

# the ACTIVIST



GMB News From Around The Region

Issue 156: October 2022

## In this issue...

- West Yorkshire Police help desks closure
- North East Ambulance Service faces industrial action
- Urgent online rally for DSA airport
- Changes to rugby fixtures welcome news
- DHL ballot kicks-off
- Asda worst paying of 'big four'
- Sweet treat for CWU picket line
- Big meet for newly formed branch

## WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE HELP DESKS CLOSURE WILL SEE JOBS AXED AND PUBLIC PUT AT RISK

**Planned cost saving exercise will leave the public increasingly vulnerable and loyal workers left in fear for their future says GMB Union**

GMB, the union for police support staff, has expressed concerns over proposals by West Yorkshire Police to close a number of police station help desks across the region – with any stations that remain open operating on reduced hours.

Police support staff who run the help desks are set to lose up to £2,300 in wages if the plan goes ahead. Help desks provide an important face to face service to the public, as well as being a safe-haven for victims of crime or for the vulnerable escaping danger. GMB has been fighting these cuts for over 18 months and is calling on West Yorkshire Police to rethink this short-sighted move, which will cause severe financial hardship to many of its employees as the cost-of-living crisis deepens.

West Yorkshire residents needing to attend a police station are likely to find the doors locked if these proposals are implemented, and instead will be directed to a yellow telephone near to the entrance where they can be put through to a contact centre. Many of these phones are reported broken which does not generate confidence in the service members of the public are likely to be left with.

**A GMB member who wished to remain anonymous said:** "Staff are exhausted as colleagues leave, unable to face the very real potential of cuts to pay, but the demand continues to grow. Sickness levels are at the highest they have ever been. The pressure on us is immense."

**Rachel Dix, GMB Organiser, said:** "To consider removing or reducing this important access to safety and support is criminal in itself. The steady erosion of this vital service, even before consultation to bring about changes commenced, is also very wrong. Public confidence in the police will only grow when their priorities focus on supporting those most at risk. Closing doors in this fashion is a backward step. Not just for the public but the professional workforce who currently support them.

"We will continue to work with West Yorkshire Police in the hope that cuts to vital services and to our members living standards can be avoided. In the event that there is no significant change of direction, we will have no alternative but to ballot our members as to the next steps."



## THE ACTIVIST

GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN

0345 337 7777 [www.gmbneyh.org.uk](http://www.gmbneyh.org.uk)

# THE ACTIVIST



## NORTH EAST AMBULANCE SERVICE FACES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**Ambulance workers should not be worrying about having to choose between eating or heating this winter, says GMB Union.**

North East Ambulance Service faces a strike vote as GMB Union launches a formal industrial action ballot. Ballot dates will be announced in the coming days. The vote comes following a consultative ballot which saw almost 90 per cent of NEAS members vote in favour of a walk out.

GMB has almost 750 NEAS Paramedics and ambulance workers, who are angry over the Government's imposed 4 per cent pay award, which leaves them facing yet another massive real terms pay cut.

GMB has also announced a formal strike ballot among almost 1,500 members at Yorkshire Ambulance Service.

**Michael Hunt, GMB Organiser, said:** "Ambulance workers should not be worrying about having to choose between eating or heating this winter whilst providing a crucial public service across our communities.

"North East Ambulance Service is in disarray; it can only keep going thanks to the good will of the overworked and undervalued crews. But good will only goes so far.

"GMB members have a clear message for the Government and the employer: 'we are worth more, we deserve more, we are willing to make a stand and we want a ballot for strike action'. GMB Union will stand shoulder to shoulder with our members and fight for the above inflation pay rise that our NHS workers deserve."



## SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT PASSES BUCK FOR DONCASTER SHEFFIELD AIRPORT

**GMB leaders and South Yorkshire politicians hold urgent online rally as MP Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Secretary of State for Transport, ignores joint letter asking for urgent assistance to save Doncaster Sheffield Airport, says GMB Union.**

Ms Trevelyan has instead made a public statement saying, 'it is down to the council'.

GMB Union is now calling on Prime Minister, Liz Truss, to follow through on her vow to save Doncaster Sheffield Airport following her statement that 'she wanted to make sure the airport survives'.

**GMB Organiser, Sarah Barnes, said:** "The airport's owners, Peel Group, have confirmed they will be winding down operations at the end of the month, despite the offer of public cash to keep it open until a buyer is found.

"We're calling on Liz Truss and her Secretary of State for Transport to take action, and meet with us and Peel Group as a matter of urgency. This closure is senseless, especially when Peel Group has been thrown a lifeline.

"Hundreds of jobs are at stake here, and the PM has the power to stop this - she must keep her word – and not make another U-turn."



# THE ACTIVIST



## RUGBY LEAGUE FIXTURE CHANGES WELCOMED BY PLAYERS' UNION, GMB

**Other sports in the UK should look at how the Rugby Football League, has welcomed the involvement and value that a trade union can bring, says GMB Union**

Changes to the Rugby League fixtures calendar have been welcomed by the players' union, GMB.

Garreth Carvell, former Great Britain international and GMB Rugby League lead, has praised the changes for the 2024 season.

The UK's Rugby Football League, professional clubs and GMB Union have agreed key changes that will see a reduction in the overall number of games, better planning around peak matches throughout the season and a focus on international games.

**Garreth Carvell, GMB lead for Rugby League, said:**

"The pandemic placed huge pressures on the very existence of Rugby League and we have worked hard to overcome those pressures whilst still recognising the need to develop clubs and the sport itself.

"It's vital that we all recognise and improve the way stakeholders influence key developments in the game by listening to the views of the players.

"I am delighted to say that their views - that quality should be the driver rather than quantity - have now been agreed.

"These new proposals are better for players, their safety, career longevity and the game itself."

"The players' voice has been listened to."

**Louise Foster-Wilson, GMB Organiser, said:**

"Other sports in the UK should look at how the RFL has built their relationship with the players and welcomed the involvement and value that a trade union can bring to their consultation framework.

"Players have a seat at the table in Rugby League and a voice."

## THE ACTIVIST

GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN

0345 337 7777 [www.gmbneyh.org.uk](http://www.gmbneyh.org.uk)

# THE ACTIVIST



## DHL PROFITS HIT £5.3 BILLION AS STRUGGLING WORKERS BALLOT FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**Hard-up workers at DHL in Bradford are balloting for industrial action over pay, while DHL profits hit £5.3 billion, says GMB Union.**

Despite months of negotiations DHL are only offering a real terms pay cut. Managers at DHL have told GMB reps that they do not have any money in the coffers to offer a decent pay rise, despite DHL having made £5.3 billion profit so far this year.

98% of GMB members voted to reject the company's most recent offer of 5% plus a £100 lump sum payment.

**GMB Organiser, Andrew Aldwinkle, said:** "GMB members have sent a clear message to DHL, their offer is not enough and it's time for them to pay up."

"Workers create the profit that shareholders take without any consideration. GMB members have been patient in the hope that a deal can be negotiated - but DHL have shown they are only interested in profit."

"For a company making billions of pounds in profit to tell its workforce it has nothing to share with them is a disgrace."

"GMB members at DHL Bradford deliver to Marks and Spencer' stores, and we are now in the peak period running up to Christmas, so any industrial action at this point will have an impact on Christmas deliveries."

"GMB members are angry and feel they are not being listened to - It's time for DHL to pay up."



## ASDA WORST PAYING 'BIG FOUR' SUPERMARKET ONCE AGAIN – BOSSES NEED TO WAKE UP, SAYS GMB UNION



**Other companies try to protect staff from cost-of-living crisis, Asda seems content to hang them out, stand back and watch workers struggle.**

Asda is once again the worst paying of the 'big four' supermarkets after Tesco bumped up wages this week.

Basic pay for Asda retail workers remains at £10.10 per hour. Tesco, Sainsbury's and Aldi have all increased wages recently to help workers cope with the cost-of-living crisis.

Meanwhile, Asda has cancelled a driver premium payment which was meant to last until December, leaving Asda delivery drivers at an industry low.

**Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer, said:** "It should be a source of massive shame for Asda - they are now the worst paying of the big four."

"Only last week Asda refused a meeting with GMB representatives to discuss the important issue of pay."

"While other companies are trying to protect hard-working employees from the cost-of-living crisis, Asda seems happy to sit back while its workers struggle."

"It's time for Asda's new owners to focus on investing in staff, instead of further debt leveraging Asda to expand their empire."

## THE ACTIVIST

GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN

0345 337 7777 [www.gmbneyh.org.uk](http://www.gmbneyh.org.uk)

# THE ACTIVIST



## CWU PICKETLINE: CASTLEFORD

Pictured (top left) is GMB's Darran Travis, delivering a box of Kit Kats to the CWU Rep, Laura, on the picket line in Castleford.

The Kit Kats, made by union members for union members (on this occasion) were gratefully received - along with a much-needed coffee and bacon sandwich brought to the picket line courtesy of local Labour party members.



## ENOUGH IS ENOUGH RALLY: SHEFFIELD

Last Saturday GMB activists from S38 & S40 branches attended the above rally in Sheffield. Also in attendance was the Labour MP for Sheffield Hallam, Olivia Blake, along with local councillors.

**GMB activist, Kevan Hensby, said:** "It was a great day with the coming together of likeminded activists showing solidarity throughout."



**Branch Activists L to R:** Fiona Hill, Colin Palmer, Ray Dowson, Mark Humphries, Les Robinson, Adam Johnson, Cameron Ingliss, Stan Waterson, Mark Churlish, Steven Carroll, Kevin Gill, Steven Page, Graham Parker, Sue Sowerby-Scott, Pauline Milner, Craig Carroll, Peter Kimberley, Grazyna Wilczynska, Matthew Mckie, Paul Clembintson. **Front row:** John Gilmore and Derek Cattell

## BIG MEET FOR NEWLY FORMED DURHAM & TEESSIDE BRANCH

It was a packed house for the newly formed D30 Durham & Teesside Branch when they met recently for a branch meeting. **Branch Secretary, Sue Sowerby-Scott, led the proceedings and was really pleased with the turn out, saying:**

"Our branch meetings are always a huge source of information for the stewards; they get to update branch members about any ongoing issues in their workplaces and share ideas and offer advice and support to one another.

"This meeting, however, was tinged with a certain amount of sadness as two of our long standing activists are retiring at the end of October.

"Derek Cattell, who served as a full-time officer for GMB, was acting Branch Secretary of the branch for several years before the reigns were handed over to me. He is one of the most knowledgeable and competent people I have had the honour to know.

"John Gilmore is also retiring, and although he has only been with the branch for approx. 7 years, his advice, expertise, and proficiency goes without saying.

"I know the branch will be sorry to lose both of these highly esteemed people and I'm sure all connected with the branch will wish them all the very best in their future retirement."

# THE ACTIVIST

GMB - Grove Hall - 60 College Grove Road - Wakefield - WF1 3RN

0345 337 7777 [www.gmbneyh.org.uk](http://www.gmbneyh.org.uk)