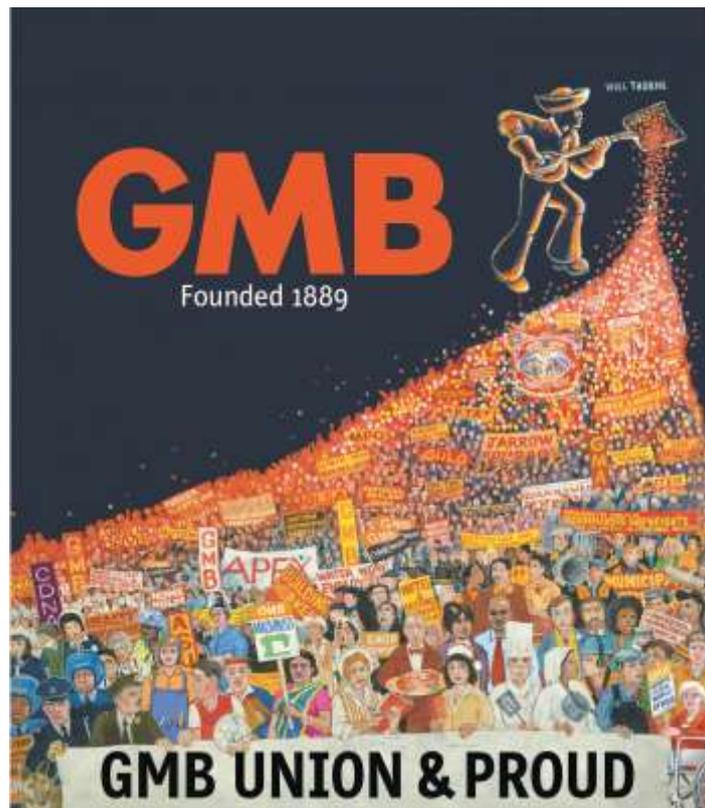




CONGRESS EXPLAINED

An Essential Guide to GMB Congress 2017



Dear GMB Congress Delegate

Congratulations on your election or appointment as a delegate to GMB Congress, the principal policy-making body of the union. You have the important and responsible task of representing your Region and voting on motions which will determine GMB policy.

Our annual Congress has an excellent reputation for its high standard of debate, often passionate, but conducted in a positive and comradely fashion.

Congress is governed by rules and procedures which may be confusing for less experienced delegates, and this guide has been designed to assist delegates through:

- the machinery at Regional and national level which goes into the making of Congress
- the workings of Congress and;
- the processes that take place afterwards to progress Congress decisions.

I hope you find the guide helpful. Whether you are a new or experienced Congress delegate I know you will have the support and encouragement of your Region to help you contribute to Congress and continue to build our organising, campaigning union.

Together with the President and Vice-President I look forward to welcoming you to Congress.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our union.



Tim Roache
General Secretary

What is GMB Congress?

Congress is the supreme policy making authority of the GMB trade union. It deals with motions from GMB Branches, Regional Committees and the Central Executive Council (CEC). It also deals with other issues such as CEC special reports and financial statements.



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It is governed by GMB rules and is the arena where GMB members can set or change GMB policy, find out what is happening in the union as a whole, participate in debates, listen to guest speakers, attend fringe meetings, and of course, enjoy the social side of getting together with members from your Region and the union as a whole.

Congress is where the General Secretary, Regional Secretaries and National Officials report back to the members on the National and Regional work of the union over a year and the policies and actions taken by the union as set out in the General Secretary's Report.

Congress is more than just speeches; it's also a great opportunity to network with others, share ideas about organising and campaigning and to find out more about key issues in depth.

GMB Congress is a national media event and by agreeing to attend you also agree to be filmed, photographed and recorded.

Every GMB Congress session is filmed and broadcast live from the GMB website on Congress TV so that all GMB members who are unable to attend Congress can watch live feeds. During GMB Congress Week, Congress TV can be accessed from the GMB national website www.gmb.org.uk

As Congress is broadcast throughout the week as a 'live' event, the Press Office would like to capture local stories in their Congress Press Releases.

If you have a noteworthy story or issue for the media, please discuss this with the Press Office who are based in the Congress venue or contact them by email: press.office@gmb.org.uk or contact Alex Jones (alex.jones@gmb.org.uk)

How often does it take place?

Congress meets in June each year. The venue for each Congress is decided three or four years in advance by the Central Executive Council (CEC) which takes into consideration the costs, facilities and accessibility offered by a range of proposed venues.

What happens at Congress?

Through their Branches, members put forward issues in the form of motions for the union to debate and develop its future policy on union organisation, economic, political, industrial and social matters. Congress does not deal with industrial matters related to negotiations as these are the remit of Section Conferences which take place every two years.

From 2008 and in alternate years thereafter in line with the Rulebook, Section Conferences have been incorporated into Congress week, but remain separate from the Congress programme. The last Section Conference year was 2016.

Following the adoption of RA323 by Congress 2013, the National Equalities Conference will agree a motion to be considered at Congress and this will be included in the Preliminary Agenda.

From 2009 and in alternate years Rules Revision Congresses take place. GMB Branches and Regional Committees can submit suggested amendments to the GMB rulebook as well as submitting motions.

However, the CEC may present rule amendments in any Congress year. Congress 2017 is a Rule Amendment Congress

Election of President and Vice President

In accordance to GMB Rules 12.1 and 13.1, the President and Vice President are elected in 2005 and thereafter are elected at every fourth Ordinary Congress. The last Election for both these offices was in 2013 and therefore Congress 2017 is an election year.

The General Secretary must receive all nominations by the Monday of the week before Congress (i.e Monday 31 May 2017).

Eligibility for election as President or Vice-President is restricted to delegates to Congress in line with rule 8.4 for that year and from members of the Central Executive Council.

The election procedure is reported to Congress by the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee when they move SOC Report Number 1 at the start of Congress. The SOC will then supervise the election process.

The General Secretary will announce the names of the candidates during the afternoon of Sunday Congress business (4 June 2017). Should there be a number of nominations, a ballot will be held.

In the event of a ballot, the appropriate number of ballot papers are delivered to Regional Secretaries by the General Member Auditors and delegates will be asked to vote. CEC members and other Congress attendees are not entitled to vote.

Who attends Congress?

Delegates

Delegates from the nine GMB Regions attend to represent their members on the basis of 1 delegate per 1,500 members of the Region's membership at the end of the previous September.

From 2011, 90% of delegates are elected by Branches and the Region's remaining 10% of delegates will be appointed by the Regional Committee to ensure that the Regional Delegation properly reflects the balance of the Regional membership in respect of industry, geographic spread, ethnicity, gender, disability, youth and sexual orientation.

To be a delegate, you will have to have been a member for 53 weeks and have been nominated by your Branch and your name put forward to your Region for election or appointment. In line with the Rulebook, nominations from Branches close on 31 December and lists of candidates are distributed by Regional Offices to Branches during the third week in January and Branches' votes must reach the Regional Office by 28 February. Only elected and appointed delegates have the right to vote at Congress.

The President, Vice-President and General Secretary

The President chairs Congress and is assisted by the Vice President. The General Secretary has the right to speak on any Congress business.

The Central Executive Council (CEC)

The CEC attend Congress and can speak to give the union's position on motions, rule amendments and Special Reports. The CEC have no voting rights at Congress.

GMB officials

All Regional Secretaries and National Secretaries attend Congress, as well as some Regional and National Officials (as appropriate). GMB officials have no voting rights at Congress.

Guests and speakers

Invited politicians, campaigners, international speakers, as well as media, press and invited visitors attend Congress.

GMB staff

National Office staff who are involved in Congress preparations attend Congress to provide support for the platform, the CEC and Congress delegates via the Press Office, Congress Office and Information Desk.

PA's to Regional Secretaries attend to support their Regional Secretary and Regional Delegation. They are your first point of contact.

How does Congress work?

Preparation at Regional and National level

The Congress year starts in October through to September the following year.

October

In late October, the Executive Officer at National Office circulates guidance to Regional Secretaries and National Secretaries setting out the arrangements for Congress, including procedures for electing and appointing delegates; submissions of motions and rule amendments; deadlines for the provision of information and text for inclusion in the General Secretary's Report; requirements for delegates of disabled access, sign language interpretation and large print documents.

Regional Offices send Branches nomination forms for election and appointment of Congress delegates and request motions from Branches.

November

In November the Congress Working Party meets to discuss initial arrangements, possible special reports, and guest speakers and agrees the timetable of tasks.

December

31 December is the deadline for Branches to send delegate nominations for election and appointment to Regional Office.

January

Any Branch or any Regional Committee or the Central Executive Council may submit motions for inclusion in the agenda for Congress.

GMB Rules state that Branch motions must be forwarded to Regional Secretaries by 31 January and Regions must send these to the General Secretary by 7 February.

February

At National Office, from 7 February onwards, the General Secretary's Office categorises and numbers the motions and rule amendments (in a rules revision Congress year) submitted and prepares the Preliminary Agenda. The General Secretary's Office co-ordinates draft policy positions on all motions and rule amendments for the CEC to consider at its March meeting.

28 February is the closing date for Branch voting in the election of Congress delegates.

March

The March CEC meeting decides upon its position on all the motions and rule amendments in the Preliminary Agenda; this is the way that the CEC recommends delegates to vote on each motion.

In some cases, the CEC is unable to take a position without more information about the motion or its intent, and asks the Region for an explanation. The Regional Secretary will ask the Branch for an explanation and send this to National Office where advice will be prepared to assist the CEC to reach its decision on a position at the April CEC meeting.

Regions hold their pre-Congress Delegation meetings in late March or early April on dates set by the Congress Working Party. Regional delegates decide upon the Region's position on the motions and rule amendments in the Preliminary Agenda. The Preliminary Agenda, Congress Explained and delegate expenses claim forms are sent to Regions in March for copying and distributing to delegates prior to these meetings. The Preliminary Agenda and Congress Explained documents will also be available electronically from the Congress 2017 page of the GMB website (www.gmb.org.uk/congress) where you will need to enter your membership number

April

Following the regional delegation meetings, Regions advise the General Secretary's Office of all decisions reached by the delegation on all of the motions and rule amendments in the Preliminary Agenda. The Regions also advise the General Secretary's Office of any Regional motions or rule amendments that they are withdrawing and are not to be included in the Final Agenda. Regional pre-Congress Delegation meetings also elect the Region's Standing Orders Committee member and the Region's Teller from amongst their delegates and have another opportunity to provide information about arrangements for delegates.

In accordance with Motion 2 carried at Congress 2012, following Regional Delegation meetings that take place prior to Congress, all Branches should be supplied with a list of the motions and rule amendments that have been submitted from their Region and the Regional Delegation meeting decisions taken regarding said motions and rule amendments.

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) meets in April to recommend to Congress which motions are in order for Congress business, and if any motions are out of order.

Following recommendations from the CEC and advice from the General Secretary's Office, they recommend which motions are existing policy and therefore will not be debated at Congress and prepare Standing Orders Committee Report No.1 which is printed in the Final Agenda.

The SOC, with the assistance of the General Secretary's Office, prepares draft composite motions and seeks the agreement of the Regions involved. Once composite motions have been agreed, the General Secretary's Office commences the preparation of the Final Agenda.

The April CEC meeting agrees positions on any motions outstanding; sometimes, if explanations are unclear or unsatisfactory, or matters underway mean a decision cannot yet be made, the CEC defers its decision and reconsiders at the pre-Congress CEC meeting.

The General Secretary's Office co-ordinates the contributions from all GMB Regions, Sections and National Office departments for the General Secretary's Report.

May

In May, the General Secretary invites members of the CEC to speak at Congress. CEC members speak in response to motions where the CEC position is other than support.

The General Secretary's Report and CEC special reports are sent to Regions in May for copying and distribution to delegates prior to the eve of Congress Delegation meetings together with credentials and other Regional documentation.

June

Regional Delegations meet on the eve of Congress to discuss Congress business. The CEC also meets on the eve of Congress to finalise its position on all Congress motions in the Final Agenda and any emergency motions agreed by the Standing Orders Committee as in order for debate.

September

The September CEC meeting agrees actions on decisions of Congress which allocates responsibility for carrying out the policies agreed by Congress.

Guidance on preparing motions

Preparation of motions- how you and your Branch can help GMB shape a better future and make a real difference!

Congress is the GMB's democratic decision making body. It makes decisions through votes on motions proposed to it by Branches and Regional Committees. If you have an issue you feel passionate about, contact your Branch.

Motions to Congress are a way to influence or change our union's national policy on all sorts of issues. If passed at Congress, motions become policies which are the collective view of the GMB. Therefore it is important that motions to Congress are clearly written. When writing a motion, your branch needs to decide what it is you want to achieve and what you want the GMB to do about the issue.

For example:

- Is it to ask the GMB to lobby MPs and the Government? Or work with organisations such as TUC etc
- Is it to set up a new GMB structure or process?
- Is it to raise the awareness of our members about a particular issue? (normally through campaigns or materials)
- Is it to ask the GMB to affiliate or give support to another organisation whose aims we support?

It also helps if you make it clear what the motivating reasons are behind your motion.

For example, it could be because our members' jobs are at risk, our members are suffering financial hardship or we want to show solidarity to a particular group of people.

As a trade union, we aim to promote economic, political and social justice not only throughout the UK, but also internationally, so motions can go beyond the workplace.

There is no one way to write a motion, but they do usually follow an established format, with several key elements. Most motions are set out clearly in a few paragraphs identifying:

What the issue of concern is, what you want done about it and what you want to achieve.

Following this format helps avoid confusion and makes it clearer for others to understand exactly what your branch means and wants the GMB to do about it.

There are many ways to begin a motion after the words: ***This Congress***, but here are a few common ways.

This Congress notes/is concerned by /regrets ... **(FACTS)**

This must be factual information that can be independently shown to be true.

E.g. This Congress notes that there are now X academy schools in England.....

This Congress believes/recognises/declares/reaffirms... **(OPINIONS)**

This motion would contain things that your branch considers to be true, but which other people may disagree with.

E.g. This Congress believes that the academisation programme of schools is privatisation of our education system.....

This Congress resolves/calls for/recommends/proposes/urges/demands... **(ACTIONS)**

This tells GMB what action to take as an organisation and gives GMB guidance on who is responsible for taking the motion forward. Try and ensure that what you are asking for is realistic and achievable and if possible give a timescale of when you want this done

E.g. This Congress resolves to campaign against schools converting to an academy.....

PRACTICAL STYLE TIPS

- A Motion is from your Branch so shouldn't be personal opinion e.g "I" but should be written in the third person as if you were speaking on behalf of your Branch but there is no need to say "our branch" best to say "we"
- Although there is no word limit to motions for GMB Congress, it is best to keep the motion concise and ensure that it is not merely a statement but has thought about what you wish to see done. You can elaborate on the issue in your speech
- Check that the motion has not been debated before and is therefore existing union policy. Make sure it is not against union rules, asking for unlawful action or seeking a rule change.
- Avoid personal attacks, also Congress motions do not cover GMB staff matters
- It's important to make sure your motion is clear, and can be understood by the people you are asking to support it. Therefore ask someone else in your Branch to read your motion and see if they understand the issues
- Your motion should have a clear title that is a concise summary of what the motion is about.
- Motions are not edited or changed in any way by National Office before they appear in the Preliminary or Final Agenda, so check the spelling and grammar
- If using facts and figures or names of organisations, committees or people, please check these and spellcheck your motion (including the title)
- Try and keep the motion to one subject
- In a Rules Revision Congress year, a separate Rule amendment form is issued to Branches

- If you are submitting a Rule Amendment, make sure that you refer to the correct Rule in the current Rule Book which can be found on the GMB National website www.gmb.org.uk/rulebook

Failure to comply with the guidelines above may mean that your Motion is ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee.

If your Branch agrees the motion, it needs to be submitted in the name of the Branch and reach your Regional Secretary by 31st January.

All motions from a Region are considered at the Congress Delegation meetings to determine whether or not the Region will support the motion. Motions then go to Congress for the elected lay representatives of the whole union to consider.

Until it is voted on at Congress, your motion remains the property of the Region.

Further Help:

You can look at the wording of previous Motions to Congress in the Final Agenda. There are some Standing Orders Committee Guidelines in the Preliminary Agenda "General Motions and Rule Amendments". For general Congress information, you can read "Congress Explained" all of these documents can be found on the GMB National website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

Understanding CEC Positions

At the pre-Congress Delegation meetings and at Congress, the CEC advises delegates to Congress on its position on each motion or rule amendment debated, as follows:

Existing policy

Where it can be clearly justified that the motion is in line with existing GMB policy the motion is put to Congress for endorsement without the need for debate. This is in accordance with Recommendation 14 of the "Framework for the Future of GMB: Moving Forward" CEC Special Report endorsed by Congress 2007. A detailed explanation of the reasons for the existing policy position can be found in the Final Agenda and these motions are reported to Congress in SOC Report Number 1.

Support

This is where the CEC support a motion which is broadly in line with policy and does not conflict with policy but would give us a clear policy for the future. The President will advise Congress where the CEC is supporting a motion and the CEC would not be required to explain why. If Congress votes in favour of a motion, that motion is carried

Support with Statement

The CEC position is support with statement in circumstances where it would be worth making a clear statement of union policy in support of a newsworthy or important subject. A CEC speaker will set out the statement in their speech. However, where an issue is important and needs a fuller report, a written CEC statement will be produced and debated separately.

Support with Qualification

This is where the main thrust of the motion is in line with policy, except for important points of detail where the motion is factually wrong, or where the CEC would want to reserve its position. In this case the CEC would support the motion with a qualification. A CEC speaker will set out reasoning for the qualification in a speech. The President asks the Region/mover submitting the motion 'Do you wish to accept the qualification?' Subject to the Region's agreement, the motion is carried subject to the CEC's qualification.

Refer

The CEC would ask for a motion to be referred where the motion might need further examination or where a more developed/ rounded statement of union policy needs to be prepared.

If the CEC position on the motion is refer, a CEC speaker will set out the reason for referral in a speech. The President asks the Region/mover submitting the motion 'Do you wish to accept reference?' Subject to the Region's agreement the motion is referred.

Seek Withdrawal

The CEC might ask for a Motion to be withdrawn where it covers an issue better dealt with in a CEC statement or report, or in another motion. This is also used when the motion conflicts with a CEC statement or report, or when the issue is better not debated. This carries the clear message that if not withdrawn it will be opposed.

If the CEC position is seek withdrawal and the Region has not yet withdrawn the motion the President will ask the Region/mover if they agree to withdraw the motion. If the Region/mover does not agree to withdraw a motion, then the CEC position changes to oppose.

Oppose

The CEC would oppose a motion where it runs counter to policy or where what the motion is asking would require a Rule Amendment in a non-rule amendment year.

Where the CEC opposes a motion, a CEC speaker will set out the reason for opposition in a speech. The CEC will ask Congress to vote against the motion, unless the Region withdraws the motion. If delegates vote in favour of the motion, they are opposing the CEC and if they vote against the Motion, they are in support of the CEC's explanation.

Preparation of speeches

As a guideline when writing speeches, you can allow approximately 100 words per minute.

Some helpful points:

- Always start your speech by stating your name and Region clearly and whether you are moving, seconding, supporting or opposing the motion and whether you are a first time speaker.
- It is best to keep to short sentences and short paragraphs as a short speech can make as much impact as a long one, and can be less demanding on new or less confident speakers.
- Make sure that it is easy for you to read, your choice of vocabulary and what you are comfortable saying.
- Deal with key points of the motion - it's better not to go into great detail or quote lots of statistics.
- If it is a seconding speech, pick out one or two specific points different to those addressed in the moving speech.
- Once written, time your speech and stay within the maximum time limit (up to 4 minutes for moving, and up to 2 minutes for seconding/other speakers).

Being called to the rostrum

Speaking at Congress may seem nerve-racking, but the main thing is to remember to be yourself, prepare your speech thoroughly and keep to the time limits. Everyone, even old hands, gets nervous; this shows you care about the issue.

The President takes motions and composites in groups as set out in the Delegate Session Programme and calls speakers forward.

Speakers and seconders should be ready to speak once their motion is called. Seats are provided at the front of the hall for speakers awaiting their turn.

What to expect:

1. The President will call the motion mover to the rostrum.
2. At the rostrum you must say your name and Region, stating that you are moving the motion, and then deliver your speech to move the motion.
3. The president will then call for the motion seconder.
4. At the rostrum you must say your name and Region, stating that you are seconding the motion, and then deliver your speech to second the motion.
5. The President will ask 'Does anyone wish to come in on the debate?' (This allows for other Regions to come in on the debate and delegates may take the rostrum to support or oppose the motion).

Tips

- Stand about a foot from the microphone – you don't need to shout, the microphone will amplify your voice
- Put your notes or written speech on the rostrum, take a deep breath.
- Due to the stage lighting you may find that the rostrum is hot

Please note: The rostrum is adjusted automatically by technicians and is wheelchair friendly.

IMPORTANT: Variations in the Congress programme may alter the scheduling of your speech, therefore you will need to listen carefully to the SOC Reports or announcements by the President.

We recommend that you have a copy of your speech with you at all times if you are moving or seconding a motion, or intend to speak in a debate.

If a delegate is not in the hall to move or second a motion then the motion will fall.

The Speaker Lights on the rostrum help speakers to keep to times. The lights work as follows:

- Green** delegate is speaking, time is being measured
- Amber** delegate has one minute left
- Red** delegate must stop speaking

IMPORTANT: Speakers are required to keep to the timings so that everyone who wants to speak in a debate gets an opportunity to do so. It is inconsiderate towards other speakers if the President has to curtail the debate because others have over-run. In addition, the microphone may be turned off

Speaking without the support of the Region

Occasionally a Regional Delegation can take a position on a motion which the mover of the motion may not agree with. If the Region does not withdraw the motion the mover or a Branch speaker may decide to move the motion without the support of the Region. If so, the mover and seconder must make it clear by stating to Congress that he/she is 'Speaking without the support of the Region'.

Right to reply

No speaker may speak more than once in any debate except a mover who can reply to a debate. This is known as the 'Right of reply'. You can only reply to points raised in opposition to your motion in that debate. You will hear the President ask 'Would the mover like the right to reply?' if the mover wishes to exercise his/her right to reply they will take the rostrum again before the vote. (The President will call for a separate vote of any motion that is opposed during the debate).

Composite motions

After composite motions have been moved and seconded, other Regions involved in the composite are given priority in debate. The composite motions are set out in the Final Agenda.

Congress is transmitted live on Congress TV so if you are speaking, you may view your speech after Congress through the National GMB Website.

Times for speakers

The SOC recommends the following time limits for speakers in their SOC Report No. 1 which can be found in the Final Agenda.

General motions and rule amendments:

Movers	up to 4 Minutes
Seconders	up to 2 Minutes
Other speakers	up to 2 Minutes

Special reports and CEC statements:

Mover	up to 6 Minutes
Secunder	up to 3 Minutes
Other speakers	up to 3 Minutes

Officers' reports:

General Secretary	up to 10 Minutes
Section National Secretary	up to 5 Minutes
Questions	up to 1 Minute

These timings are at the discretion of the SOC and may change during Congress week. Listen carefully to all SOC Reports delivered from the rostrum during the week for any changes to speaking times.

Voting procedure

At the end of a group of motions the President asks the CEC speaker to set out the position on the motions where the CEC position is anything other than support and then asks Congress to vote accordingly by a show of hands.

If any delegate wishes the President to take a separate vote on any motion they will need to make Congress aware of this before the votes are taken. It is usual practice that if there has been any opposition to a motion, the vote will be taken separately.

Only elected or appointed lay delegates seated in the Congress hall can vote at Congress.

Those on the list below are **not** eligible to vote. (If you are in doubt, please speak to your Regional secretary)

- Visitors
- Guests
- Auditors
- Full-time Officials, Regional Secretaries, National Officers, Section Secretaries
- GMB staff
- Members of the CEC



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Votes at Congress are taken by a show of hands. A Teller vote or card vote is taken when the President believes the show of hands vote is too close to call.

It shall be within the discretion of the President to determine the manner of voting, whether by a show of hands, a Tellers vote or a card vote.

Note: Only delegates in the hall can vote (card or hand vote). Stewards will stop anyone entering the main hall if the President requests "Doors closed" and a prior warning will be given by the President

Teller vote

When the President calls for a Teller vote, the stewards will be asked to close the doors and only delegates in the Hall are able to vote:

- Tellers will collect the Voting Sheets to record votes from the General Member Auditors
- Tellers should stand beside the Region they have been asked to count. Details of which Regional Teller allocation are in the Final Agenda
- The President then asks Congress 'All those in favour?' Tellers count the hands and record the number of yes votes and give this information to the General Member Auditors.
- Tellers return to the region they have been asked to count and procedures (b) and (c) are repeated when the President asks 'All those against?' Again, each Teller counts the hands and records the number of no votes on the votes against tear-off, and gives the information to the General Member Auditors.
- A Teller may add his/her own vote (for or against) to the votes of the Region he/she is counting.
- Tellers then return to their own Regional seating.

Once it is signalled to the President that all Tellers have reported to the General Member

Auditors, the President can move to the next business.

The General Member Auditors total the votes recorded by the Tellers and the result is announced to Congress by the President.

Card vote

A book of voting cards will be issued to each delegate. Each book will contain numbered cards marked for and against. The number on each card is to identify the number of the vote, and **cannot** be used to identify individual voting. The appropriate voting card will be selected and used by the delegate to vote either for or against. The card must not be marked in any way, but placed in the ballot box provided by the Teller.

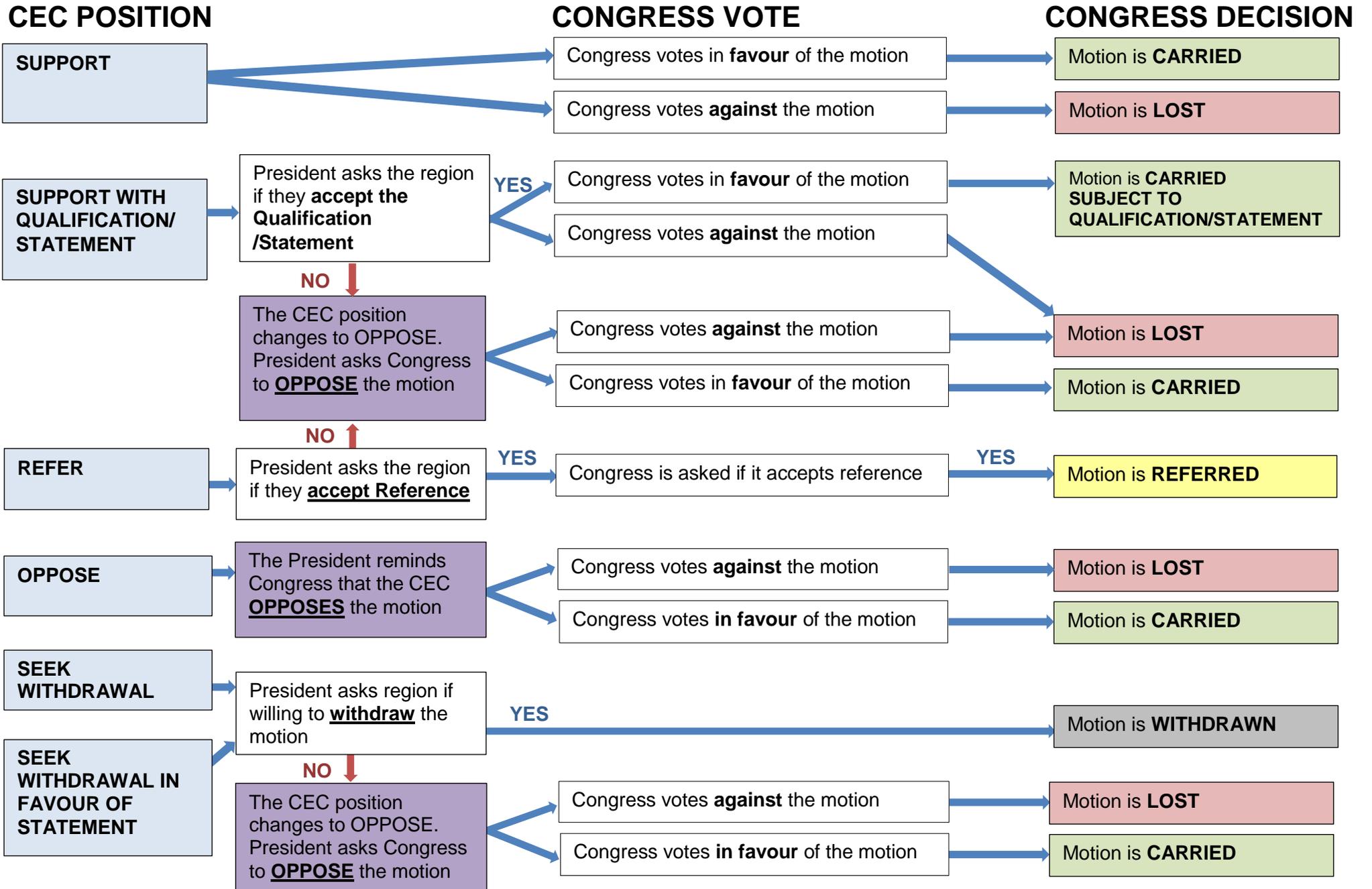
When the President calls for a card vote:

- (a) Tellers will provide a ballot box for each Regional Delegation.
- (b) The President will announce the number of the card to be used – for example: ‘Card vote number 1’.
- (c) Delegates will choose the appropriate numbered card, marked either for or against from their booklet of voting cards and place it into the ballot box provided.
- (d) Once the President has announced ‘Card vote completed’ Tellers will take the ballot boxes to the General Member Auditors.
- (e) The General Member Auditors will count the votes, and notify the President of the result.

The President of Congress shall have no vote. If there is a tied vote, then the motion shall fall.

All regional tellers must be in the hall at all times and must attend a briefing meeting on Sunday morning.

The following diagram shows the voting paths for each CEC Position on motions



The Congress week

What you need to know

Credentials, wallets and accommodation

Regional Offices arrange accommodation for their Regional Delegation and issue delegates with their Congress wallets at their eve of Congress Delegation meeting. This will include a number of Congress related documents including:

- Final Agenda and Congress Guide (a document which contains the motions and/or rule amendments for debate at Congress, information on fringe events and exhibitors)
- 1-page Delegate Outline Programme
- Financial accounts
- Report of award winners
- Other Congress related information



Your Congress credential indicates your name, region and section and must be worn at all times in the Congress venue, it is required for access to the Congress hall. If you are a visitor to Congress, you would normally be seated in a separate viewing area.

Your region should provide you with a copy of the General Secretary's Report and your Equality Monitoring Form (also available on line at www.gmb.org.uk/congress where you will need to enter your membership number)

IMPORTANT: Lost your credential? Need another wallet or a replacement document? In the first instance report this to your Regional Secretary's PA or Delegation Leader who will make arrangements for a replacement.

Conduct

The GMB is committed to the participation of all our delegates at Congress. No-one should be put off from participating because of the actions, attitudes or language of others at Congress.

It is essential that all those at Congress are treated with respect, politeness and civility. The GMB expects all those attending Congress to work within these principles. Language and behaviour that is unacceptable to other delegates, venue and GMB staff, the CEC, guests and visitors will not be tolerated.

Please remember that every GMB Congress session is filmed and transmitted live from the GMB website - please avoid using inappropriate language.

Time keeping

Delegates are responsible for their own timekeeping. It is very important both for the smooth running of Congress business and politeness that you are punctual.

Mobile phones/electronic devices

If mobile phones are brought into the Congress hall, they must be switched off or silenced at all times when Congress is in session.

Film, cameras and photographs

The SOC has given permission for the filming of Congress. Please be aware that your image

may be recorded, transmitted and/or published.

Congress Sessions

The timings of Congress sessions are set out in the Standing Orders Committee Report Number 1 in the Congress Final Agenda: Congress sessions are usually as follows:

In a non-Section Conference Year: Congress starts on Sunday and ends on Thursday lunchtime.

Typically, Congress sessions are:

Sunday – Wednesday	9.30 am to 12.30 pm	2:00pm to 5:30pm
Thursday:	9.30am to close of business	

Doors to the venue open at 8:45 each morning.

Wherever possible, Congress business will run to these timings. However, if there is a substantial debate or urgent business, Congress sessions may be extended. If there are changes to the programme the President or the Chair of the SOC will make an announcement

In a Section Conference year

Section Conferences will be held on the Tuesday of Congress week. Section Conferences are advisory and the Section National Secretary will report back highlights from their Conference to Congress delegates. The programme for Section Conferences and motions are listed at the back of the Final Agenda.

The Platform

Although the SOC determines the business to be brought forward, the President presides over Congress (rule12) ensuring that the rules of debate are adhered to and the business is dealt with in a fair and orderly manner. The current President, Mary Turner, has a great deal of experience and has presided over Congress for a number of years. Above all she is fiercely committed to the principle that it is a lay member Congress.



Congress is chaired by the President who sits on the platform with the Vice President and General Secretary. They are supported by the Executive Policy Officer whose role is to advise on policy and ensure the smooth running of Congress and oversee the recording of Congress decisions. During debates, other key Officers may sit on the Platform .

The Vice President, currently Malcolm Sage is also very experienced and considerate to members. The Vice President normally operates the lectern traffic light system which indicates the length of time a speaker has to speak. A senior official assists the President and Vice President and operates the lectern lights when the Vice President takes the chair.

Congress Business

Order of debate

It is important that Congress is conducted courteously and in accordance with GMB rules. Motions are grouped together for the Preliminary Agenda in appropriate subjects and are scheduled for debate based on factors that include CEC Special Reports, guest speakers and formalities. The order of debate may change to accommodate these factors. Motions published in the Final Agenda are in numerical order but debated in Programme order.

To assist delegates with the order of Congress debates a one-page document, namely the Delegate Outline Programme (included in Congress wallets) provides an overview of the Congress Programme, however this is subject to change.

Delegate Outline Programme

Motions marked

- With a large **X** have been ruled out of order by the SOC
- With **EP** have been determined to be existing policy by the SOC

These are reported to Congress in SOC Report No. 1.

Motions marked with **Cxx** are composite motions agreed by the relevant Regions and are listed in the Final Agenda.

GMB Congress 2015		Delegate Session Programme	
SUNDAY 7 JUNE 2015		MORNING SESSION TO BEGIN 9:30AM	
*Scoll Rinse Geoghe Irish dancers on stage			
1.	Call to Order		
2.	Banner Ceremony, Northern Region		
3.	Video Montage		
4.	Welcome by Gerald Nash TD		
5.	Safety Procedures		
6.	Welcome to Delegates and Visitors		
7.	Roll Call		
8.	Obituaries		
9.	Tribute to Billy Hughes, Northern Region		
10.	Appointment of Tellers		
11.	Confirmation of Standing Orders Committee		
12.	Standing Orders Committee Report No. 1 – Chair: Helen Johnson		
13.	President's Address – Mary Turner		
14.	Vote of Thanks to the President - Eddie Marnell, North West & Irish Region		
15.	CEC RULE AMENDMENTS		
CEORA1	Rule 4	Dissolving the union	
CEORA2	Rule 29	Audits	
CEORA3	Rule 35	Branches	
16.	UNION ORGANISATION: Congress		
Motion 7	Report on Passed Motions		LO
17.	UNION ORGANISATION: General		
Motion 14	Monument to Will Thorne		LO
Motion 15	Eleanor Marx Day		SW
Motion 16	International Women's Day		LO
Motion 17	Retired Members' Association		LO
18.	UNION ORGANISATION: General		
Motion 20	Establish A GMB Or TUC Radio Station		LO
Motion 21	Campaign For Press And Broadcasting Freedom		LO
Motion 22	Banner Theatre's 40th Anniversary Appeal For Core Funding		BI
Motion 23	Sponsorship Of England Women's Football Team		YO
19.	CEC SPECIAL REPORT: GMB BRANCHES – A FUTURE THAT WORKS: INTERIM REPORT		
20.	UNION ORGANISATION: Finance & Contributions		
Comp 18	Branch Organising and Equality Fund (47, 383)		LO, NEC
SUNDAY LUNCHTIME FRINGE MEETINGS (12:45 – 1:45):			
Presentation and Discussion On GMB Annual Accounts, Verschoyle Suite, Leisure Centre, Floor 1			
The Role of Eleanor Marx in founding GMB, Newcastle Suite, Leisure Centre, Floor 2			
Exploitation of Agency Workers, Brittas Suite, Leisure Centre, Floor 2			
Pensions - Organising for a Better Future, Rethcoole Suite, Leisure Centre, Floor 2			

Delegate Session Programme

A detailed Delegate Session Programme will be provided to delegates at the start of each morning and afternoon session.

This lists the grouping of motions and will show any changes e.g. scheduling of Emergency Motions, business carried over and information on fringe meetings.

Congress opening

The opening ceremony starts when the President calls Congress to order:

'I call Congress to order for the opening ceremony. Congress please stand to greet the national banner.'

Banner ceremony: Regions take it in turn each year to form the Banner Party which brings the GMB national banner to the platform. Regional banners are also bought to the platform. The National Banner is displayed on the platform during Congress week and Regional Banners are displayed around the edge of the main hall.



© Andrew Wiard

Video montage: A montage of photos and videos is shown highlighting GMB work during the previous year.

Roll call: The President asks Regions to notify the Congress Office of any changes to their Delegation.

Obituaries: The President asks Congress to stand in silence while the obituary list is scrolled on the screen. A copy of the list is printed in the Congress Guide.

Standing Orders Committee (SOC) Report Number 1: The Standing Orders Committee is made up of elected or appointed Congress lay delegates, who oversee all aspects of Congress business. The Chair of the SOC moves SOC Report Number 1 at the start of Congress.

This report is printed in the Final Agenda and contains recommendations for the conduct of Congress business during the week.

Any delegate can challenge the recommendations in SOC Report Number 1 by calling for 'Reference back' on a SOC decision e.g. that a motion has been ruled out of order.

Delegates can indicate that they wish to challenge the Report and are called to speak. Once they have spoken, the SOC Chair will respond. Following debate Congress will be asked to vote on the individual references back, then on the whole SOC Report Number 1. Once SOC No 1 has been adopted by Congress, this becomes the rules for all Congress sessions.

President's Address: The President addresses Congress; printed copies of the President's Address will be available later the same day.

The order of debate

The procedure for debating motions and rule amendments shall normally be at the discretion of the President who will indicate to Congress wherever appropriate, the procedure or procedures he/she intends to adopt. In determining the procedure for debating motions and rule amendments, the President shall have regard to the following points:

- no motion can be amended, rescinded or negated by a subsequent motion, at that Congress;
- precedence in debates shall be given to a motion of the CEC;
- rule amendments take precedence in debate over general motions;
- personal attacks on colleagues should not take place.

CEC Special Reports: These are in-depth reports on important issues relating to GMB democracy, governance, finances, structures and social and political matters and are moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. The President then invites Regions to speak, and after the CEC mover has been asked if s/he wishes to exercise the right to reply, the report is put to the vote. Once CEC special reports are carried they become union policy.

CEC Statements: These set out the union's position on issues that are of special importance to the union or are relevant to matters being debated at Congress. They are circulated to delegates in advance. They are moved and seconded by members of the CEC and voted on.

Guests and speakers: Invited politicians, campaigners and international speakers may speak at Congress, details of which can be found on the one-page Delegate Outline Programme.

Congress Awards: Congress awards for Equality, Health & Safety Reps and Women are presented at Congress selected from nominations submitted by Regions.

Congress Local Gift: In turn at each Congress, a Region will select a local charity from within their Region to receive the Congress local gift, which is funded 50% by National Office, and 50% by GMB Regions.

DVDs and visual presentations: DVD's and visual presentations are often shown during Congress. They must be approved in advance by the SOC.

Emergency motions: Any delegate wishing to submit an Emergency Motion shall in the first instance seek the agreement of his/her Regional Secretary that the motion is an Emergency Motion. It shall then be referred to the Standing Orders Committee, which shall decide whether the motion is an Emergency Motion after taking account the following points:

- Whether the motion involves a serious situation needing quick action
- Whether the motion relates to events that have occurred after the closing date for motions as prescribed in the Rule Book (i.e. 31st January)
- Whether the motion relates to a decision already taken by the Congress which is in session and would consequently amend or rescind the decision.

If the SOC decides that the motion is in order for debate it reports this to Congress and the CEC decides its position on the motion. In the relevant SOC Report, the Chair will indicate when the emergency motion is likely to be scheduled. Emergency motions are distributed to delegates prior to debate.

Questions on accounts: As detailed in SOC Report Number 1 which is part of the Final Agenda, delegates may ask questions on GMB's financial accounts (balance sheet and auditors' report) and these questions must be submitted in writing to the Congress Office no later than 5.30 pm on the Monday of Congress week.

Question and answer (Q&A) sessions at Congress:

If there is a Q&A Session planned, delegates can submit suggested questions to their Regional secretary for consideration by the delegation. Regions are advised of the protocol devised to ensure that questions cover a range of subjects, there is no duplication and Regions are treated equally. Those delegates who are selected to ask a question will be notified in advance of the session.

Congress closing

On the final day of Congress, when all business has been completed, the closing procedures take place.

Omnibus vote of thanks: Regions take it in turn each year for a member of the CEC to give the omnibus vote of thanks to Congress

General Secretary's closing speech: The General Secretary makes a closing speech to Congress, including reviewing the week's events and highlights.

Closing ceremony: This is in two parts:

1. Slideshow: A selection of photos is shown showing regional successes
2. All stand for the singing of 'The Red Flag'

Facilities and additional Congress information

Information Desk

A Congress information desk is located at the entrance to the Congress venue, and is staffed by GMB National Office personnel.

Internet cafe

A GMB Internet Café with printing facilities is provided for credential holders to use to amend and print speeches or browse the Internet. This is located in the Exhibition Hall and is staffed by GMB IT Staff.

Stewards

Stewards check all credentials and will direct any Congress attendee without a credential to the information desk where the staff will make the necessary arrangements to issue a credential. The desk also holds useful telephone numbers and addresses for local amenities e.g. train station, emergency doctor, taxi's etc.

Exhibition

The Final Agenda and Congress Guide contains the exhibition guide giving details of all exhibitors and the location of the exhibition stands. The exhibition enables delegates to find out more about the interesting range of campaigning, social, and political organisations involved with the GMB, as well as those providing various services to GMB members. There are also GMB stands within the exhibition specifically dealing with information and guidance on a range of issues including health and safety, and equality.

Please make sure that you do not forget to visit the exhibition to collect your Congress gift (further details in the Final Agenda & Congress Guide).

Fringe meetings

In the months leading up to Congress invitations to hold a fringe meeting are sent to appropriate Regional Secretaries, National Officers, GMB departments and external organisations.

We hope to provide a range of fringe meetings where policy, social and political issues are discussed in depth with keynote speakers. These usually take place at lunchtime but can also happen after Congress closes.

The scheduling of fringe meetings is based on a number of factors including availability of guest speakers. Fringe meeting details are set out in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide. Occasionally lunchtime fringe meetings may be shorter than planned due to Congress business over-running, this is unfortunate but cannot be avoided.

Please note: individual special dietary needs may not be catered for if a lunch is provided.

Congress documents

All Congress documents are designed to be resourceful and consideration is given to ethically produced materials, costs and portability.

Congress documents dating back to 2005 can be accessed from the Congress area on the GMB National website: www.gmb.org.uk/congress. Leading up to Congress, documents will be available in readiness for Congress. During Congress week, we will endeavour to make some Congress documents available electronically on the GMB National website.

Literature/flyers etc

No literature or leaflets – other than official GMB literature - may be distributed inside the Congress building without the prior permission of the SOC.

Literature, wherever distributed, which is intended to influence the voting intentions of delegates to Congress, should be brought to the attention of the SOC.

Accessibility

All Congress venues are fully accessible. If you require any of the following:

- Wheelchair access
- infra-red headphones / hearing loop (availability depends on the system in use at the venue)
- sign language interpretation
- large print documentation (16 pt)

Please inform your Regional Office in advance of Congress or at the pre-Congress Delegation meeting. This information will be passed to the Executive Officer at National Office to act upon.

Bucket collections

Requests for permission to hold bucket collections should be submitted to the SOC by 11am on the first Sunday morning session of Congress. Requests must be submitted in writing by the Regional Secretary, and must have the support of the Regional Delegation.

Priority will be given to requests for bucket collections which concern trade union or related issues. The SOC limits consideration of requests for bucket collections to a maximum of one per Region, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. The SOC limits the total number of bucket collections at Congress to three, except in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances at the discretion of the President.

Bucket collections are normally scheduled at the end of the morning or afternoon session and the total collected is reported to Congress in an SOC Report.

Refreshments

Whilst Congress has a break for lunch, there are no set tea breaks during Congress morning/afternoon sessions. However, there is a refreshment outlet within the exhibition hall where tea and coffee is provided free of charge to all Congress credential holders throughout the day. Where possible all refreshments will be FairTrade.

Equality monitoring

The GMB is committed to equality auditing. We aim to ensure that Congress is fully representative of its membership. Please complete the Delegate Equality Monitoring form and return it to your Delegation Leader/ Regional Secretary before the end of Congress.

Delegate feedback

We value your comments and your evaluation of your Congress experience, without evaluation monitoring we cannot measure how well we have organised Congress. It is very useful information for us in the planning and organising of future Congresses. Therefore a suggestion

box will be placed by the “free” tea/coffee outlet in the exhibition for delegates and other credential holders to suggest changes to Congress which the Congress Working Party will consider when planning the following years Congress

President’s Night/ Regional functions

All delegates and Congress attendees are invited to the President’s Night. This is an informal social function arranged on behalf of the GMB President. Dress code for the function is smart/casual. Final details will be published in the Delegate Briefing produced in May 2017 which will be available on the GMB National website www.gmb.org.uk/congress. For information about regional functions please contact your Regional Office.

Your hotel accommodation

If you experience a problem with your accommodation please report it to the hotel. If the problem persists please inform your regional delegation leader.

Information you need to let your Regional Office know about

Special dietary requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements i.e severe allergies (nuts, gluten); vegetarian, vegan, halal or dairy-free it is important to let your region know so that they can advise your hotel accordingly. Every effort is made to accommodate different dietary needs at the Congress venue, however we cannot guarantee that your special dietary needs will be available at the in-house Congress venue food outlets.

Mobility/health issues

Please advise your Regional Office of any mobility or health issues that need to be accommodated to help you attend and enjoy Congress.

Vision impairment

To aid people with sight impairment, we produce a large print (16pt Arial font) version of Congress documents, available to delegates who request them. If you require large print versions of Congress documents please advise your Regional Office as soon as possible.

Following through the decisions of Congress

Following Congress, the General Secretary's Office prepares a record of all the decisions of Congress and sends this document to all the Regional Offices. A copy is also put onto the GMB National website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

In accordance with Motion 2 carried at Congress 2012, following Congress, Regions should circulate to their Branches the decisions reached by Congress regarding the motions from their Region.

In September the CEC meeting agrees actions on decisions of Congress which allocates responsibility for carrying out the policies agreed by Congress.

In accordance with Motion 7, 'Report on Passed Motions' carried at Congress 2015 information about the progress in carrying out the decisions of Congress for all carried and referred motions is available on the GMB National website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

If you wish to make an enquiry about a specific motion, please e-mail policy@gmb.org.uk

GMB CONGRESS 2015 Decisions Made by Congress on Motions, Rule Amendments, Reports and Statements		
Report, Motion, Statement Title:		
REPORTS TO CONGRESS		
General Secretary's Report		Carried
Annual Accounts and Auditor's Report		Carried
CEC SPECIAL REPORTS		
GMB Branches- A Future that Works Progress Report (containing Rule Amendments to Rules 26, 35, 37, 47)		Carried
GMB Women's Project Progress Report (containing Rule Amendments to Rules 17a, 17d, 17e)		Carried
Your Health, Your Safety		Carried
OTHER CEC REPORTS TO CONGRESS		
CEC Finance Report (containing CECRA5, 7, 8, 9)		Carried
CEC STATEMENT TO CONGRESS		
CEC Statement on Fracking		Carried
CEC RULE AMENDMENTS		
CECRA1	Rule 4 Dissolving the Union	Carried
CECRA2	Rule 29 Audits	Carried
CECRA3	Rule 35.13 Branches	Carried
CECRA4	Rule 26 Legal Assistance	Carried
CECRA5	Rule 26 Legal Assistance	Carried
CECRA6	Rule 45 Contributions	Carried
CECRA7	Rule 45 Contributions	Carried with Finance Report
CECRA8	Rule 47a Retired Life Members	Carried with Finance Report
CECRA9	Rule 53 Funeral Benefit	Carried with Finance Report
STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE (SOC) REPORTS		
Standing Orders Committee Reports 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5		Carried

Congress 2015 Decisions

1

Example of Report of Decisions of Congress

Glossary of terms

Carried

A motion is carried when the majority of delegates vote in favour.

CEC

The Central Executive Council is the governing body that runs the union between Congresses. The CEC consists of fifty-five elected members from each of the nine Regions elected in general, section and women's reserved seats, including five national race reserved seat members, plus the General Secretary.

CEC Special reports

CEC special reports are in-depth reports on important issues relating to GMB democracy, governance, finances, structures, social and political matters. They are approved by and moved and seconded on behalf of the CEC. The President then calls on Regions to speak in debate, and after the CEC mover has been asked if s/he wishes to exercise the right to reply, the report is put to the vote. Once CEC special reports are carried they become union policy. Special reports are printed and distributed to delegates by Regional Offices. Reports from previous Congresses are available on GMB National Website: www.gmb.org.uk/congress

CEC Position

A CEC agreed position on any motion or rule amendments e.g. support or oppose.

CEC Statement

This sets out the union's position on issues that are of special importance to the union or are relevant to matters being debated at Congress. They are circulated to delegates in advance and moved and seconded by CEC members. If accepted, they become union policy.

Chair

Congress is chaired by the President, whose role is to ensure that all the business of Congress is properly carried out. When the President is absent from the platform, the Vice-President chairs Congress.

Composite Motion

Where one or more motions have a similar purpose, these are grouped together to form a Composite motion and treated as a single motion. The text of the composites and the motions making up the composite are set out in full in the Final Agenda, prefixed with the composite number, e.g. C1. Regions involved in the composite agree which Regions will move and second the composite and have priority in debate.

Congress local gift

In turn at each Congress a Region will select a local charity to receive the Congress local gift, which is funded 50% by National Office, and 50% by the Regions. A formal announcement of the recipient(s) is made during Congress. The presentation of the gift is made by the Region after Congress.

Congress Office

This is located backstage and is responsible for all administration and organisation work during Congress.

Congress Working Party

The Congress Working Party consists of specialist staff from National Office, the NAU and Section Secretaries. It is chaired by the General Secretary and meets regularly to plan all arrangements for annual Congress.

Credentials

These are the badges which permit access to Congress. They are issued in advance of Congress by the Executive Officer at National Office to Regional Secretaries who distribute them to their delegates and visitors. The type of credential differs depending upon voting status:

- Voting Delegates
- CEC Members
- GMB National or Regional Officer and Staff
- GMB Visitors (GMB members)
- Visitors (non-members)
- Exhibitor
- Steward

Credentials must be worn at all times in the Congress venue, and are required for access

to the Congress hall. Lost or damaged credentials can be replaced at Congress by your Region.

Defer

If explanations to motions are unclear or unsatisfactory, or matters underway mean a decision cannot yet be made, the CEC defers its decision and reconsiders at the pre-Congress CEC meeting.

Delegate Outline Programme

The one-page Delegate Outline Congress Programme lists the weekly timetable for the order of debate of motions and is provided in delegate wallets.

Emergency motion

Emergency motions may be submitted to the SOC on matters that have arisen after the Rulebook closing date for submission of motions to Regions (i.e. 31st January) on a pro-forma form issued by the SOC, and signed by the Regional Secretary and Regional President. If the SOC decides that the motion is in order for debate it reports this to Congress. The CEC then decides its position on the motion. Emergency motions are distributed to delegates prior to debate.

Existing policy

A position which identifies a motion that is the same or similar to a motion already adopted by Congress.

Explanation

In some cases, the CEC is unable to take a position without more information about the motion or its intent, and asks the Region for an explanation.

Falls

A motion programmed for debate which is not moved or not seconded, therefore cannot be carried by Congress.

Final Agenda & Congress Guide

This document contains motions, rule amendments, composites and CEC rule amendments to be debated by Congress, following withdrawal of motions or rule amendments from the Preliminary Agenda. It also lists fringe events and details of the Congress exhibition and contains a

Representation Statement for delegates attending Congress.

General Member Auditors

Three General Member Auditors are elected by branch votes every four years from nominations from Branches. Their role is to supervise the counting of the votes in cases of Teller Votes, Card Votes or Ballots. They are seated near the back of the Congress Hall.

General Secretary's Report

Reports from the General Secretary, National Office Departments, European Office, GMB Sections and Regions on activity, particularly in respect of GMB@WORK, from 1 May of the preceding year to 30 April of the Congress year e.g. General Secretary's report to Congress 2017 covers activities during 1 May 2016 – 30 April 2017. These are printed and distributed to delegates by Regional Offices in May in advance of pre-Congress Delegation meetings. Reports from previous Congresses are available on GMB Website www.gmb.org.uk/congress

Motion

A formal proposal put to Congress by a GMB Branch, Regional Committee or the CEC for discussion and vote. This is normally moved and seconded by a delegate but can be formally moved and/or seconded.

Mover

The delegate who proposes the motion to Congress – either formally or with a supporting speech. If a motion is not moved that motion falls.

Out of order

Motions ruled out of order by SOC are reported in SOC Report No. 1 in the Final Agenda and presented at the start of Congress. The reasons that a motion may be ruled out of order are set out in the Final Agenda in 'Guidelines for Congress Business'.

Point of order

A point of order may be raised by a delegate if s/he wishes to bring a breach of Standing Orders or Congress procedures to the attention of the President.

Preliminary Agenda

Categorised list of all motions and rule amendments submitted by Branches to Congress.

President's Address

The President's speech to Congress, usually part of the opening ceremony. Delegates will receive a copy of this after the address is delivered.

President's running order

This is the detailed order of debate for each Congress session for use by Regional Secretaries and the platform only.

Refer

Where the factual background of a motion needs to be examined or where a more developed/rounded statement of union policy than the motion would provide needs to be prepared. A report of action on motions referred from the previous Congress can be found in the Executive Policy Section of the General Secretary's Report.

Right of reply

When a motion or CEC special report has been debated and points made in opposition to the proposals in the motion, the Chair will ask the mover whether s/he wishes to exercise the right to reply. Only the mover of a motion or a CEC special report has the right to make this second contribution from the rostrum in the same debate and must use the right to reply to answer points made in opposition during the debate, not to restate the case.

Rule amendment

A proposed change to the GMB Rulebook submitted by a Branch or a Regional Committee in a Rules Revision Congress year or by the Central Executive Council in any Congress year.

Rule book

GMB is governed by its Rule Book and every member of GMB is bound by the rules. GMB rules are made by GMB members and determine the structure, democracy and constitution of the union. The Rule Book also details arrangements for GMB's full-time Officials, Regions, Finance, Branches and

Contributions and Benefits. Following a decision made at GMB Congress 2008, this is now available in electronic form only on the GMB National Website:
www.gmb.org.uk/rulebook

Rules Revision Congress

Each alternate Congress (2015, 2017 etc) is a Rules Revision Congress where Branches and Regional Committees can submit amendments to the GMB Rule Book as well as general motions. Note: CEC can submit amendments to the Rule Book in any Congress year.

Secunder

A delegate who endorses a motion that has been moved. If the motion is not seconded, the motion falls.

Section conferences

Biennial industrial conferences of the three GMB sections (Commercial Services, Manufacturing and Public Services) held during Congress week every other year (2016, 2018 etc) in line with the Rule Book

Session Programme

A detailed programme is issued to all delegates at the start of each session which determines the order of debate. It is important to follow this as the programme is often subject to change on a session by session basis.

Standing Orders Committee

The Standing Orders Committee (SOC) is a Committee of elected or appointed Congress delegates, one from each Region, who oversee all aspects of Congress business. They are elected at the pre-Congress Regional Delegation meetings in April each year. They make recommendations to Congress for the handling of the agenda and the Committee remains in session throughout Congress. The SOC determines whether each motion submitted to Congress is in order for debate at Congress. The criteria are outlined in the Congress Guidelines in the Final Agenda.

SOC Report Number 1

The first SOC Report is included in the Final Agenda. It lists the composites, out of order

motions, and any withdrawn or existing policy motions. The Chair of the SOC then makes additional verbal reports to Congress as appropriate during the Congress week. By agreeing to SOC Report No 1, this sets out the procedures of Congress for the whole week.

Stewards

Stewards are local Branch members and activists who volunteer to steward the Congress venue, under the direction of the Congress Office. They will check credentials and generally assist delegates and visitors as required. They will also assist the venue staff with security of the venue.

Tellers

Every year each GMB Region appoints a delegate as a 'Teller' to count the votes of another Region. Teller's names and the Region they are responsible for counting are listed in the Final Agenda and Congress Guide. Tellers need to be in the Hall at all times.

Withdrawal

A motion or rule amendment removed from the Final/ Preliminary Agenda usually by the agreement of a Regional Delegation meeting. The SOC must be notified by the Region of withdrawn motions which it then reports to Congress. Motions can be withdrawn at any time up to and including during Congress right up to the point of debate.

Comments from first time delegates to Congress

“As a first time delegate I found everyone friendly and polite from all Regions. Everyone was helpful and made you feel very welcome”

“Truly inspirational and really enjoyed my first Congress”

“As a first time delegate, I have found it to be a very informative and enjoyable experience, and I shall go back to my branch re-energised for the struggles we're facing in the coming weeks and months.”

“I got encouragement from the amount of first time delegates (like myself) and their first time public speaking. Their commitment has given me hope for the future and to carry on the work of the union for my members.”

“For a first time delegate daunting to begin with, also nervous and unsure what to expect, but as it progressed, with help from fellow activists became more confident”

“This was my first Congress and I found the organisation helpful and the stalls very interesting. The debates and motions I found very useful and will enable me to take some fresh ideas back to our branch meetings. There were several points that provided a rallying of hope that inspired me and gave the confidence needed to return home for a continued fight”

“I spoke for the first time and hope to improve and speak again on other issues”.

“First time and enjoyed it.”

“As a new delegate I was made to feel welcome right from the start”

“This was my first time and found how friendly everyone was, especially to someone like me who was a first time delegate.”

“Feel a lot more confident after attending this first Congress as a delegate, everyone was so supportive”

“I enjoyed being a first time delegate – I received a lot of support which made my first speech easier”

“It was my first Congress and I presented my first speech on the afternoon of Congress on the first day and support from fellow delegates and GMB”

“First time at Congress, at first confusing but with help from others understanding then leading to a very interesting and enjoyable experience. I will try to attend next Congress, and take a more active part in this.”

Other comments

“Thank you for inviting me; I feel a part of this organisation. Going forward to re-new my efforts, to achieve the goals and targets set by our members to fight for injustices.”

“Enjoyable and inspiring”

“I thought I was motivated before Congress and my motivation for the movement has now trebled. The support from everyone has been overwhelming and it is an honour to be part of this movement”

“It was a shot in the arm. First time delegates and speakers were supported and encouraged to speak and contribute”

“I have made a lot of new friends and learnt a great deal on how the Union works”

“Proud to have been able as a young lay member, to make the policy (in a small part) of my union. Wrote, moved and voted for a motion of my own making. Also proud of a General Secretary that recognises Young Members' contributions.”

“An excellent experience to be part of the democracy of a great Union”

“Educational and inspirational”

“Excellent organisation, good friendly reception and a very enjoyable experience”

“The fringe meetings were varied, interesting and informative”

“It has become clear, the hard work and commitment of GMB members across not only my region but the whole of the GMB. It has allowed myself to network, attend fringe meetings but most importantly allowed me the insight through the sovereign of our union and congress to build networks, links and support.”

“The passion of lay representatives from all areas of the GMB and the friendships formed over the course of the week.”

“Really enlightening”

“All the fantastic first time delegate speeches, good future for the union”

“Very enjoyable, illuminating and plenty to think about to take back and discuss with shop stewards and members”

“Uplifting”

“I'm more aware of issues nationally, have more passion and feel valued”

