



the ACTIVIST

GMB News From Around The Region

Issue 119: November 2021

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GMB EQUAL PAY CAMPAIGN IN ASDA: DEMO 29/11

Thousands of GMB members are currently suing Asda for equal pay. Asda retail workers are being robbed between £1.50 and £3 for every hour of work they do because they are paid differently to the men who work in Asda distribution depots.

GMB members rightly believe that women in the stores who do work of 'equal value' to men in distribution should be paid the same. Sadly, women have died waiting for Asda to do the right thing and pay them equally.

On Monday 29 November, Asda's women workers will be in court to explain to a judge exactly how and why the work they do in the stores is work of 'equal value' to the work done in the distribution centres.

To mark the day, we have organised demonstrations in solidarity with our members outside stores, in a nationally co-ordinated campaign day to raise awareness and highlight the ongoing claims.

The stores are, Doncaster, Barnsley, Wakefield and Huddersfield, starting at:



- 9.30am - Doncaster, Gliwice Way, Bawtry Road, Doncaster DN4 5NW
- 11.30am - Barnsley, Old Mill Lane, Barnsley S71 1LN
- 1.30pm - Wakefield, Asdale Road, Wakefield WF2 7EQ, and finishing at,
- 3.30pm - Huddersfield, Longhill Road - Off Bradford Road, Huddersfield HD2 2LQ

GMB Organiser, Tristan Chard, said: "Asda's policy on pay is sexist. They think that women come to work for a 'secondary income' and that men working in distribution are the 'breadwinners'. We hope you can join us at one of the venues and support Asda workers in their ongoing struggle for pay justice."

Now is the time for pay justice for women workers!

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GMB member and refuse worker, Melanie Dinsdale, gets behind the campaign for women's safety in Leeds

STRIKE ACTION BACK ON FOR SHEFFIELD REFUSE WORKERS

Striking refuse workers will kick-start their industrial action with a march and rally at Sheffield Town Hall on Monday 8 November 2021, in protest over pay.

GMB Union say the strike action by refuse workers at Veolia in Sheffield was suspended last week to allow GMB members to vote on a new pay offer put forward by the company. But that offer has been overwhelmingly rejected by GMB members and the strike will go ahead.

The refuse workers voted for industrial action in anger at a below inflation pay offer from Veolia, amounting to a real-terms pay cut, and other attacks to terms and conditions.

The action, which could affect more than 200,000 homes, will now take place on Monday 8 November from 6:30am and striking workers will march from the Lumley Street depot to Sheffield Town Hall to hold a rally at 9am.



Lee Parkinson, GMB Organiser, said: "GMB members have gone above and beyond over the last 18 months to serve the people of Sheffield, whilst putting their own health and safety at risk.

"All they are asking for is some acknowledgement of the effort they have put in, by way of a decent pay rise that at least keeps pace with the cost of living, and not to the detriment of other terms and conditions.

"They have been left with no choice but to take this action."

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL GET SWITCHED ON TO WOMEN'S SAFETY

Leeds City Council is supporting a Women Friendly Leeds 'Switch on to Women's Safety' campaign and have placed giant posters on their refuse wagons to show solidarity with women across the city. They want to send a clear message to men who continue to be abusive and sexist towards women that it needs to stop.

They will also be taking part in the annual national White Ribbon campaign to end male violence against women by engaging with men and boys to make a stand against violence.

Stacey Booth, GMB Organiser, said: "Badging up refuse wagons is a great idea and we're only too pleased to get behind this campaign. We support the council in raising awareness and making sure that women in the city feel safe.

"No woman should be subjected to physical or mental abuse in their daily lives by men, whether that be at home, work or in public. It must stop now."

Pictured are mother and daughter team Melanie Dinsdale and Gemma who have given the campaign the big thumbs up.

Melanie's claim to fame is that she was one of the first women refuse collectors in Leeds, and Gemma has followed in her footsteps.



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REGIONAL COUNCIL MEET ONLINE

It was another full house for the virtual October sitting of Regional Council - the overseeing body of the union that meets twice a year. Before union business got into full swing, delegates paused proceedings so they could hold a minute's silence in memory of Patrick Harvey from Chesterfield No 1 Branch, who sadly passed away recently.

Regional Secretary, Neil Derrick and Regional President, Cath Pinder, opened the session and took delegates through a packed agenda, which covered union growth and finances, departmental reports, an overview of Lifelong Learning and team reports from Senior Organisers, Pete Davies and Desiree Wilburn. The region's new Political Officer, Craig Dawson, addressed Regional Council and provided some useful facts and figures on the political landscape in his presentation (available on request).

Elections also took place for delegates to sit on the appeals' panel (Paul O'Brien from Doncaster Central Branch was elected) and for a regional auditor (Rob Whitehead from Rowntree & Associated Branch was elected).

A financial proposal for a regional Growth Fund was put to the delegation, which focused on the voluntary investment of branch funds into a central pot to attract a better rate of interest. Following the presentation made by Neil Derrick, Regional Council endorsed the proposal.

In the Regional Secretary's report, Neil Derrick outlined the importance of getting back to the principles of GMB@Work

and kick-starting the rebuild of the union by going into workplaces, having active campaigns and building our density of membership where we have organisation.

Sadly, this will be Neil Derrick's last Regional Council as he announced at the meeting that he intends to retire next April. **He said:** "It has been an absolute privilege to work for the union for the last 42 years and be part of this great region."

Cath Pinder paid tribute to Neil, saying: "He has been a tremendous support and she was personally gutted Neil was retiring."



POSITIVE CHANGE FORUM

Regional Council also endorsed the recommendation that a Positive Change Forum be set up in the region. The Forum will be an important part of our effort to ensure that the work of the Taskforce nationally is shared fully, adopted, and implemented across the region.

[Follow this link for further details about the Positive Change Forum](#)

Cath Pinder, Regional President, along with Lou Foster-Wilson, Regional Equality Officer, will take the lead on setting up the Forum. Further details will be published in The Activist.

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REGIONAL EQUALITY FORUM: FORMAL NOMINATIONS

Our Regional Equality Forum has been going from strength to strength and leading on some fantastic campaigns recently. Our regional equality activists have achieved this working with our officers, in particular Lou Foster-Wilson as the Regional Equality Officer and Neil Cole, Organiser, by taking an inclusive approach to the Regional Equality Forum and allowing all those interested in equality within the region to attend meetings and participate in activities.

This open and inclusive approach will continue. However, to comply with Congress policy and facilitate formal elections onto strands on Regional Council and other democratic bodies, we need to formalise the composition of the Regional Equality Forum, as only those members of the Regional Equality Forum in the appropriate strands who have been nominated to the Regional Equality Forum by their branches will be able to seek nomination for election to Regional Council and the Central Executive Council in the Reserved Seats.

In order to formally constitute our Regional Equality Forum and to facilitate the elections to Regional Council which are imminent, we are inviting branches to nominate one member who self identifies as a member of each of the following equality strands as the representative on the Regional Equality Forum:

- ◆ Women
- ◆ BAME
- ◆ Young Members (under 30)
- ◆ Disabled Members
- ◆ LGBT+

Please note that the branch nomination will be invited and should be prepared to participate in the work of the Regional Equality Forum, to ensure that its activities go from strength to strength.

If you are interested in being nominated, please contact your branch secretary.

Nominations need to be submitted to Lou Foster-Wilson, Regional Equality Officer by **Tuesday, 30 November 2021.**



GMB ACTIVISTS NEGOTIATE NEW DEAL FOR LEEDS CITY COUNCIL WORKERS

Well done to Claire Ryan, Phil Charlton and Sally Ryan, GMB activists in Leeds City Council, who have worked in partnership with other unions and the council to develop a new policy for anyone considering fostering a child, which will provide paid leave for both parents.

Leeds City Council workers are now entitled to up to 9 days additional paid annual leave to help with the process of becoming a foster carer, settling in a new child and attending fostering support groups or meetings. The policy change has resulted in the council being named a Foster Friendly Employer by the UK's leading fostering charity, The Fostering Network.

Claire Ryan, GMB Convenor, said:

"We worked in partnership with Leeds City Council Corporate HR policy team and our fellow union colleagues to build a robust and meaningful policy that benefits our members and all Leeds City Council employees.



"We brought the experiences of our members to the working group, and this helped to develop such a supportive policy for staff. It was a pleasure to work alongside Leeds City Council to create something so meaningful."

Foster4Leeds is appealing to anyone who is considering becoming a foster carer to please get in touch at www.foster4leeds.co.uk. In Leeds there is currently a shortage of foster carers for children aged 11+, sibling groups and disabled children.

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GMB WELCOMES NEW REP AT HERMES

Pictured are Sue Wood, Senior Organiser and Darran Travis, Organiser, with Nathan Bell (centre) at a meeting in GMB's regional office in Wakefield.

Nathan has just been appointed as the new regional and national GMB Representative for Hermes.

Sue Wood said: "It's great to have Nathan on board as a GMB Rep and I know he will be an asset to the GMB team.

"I look forward to working with him to maximise our membership in Hermes over the coming weeks and months."



SIGN UP A FRIEND TO GMB

GMB is the trade union for everyone. Our members work in public services, for private companies, in full and part-time jobs. We're on the side of working people. We exist to get a better deal for our members and to support them when they need our help.

There are hundreds of thousands of workers who still need our help and with your support we can reach out to those workers. It can be anything from requesting a GMB application form for a friend or colleague, to providing us with information about an unorganised workplace near you that would benefit from GMB support. Please take a moment to complete our short survey.

[Click here for survey](#)

TUC: UNIONS TELL MPS TO WEAR MASKS AMID RISING COVID CASES

MPs and peers have been told to wear face masks in parliament following a rise in Covid cases in the building. The move comes after repeated criticism from unions, who have said a refusal by many MPs to wear masks was putting parliamentary workers at risk. This week, Commons Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle urged MPs to follow the parliamentary authorities' guidance, saying they should 'pull together' to stop the spread of infections. He added that the measures would be reviewed in two weeks' time. Most opposition MPs have opted to wear a mask, but many Conservatives have not.

Face coverings became mandatory for staff employed by the House of Commons, unless they have a legitimate exemption - but it was left up to individual MPs to decide whether to cover their faces or not. Last month, Commons leader Jacob Rees-Mogg said Conservative MPs did not need to wear masks because they knew each other well, and this meant they were complying with Government guidance. Pictures of Mr Johnson not wearing a mask at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow have prompted criticism of his behaviour on social media. The Speaker said the parliamentary authorities had decided to take further action "to ensure case numbers do not continue to rise" and urged members not to "undermine the officials of the House."



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