This is a critical time to take to the streets and insist the Government stops wrecking our NHS and invest in hard-working loyal staff. An uprising of ‘Maybots’ descended on Victoria Gardens in Leeds in April as part of a mass rally against the destruction of the NHS. The sinister Prime Ministerial mechanoids held up placards calling on the Government to stop tearing up the NHS, before setting off on a march around Leeds.

GMB Senior Organiser, Desiree Wilburn, said: “Because of the deliberate underfunding of the NHS by Theresa May and Co, it crashed into the buffers as demand soared over the winter months. Years of pay caps and almost 100,000 vacant posts have left staff demoralised and exhausted with many leaving the NHS altogether. NHS England is intent on breaking-up the NHS to outsource facilities and staff and serve them up on a plate to private companies whose only real interest is to make a profit from a cherished institution. It’s up to us to force this spiteful, delusional and weak Government to get its act together.”

GMB Organiser, Stacey Booth, addressed the rally, saying: “NHS workers have faced eight years of derisory pay awards of no more than 1% whilst working in a chronically underfunded service, they have had enough, the winter crisis has forced the Government to offer them a pay deal that to be quite honest is an insult. The headlines do not expose the strings underneath it and with the latest swathe of privatisation models, thousands of NHS staff cannot even have their say; it’s a scandal and one we must stop. At Leeds Teaching Hospital alone, 2300 staff are at risk of privatisation but GMB are determined to stop these models.”
GMB campaigned for an ‘angry remain’ recognising that for many of our members the status quo was not perfect.

However, it was not an easy campaign. Freedom of movement was one of the reasons why a significant number of members voted to leave the EU. Many were working in sectors that had first-hand experience of seeing unscrupulous employers exploit migrant workers to undermine union agreed wage rates or to provide a sense of insecurity.

In Yorkshire we had Next recruit Polish workers a week before advertising the jobs in the UK, despite South Elmsall being an area of high unemployment. Our criticism is absolutely not towards migrant workers, but directed towards those employers who want to ‘divide and rule’. We are proud to have EU citizens as members, to have migrant worker branches and will continue to campaign against xenophobia and racism.

GMB has welcomed Labour’s commitment towards membership of a Customs Union with the European Union. We have members in ports, logistics, manufacturing and retail and costly delays would be devastating. Many goods zig-zag across borders multiple times in their production. This is even more the case between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and GMB has members on both sides of the Irish border.

We believe the Conservative Government has repeatedly failed to pursue Brexit in the national interest and instead has been driven by internal factors in their party.”

NEIL DERRICK ON BREXIT & YORKSHIRE

With less than a year to go to Exit Day and no sign of a plan for the economy after 29 March 2019, Brexit will have a significant impact on the jobs and life chances of working people in our region.

At a TUC organised conference, stakeholders and experts came together from around the region to discuss the risks and priorities of Brexit for Yorkshire. Neil Derrick, Regional Secretary, was GMB’s representative at the event.

“GMB’s approach to Brexit since the referendum has been to ensure that workers do not lose out in terms of their rights at work, jobs, pay and conditions or public services,” Neil told the conference.

GMB will work with other organisations with a common agenda to maintain the strength of the sectors, their future potential and high standard. Where politicians made promises during the referendum we believe that they should be held to account, especially those now at the heart of Government. GMB does not want to see any area worse off from Brexit and believes the Government must be open about the challenges and put into practice an industrial and investment strategy involving trade unions, employers, public sector bodies and communities.

GMB has been at the forefront of pressing for Government to publish the impact assessments for the particularly approach to Brexit it is taking. We believe workers and industries deserve to know the consequences for their livelihood. Instead we have seen David Davies claim they were undertaken in great detail, then not done at all, followed by partial leaks of documents. This is totally inadequate.

Latest Inflation - March 2018

RPI: 3.3% (down from 3.6% in February)
CPI: 2.5% (down from 2.7% in February)

GMB Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region
@GMBCampaigns
COUNCIL MAKES U-TURN ON DECISION TO STOP PAYING FOUNDATION LIVING WAGE IN SCHOOLS

U-turn comes about as a direct result of opposition and pressure from GMB representatives

In last month’s Activist we reported on a decision made by Derbyshire County Council to stop paying the Foundation Living Wage to qualifying employees, and their unilateral decision to prevent schools from paying it too. A course of action that they were not empowered to take because of the devolved decision making powers that schools have.

Derbyshire County Council has now reconsidered its position and has confirmed that the facility for schools to continue paying the Living Wage will remain and schools can, therefore, continue to pay their qualifying employees the Foundation Living Wage which is now £8.75.

GMB Organiser, Jon Smith, said: “This is a positive decision. However, it should never have become an issue as the facility to pay the Foundation Living Wage should not have been removed in the first place.”

“It is disappointing that the council has not reconsidered its decision to stop paying the Foundation Living Wage to its directly employed staff as this represents a pay cut in real terms for those staff.”

A PROBLEM SHARED

The region is pleased to announce its support for a campaign called ‘A Problem Shared’ which was launched by Emma Oliver, in memory of her son Daniel Long, who sadly committed suicide in 2017 because of exam pressure.

Emma Oliver came to address the GMB’s Schools & Academies Support Staff Forum and the Regional Young Members’ Committee to discuss her campaign; she is calling for the appointment of a Counsellor in every school, a role which should not be an add-on to someone’s existing duties but a brand new resource.

Details about the campaign as well as a link to a petition can be found at: http://notfineinschool.org.uk/experiences/problem-shared/

Exam season is fast approaching and children will be feeling the stress. If you are a parent, grandparent or guardian have you been made aware of the support available in school for children during this time of increased pressure? Does the child know it’s there and how to access it?

GMB will be contacting schools in our region about this campaign over the coming weeks, but in the meantime, you can raise this with your school.

If you would like further details about this campaign please contact Rachel Harrison email: rachel.harrison@gmb.org.uk
UNIONISED WORKPLACES ARE SAFER WORKPLACES SAYS MARY CREEGH, MP FOR WAKEFIELD

GMB offices across the region fell silent on the 27th April to remember the dead and fight for the living as the world prepared to commemorate International Workers’ Memorial Day on the 28th April.

At GMB’s regional office in Wakefield, Neil Derrick, GMB Regional Secretary, led the proceedings and the memorial bell was rung three times by local MP Mary Creagh just as Wakefield Town Hall struck 10am. Mary Creagh paid tribute to ‘GMB and the work it does in promoting health and safety and protecting GMB members in the workplace through a network of amazing health and safety reps’.

International Workers’ Memorial Day is a day when workers around the world stop to remember those workers killed, disabled, injured or made unwell by their job. It is a day to remember the dead and to fight for the living and a day to acknowledge the families and friends of those who have lost their lives through the effects of work.

Neil Derrick said: “GMB will never stop campaigning to improve health and safety in the workplace. It is disgraceful that in the 21st Century people set off for work but don’t return home at night because they have been injured or killed as a result of negligent employers and bad employment practices.”

(See our next issue for details of WMD events from around the region)
PRIDE 2018

Pride season is fast approaching and the theme for this year is LGBT+ Mental Health. We will be at Pride events across the region talking to people about what trade unions can do for them and how we work to eradicate discrimination.

We will be at York pride (parade and stall) 9th June, Leeds Pride (parade) 5th August and Wakefield Pride (stall) 12th August.

We need your help and support to make these events a success and there are many ways for you to help and assist on the day, from carrying the regional equality banner in the parade or carrying a GMB flag, to giving out information and chatting to people in the Pride field. Any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact GMB Equality Officer, Lou Foster-Wilson on email: louise.foster-wilson@gmb.org.uk or tel: 0345 337 7777 for more information.

KOBER MEMBERSHIP GROWING THROUGH JOINT BRANCH WORKING

Representatives from B05 Organising Branch and M35 Migrant Workers’ Branch joined together once again, organising and recruiting members to GMB in Kober, Cleckheaton.

The company gave permission for GMB to utilise the canteen facilities to speak to workers and invite them to join the union. A substantial number of the workers originate from Poland though many have worked at the company for a decade.

M35 Branch Secretary Dzesika Kozlowska and Branch President Justyna Kamienska were able to converse with the Polish workers in their native tongue and explain the benefits of joining GMB.

The joint working is the brainchild of B05 Branch Secretary, Cath Pinder, who said: “It doesn’t matter what branch any of us are in, we are all GMB family. B05 Branch are more than happy to use our resource to help other branches to grow and to work with them for organising success.”

Other GMB branches are encouraged to use M35s expertise if they need assistance with groups of Polish workers.
The Activist

LOCAL CHARITY GETS CASH BOOST FROM GMB

GMB staff and activists have raised money to support mental health awareness by holding various awareness days and from donations received at Wakefield Pride in 2017.

A cheque for £150 was presented to Eastmoor Community Project in Wakefield who is supported by Turning Point Talking Therapies.

Eastmoor Community Project was established in 1998 and is a small voluntary organisation and registered charity that encourages community involvement and participation in the Eastmoor Area.

Turning Point Talking Therapies offers workshops and online support for people aged 18 and over suffering with mental health problems in the Wakefield district.

Emma Wray from Eastmoor Community Project, said: “We are overwhelmed by the generous donation and the cheque will help support our mental health awareness activities.”

GMB’s Jessica Carrington, said: “We are looking forward to continuing to work alongside Eastmoor Community Project and Turning Point Talking Therapies to raise awareness around mental health.”

Lou Foster-Wilson also from GMB, said: “We will be attending York, Leeds and Wakefield Pride this year, where we will raise awareness around mental health in the LGBT community. Turning Point Talking Therapies will be joining us at Wakefield Pride.”

WELL DONE KALVINDER

Celebrating 40 Proud Years at GMB

GMB’s regional Finance Officer, Kalvinder Degun, has just celebrated a staggering 40 years working for the union. Her career began in April 1978 in the Sick Fund Section, at the regional office which was based in Leeds. The GMB was called the General Municipal Workers’ Union and Frank Booth was the Regional Secretary.

Kalvinder progressed to the Check-Off Section in 1990 and then became the Assistant Finance Officer in 1989 before finally being appointed the region’s Finance Officer in 2000.

Kalvinder has worked under six regional secretaries over the last 40 years.

Commenting, Kalvinder said: “It has been a privilege working with such a variety of people, in particular, our activists and members who are the GMB. I have gained skills and knowledge due to the many changes and enjoyed the challenges. The time has just flown by.”

GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN
0345 337 7777  www.gmbyorkshire.org.uk
TUC NATIONAL MARCH & RALLY
A New Deal For Working People

The TUC is holding a rally in central London on Saturday 12th May and will be joined by unions and supporters from all over the country. Together we will be calling for more and better jobs and a more equal and prosperous country. We want GMB members to join in and let their voices be heard.

Speakers at the rally will include TUC General Secretary Frances O’Grady, union leaders and frontline workers. The family-friendly event is part of the TUC Great Jobs Agenda campaign #TUCnewdeal. The march will assemble on the Embankment between Hungerford Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge from 11am. It will move off at 12pm and march to Hyde Park. The rally will take place in Hyde Park, finishing at 4pm. GMB has a limited number of train tickets available leaving from Leeds and Sheffield station which will be available to activists on a first come first served basis.

Please contact Trudy Frampton on tel: 0345 337 7777 email: trudy.frampton@gmb.org.uk