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## SHEFFIELD REFUSE WORKERS' STRIKE SUSPENDED AS NEW PAY OFFER TABLED BY COMPANY: OVERWHELMING SUPPORT ON FIRST DAY OF DISPUTE

GMB Union will suspend the planned industrial action by refuse workers at Veolia in Sheffield that was set to take place on 15 November - with indefinite strike action from 22 November - so it can ballot members on a new pay deal put forward by the company yesterday.

Members will vote on whether they want to accept a two-year deal which will see a 3% increase for year one, with a one-off payment of £250 and a further 3.5% for year two.

GMB members had already undertaken their first half-day of industrial action on the 8 November, and voted to escalate industrial action in response to Veolia management busting the bank to bring in agency staff over the weekend to undermine their current intermittent strike action.

More than 200,000 homes in Sheffield would have been affected by the industrial action should it have gone ahead.

**Lee Parkinson, GMB Organiser, said:** "I will be meeting with GMB members at Veolia on Monday to put the offer to them and once we know the outcome of the ballot, I will reconvene a meeting with the company. **So watch this space for now.**"



**Support the Strike**

**Join a picket**

**Lobby**

**Donate**

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## COMPULSORY NHS VACCINE WILL ADD TO 'CRUSHING' STAFF CRISIS

GMB says the compulsory health worker vaccine is a heavy handed approach that risks exacerbating the already 'crushing' staff crisis.

**Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer, said:** "GMB is opposed to legally enforced medical procedures as a condition of employment - it's a heavy-handed, rudimentary approach from the Secretary of State.

"More holistic approaches should be explored and implemented - understanding and addressing the reasons for vaccine hesitancy amongst a relatively small portion of the health and social care workforce.

"GMB has proactively promoted the vaccine - the Government should look at what has worked so far and where more can be done. A large survey of GMB members across social care, ambulance and the NHS showed almost 60% do not support making the vaccine compulsory, with up to 12% of workers in some ambulance trusts unvaccinated.

"Bulldozing this vaccine will exacerbate the already crushing staff crisis we face across the NHS and ambulance services. Both are operating under extreme pressures, after a decade of austerity and cuts, with an exhausted and demoralised workforce who are fearful of what is to come as we head through winter.

"Staff are already leaving their employment and this will certainly force many more to go, as we are currently witnessing in adult residential social care as a result of this legislative change to their employment."

## GMB ROLL OUT THE BALLOT

Our NHS team have been out in force this week, promoting the pay ballot around the region.



They also took the opportunity whilst visiting Doncaster Royal Infirmary to push the contractors' pay issue to those employed by Sodexo at the Trust. They only get minimum wage, no weekend enhancements and less holiday and sick pay than their NHS colleagues.

## AMBULANCE TRUSTS FORCED TO USE UNQUALIFIED STAFF AS GOVERNMENT IGNORES CRISIS WARNINGS

Last month the union wrote to Secretary of State, Sajid Javid and Jeremy Hunt MP, Chair of the Health Select Committee, raising 'serious concerns regarding the untenable workplace pressures that our members are facing in the ambulance service'. GMB has received no reply.

Reports this week suggest lives are at risk because average waits for emergency callouts for problems such as heart attacks and strokes are taking more than twice as long as they should.

GMB members in ambulance crews have raised concerns about working with unqualified staff - but have been told they have to put up with it. Meanwhile, ambulance workers describe 'the worst service pressures they have ever experienced - worse than any previous winter'.

GMB ambulance workers warned the Government this winter looked likely to be the worst crisis the NHS has faced. With grim predictability, Ministers completely ignored the voices of those on the front line.

Now the chickens are coming home to roost - lives are at risk due to waiting times, staff are at breaking point and trusts are so desperate they are bringing in unqualified workers, and it's only November, so unless rapid and serious action is taken, the winter crisis could become a catastrophe.

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## GMB EDUCATION PROGRAMME 2022

We're pleased to be able to provide you with the Education Programme for 2022, and hope that many of you will decide to take the opportunity to enrol on a course.

Your position as a GMB representative is vital to the organisation and at GMB we firmly believe that to be able to properly carry out your role, education and training is of great value.

Whether you have been a post holder for a few months or a few years, I would encourage you to take a look at the programme and see what courses may be of interest to you. Follow the link below for the programme and complete the online application form if you'd like to take your training a step further.

[Education Programme Application Form](#)

Alternatively, you can contact the education department for a copy of the programme. If you have any queries in regard to training or you would like to give us your feedback we would be happy to hear from you, please feel free to ring on:

**0345 337 7777 or drop us an email.**

**Colin Kirkham & Vicky Austin**

Colin.kirkham@gmb.org.uk Victoria.austin@gmb.org.uk



## GDP: GROWTH WILL BE STUCK IN SLOW LANE WITHOUT PLAN TO GET REAL WAGES RISING

The latest GDP figures published on Thursday, show quarterly GDP growth slowing from 5.5% in Q2 to 1.3% in Q3 and declines for manufacturing and construction.

TUC General Secretary **Frances O'Grady** said: "The slowdown is worrying for workers who are already expecting real wages to fall.

"The Chancellor's budget had no plan to get pay rising, with workers facing rising prices, higher taxes and lower social security. Without strong pay growth, demand will be weak and the economy will get stuck in the slow lane again.

"The Government must go back to the drawing board and come up with a plan to get real wages rising across the economy."

## CALLING ALL GMB REPRESENTATIVES

We have spaces left on the courses below. Anyone interested should contact Vicky Austin either by telephone on **01924 887283** or by email at [victoria.austin@gmb.org.uk](mailto:victoria.austin@gmb.org.uk)

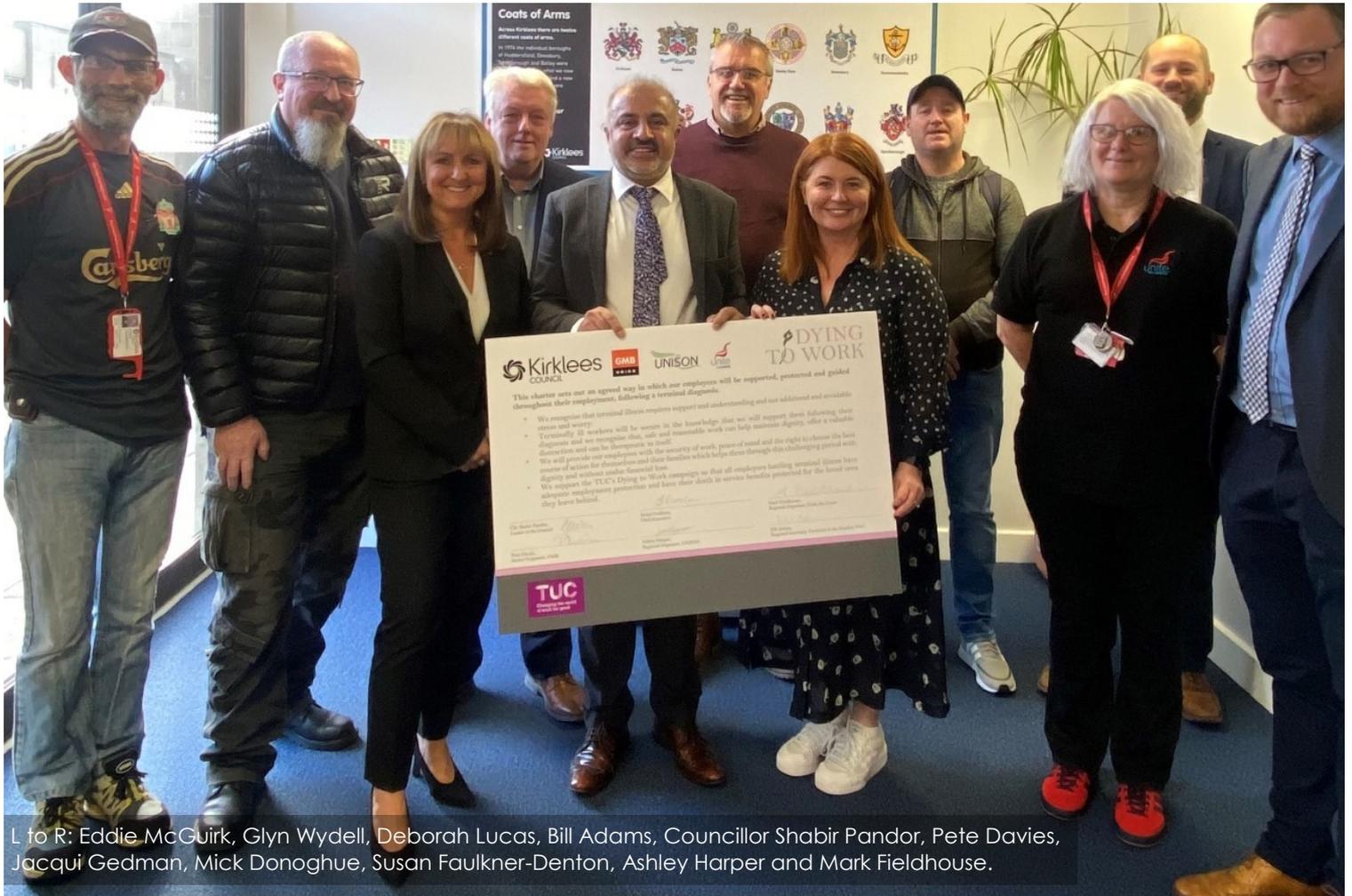
- **Mental Health Awareness**  
3 Days 1/2/3 December 2021
- **Identifying Employment Tribunal Claims**  
17 December 2021

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L to R: Eddie McQuirk, Glyn Wydell, Deborah Lucas, Bill Adams, Councillor Shabir Pandor, Pete Davies, Jacqui Gedman, Mick Donoghue, Susan Faulkner-Denton, Ashley Harper and Mark Fieldhouse.

## KIRKLEES COUNCIL SIGN UP TO THE TUC'S DYING TO WORK CHARTER

**We're pleased to announce that through the commitment and tenacity of our team of convenors and reps over in Kirklees, the council has now become a signatory to the Dying To Work Charter.**

The Charter is part of the TUC's Dying to Work Campaign, which wants to see terminal illness recognised as a protected characteristic so that an employee with a terminal illness can enjoy a protected period and not be dismissed as a result of their condition - and any death in service benefit protected for the loved ones they leave behind.

The campaign was taken forward by the TUC because of the case of GMB member Jacci Woodcock who was forced out of her job by her employer after developing terminal breast cancer.

**GMB Senior Organiser, Pete Davies, said:**

"Your job should be the last thing on your mind if faced with having to deal with the news of a terminal illness and we would expect all GMB members to be treated with fairness and dignity in these situations.

"By signing this Charter, Kirklees Council has committed to do just that.

"I would like to pay tribute to Andrew Aldwinkle and the team of GMB convenors and reps at Kirklees Council who have worked long and hard to get this important agreement across the line."

**The Dying to Work Campaign has been growing in momentum and more than one million workers across the UK will be covered by the Charter. For further details visit:**

[Dying to Work Campaign](#)

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## REGIONAL EQUALITY FORUM STATEMENT: YORKSHIRE CRICKET CLUB

Yorkshire & North Derbyshire GMB Regional Equality Forum were shocked and appalled by allegations of racism at Yorkshire County Cricket Club and the attempts by the club to play it down.

Whether it's in a shop, on the factory floor or cricket pitch, no one should be subjected to racist abuse at their workplace. Racist slurs are not "banter" and should never be tolerated.

The Forum stands in solidarity with all those suffering racist abuse. Whilst accepting that the Chair and other members of the club's board may not have been at the club at the time of the alleged incidents, we believe they should've done more to address the issue.

We hope that the, albeit belated, resignation of the Chair and other board members leads to changes for the better at the club. The fact that sponsors pulled out, that upcoming international fixtures were taken off the club and, the way the cricketing world and public have condemned the racist abuse, shows that failing to act on racism comes with consequences.

Diversity, inclusion and opposing racism should be a matter of course for any organisation. The Forum expects all organisations to take the issue of racism and, in fact, any discrimination seriously and to address it whenever it arises. Supporting diversity and inclusion and opposing all forms of discrimination is not a passing fad. It is, and must always be, the right thing to do.

The appointment of Lord Kamelsh Patel of Bradford as Chair brings the chance of a new start for Yorkshire County Cricket Club. We hope that the club makes positive moves to rid the club of any trace of racism and works with others throughout the county to oppose racism in the wider community.

With its tradition for "fair play", cricket is part and parcel of the culture of the country, especially in Yorkshire. We believe in fair play for all, irrespective of their background and culture. The Forum looks forward to a multi-cultural Yorkshire team, supported by a multi-cultural fanbase winning the County Championship. The Forum looks forward to an end to racism in sport, in the workplace and in the community.



Paul pictured with Helen from Mind

## TOYTROPOLIS

Well done to GMB activist Paul Ivison from ASDA in Harrogate. He has managed to raise



£137 for the charity Mind from donations received by visitors to his mental health themed garden over the summer months.

You may recall seeing a feature in *The Activist* about Paul and how he likes to decorate his garden with different themes to raise money for charity. Well, he has done it again and this time he has created a 'Toytropolis' which has over 200 toys that include Scooby-Doo, Batman and Peppa Pig. He hopes to raise £500 for North Yorkshire Horizons, which is a drug and alcohol addiction service that he previously worked for. **Good luck Paul!**

## TUC POLL: TWO IN FIVE DISABLED WORKERS PUSHED INTO HARDSHIP DURING PANDEMIC

Two in five (40 per cent) disabled workers have been pushed into financial hardship over the last year, according to new TUC polling published this week. The polling, carried out for the union body by BritainThinks, shows how disabled workers' living standards have been "hit hardest" by Covid-19.



And leading disability charity Leonard Cheshire is adding its voice to the TUC's, publishing new research which shows the continuing stigma against disabled workers, and calling for action to break down barriers to employment for disabled people. [Read full article here](#)

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