



theACTIVIST

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GMB News From Around The Region



GMB OPENS NEW ACTIVIST CENTRE IN HUDDERSFIELD

We're pleased to announce the launch of a new activist and education centre which has opened in the heart of Huddersfield. The centre will be home to our team of Kirklees convenors, but will also provide a state of the art learning facility and access to education and training courses for our members across Huddersfield and the wider area.

The centre was officially opened by GMB Regional Secretary, Neil Derrick and leader of Kirklees Council, Shabir Pandor. Guests invited to the opening included GMB Regional President, Cath Pinder, Batley & Spen MP, Tracy Brabin, councillors from across Kirklees and members of Kirklees HR team. GMB members were also on hand to try out some of the amazing IT and sign up for courses.

GMB Organiser for Kirklees Council, Andrew Aldwinkle, said: **"The facility is just what we need to help grow the union, provide a quality service to our members and promote life-long learning to the workers in Kirklees. But, without the dedication and commitment of our team in Kirklees who include Glyn Wydell (convenor), Ian Thwaites (convenor), Sharon Booth (ULR), Lyall Singleton (workplace Rep) and Richard Gilbert (ULR) the centre probably wouldn't have come to fruition. They even painted it in their own time. They're a credit to GMB."**



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GMB KICKS OFF CAMPAIGN AT BARNESLEY HOSPITAL TO GET PAID SICK DAYS AND PAY JUSTICE FOR ISS WORKERS

ISS is a private contractor operating inside NHS trusts across the UK, but it doesn't pay its staff NHS Agenda for Change pay, terms & conditions. Instead, workers are paid poverty wages and denied sick pay when they fall ill.

It's GMB's view that anyone employed by ISS and working in the NHS should not be paid less than colleagues directly employed by the NHS.

GMB's Ben Kirkham has kicked off a campaign at Barnsley Hospital to get paid sick days and pay justice for ISS workers. He said:

"We know the Tory Government is riddled with short-sightedness; they are viciously reactionary and will no doubt keep on privatising. Seventy years on from its inception, the NHS is not in ripe health."

"Chronic underfunding, a massive expansion of the private sector into healthcare provision, plus a demoralised and underpaid workforce, have combined to put the NHS in grave danger."

"We will continue to campaign for all contracts to be brought back in-house."

"With the NHS no longer having the capacity to provide the services, the need to organise ISS workers could not be greater."

"ISS must raise the pay of GMB members in line with NHS contracts and introduce sick pay from day one."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYERS ACCUSED OF CREATING 'UNNECESSARY' PAY DELAY

The three unions representing council workers have expressed disappointment at the local government employers' failure to make them a pay offer – more than six months after they submitted this year's wage claim.

GMB, Unison and Unite, which between them have more than a million local government members across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, are critical of what they see as unnecessary delays to the process.

The unions want the employers to hurry up and make an offer and have already written to Chancellor Sajid Javid urging him to ensure that local authorities have the funds to meet the unions' pay claim for 2020/21.

In a joint statement the three unions said:

"The unions are astounded to hear that the local government employers, who met on 21 January, still have not made the local government workforce a pay offer."

"The unions were expecting that one would be made in response to the pay claim submitted back in July."

"The pay talks have already been delayed due to the general election. While we welcome the employers' commitment to meet in early February, the extra delay of a couple of weeks is unnecessary and unhelpful."

"The joint union message to employers is simple. We submitted our joint union pay claim well in advance of the pay timeline and don't understand why they can't make an offer now instead of further delaying pay talks."

"We urge them to make an opening offer, get around the table and start pay negotiations immediately."

"In the meantime, the three unions representing local government workers have written to the Chancellor setting out why it's essential the Treasury fully funds a substantial pay rise for the more than one million local government workers across England, Wales and Northern Ireland."

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L to R: GMB Organisers Katherine Mitchell and Paul Wade pictured with Theresa Humphreys

GMB REP THERESA TELLS US HOW IT IS

“Being a GMB rep in my workplace gives me great satisfaction” says Theresa. “I started out with just two members and after a lot of recruitment and hard work within my directorate at Leeds City Council, most of the team has now joined. As an active GMB rep, it is hard work but very rewarding when staff are able to voice how they feel and get the outcome they want.

In my role as GMB rep I deal with a whole range of issues from workplace disputes, ill health retirement, occupational health meetings to sorting out health and safety matters with management. We regularly hold recruitment events to promote GMB to the workforce and at one such event I was lucky enough to sign up a customer after a discussion with him in the Jobshop where I work. He later went on to secure employment working for Richard Burgon MP in Westminster and took his GMB membership with him.

It was also great to be able to present the winner of the ‘Six Book Challenge’ with a kindle on behalf of my GMB branch; the winner was a member of staff from Merrion House who won a short story competition.

Being a GMB rep can be pretty hectic and combining it with my Union Learning Representative role means there is never a dull moment but it is so rewarding being part of a union that looks after its members to get the best outcome at a time when they are at their most vulnerable.

So my advice to any GMB member out there who is thinking about taking on the role... **just do it!**



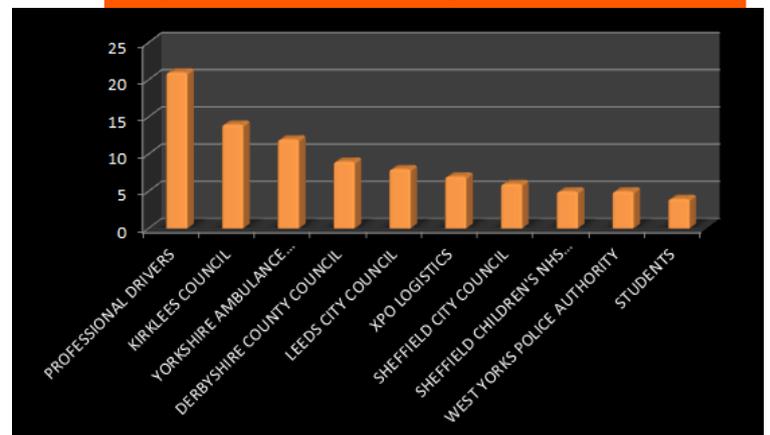
SUPPORT FOR GMB MEMBERS AT LIBERTY SPECIALITY STEELS

Following the announcement on 9 January by Liberty Speciality Steels that 350 jobs are to go in South Yorkshire and Wales, we are relieved to report that there is minimum impact to GMB members' jobs.

GMB rep Ian Kemp and the on-site team are in place to assist any members who are at risk and will work with the company to re-deploy into alternative roles. If any member who is not at risk and wants to be considered for redundancy, they will cross-matched with other GMB members who are at risk.

The onsite multi-union committee has also negotiated a 2% increase in wages from February 1, followed by a further 2% increase on April 1, which will go to a members' vote.

Top 10 Membership Growth Chart



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TAKING TIME TO REFLECT

“The refuse dispute in Leeds demonstrated the true strength of solidarity amongst the workers.”

On the 7 September 2009, 500 courageous men and women took their first steps towards what was to become a bitter and long drawn out dispute over pay, as they set off on an 11 week-long strike which was to become the largest strike in GMB's history.

GMB members working for Leeds City Council in the Refuse, Waste and Street Cleansing Service, joined with members from Unison in a show of solidarity against the Tory & Lib-Dem administration when they threatened to privatise the service and cut wages by up to £5,000, under the auspices of implementing equal pay legislation.

GMB and Unison members stood side by side at the daily picket lines during the strike; the people of Leeds came out in their droves to support the striking workers which was a massive boost to morale at a time when many were suffering severe hardship because of their plight.

Seven weeks into the strike a secret ballot was held following an offer from Leeds City Council, which was emphatically rejected by 92% of the workforce. The strike finally ended on the 24 November 2009, following intense negotiations between the trade unions and the then leaders of Leeds City Council resulting in the threat of savage pay cuts and privatisation being removed.

This strike was an empowering display of trade union solidarity and a great victory for all those members who proved that the resolve of the workforce could not be broken. The victory was further enhanced because Leeds City Council was brought back under the control of the Labour group.

Desiree Wilburn, GMB senior organiser, said: **“The refuse dispute in Leeds demonstrated the true strength of solidarity amongst the workers and it will be an experience that I will never forget. To see striking workers day after day coming together to support each other on the picket line was heartfelt. I know many workers were struggling financially but their resolve and determination to get the right outcome was never out of their sight.”**

REFUSE TO BE BEAT



Workers march back to work in victory



Keeping warm on one of the many picket lines across Leeds



Desiree Wilburn and Elvis providing some picket line entertainment

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Compo win of £750k for injured GMB member

GMB & UNIONLINE ALWAYS ON YOUR SIDE

Unionline was established by GMB to provide a broad range of legal services to members. Their aim is to provide the first line of support to members for any legal need, especially personal injury.

So when a GMB member approached Unionline for support following a workplace accident they didn't hesitate in taking up the case.

The member was injured whilst working as a healthcare assistant at Doncaster Royal Infirmary. As a result of slipping on a wet floor the member sustained what was initially believed to be a fractured wrist. Unfortunately, they did not recover well and went on to have multiple surgeries which in turn led to Chronic Post-Surgical Pain Syndrome.

The member was unable to continue working and was retired on the grounds of ill health in September 2016.

Unionline obtained initial reports which suggested that the accident had simply accelerated the onset of symptoms from pre-existing degenerative change.

However, a second opinion was sought and this was supportive of the member's claim. So on that basis the solicitor went on to obtain reports from a psychologist, a pain management specialist and an occupational therapist.

The case was due for trial in February 2020 but the solicitor arranged a settlement meeting and after negotiation the case settled for damages in the sum of £750,000.00.

UNIONLINE

YOUR TRADE UNION LAW FIRM

0300 333 0303

www.unionline.co.uk

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ROTHERHAM ROAD-SHOW RECRUITS

GMB R62 branch, who represent members at Rotherham Council and in the private sector, held a road-show and drop-in session at Riverside House in January. Amanda Horseman, GMB branch secretary, along with the local GMB reps' team were on hand to offer advice, support and sign people up to GMB.

It was a fantastic event with members visiting the GMB stall throughout the day to have a chat, seek advice and take advantage of the winter survival kits on offer.

It's clear to see why this branch is on the up with the quality of activists they have. The team did an excellent job of raising the GMB profile within Rotherham Council, resulting in new members signing up.

Paul Wade, GMB's Membership Development Officer, joined the team for the event. He said: **"It just goes to show, getting out there and being seen is a great way to meet existing GMB members and spread the word of what our union is doing. Well done all for a fantastic day of activity from your branch."**



L to R Ricky Tomlinson, Amanda Burley & Mary Turner

PROFILE OF A GMB REPRESENTATIVE

Hello, I'm Amanda Burley, I live and work in Leeds and I'm a member of the Leeds Civic branch. I'm currently engaged to be married to Wayne and have two grown up daughters from a former marriage and one granddaughter aged 5. My eldest daughter is a school teacher and my youngest a banker.

I currently hold many positions with GMB, including Regional Council and Regional Executive Committee (REC) member, secretary to the Regional Union Learning Committee, I sit on the Branch Committee and I'm a health & safety rep and shop steward. I have also recently been elected to the Central Executive Council (CEC) and I'm a member of the CEC Political Sub Committee. I feel truly honoured to have been elected by the membership to the CEC and the REC and will ensure I have been a worthy vote for them within the next four years. I have also attended GMB Congress seven times and been a delegate to the Trade Union Congress twice.

It was in February 1998 when I first became involved with GMB. I worked in the Home Help Sector of Leeds City Council and whilst we were striking over equal pay, two members nominated me to become a GMB rep. Neil Cole, who is now a GMB Organiser, got me enrolled on many training courses and really encouraged me to get involved with the branch. With the excellent training I have received through GMB, I have achieved two diplomas in Health & Safety and Employment Law. This has given me the confidence to speak up and represent our members.

Going forward, I would like to see the GMB continue to fight for workers' rights and vigorously campaign to return to a Labour government. On a personal level, I want to progress within GMB and continue to assist members fighting for equality and fairness for all. One very memorable moment for me is when I won the Health and Safety Silver Award at Congress 2014; the late National President, Mary Turner and Ricky Tomlinson presented me with it, which was a real honour.

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L to R Cllr Mark Jones, Cllr Terry Fox, Leonie Wallace GMB Equalities Officer SCC, Cllr George Lindars-Hammond & Cllr Bob Johnson

INTRODUCING PAID CARERS' LEAVE FOR COUNCIL WORKERS

Well done to the GMB team in Sheffield who have recently negotiated paid carers' leave for employees at Sheffield City Council. Discussions began as part of the council's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion action plan and have now finally become policy.

In a bid to combat low morale and to support those workers with caring responsibilities, the council, through negotiations with the trade unions, has committed to offering paid carers' leave, which would be consistent with the organisation's wellbeing commitment to employees and more in line with good public sector practice. Paid carers' leave will have a positive impact on the work-life balance, wellbeing and sickness of those who have the added responsibility of a caring role, which for many can be demanding, especially when not recognised or acknowledged by their employer.

Lee Parkinson, GMB Organiser, said: **"This is fantastic news for so many of our members who as well as having to go to work have the additional responsibility of taking care of a family member or dependent."**

Latest Inflation: December 2019

RPI: 2.2% (unchanged on November)
CPI: 1.3% (down from 1.5% in November)

 GMB Yorkshire and North Derbyshire Region

 @GMBCampaigns

TUC HEARTUNIONS WEEK

The TUC's Heartunions week will be taking place from 10 to 16 February 2020. It's a chance to tell the story about why unions are vital for everyone at work, and encourage people who aren't yet in a union to join.



It's a great opportunity for reps and activists to publicise what they've been doing and make the case for union membership. The campaigning theme for Heartunions is stamping out sexual harassment at work.

Look out for more details about how you and your workmates can take action on sexual harassment, and use the campaign to encourage non-members to get involved.

TEAM SPIRIT

Shaw Lane Football Club under 11's team in Barnsley can be seen proudly wearing their new kit which has been sponsored by a local GMB branch. The team, which is run by volunteers, reached out to local businesses for support and desperately needed funds. GMB stepped in and thanks to the kind support of Barnsley GMB Branch and branch secretary, Ann Gallagher, the team now have a brand new kit for which they, the parents and managers are truly grateful.



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