks, Andrew. I now call Prospect.

Michelle Donnelly (*Prospect*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 12. *She said*: First-time speaker, first-time delegate. (*Applause*) And I have literally just received the speech, so please bear with me.

As Prospect, we are proud to support this motion and commend Community and the GMB for their work representing steel workers. Prospect believes that reindustrialisation must come hand in hand with weighting procurement in favour of workers, British industry and local communities. As well as in steel, it is also especially important for our members in defence, energy and the public sector, to name just a few. It is welcome that the new Prime Minister has identified that the root of many of the economic challenges we face as a nation can be traced back to the deindustrialisation of Britain in recent decades, but as the trade union movement, we must be clear that reindustrialisation must be centred around high-quality unionised jobs.

It is disappointing that in many sectors the Government is yet to publish job plans as part of the industry strategy. Reindustrialisation in all sectors needs to create good unionised jobs. There must be clear conditions on companies receiving government support or government contracts around trade union access and recognition. The Fair Work Charter in offshore wind is an example of this but it should be just the start not the end, of procurement reform. Further recent steps taken by the Government in this direction have been welcomed, but we

need to go further to ensure procurement is weighted in favour of the workers who deliver our industrial strategy in key industries. Congress, we support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Very well done, Michelle, again as a first-time speaker. Just an observation, Congress, from me: the quality of the speeches from the first-time speakers has been exceptionally high. (*Applause*) The trade union movement is clearly in good hands. Well done everyone. Nautilus.

Martyn Gray (*Nautilus*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 12. *He said*: We all know the free market is not free: it costs jobs, it costs communities, it costs opportunities, on the back of others exporting wealth, not sharing it, not retaining it, not keeping it in this country. This motion is not radical. It seeks to commit a Government to investing in its people. A Government that has said it is committed to the revitalisation of the triple helix, whatever that might mean, of making sure that industry pulls its weight, of making sure that government pulls its weight, of making sure that research pulls its weight. The only way to do that is by making sure that the jobs are here and that it is supporting jobs in this country.

Too often steel is being shipped in from abroad. You would think coming from a maritime trade union we would be quite glad for the work that would come from that but, all too often, that work is not happening on the ships operating in and out of that country. Flags of convenience and other opportunities like that are escaping away because the free market is not free. One thing we can do here is send a real clear message that what we want is jobs, we want skills, we want communities to be re-empowered and we want a fair fighting chance

to do well, to get this country back where it needs to be, to support local jobs, local communities and get us back to where we want. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Very well done Martyn, thank you. I am now going to go to go vote on Composite Motion 12. Will all those in favour please show? All those against please show. The motion is carried.

*Composite Motion 12 was **CARRIED.***

SECTION 2 (CONTINUED): STRONG RIGHTS AT WORK AND PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION

The President: Delegates, we now move to Section 2 of the General Council report: Strong rights at work and protection from discrimination from page 22. I now call Motion 18, Tackling retail crime. The General Council supports the motion, moved by USDAW, seconded by GMB and two other unions I will call - the Bakers' Union and RMT.

Tackling retail crime

Rab Donnelly (*Deputy General Secretary, USDAW*) moved Motion 18. *He said*: I am proud to move our motion on the importance of tackling retail crime. Congress, every worker should have the right to go to work, do their job and come home safely, but for public-facing workers right across our movement, that basic right is being denied. USDAW members have been at the sharp end of a retail crime crisis. For too many retail workers, customer abuse has become normalised. They have been shouted at, threatened, sworn at or spat at. It is seen as "just one of those things". For one in 10 retail workers that abuse escalates to violent assault.

For years these experiences were ignored and overlooked by the Tories. That is why I am delighted to welcome action from a Labour Government who is finally listening to retail workers and taking much needed steps to protect them. Labour's Crime and Policing Act delivers a new offence of assaulting a shop worker, something our members have campaigned long and hard for. Last week USDAW co-ordinated a letter calling on the Home Secretary to enact the law during our Respect for Shop Workers Week in November, to send a clear message that retail workers deserve respect, and that retail crime will be taken seriously. Early indications show that investment in policing and targeted action in town centres is already starting to turn the tide. As our members face new frontiers of abuse, like being filmed without consent and posted online for click bait, these new protections have come at just the right time. But there is always more that can be done. I want to focus on retail home delivery drivers, because they are on the front- line too, but are often overlooked. They are the ones delivering the convenience of our weekly shop to your door. They are the ones making sure older people, disabled people and busy families can access the food and

basic items that they need. They are also the ones enforcing age-restricted sales for things like alcohol and knives on doorsteps. This is a frequent trigger for abuse and when you are working late at night and in difficult environments, the reality is it is very different to working in a store. There is no colleague nearby, no security guards and, if a situation escalates, you are on your own.

When USDAW asked every delivery driver about their experiences, 13% said they had been assaulted on delivery rounds in the last year and a quarter had been forced to refuse to make a delivery because they are worried about their own safety. That to me is beyond unacceptable.

However, the new protections only apply to workers in shops, not their colleagues making deliveries outside them. Congress, if we are serious about tackling retail crime (and we have to be) delivery drivers tasked with enforcing the law must also receive the protection of the law. Legislation is of course the beginning and not the end of the conversation. Too many retail workers still feel that reporting abuse won't lead anywhere or that it won't be taken seriously. So workers must see the impact of new laws being used to protect them. This can only happen with continued investment in policing to make retail crime a priority. The voices of retail workers at the sharp end of abuse must be at the heart of decisions on police reforms that will impact them and those voices must be reflected in TUC campaigns on workplace violence.

Congress, please support the motion and let's send a clear message from here that abuse is not and never will be part of the job. Thanks, Congress. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Rab. You are spot-on on a really serious issue. Seconded by GMB.

William McGluskey (*GMB*) seconded Motion 18. *He said*: First-time delegate and first-time speaker. (Applause) Congress, no worker should experience abuse. No worker should be subjected to physical harm and no worker should be afraid to go to their work. Our retail members know all too well that attacks and abuse are becoming more commonplace and we are appalled that USDAW members have faced this abuse. We extend our heartfelt solidarity to you all. It proves that employers must keep their staff safe and realise their duty to keep their workers out of danger.

The precarious work our members face in the gig economy means the onus is on them to choose between their safety and their earnings. Food delivery drivers have faced some appalling abuse on top of poor wages and exploitation by the vulture capitalists of Silicon Valley who make their billions from them. In the UK, people of global majority heritage and immigrants to our country are most of this workforce and as racial tensions continue to be whipped up to a frenzy across the UK by the far right, food delivery drivers are at the sharpest end of the abuse.

In my home city of Glasgow, our member Mohammed was racially attacked by far-right thugs when he was out making deliveries. He was singled out because of his ethnicity and was an easy target because he was visible as a driver. Mohammed had traffic cones thrown at him. He had disgusting racist violent verbal abuse hurled at him. The incident was so dangerous it left him scared to leave his home and go to his work. With the support of GMB Scotland, Mohammed has spoken publicly about his attack and encouraged other gig economy workers to speak out against this hate.

We are absolutely committed to keeping our members safe and we will raise these issues with the TUC and wider. We urge that our affiliates help strengthen legislation to prevent these disturbing and dangerous attacks on these workers. Colleagues, support this motion let's protect the vulnerable from abuse. I second. (*Applause*)

The President: William, very well done and presented. The Bakers' Union are next and then RMT.

Nick Mead (*BAFWU*) spoke in support of Motion 18. *He said:* President, Congress, I work in food retail and I see daily what walks out of my doors and while I am not saying it is right, this isn't about the mum with no money trying to feed her baby because there is no right to food. This is about the gangs coming in with shopping bags and emptying my fridges and my selectors to fund crime. The cost of trying to prevent this stops the money going in the pot that could be better spent on workers' welfare or, dare I say it, higher wages which is also

funding the anti-social behaviour that comes with the theft. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much.

The President: I now call the RMT.

Annila Saghir (*RMT*) spoke in support of Motion 18. *She said*: I want to start by saying a word from a great Pakistani female poet called Kishwar Naheed, one of the leading feminist voices of modern Pakistan, and excuse my Urdu, it is not great. I always say Urdu is my second language not English. In "The Grass Is Like Me" she writes, "As soon as the grass is able to raise its head, the cutting machine comes to flatten it, but neither the grass's desire to grow nor a woman's determination can be extinguished."

RMT fully supports this motion. We support USDAW's call for a specific offence of assaulting a retail home delivery driver, a key demand of our own campaign. It is a standalone offence for public transport workers and we want that protection extended to every public-facing worker in this country. Violence against public transport workers is at epidemic levels. In our national survey last year, two-thirds of public transport workers said they had experienced violence at work in the past 12 months, and the majority more than once. British Transport

Police figures show violence against rail workers has risen year on year since 2010 and in 2024/25, it was up by 34% from the year before. The damage does not end at the end of the shift. A third of public transport workers have considered leaving the job because of the risk of violence. PTSD among rail staff runs at more double the rate than in the general population and the researchers call it trauma-exposed work.

My day job is being a guard. I open and close train doors. I check people 's tickets. I make announcements. That should not be trauma-exposed work. That is why the RMT launched our Action Against Assaults campaign and brought it to Congress last year. We welcome the TUC Summit on Violence at Work and the demands of our resolution and the campaigning still to come.

We know what works because USDAW showed us. They want a specific offence for shop workers. We commend them for it and we back them today in extending it to delivery drivers. In Scotland, my union won manifesto commitments this year and the Scottish Government has committed to a new offence of abusing or assaulting public transport workers. We tried to do the same in this country. We sought to amend the Crime and Policing Bill and the UK Government has so far refused to extend protections to public transport workers in England and Wales. So, for example, my colleagues in the North East are less protected when they are on this side of the border than when they cross the border to Edinburgh. It is the same job, same abuse, same train but different rights.

I was telling my delegates who are here with me today that I have been to so many conferences this year and all I have talked about is getting beaten up and spat up and sworn at at work. I feel like it is all I have done all year. Have I got the red light? I am so sorry. I am not a train driver so I do not know about red lights. Thank you. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks, Annila, well delivered. I am now going to go to the vote on Motion 18. Will all those in favour please show? Will all those against, please show. That is carried.

*Motion 18 was **CARRIED.***

The President: Congress, I am sure you will have heard the sad news of the death of the Prime Minister's father yesterday. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister will no longer be able to join us at Congress as planned. On behalf of everyone here today we send our condolences to the Prime Minister, his family and loved ones at this very sad time. We very grateful that Louise Haigh, the First Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will now address Congress on behalf of the Prime Minister and his Government. A former Unite shop steward, Louise entered Parliament when she was elected as Member for Sheffield Heeley in 2015. Throughout her parliamentary career she has been a great friend to the union movement. As an MP, she has campaigned for more protections for women from harassment at work and increased support for victims of domestic abuse and violence as well as supporting international solidarity with unions in Colombia. As a Minister, she has spearheaded public ownership and control of transport services through greater powers for

local authorities over buses and bringing UK railways back into public ownership. More recently in her new role she has strengthened public procurement guidance to support better jobs, skills and UK supply chains.

Following her speech, Louise has agreed to take some questions from delegates which Paul as General Secretary will chair. Not only is Louise welcome to Congress, I warmly welcome her back as a Cabinet member in a senior position. Louise, the floor is yours. (*Applause*)

The Rt Hon Louise Haigh (*First Secretary and Duchy of Lancaster*): Thank you, Congress. It's a real privilege to be here with you today, albeit in very sad circumstances. As has been said, you will all have heard the news about the Prime Minister's father, that he very sadly passed away on Sunday night. I'm sure I speak for everyone here today when I say that all our love and our best wishes are with Andy and his family as they grieve the loss of a husband, a father and a grandfather. (*Applause*)

The Prime Minister has talked so openly and so movingly about the influence that his father, Roy, had on his life and on his politics. And many of you in this room will have had to personally experience the devastating impact that Alzheimer's can have on the lives of you and your loved ones.

It's at times like these that you want to be surrounded by the people closest to you. And that's genuinely one of the reasons why Andy was so sorry he couldn't be here today with our Labour family.

Because the Prime Minister understands that the strength of our movement is drawn from our roots in the trade unions and that moments like these are such a valuable opportunity to come together. To remind ourselves of our common endeavour, of what binds us and unites us in our daily fight to improve the lives of working people.

Like all families, we have and will always have our differences, our disagreements, big and small, but on days like today, we should come together and remind ourselves of all that we have in common and everything that we have achieved, together.

At various points, I've sat next to some of you around the negotiating table. And at other times, I've sat across from you. I know which times I have preferred! Sometimes you've backed us; sometimes you've challenged us. Sometimes you've told us exactly what you think. And we wouldn't have it any other way. But through all those years - in Opposition and in Government - there is a unifying belief that has bound us together. A belief that brought me into politics and has shaped everything I've worked to achieve since.

The belief that when ordinary people find themselves up against powerful institutions, they should never stand alone. It's a principle that runs through the heart of this Labour Government. And it's the same principle that runs through the core of everything you do. A labour movement - united in a shared purpose to create a society where every person, in every place, has the chance to fulfil their potential and to live the richer, fuller life that they deserve. Because as the late, great Jimmy Reid put it, "a rat race is for rats."

(*Applause*)

Congress, we know that such a future won't be handed to us. We need to go out - every day - and fight to create it. With the determination to fight for working people and the courage to act when the situation demands it. It isn't always easy. But nothing worth doing ever is.

And I am proud of what Labour in power has done so far since 2024:

- New rights for renters
- Lifting half a million children out of poverty by ending the two-child cap
- Record investment in our NHS
- Rebuilding our infrastructure
- Saving our steel industry
- Bringing our buses back under public control

And especially close to my heart from my time as the Transport Secretary

- Bringing our railways back into public ownership. (*Applause and cheers*)

We know we need to go further and faster to deliver the scale of change the country expects. But never be in any doubt whose side this Labour Government are on. Whether it was standing up for workers illegally sacked by P&O Ferries. Or changing public procurement to create more good jobs here in Britain. We are proudly on the side of working people. And Congress, I can promise you now, under this Government, there will never be any doubt about whose side we are on. (*Applause*)

As Barbara Castle, that red-haired socialist from Yorkshire once said: "In politics, guts is all". We are fortunate in this Labour Government to not be short of too many red-headed socialists. It's wonderful to see Angela Rayner back with us on the front row, joining us again today.

And that means never shying away from the big issues of our time. AI has enormous potential to improve lives, to transform our public services, make our businesses stronger and deliver new scientific breakthroughs.

We must work to make the most of the opportunities that AI can bring. But I know people are worried, rightly, about what it already means for their jobs. What it means for the world their kids are growing up in, and of course for their safety.

We must heed the warnings of those who are at the forefront of developing this technology. There are clearly huge risks to our national security and society if the right guardrails are not put in place. This is an issue that goes beyond our borders. And we are ready to work with our international partners to make sure we get this right.

AI will reshape our lives and the lives of our children. We have a solemn duty to mitigate the risks and ensure that it is for the benefit - not the detriment - of our society. It is these challenges - and our collective response to them - that will define the future our children inherit.

And just as the trade unions have used your voices to stand in solidarity with those who face persecution and injustice, we must be guided by those shared values. Both here and around the world. Including what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Prime Minister was right when he said that Britain had been too slow in our response. At a time when it has never been more important to remind the world who we are, we hesitated.

Well, Congress – not any more. We will no longer stand by while innocent Palestinian families are torn apart, while innocent children are killed in Gaza, and while the hope of a two-state solution evaporates before our eyes.

The sanctions Ed Miliband announced last week are about changing course. The Israeli people are not responsible for the actions of their Government. So, we are purposefully targeting the illegal settlements. Increasing pressure on the Israeli Government, and helping to keep the hope of peace in the Middle East alive.

We will stand against injustice. We will stand up for peace. We will build a coalition of international partners to speak with one voice and remind the world who we are. (*Applause*)

Congress, the lesson is clear. Our collective power matters. But as the Prime Minister has said - we have spent too much of the last four decades doing everything we can to weaken it. He has spoken about the wrong turns we took in the 1980s. But we don't talk enough about what that meant for our unions. You were weakened in the Thatcher years. Marginalised in the decades that followed. Vilified through the era of Tory austerity. Treated like a nuisance at best and part of the problem at worst.

We know those attacks weren't just on you. They were attacks on the millions of working people you represent. The nurse finishing a night shift. The teaching assistant opening the school gates. The bus driver getting people to work. Every worker who gets up and gets on every single day. When they weakened you, they weakened them.

And whilst this Labour Government has the privilege to serve, you have my word: we will never go back. (*Applause*)

But our communities are still living with the consequences of these lost decades. Good jobs and opportunities drained away. Councils left under powered and under resourced. High streets hollowed out. The pubs and clubs that once brought people together - boarded up and abandoned. Power and autonomy that once belonged to communities drifting further and further away from them.

The frustration people feel across the country, that so many of your members feel. It's not unjustified; it's not unreasonable. It's what happens when people are told - year after year - that 'the decisions have already been taken', that 'this is just the way things are'. It's what happens when a country gets comfortable with leaving certain people and places behind.

Well, no more, Congress. We are going to put power back into our communities. We are going to put power back into the workplace. And, together, we are going to put power back into the hands of working people. (*Applause*)

Over the last eight weeks, I have had the chance to meet with leaders from across regional and local government, each with their own challenges and opportunities. But what united so many of them was worry. Worry about one issue in particular: The cost of living.

This Government is committed to bringing back hope to this country. To get Britain believing in itself again. But we are not naïve to what that will take. To the scale of the challenge ahead of us. Because for so many families…

Those things - hope, belief - they don't come easily right now. When you're up to your eyes in bills. When you're sick to your stomach with worry. Those things aren't foundations. They're luxuries. And we can't ask people to look to the future until they can see through to the end of the month.

Over the summer, we have started some of the work to give people breathing space. But to support working people for the long-term, to change things -- to really change things -- we have to rewire the state of our country completely.

And we can't do that without listening to working people first. We can't do it without their voice in the room. Or without the people who lift those voices up every single day. We can't do it without every single one of you, Congress.

It's not something you hear often in party politics, and probably not what some of my fellow Ministers expected to hear on their first day of this new Administration, but every single one of them knows: Expect to lose power.

Because if a decision can be taken closer to the people it affects, that is where we want it taken. If a city knows a new transport link could unlock thousands of jobs, we want it to have the power to build it. If a town can see the jobs of the future coming, we want it to have the power to train its young people for them. If a community has a chance to bring life back to a struggling high street, we want it to have the power to take it. Wherever there are opportunities for working people, wherever there is the potential of investment, of good jobs, or of a new future, it is local people who will see it first.

So, Congress, let's finally give them the power to seize it. And when local people have the power to shape their economy and government stands ready to back them, then business will have the confidence to invest. Money starts flowing back into our communities. And working people begin to see and feel the change they have been crying out for. The shutters coming up on our shops. The doors opening to our pubs. The empty units on the high street filled. Young people choosing to build their lives where they grew up and parents believing their kids can have a better life than they did. No more people written off. No more places left behind. That, Congress, is good growth in every postcode.

Now, new jobs, new opportunities, new industries. It would be easy to get carried away. But, Congress, you know as well as I do that a new job isn't always a good job. And all the investment in the world means very little if the people doing the work still don't feel secure. If they don't know what hours they'll get or if they can't afford to take a day off sick. That is why we passed the Employment Rights Act. And when I say "we", Congress - I'm not just talking about the Government. I'm talking about every person in this room.

Because of you, working people have had the biggest uplift in their rights in a generation. Changes that won't just transform lives today but the lives of our children and our grandchildren.

- Sick pay from day one
- An end to fire and rehire
- More protection for mums
- The right to paternity leave for dads
- Stronger protections from unfair dismissal

And an end to exploitative zero-hour contracts that give employers all the flexibility and working people all the insecurity. (*Applause*)

And that principle should apply to the rest of our working lives too. Because life isn't always as neat as we'd like to be. Or as employers would like it to be. There's kids to pick up. Parents

to look after. Families who rely on us at short notice. And sometimes, a little bit of flexibility can make all the difference.

Now I know that businesses have to make things work too. Not every job can be done from home. And not every request can be agreed. But every request can and should be taken seriously.

So today I am pleased to announce that we will strengthen the right to flexible working. If an employer wants to turn down a request, they will have to sit down with their employee, properly consider it and explain why.

Congress, that is what putting power back into the hands of working people looks like. Power over your place. Power over your work. When you get those two things together, you get something else: Power over your future. The freedom to plan. The freedom to make choices. The freedom to look beyond the end of the month and start looking to the years ahead. To believe life can get better. That your children can do better. And that the place you call home can have a better future too. That is how we bring back hope.

Congress, the trade unions are vital to this Labour Party and this government. Vital to this country and its future. We aren't a monument - we are a movement. And you don't stop campaigning because we are in government. I don't mean with placards and

loudhailers - although I know how many of you in this room are partial to them - but that every single day in Government we are campaigning against the vested interests, the forces trying to stop progress, against the unaccountable crypto billionaires living thousands of miles away, who think our democracy is up for sale. Against the politicians who pretend to be on the side of workers, but pocket millions in undeclared donations and speak openly about their plans to strip working people of the very protections they rely on. Against the far-right ringleaders marching on our streets in balaclavas, seeking to spread fear and division in our communities. (*Applause*)

Against all those who talk down our country and say that "things can't get better", that "this can't be done."

Congress, today we re-commit ourselves to our collective endeavour to turn the page on four decades of lost opportunity to deliver the change our country is crying out for, and to build a future that the people we represent expect and deserve.

Thank you, Congress. (*Applause and standing ovation*)

The President: We will be taking questions in batches of three. I see Paul has joined you on the stage to take our first questions.

The General Secretary: Thanks, President, and thanks to Louise for a fantastic and inspiring address. She has agreed to take questions. We are going to take them in three batches of three. We have got people lined up. Our first question is from Kelvin Maloney, who is a UNISON member, a care worker and vice Chair of UNISON's National Social Care Committee.

Kelvin Imolaume (*UNISON*): Thank you, Secretary of State. *He said*: First, can I associate myself, my union UNISON and the hundreds of thousands of care workers across the country in sending our condolences to the Prime Minister on the passing of his dad.

Secretary of State, the Prime Minister's recent speech on the importance of all care workers and in need for a national care service was very welcomed as was his recognition of the damage done by profiteering within the sector. As part of his plans to bring the National Care Service into being can the first Secretary of State explain how the Government intends to clamp down on those putting profits ahead of people? Does she agree with UNISON on the need to remove the profit motive from the care sector. (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: I now invite Carys Lancaster, an USDAW rep and retail worker.

Carys Lancaster (*USDAW*): Good afternoon. Lots of the members I represent in my store really struggle because their hours are not secure. Will you help them by ensuring that

guaranteed hours are applied to everyone in line with the Government's manifesto commitments.

The General Secretary: Thank you, Carys. Our final question in this section from Marianos Zlatinova. She is an RMT and cleaner on our public transport system.

Marianos Zlatinova (*RMT*): First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am also a cleaner working on public transport, and I know outsourcing means worse jobs and worse services. We have welcomed your opposition to outsourcing, so, can you commit that government departments will sit down with the trade unions to agree an urgent plan to deliver the biggest wave of insourcing in a generation? (*Applause*)

Louise Haigh: Kevin, let me say first and for most a huge thank you to you for the incredible work you do. Andy's experience this week is demonstrative of the incredible work that the care workforce does and I am sure everyone in this room will know someone who had a been cared for and supported by the incredible social care workforce across this country. A workforce as large as the NHS but has been absolutely undervalued for far too long. That is what (*Applause*) absolutely underpins the Prime Minister's personal commitment to tackling social care. It is an issue he has cared about for decades and really put at the heart of what he wants to do in returning to government now. A strong national care service will be absolutely underpinned by its workforce and we are committed to going further and faster on social care reform. Louise Casey has been tasked at looking at a number of issues,

specifically the issue of private equity, which you address, and how we will make sure people are put before profit, and that will be reporting back to the Government next year. Again, thank you for the question and for the incredible work you do.

Carys, equally, thanks and congratulations to USDAW in particular for highlighting this incredibly important campaign. I am a former zero-hour contract worker myself, so I know firsthand the insecurity that comes with that kind of contract and, as I said in my speech, when you cannot plan for the end of the month, or even the end of the week, it is impossible to plan for the future. This was at the heart of the employment Rights Bill which became an Act. We have just concluded a consultation on guaranteed hours which we have been working in lockstep with the trade unions on and in constant conversation with trade union reps, together with rights to reasonable notice of shifts and payment for short notice cancellation and the stronger notice at work. We are really committed to tackling this issue and making sure that you have the security and flexibility that matters for you, and that you deserve.

Mariana, thank you so much for your first-time contribution to Congress. There was a Manifesto commitment to the largest wave of insourcing in a generation. For too long, and that is part of the four decades of missed opportunities and the type of approach that the Prime Minister has talked about, so often we have seen outsourcing by default, when, in fact, that has not driven the best value for money for the taxpayer and it has certainly not driven the best rights and conditions for workers.

From April 2027, the Government and all its arm's length bodies will conduct a public interest test to look at how services can be delivered in-house. My department, the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, is bringing all cleaning and security staff back in house when major contracts end in 2028. (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: Thanks, Louise. We have got our second set of questioner. First up is Andy Green, who is Chair of Unite's Executive Committee.

Andy Green (*Unite*): I want to point out I am also a Tilbury dock worker for my day job. Louise, there is no doubt Labour is getting a second hearing, but it is time to be bolder and to ensure that the working classes know that Labour is on their side, this must mean action and not just words. British manufacturing has lost 4 million jobs since the 1980s and the overwhelming majority of them were good, well-paid union jobs. You have spoken about reindustrialisation. Can you tell us what is the timescale for that, who is going to pay, and are you going to give a commitment to buying British? (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: Thanks, Andy. Next up is Katy Hanson. She is a senior consumer policy manager at Ofcom and she is a Prospect branch manager.

Katy Hanson (*Prospect*): Secretary of State, will the Government pause UKRI's cuts to public sector R&D, cuts that would see world-leading facilities closed or downgraded and consult with all stakeholders, including unions on a better way forward and will not undermine the Government's reindustrialisation agenda?

The General Secretary: Thank you, Katy. And finally in this section we have Dave Turner. He is a firefighter and FBU member and he represents the South East region on the FBU's National Executive.

Dave Turner (*FBU*): First Secretary of State, like everything else, you will have seen the devastating wildfires across the UK this summer. As a proud firefighter and FBU official who has dealt with these incidents, I know the toll it takes on the crews and communities. With extreme weather and wildfire risk increasing, does the First Secretary of State agree we need the firefighters, equipment and resources required to meet this growing threat and that we need to act now before next summer. (*Applause*)

Louise Haigh: Andy, firstly thank you for the question. I absolutely agree with this second chance that we have been given and the opportunity and the necessity to be bolder, I would say, in this second chance that we have been allowed. Just yesterday, Jonny Reynolds the Business Secretary announced that the Government are working towards purchasing Speciality Steel UK in south Yorkshire, which will safeguard 1,400 jobs and protect vital sovereign capabilities. (*Applause*) I am really proud of the work that the Government has

done in safeguarding British steel across the country, but just yesterday that was a really positive announcement in that regard.

And in terms of buying British, again, there has been a really strong commitment across government and very recent announcements that we are about to bring to fruition. I have reformed the way public procurement works for the £90 billion worth of taxpayers' money that is spent through public procurement. That will now in terms of social value be only targeted at jobs and skills in this country. We have stripped out all other requirements for public procurement so we can really target it at good jobs and skills here, creating apprenticeships and opportunities for our young people as well. We have also told Cabinet colleagues to use national security provisions in procurement to make sure that we really target British investment in crucial sectors such as ship-building, AI and energy infrastructure. So, lots already done, a lot announced just over the last few weeks, but a lot more to do as well.

Katy, thank you. We have committed to supporting UK science with £68 billion of investment in R&D. The Prime Minister has been absolutely clear that we will be working closely with the research community to ensure we can protect our core scientific capability and keep world-class facilities open. Thank you for the question, it is a really important one, and of course we will do so in conjunction and conversation with the trade unions.

And Dave, my grandfather was a fire fighter and a very proud member of the FBU. Thank you for the work you do and thank you to all the firefighters and emergency workers that kept us safe over this unprecedented summer of extreme heat and wildfires. You risked your lives every day during those unprecedented fires to keep us safe. And we are, thanks to climate change, unfortunately, going to see this as the new normal. So, we have invested £100 million already in the fire service and will continue to work across government to tackle our resilience, because soon, we will be seeing excessive rainfall and drought in addition to the wildfires and extreme heat over the summer. We are holding an extreme weather summit in the coming weeks and months, and that will be absolutely in partnership with the FBU because of your expertise to help us prepare for upcoming extreme weather in the future. (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: Our final round of questions, our first question comes from Nell Bennett. She is the Young Workers' Lead on the TUC's General Council. She is a practising physiotherapist and she is also a young workers' rep for CSP.

Nell Bennett (*CSP*): The first part of my question is do you see a role for apprenticeships at all levels in the NHS but also in the wider public sector? Also how are the government going to support the apprenticeship agenda?

The General Secretary: Beverley Gunning is a GMB member and a local government worker.

Beverley Gunning (*GMB*): Good afternoon, Secretary of State. This is my first time at TUC Congress. (*Applause*) Secretary of State, equal pay law exists because the market discriminates against the value of women's work. The Next Retail equal pay judgment has not only shocked me but has struck fear into women across the country and with both the Conservatives and Reform plotting to scrap the Equality Act, women's hard-one right to equal pay for equal work of equal value, is now under threat. Historically, this strong woman who were beautifully portrayed in the film "Made in Dagenham" Barbara Castle, was the last Labour woman to hold your position as First Secretary of State. So I ask: will you finish what she started, honour your manifesto commitments on equal pay and finally deliver pay justice for working women? (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: Brilliant, Beverley, thank you. (*Applause*) And last but by no means least, Debra Beale, who is the President of the NEU.

Debra Beale (*President, NEU*): First Secretary of State, in your speech you touched upon AI and as it is increasingly introduced into schools, public services and across the economy, do you agree that strong regulation is needed to protect educational standards, jobs and data? Do you also agree that trade unions should have a formal role in the development, implementation and oversight of AI, to ensure that that benefits workers, learners and communities rather than simply driving private profits?

Louise Haigh: To Nell, first and foremost, we absolutely see a role for apprenticeships at all levels but we are prioritising opportunities for young people. There has been a 40% fall in young person apprenticeships starting in the last ten years and we have a crisis in young people not in employment, education or training. We inherited a situation where a million young people were out of work, education or training and we think that is one of the worst legacies of the last Tory Government and, unfortunately, we have not made sufficient progress in the last couple of years. So, that is why the Prime Minister has set up the NEET taskforce chaired by Alan Milburn, and we are working closely with trade unions to look at every lever we can pull. Young persons' apprenticeships are incredibly important in order to tackle one of the biggest crises, frankly, in our society and our economy today.

Bev, thank you, great question. I just think first Reform and the Tories show exactly who they are by opposing the Equality Act, don't they, and by standing so firmly against something that everyone in this room and those whom we represent have spent so many years and decades fighting for. The fact that you had to invoke the only other woman to hold my role who brought forward this legislation decades ago, in order to make the point, shows how much more progress we need to make.

We absolutely are committed to delivering there. We will make the right to equal pay effective, not just for women but for ethnic minorities and disabled people as well. And we will make sure the right to equal pay is effective, by putting in place measures to ensure that outsourcing of services can no longer be used by employers to avoid paying equal pay. (*Applause*) We will absolutely deliver this change in partnership with business, with trade

unions and civil society, and we have now launched a consultation, which I am sure everyone in this room and those you represent will be involved in.

Finally, Debra, thank you, again a really good question. Nothing can replicate the impact that teachers and teaching assistants have. There is no way that AI can ever overtake the need for quality teachers and teaching assistants in schools. I am sure again nearly everyone in this room can point back to a teacher or someone in their school who had a profound impact on their life and their life choices. We need to make sure that those interactions and that relationship is 100% protected. As we go forward in all the reform around AI working people need to be at the heart of the AI debate. We are committed again to working with trade unions and employers on this. Where AI makes work more productive, the benefits should be felt by workers, not just shareholders or tech bros. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The General Secretary: First of all, thank you to everybody for their questions. We had lots and lots of questions from unions, but, hopefully, you have had a good flavour of the questions being asked. I would say at a time when there are big questions about transparency in our politics, it is refreshing to have a First Secretary of State and a Labour Cabinet Office Secretary talking openly about these are the shared challenges that we all face as a country and we will work together to make sure we represent working people, their families and communities up and down the country. Louise, thank you very much. Congress, again show your appreciation. (*Applause*)

SECTION 2 (CONTINUED): STRONG RIGHTS AT WORK AND PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION

The President: Delegates, we will now continue with Section 2 of the General Council report, from page 22. I now call Motion 19, Firefighters concordat on health and well-being. The General Council supports the motion moved by the FBU and seconded by ASLEF.

Firefighters concordat on health and well-being

Steve Wright (*General Secretary, FBU*) moved Motion 19. *He said*: Congress, as firefighters we know that the job that we do is dangerous, as we have just seen recognised by the First Secretary of State with firefighters on the frontline this summer with wildfires. We know that every time we leave the fire station, every incident we attend, there are risks. We train for those risks, we wear our PPE, we wear our breathing apparatus and we do everything we can to protect ourselves and each other. But there is another danger, a danger that we have come to understand much more clearly in recent years. The danger that does not end when the fire is out. And that danger is cancer that firefighters face an increase in contracting on a daily basis.

Congress, the FBU has brought this important motion because we have made an important breakthrough in our long running campaign on firefighters' occupational cancers. April at our

first ever health and safety summit, the Health Secretary and the Westminster Government announced a concordat and health monitoring for fire fighters. That was confirmed by the Fire Minister in May at our own conference. Since then, the Burnham Government has invited our officials into the room to join a working group, to work out how health monitoring works in our sector. This is a real victory for our members, won by the workers in the fire service, not by the bosses. And it did not happen overnight. It happened as a result of decades of campaigning, research and negotiations by the Fire Brigades Union. More than half a century ago it became clear to firefighters that we were suffering respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and often dying much younger than the rest of the population. That is why the Fire Brigades Union began supporting research into firefighter cancers back in the 1980s. A decade ago our conference took the decision to commission major research into cancer risks among UK firefighters. That work and our collaboration with Professor Anna Stec and her team at the University of Central Lancashire has helped transform what we know about the risks firefighters face.

We also launched our own campaign because we understood the contaminants that firefighters encounter out in incidents on the ground at fires do not simply disappear when the incident is over. They come back to our station: they are on our PPE, on our equipment, on our fire engines and in our workplaces. But now the science is an absolutely clear. The World Health Organization's Cancer Agency has classified occupational exposure as a firefighter as Group 1: Carcinogenic to humans. That is the highest evidence category used by the International Agency for Research on Cancers. It is the same category that includes tobacco smoking. That means that being a firefighter carries the same level of cancer risk as

smoking itself. It means that the evidence is absolutely clear: Occupational exposure as a firefighter can cause cancer.

Congress, we should not accept that as simply the price of doing our job. We accept that firefighting is dangerous, that our job a dangerous. What we should never accept and what we will not accept is failing to do everything that we can to prevent the dangers that we can prevent. That is why we are fighting every day for this. That is why we have published best practice, produced workplace guidance and built our own cancer database. And it is why securing proper decent meaningful health monitoring is so important to our members and their families, because when the science tells us that our members are being harmed, we need to know what is happening to their health. We need regular checks, we need intervention and we need to make sure that firefighters who develop occupational cancers get the recognition and the support they and their families need.

But Congress, this is not the end of our campaigning for the next stage. We want to make sure that every fire station has the right de-con and health and safety arrangements in every single fire station across the UK. We want to make sure we have the right equipment, the right procedures and the right levels of investment to ensure we are protected from exposure to harmful contaminants. We need UK-wide health monitoring.

Congress, firefighters run towards danger to protect other people. We should not have to accept that our job that we do to protect others should compromise our own safety. We

know the dangers. The science knows the dangers. We know exactly what needs to be done in the UK fire and rescue service to protect us. We are calling on the Government to commit further than just a working group to look at this; to commit to make sure that every single firefighter across the UK is regularly tested and regularly protected and we have proper prevention measures in place. Support your firefighters, Congress, support this motion, I move. (*Applause*)

The President: Excellent, Steve, well done. I now call ASLEF.

Dave Calfe (*General Secretary, ASLEF*) seconded Motion 19. *He said*: I am proud to be seconding Motion 19. As the father of a firefighter (who is of course a member of the FBU), I want to congratulate the FBU on their DECON campaign. The FBU have set out the right arguments and the right approach on behalf of their members, putting their health and well-being front and centre. And we welcome the Government recognising the importance of health and safety. It is of course right that the government does all it can to help especially for those workers who serve the public in dangerous circumstances. Health and safety should be at heart of everything we do. Everything worker should have the maximum protection for their health and well-being in the workplace. We hope this will be used as a template for other unions. We will be using it to continue our campaign Dignity for Drivers on the long-term health implications of the lack of access to toilets and the time to use them. We held a fringe with other transport trade unions today at lunch time on this. It is not just train drivers who can benefit from a successful campaign. Many in passenger transport, freight and logistics can and will. ASLEF will certainly be carrying our Dignity For Drivers campaign

forward encouraged by the work of the FBU and the engagement of government. We look forward to working with the Secretary of State for Transport no bring our campaign to a successful conclusion. I just want to end on this point to colleagues in the FBU. I want to place on record our thanks to FBU members who attend to support our members post train accidents which we have unfortunately seen this year. Whilst these accidents are rare, they can have a profound effect on our members and the care shown by all first responders and NHS staff is appreciated by ASLEF. Thank you. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Well done, Dave. I am going to go to the vote on Motion 19. Will all those in favour please show? Will all those against please show. Again thank you. And that is carried.

*Motion 19 was **CARRIED.***

The President: I now call Composite Motion 7, Tackling workplace fatigue to protect workers and the public. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by the Hospital Doctors' Union, seconded by Unite supported by RCN and Nautilus. I will also be calling BALPA in the debate as well.

Tackling workplace fatigue to protect workers and the public

(*Composing Motion 20 and amendments*)

Sasha Burn (*The Hospital Doctors' Union*) moved Composite Motion 7. *She said*: President, Congress, we bring this motion because fatigue is no longer an occasional inconvenience in the workplace. It is growing systemic threat to workers' safety, dignity and well-being across the UK economy and it is putting the public at risk too. The TV programme is not called "Your life in their tired hands" for a reason. From healthcare to transport, from emergency services to manufacturing, from social care to every safety-critical sector, workers are being pushed past the limits of what is safe, sustainable and humane. Fatigue is not a personal failing. It is not a matter of resilience. It is an organisational hazard created by poor decisions, staffing levels, rota design, by the way work is structured, and, like any hazard, it can be prevented.

Congress, we have all heard the stories. Unite's recent survey of bus drivers revealed what many of us already knew, exhausted workers are driving vehicles full of passengers through busy streets terrified to admit they are fatigued because they fear being penalised. That is not just wrong it is dangerous. It puts workers, passengers and pedestrians at risk and it is happening because employers are failing to manage the risks properly. In healthcare we see the same pattern: Staff shortages, relentless pressure, long shifts, inadequate rest facilities and poor rota design are pushing workers to the brink. When a nurse, a doctor, a paramedic or a porter is exhausted, it is not only their own safety at stake; it is the safety of the patients they care for, but the principle is universal: wherever tiredness undermines safe performance people get hurt. We are all patients of the NHS. None of us wants to be cared for by an exhausted healthcare worker. Let's be clear, employers are trying to plug staffing gaps with badly designed on-call systems that mask short staffing and push workers into unsafe patterns of work. This is not fatigue management, it is fatigue creation.

Congress, we must call this what it is: a national workplace safely issue. Fatigue contributes to errors, accidents, sickness absence, burn-out, poor retention and reduced productivity. It is costing workers their health, costing employers their staff and costing the public their safety. That is why this motion demands national recognition of fatigue as a major occupational hazard. We need stronger guidance and where guidance is not enough we need regulation. We need legal duties requiring employers to assess fatigue risks and manage them properly through safe staffing, sensible scheduling, adequate welfare facilities, protected recovery time between shifts and compensatory rest after on-call periods. Workers must also have confidential ways to report fatigue without fear of detriment. No worker should ever be punished for saying they are too tired to work safely. Health and safety reps must be trained and empowered to identify, monitor and challenge fatigue risks. Fatigue management policies must be negotiated through collective bargaining, not imposed.

We call on the General Council to lobby government to work with unions, regulators, employers and occupational health experts to develop sector-specific fatigue management guidance because when we get this right everyone benefits: worker well-being improves, sickness absence falls, retention strengthens, productivity rises, errors and accidents decline and the public is safer. Fatigue is preventable, it is manageable and it is time the UK treated it as the serious workplace hazard it is. Congress, let's protect workers, let's protect the public and let's make fatigue management a core part of safe modern unionised workplaces. I move.

(*Applause*)

Maria Dickinson (*Unite*) seconded Composite Motion 7. *She said*: I am a bus driver for Cardiff Bus and a first-time speaker. (*Applause*) Congress, fatigue is not a weakness; it is a workplace safety issue. For years Unite has campaigned on fatigue in our bus industry. Our latest survey of more than 2,000 London bus drivers should alarm us all. Almost half have experienced a fatigue-related close call in the previous year and 83% feared negative consequences if they reported being fatigued. This is not fatigue management; this is a safety system that that has failed. At Bow bus garage over 300 Unite members took strike action over scheduling and fatigue, including inadequate breaks. They were fighting for the right to do their job safely. Fatigue is also made worse by working conditions. This summer, bus drivers reported extreme temperatures, dehydration and fatigue, but Unite members organised and campaigned, and this week we secured the commitment of air conditioning in all London bus driver cabs by May 2027. (*Applause*) That victory shows that fatigue is preventable when we tackle it.

Congress, technology must not become the answer to unsafe working practices. Fatigue technology may help protect workers but it must never become a surveillance tool used to discipline them. If technology detects on exhausted driver, don't ask what is wrong with the driver; ask what is wrong with the work that made that driver so exhausted.

There is an equality issue too. Women bus drivers experiencing menopause or peri-menopause may already face disrupted sleep, exhaustion and difficulties concentrating. There are also hidden disabilities for men such as prostate cancer. Poor shift patterns and inadequate recovery can compound these symptoms. Our members tell us about 12-hour

shifts, poor scheduling, inconsistent start times, inadequate breaks and insufficient recovery. In every job fatigue management must recognise and support workers, not penalise them. Workplace fatigue can be solved by changing the work. Safe staffing, safe working hours, properly designed shifts and schedules, proper breaks, welfare facilities and recovery time and decent pay so workers are not pressured into excessive overtime or rest day working just to make ends meet. We do not solve fatigue with a well-being video, we don't solve it with an app. No timed vehicle target or profit margin is more important than getting the workers and the public home safely. Congress, fatigue is foreseeable, fatigue is preventable. Please support this motion. (*Applause and cheers*)

The President: Thank you very much, Unite. Supported by RCN and then Nautilus.

Marie Crighton (*RCN*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7. *She said*: President, Congress, within the maternity services midwives routinely work long shifts, nights and weekends and on-call periods. As a community midwife we are rostered to cover on-call periods. This will involve us being called out during the night after working a day shift and working several hours in high-demand and unfamiliar clinical settings. Even if we are not called out, our sleep is disrupted and we are not well rested. Some trusts are attempting to introduce or expand a poorly designed on-call arrangement with not enough staff available. This in turn has led to fatigue, which is a serious health and safety risk across the economy, and within maternity services can lead to serious consequences where decisions can affect the safety of women, babies and staff. Fatigue also contributes to burn-out, sickness absence and emotional stress. Fatigue must be treated as a preventable hazard and not as a failure to

magazine our own resilience. It is the responsibility of the employer to design safe rotas, provide adequate staffing and assist the risks created by working hours and on-call arrangements. On-call arrangements are a big risk and must be subject to proper consultation and collective bargaining with recognised trade unions and health and safety reps. There is a need for information, training and facility time required to monitor working hours, challenge unsafe rotas and ensure compensatory rest is provided. Where this does not happen we will say no, just like our members in South Tyneside and Sunderland, who have voted twice to take industrial action over unsafe on-call systems. Solidarity to them.

Safe maternity care depends on staff being sufficiently rested to make complex decisions and respond effectively in emergencies. Compensatory rest must be provided promptly, equal to the rest that has been lost, planned into staffing arrangements, properly recorded and monitored and supported by enough staff to allow the midwife to be released.

Congress, please support fatigue guidance for all workplaces, stronger enforcement and a clear requirement for employers to manage fatigue as a workplace hazard. My message is simple. An exhausted midwife cannot provide the safest care. Safe on-call arrangements and proper recovery times are essential protections for staff, women and babies. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much. Calling Nautilus.

Martyn Gray (*Nautilus International*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7. *He said*: Congress, fatigue affects every worker. I am sure there are many in this room this afternoon Tuesday day three of Congress that are thinking they know something about fatigue. But for a seafarer who has been working since Sunday, it is entirely possible that by the end of today they will have worked 42 hours. Fourteen hours a day is the legal maximum for someone working at sea. That is what they can be expected to do. They can be expected to do that whilst in command of a vessel that is crossing some of the world's busiest shipping lanes. They can be expected to do that whilst in charge of some complex machinery where when you get it wrong it costs lives and causes danger to the environment.

Fatigue is not the fault of workers and rarely is that understood during investigations, rarely is that understood by employers, and it is never understood by those seeking to enforce the law and criminalise those when things go wrong because of tiredness. It is highly preventable and when you have doctors, midwives, bus drivers and many more all in agreement that something needs to be done, it is time that something was.

This motion seeks to get commitment to actually deal with fatigue on a sector-by-sector basis, making sure that the appropriate safeguards are put into place across the industries that we all represent; to make sure that our members are protected, are well rested and are not put in danger by the consequence of being forced to work too much. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Martyn. I now call BALPA.

Zohra Francis (*Acting General Secretary, BALPA*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7. *She said*: BALPA wholeheartedly supports this motion. BALPA members would recognise many of the contributory factors identified by previous speakers. Workforce shortages, long hours, poor or short notice shift rosters that change frequently and insufficient recovery time are contributors.

I am going to use my time today to share the perspective of BALPA members on this issue. Managing fatigue risk is accepted as critical to flight safety. Pilots play a key part in a safety-conscious environment but we have seen with the increased demand for flights, tighter schedules and the drive for profits putting more pressure on pilots and increasing the likelihood of fatigue. Legislation on flight and duty time limitations determines the maximum time that pilots can fly and work, but these rules are being pushed to their limits, viewed as targets to be achieved by airlines. This is in contrast to what they should be. They should be absolute maximums used in exceptional circumstances. These rules and how they can be interpreted are no longer fit for purpose. Legislation needs to reflect more clearly the risks of fatigue. BALPA welcomes the work of the Civil Aviation Authority and we are currently working with the CAA on the ongoing review on these flight time limitation regulations and we are working with our members to build an accurate picture of their experiences and we will continue to build the case for change. But in addition to what is classed as working time in reality, a pilot's day often extends by unsocial hours, meaning that they have to travel to work by car. This is unavoidable and often the most convenient and efficient mode of transport but they then have to park their car in designated car parking spots. Sometimes

these are full. They then get on a shuttle bus to terminals, which can be infrequent and overcrowded. Once pilots arrive at the terminal they then have to face the delays of security and other areas. Over the last number of years we have seen reporting points moved closer to aircraft. The reporting point is when a shift officially starts. This forces pilots to absorb more and more of their time and increases the pressure on their day. This time is outside of the pilot's control and should be included in any good risk fatigue management and stress risk assessment. All of this means that an already gruelling day is extended and rest periods can become compressed.

The President: Zohra, can you wind up your speech, please. The red light is on.

Zohra Francis: Fatigue is a systemic workplace hazard. It needs to be recognised as a safety issue. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Zohra. I am going to take the vote on Composite Motion 7. All those in favour please show. All those against please show? The motion is carried.

Composite Motion 7 was *CARRIED*.

The President: I now call Motion 21, Supporting our logistics workers. The General Council supports the motion. Moved by Community, seconded by Unite and I will be calling USDAW and CWU.

Supporting our logistics workers

Deb Wood (*Vice-President, Community*) moved Motion 21. *She said*: Congress, we must recognise the crucial work that our logistics sector workers do here in the UK to keep our country moving day in and day out. They face gruelling hours, often in difficult conditions, and receive little recognition, yet day after day they deliver for all of us. And it is thanks to their hard work that we can go about our daily lives with access to the essential goods and services that we all rely on. From food, medicines and fuel, to parcels, road side assistance and critical supplies for hospital and public services, logistics workers ensure that people and communities have what they need and when they need it. However, Congress, such pressures are beginning to take their toll. Unsurprisingly, workers in the logistics sector feel overworked and undervalued. One survey of more than 2,500 UK HGV drivers found that 91% felt they did not receive enough respect for the job they do while 69% reported poor working conditions.

Community's own Wellbeing on the Move campaign has found that long anti-social shifts and inadequate workplace support leave logistics, road transport and warehouse staff feeling

under appreciated. And when those pressures are compounded by limited training opportunities, skilled workers leave the sector in search of better work elsewhere.

Congress, this means valuable experience is being lost and the skills gap is widening. Our workers are being let down and the consequences affect us all. Fewer workers mean slower parcel deliveries, delays to roadside assistance and reduced access to everyday household essentials. Hospitals and emergency services will wait longer for vital supplies while supermarkets, shops and restaurants will face delays to food and drink deliveries. Decent conditions at work are not an optional extra, Congress; they are fundamental to maintaining skilled staff and maintaining the services that we all rely on.

Government investment in safer parking, better roadside facilities and driver training is very welcome. They have announced longer-term facilities, funding to support better welfare and safer roads. They are funding HGV training and more driving tests and they have commissioned work on future transport skills. But Congress, this does not go far enough. These measures do not tackle the everyday conditions that drive experienced workers away. Logistics workers across the sector need meaningful action on working hours, rest breaks, well-being training and fair opportunities to progress. Government must work with unions and employers to ensure that improvements are not felt only at the roadside but throughout warehouses, depots and distribution networks. That is why Community is calling on the TUC to properly engage with government, unions and employees on working hours and rest breaks for logistics workers and to consult with unions and workplace reps on existing policies, including shift length and overtime. We want the TUC to encourage employers to take the

necessary steps to ensure that well-being support services are actually accessible for employees. And we want the TUC to ensure that employers are offering upskilling and training opportunities to all staff. Supporting Motion 21 means standing behind a sector that keeps our country moving. It means securing a sector where staff can work safely, building lasting careers and receive respect for the vital work that they do.

Let's come together to give our logistics workers the backing they deserve. Congress, I urge you to support this motion, thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you Deborah. I now call Unite.

Steve Oxborough (*Unite*) seconded Motion 21. *He said*: I am a first-time delegate to Congress and first-time speaker. Please forgive the nerves or the teeth chattering; one of the two. (*Applause*)

I am the Secretary of the Swindon Transport and Food branch and a longstanding trade union activist within the transport sector. My branch includes all types of logistics workers including HGV drivers. This is a huge industry of vital importance. Almost 90% of all goods have at some point travelled by road. So let me ask you: why is there a constant shortage of HGV drivers? Why is the average age of HGV drivers over 50? And why are only one per cent of HGV drivers women? There is a clear need to fill these roles but poor working conditions put

people off. Too often there is a lack of decent toilet facilities at truck stops and laybys and nothing for women. You can drive to a location and be refused access to their toilets because you are a third party employee. This is about dignity but it is also about safety. In 2022, there was a rail worker at Worthing who was struck by a train and killed as he tried to take a toilet break in a siding. HGV drivers are put at risk every day. When they park a valuable cargo in an insecure area for a toilet break, this can put them in danger.

So how do we address this issue? The UK transport sector is one of the most fragmented in the UK with over 50,000 firms and an average number of employees of just six. Yes, six workers in a firm. Unbelievable. Unite has over 6000 members in the sector and hundreds of collective bargaining agreements. I am proud to say Unite is well organised in most of the big firms but a lack of facilities, along with subcontracting, undercutting by non-union employers undermines the jobs, pay and conditions of our members. In an industry where workers have so much leverage, we have to constantly fight just to tread water. That is why Unite supports this amended motion with a call for the TUC to engage with government and convene with both unions and employers together.

Congress, only by rebuilding national collective bargaining in the road transport sector will we put a floor under the pay and conditions of our members and reverse the fragmentation. The potential here is massive so let's work together to use it. Please support this motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Keith, thank you very much for highlighted some of those stats, which are shocking. USDAW.

Rab Donnelly (*Deputy General Secretary, USDAW*) spoke in support of Motion 21. *He said*: I am speaking in support of the motion and in support of logistics workers. USDAW represents around 100,000 logistics workers; workers who keep our economy moving every single day. From delivering essential goods, ensuring shelves are stocked to making sure we all get the products we need, their contribution is invaluable.

This motion addresses many of the issues USDAW deals with day in day out, whether it is inadequate working time protections, employers thinking they can change rotas right up to the last minute or the simple fact there are not enough decent roadside facilities. As a former driver myself, I know firsthand the impact that these issues can have, how undervalued they can make workers feel; how they can remove their ability to have a proper life outside of work and how they can result in people simply deciding to leave the industry.

Congress, we have been talking for years about a recruitment crisis in the driving sector. Proper apprenticeships can be part of the solution and we continue to push employers to provide real apprenticeships through warehouse to wheel type schemes. As well as solutions from the sector we need to see solutions from the Government. USDAW is proud that we will shortly see the introduction of a specific offence of assault a shop worker, yet it is disappointing the Government refuses to extend these provisions to home delivery drivers;

drivers who are out operating on their own, have to conduct age-related checks and are at significant risk of being robbed. We also cannot ignore the recent spread of online warehouses operations which are reliant on zero hours contracts, poverty pay and the lowest possible terms and conditions.

Congress, this is not acceptable and USDAW continues our campaign to deliver guaranteed-hour contracts for all workers as well as seeing Make Work Pay delivered in full. As a key union in the logistics sector, we are also planning to take full advantage of the right of trade union access coming into effect next month. Everyone in this room understands the issues spoken about in this motion can be resolved through trade union organising and collective representation.

I would like to once again thank Community for raising this important motion and offer USDAW's ongoing commitment to tackling the issues facing the sector. Please support. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Rab. I now call CWU.

John Carson (*CWU*) spoke in support of Motion 21. *He said*: I am another first-time delegate and speaker. (*Applause*) It is probably all downhill from now, I am afraid. The CWU greatly welcomes this motion with interest as we have in the parcels and logistics sectors thousands

of members there and understanding many of the issues that have been highlighted in the motion. There are many issues we have addressed over many years with Royal Mail in collective agreements with the employer, showing that union density and union strength can deliver for workers. Unfortunately, though, we do not exist in isolation, and it is a point Keith made in his own speech. The parcels and logistics sector is a sector built on an economy of exhaustion, where workers are pushed to the very brink to deliver more and more for less and less reward. It has to stop. It is built on bogus models of employment. It is a playground of exploitation and as long as this continues to be the case, unionised labour will be undermined, isolated and targeted. The only thing it would take to push this over the edge is for a political trigger to be pulled, and we all know what that might be.

That happened to us in 2022 when the Tory Government of Liz Truss gave Royal Mail the green light to take on and smash the CWU. In that dispute, my postal worker colleagues and I took 18 days of strike action and hundreds of our reps and activists were sacked and suspended. They tried to break us, but Congress, they did not break us and Congress, they never will break us. (*Applause*)

But the wolves are still very much at the door. The status quo cannot continue. If it does, Royal Mail and the CWU as you know it will no longer exist in their current form. That would be a defeat for workers and a defeat for this movement and for unionised labour. But it does not need to be this way. We need a collective trade union response to deliver the aspects of the motion that are there in the motion. Collective sectoral bargaining and a trade union strategy to take on the multi-nationals and the vested interests. We can do it because there

is a truth that will always exist and that truth is there is no parcel delivered or a door opened without the kind permission of the working class. With that truth and with our collective organisation, we can create a better future for parcels and logistics workers and defeat the billionaires' race to the bottom and create instead a workers' race to the very top. Let's do it together. Support the motion, Congress, thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: John, I am not sure why you thought your speech would go downhill because it was anything but; it was absolutely terrific. Well done. (*Applause*) I will now go to the vote on Motion 21. All those in favour please show. Against all those against please show? That is carried.

*Motion 21 was **CARRIED**.*

The President: I will now call Motion 22, Wage restrictions on professional footballers. The General Council supports the motion. It will be moved by the PFA, seconded by the POA who are formally seconding this motion but do not wish to speak.

Wage restrictions on professional footballers

Maheta Molango (*PFA*) moved Motion 22. *He said*: Every year here at Congress I am reminded that the PFA is not like most unions. We know we are often seen as an outlier. We

have a diverse international membership spanning over six professional divisions and unlike me, who was a modest journeyman football player, many of our members are actually recognised names: people who are extremely well rewarded for their talents and for the joy they bring to a lot of people here at home as well as abroad.

So, why would those people need a union? Because everybody needs a union (*Applause*) and because there are certain issues that you cannot solve on your own, irrespective of your reach, influence or the number of followers that you may have on social media. On the other side of the spectrum, we also have members who have given equal commitment to their careers but unfortunately they exist on a series of fixed short-term contracts. They must go wherever the contract is. They are only one injury away from having to leave the game and they have certainly not earned millions. They will need to retrain and begin a new career when they retire from football. They do not retire at 60 or 65 like most us, but at 30 or 35. In truth, there is often not much that links the careers of those at the top with those who are at the bottom but what does connect those 6,000 members, male and female, from the Premier League, the EFL and WFL, is that they are all members of a trade union. We are very proud of that and we are very proud of our affiliation to the TUC. (*Applause*)

More than ever in our industry football finances are under the spotlight. There is far greater scrutiny on club spending and a new financial regulator was created to try to ensure that club owners act responsibly, but also they are here to remind everyone that without fans and without players there is no football. The simple message has to be relayed: something must be done.

Let me be clear, the PFA wants a financially sustainable game. It is good for our members and it is good for the game. However, the creation of new rules which limit the ability of players to earn and which artificially reduce the expenditure of club owners are not the answer, especially when those rules appear to be designed to address competitive balance as opposed to financial sustainability and crucially new rules cannot just be pushed through without the agreement of those who are impacted by those rules, our members, who are ultimately employees. As you all know, part of the role of a trade union is often to take the difficult position on behalf of our members. It can be and is portrayed as unions acting as blockers to any change. But you will all agree that is not the case. It is our job to ask the difficult questions. It is our job to want to see the evidence. It is our job to want clarity on new regulation that will affect the employees. And ultimately, to uphold the legal rights trade unions have worked so hard for on behalf of workers. Changes cannot be collectively agreed between business owners and imposed without the agreement of those they impact. The PFA may be different from other trade unions but our objective is ultimately the same: to ensure the rights of our members are protected, whoever they are and whatever level they play at. Football may not be the same as every other industry but football is not above the law. We all want our professional game to have a financially sound and secure future but measures need to be achieved always involving the employee and of course involving the trade unions. This is why I ask Congress to support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Maheta. I am going to go to the vote on Motion 22. Will all those in favour please show? All those against? The motion is carried.

Motion 22 was *CARRIED*.

The President: Congress, I would like to take Emergency Motion 2 after Composite Motion 8. First, I ask Congress's permission to suspend Standing Orders and allow us to run slightly over half past five to maybe quarter to six so we can conclude today's business and take some stress off tomorrow. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*)

SECTION 3 (CONTINUED): A FAIRER ECONOMY AND STRONG PUBLIC SERVICES

The President: We now continue with Section 3 of the General Council report: A fairer economy and strong public services. I now call Composite Motion 8, Right to Food Commission. A public system, not charity: reinvesting in food and nutrition security. The General Council supports this motion. Moved by the BFAWU (the Bakers' Union) and seconded by BDA.

Right to Food Commission. A public system, not charity: reinvesting in food and nutrition security

(*Composing Motions 32 and 33*)

Sarah Woolley (*General Secretary, BFAWU*) moved Composite Motion 8. *She said*: President, Congress, as a union that represents food workers across this country, the right to food could

not be more fundamental to who we are and what we stand for, but this motion is about much more than food. It is about wages, social security, decent work, public services and ultimately it is about dignity. We live in one of the wealthiest economies in the world yet millions of people are food insecure, including people who are working. No one should have to choose between heating their home, paying their bills and putting food on the table. We need to be absolutely clear: Britain does not have a food shortage; Britain has an income and distribution problem. The evidence heard by the Right to Food Commission that I have been so privileged to sit on with as joint vice-chair with some amazing people makes that very clear. People are going hungry not because there is not enough food but because they do not have enough income, security or protection to afford it. Working families are relying on food banks. Parents are skipping meals so their children can eat. Older people are choosing between heating and eating and when household budgets are squeezed food is the first thing that gets sacrificed. That is why we cannot simply tell people to budget better. You cannot budget your way out of poverty when wages do not cover the cost of living, when rents and energy bills are rising and when our social security system fails to provide an adequate safety net.

Congress, hunger is an income problem, not a food problem, and that is why charity cannot be the solution. Food banks and emergency food aid do incredibly important work. They provide a lifeline to people who otherwise might go hungry, but they should never have become a permanent part of our welfare system. People should not have to stand in a queue and accept whatever food happens to be available. The right to food must mean access to

food that is nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate and available with dignity and choice. Charity should never replace rights.

This is why we have been so involved in this work of the Right to Food Commission and its roadmap to end food poverty by 2035. The Commission's emerging evidence tells us that we need a fundamental change in how we approach food insecurity. We need proper wages and secure employment. We need a social security system that enables people to afford the essentials. We need universal free school meals. We need investment in community food infrastructure and we need the right to food to be enshrined in UK law, with clear duties, minimum standards and fundamental accountability.

Congress, there is also an important role her for the trade union movement. The right to food must become a trade union issue because when we organise for better wages, we are organising for the right to eat. When we organise for secure employment, we are organising for the right to eat. When we defend social security, public services and decent pensions, we are organising for the right to eat. And when we organise food workers we are not just fighting for the workers who produce, bake, prepare and distribute our food; we are fighting for a food system that works for everybody.

The Commission estimates that tackling food insecurity through its proposed programme will cost around £6 billion a year on top of current commitments - less than half of 1% of total public spend - while generating an estimated £100 billion in wider economic and social

benefits over the next 20 years. So let's stop pretending that ending hunger is unaffordable. The expensive option is continuing with hunger. We already pay the price through ill-health, pressure on our public services, lost productivity, poor educational outcomes and human suffering. The choice is whether we invest in prevention, dignity and security or continue paying for failure. We believe the trade union movement should be at the forefront of this fight.

We are calling for the TUC to promote the right to food as a core trade union issue; to equip workplace representatives with the knowledge and the confidence to organise and campaign around it and work with affiliates and the Commission to develop accessible education and campaigning resources. We are asking the TUC to join us to campaign for the right to food to be enshrined in UK law, for the Commission's recommendations and roadmap to be implemented, for properly funded public health nutrition services, for a national food and nutrition strategy and for secure unionised employment for food and nutrition workers.

Congress the evidence has been heard, the solutions are there and hunger is not inevitable. A society as wealthy as ours should not accept a situation where working-class people cannot afford to feed themselves or their family. Food is a right not a privilege. Dignity is a right not a privilege. Come and talk to me about how you can get involved and pick up a leaflet. Please support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Sarah, as always well delivered. Seconded by the BDA.

Abigail Pearson (*BDA*) seconded Composite Motion 8. *She said*: I represent the British Dietetics Association and am a NHS dietician. I would like to thank Dr Sharon Noonan-Gunning, the Right to Food UK commissioner, whose excellent work alongside Sarah Woolley has underpinned this motion. Since 2010, austerity and a deliberate restructuring of public services has dismantled government funded public health nutrition and front-line NHS services, replacing them with community food programmes run by unpaid labour in the voluntary food sector. This has led to widening health inequalities as access to centrally funded food programmes and healthcare has increasingly become a postcode lottery. Evidence is showing that working-class people are dying younger as a result of this.

As a clinical dietician, I have witnessed how disjointed discharge pathways from hospital can result in readmissions if patients do not have access to food due to a lack of finances, support or the housing required just to prepare nutritious food within their own home, propagating a cycle of chronic malnutrition in our hospitals and communities. The repercussions of malnutrition are estimated to cost the NHS £23.5 billion a year. Tackling obesity is estimated to cost another £6.5 billion a year to the NNS. Growing health inequalities are likely to increase these costs further as members have confided to us that patients with children of coeliac disease, which requires a strict, gluten free diet, are not able to abide to these restrictions due to food insecurity. Some patients have actually told us they are now taking less medication if their prescription states it must be taken with food.

The BDA also supports the shift to sustainable public health nutrition given the urgent climate crisis while additional current geo-political tensions are affecting the cost and availability of food. The Government has rightly recognised the risk of an impending El Nino to our food chains, advising the public to stockpile two weeks of food, but provided no caveat on how these people already struggling to feed their families on a day-to-day basis could be supported right now to access this. However, we have also seen how pressure on the government can lead to the expansion of free school meals to working families around the UK, but we need to keep momentum in order to meet all of the Commission's demands that will improve our nation's health, with dignity and empowerment.

Congress, please join us in supporting this motion for the right to food to be enshrined in law and embedded in TUC campaigning to organise and train all of our allied workers, including the community food sector workforce. The state must reclaim responsibility for safeguarding our communities' right to adequate nutrition through a national food strategy that strengthens the dietetic and public health nutrition workforce. We need to put an end to the reliance on food banks, the stigma of living in food insecurity and to stop the division perpetrated by the far right through lies that dwindling resources are due to migrants using our public services. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you very much, Abigail. I am going to take this one to the vote on Composite Motion 8. All those in favour please show? All those against? That is carried.

*Composite Motion 8 was **CARRIED**.*

The President: I now call Emergency Motion 2, institutional racist targeting, harassment and humiliation of Professor Jason Arday. Moved by UCU, seconded by NEU.

Institutional racist targeting, harassment and humiliation of Professor Jason Arday

Andrew Ward (*UCU NEC*) moved Emergency Motion 2. *He said*: First-time delegate, first-time speaker. (*Applause*) I am here to move this emergency motion. Professor Jason Arday was a UCU member, he was a colleague, an activist and a friend. Following his tragic death, there was deep sadness but there are questions for society and our movement. We need to answer the question: would Professor Jason Arday have been treated differently if he was white? When we are looking for answers, we need to consider the Americanisation of political discourse in the United Kingdom. We need to recognise that he was faced with a systematic racist onslaught from the right-wing press. All the usual suspects were there - GB News, Talk TV, the *Mail*, the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, who in a few weeks posted at least 33 news items about Professor Jason Arday, including 19 in the space of 48 hours. His story, rather than being an inspiration, was used by the right wing to attack diversity, equality and inclusion. The level of press attention paid to Rachel Reeves and Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney for similar claims of plagiarism and an inflated CV was trifling compared to the venom in the attacks on Professor Jason Arday's character. He was expected to be held to a higher standard.

Growing up my parents told me you have to be twice as good to get half as far. Everybody in the black community knows this and it has been a common thread throughout these proceedings at Congress. In post-16 education, black academic staff make up 3% of the workforce and, at a senior level, black professionals account for roughly 1% of professional contracts. This is why an intelligent charismatic black man was not allowed to succeed. This is why he became a victim of sustained racist targeting, harassment and humiliation. These are the circumstances that led to a family losing a son, a father, an uncle and a brother. The normalisation of racism in society has led to a growth of far-right politics. Their aim is to create an atmosphere of grievance, suspicion and hatred to divide the working class. We all know the play book and we failed to stop it. Aided by social media that leans to the right, with millionaire funding, sensationalist stories, rumours and outright lies which thrive on clicks. With the aid of donations from millionaires, they are marking their territory. When a dog marks its territory, it raises its leg against a lamppost. The right wing raises the flag of St George, fuelled by righteous indignation that the system is rigged against them, and the stage is set, even mimicking the American right by attaching themselves to Christianity. It is going to take a massive effort for us all to turn this around. We need a willing government to set the tone and put forward legislation to tackle the rise of the far right. We need a government that will address institutional and systemic racism. It is going to require employers to take claims of racism seriously and when we won't, our government needs to make them. We know our members experience racism in the workplace but they are unwilling to take out grievances because they fear reprisals and they do not trust the employer to investigate

impartially, and have little faith in the industrial tribunal system, as only 5% of racial discrimination claims that get to a full hearing are successful.

Our unions have a part to play too. We need to have mechanisms in place to gather evidence and testimonies and to lobby and to protest to build solidarity. Unions will have to be braver in their support of black members by taking cases to tribunal. We all have to be braver. (*Applause*) We all have a responsibility to make sure that this can never happen again. We have been playing catch up for too long and we need to find a way to get ahead of the far right.

Can Congress please join me in a minute's silence for our UCU member Jason Arday and help work with us to make sure this tragedy never happens again.

Congress held a minute's silence

(*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Andrew. That was powerful and exceptional, thank you. All seconded by NEU.

Daniel Kebede (*NEU*): Congress, following that, I think it is also right that I first speak in sorrow and in love to Professor Arday, to his friends, his colleagues, his students and to UCU members who mourn Jason not as an obstruction, not as a headline, but as a human being they knew and valued.

Jason's life mattered, his work mattered, his scholarship, his courage in speaking about race, class, disability ad justice mattered. To honour him we must do more than speak softly over tragedy. We must ask what kind of society celebrates a black man's brilliance one case and allows his humanity to be placed on trial the next. I have said publicly and I will say it here again that where there are questions raised about professional conduct, there must be due process, fair, transparent and free from the cruelty of trial by media. A worker is not a rumour. A person is not an allegation. A life is not something to be picked over by the mob and then discarded when the mob moves on.

But Congress, we cannot pretend that this happened in a vacuum. Black academics, black educators, black students and black public figures know what it means to be scrutinised differently, disciplined differently, believed differently and treated as though their presence in elite spaces must always be explained, justified or contested. Institutional racism is not about insults shouted in the street. It is the pattern, it is the culture, it is the unequal burden of truth, it is the readiness to doubt black excellence and the reluctance to examine the systems that marginalise black people in the first place. And all of this is happening as racism is being normalised again in our politics. Far-right voices seek to divide working-class communities, telling people struggling with pay, housing, poverty, public services and the cost

of living that their neighbour is the problem, that migrants are the problem, that black and brown communities are the problem. But they are wrong. The problem is not the child seeking safety. It is not the colleagues whose families came here for a better life. It is not the black professor who dared to rise in institutions that were never built with him in mind. The problem is inequality, it is poverty, underfunding and the politics that would rather scapegoat than solve. That is why the trade unions must be clear. We do not answer racism with silence. We do not answer the far right with neutrality; we answer it with solidarity, with organisation and with collective power. And that is why we are building the Together Alliance, standing with trade unions, anti-racist organisations, campaigners, artists, faith groups and communities to say that the answer to hate is unity. That we march together for love, for hope, for justice and for one another.

This motion is about Professor Jason Arday but it is also about every black educated isolated, undermined or forced to carry a weight that others do not see. It is about every student told directly or indirectly that excellence is not expected of them and it is about the duty of government and employers to tackle racism not as a public relations exercise but as a structural reality requiring structural change. We need accountability where institutions fail. We need properly resourced anti-racist work in higher education. We need government to work with unions and black staff; not to lecture from afar. And we need our movement to defend due process, human dignity and anti-racism together because these are not competing principles. They are the same principle: every person has value and every worker deserves justice.

So let us honour Jason Arday's life by refusing the normalisation of racist humiliation. Let us honour his legacy by challenging the systems that still make black achievement vulnerable to suspicion and attack. Let us honour him by building a movement that is brave enough to speak, organised enough to win and broad enough to bring people together. I second. (*Applause*)

The President: Well done, Daniel, thank you very much. I am now going to go to the vote on Emergency Motion 2. Will all those in favour please show? All those against please show? That is carried unanimously. Well done, Congress. (*Applause*)

*Emergency Motion 2 was **CARRIED.***

Results for General Council elections

The President: Delegates, the results for the General Council elections are as follows: Overall, 38 of the 41 eligible unions participated. Three unions that were eligible to vote in both Section C and Section D did not vote in Section D.

Results Section C

Ged Nichols, Accord

Brian McDaid, Aegis

Simon Weller, ASLEF

Sarah Woolley, BFAWU

Dave Penman, FDA

Martyn Gray, Nautilus International

Jane Pritchard, The Royal College of Podiatry

Results Section D

Kate Hudson, CWU

Alice Angliss, Musicians Union

Sue Ferns, Prospect

Bev Laidlaw, PCS

That concludes this afternoon's programme of business. May I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this evening. For the latest updates do check the fringe listings on the TUC website. Congress is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

(*Congress adjourned at 5.40 p.m.*)

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