

# GMB BRANCH NEWS B44 BEDS COUNTY

2026 - Issue 2



## What's to come ....

20 April to 22 May – NJC Pay  
Ballot open

June 2026 – GMB Congress

6 August 2026 – B44 Branch  
Meeting (1800 via Teams)

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## WELCOME TO THE B44 BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our second B44 branch newsletter of 2026. Another busy time supporting members working in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough employers

Remember you can call us for advice on any employment issue, not just to attend formal meetings. We can often help you nip things in the bud before they go formal.

## In this issue ...

### UPDATE – NJC Pay Claim 2026/27

Are your details up to date to receive your ballot paper?

### Who's Who – Introducing your Branch President

We find out more about your Branch President, Karen.

### Spotlight – Congress 2026

Why is Congress important to our members

### Branch Meetings

When they are, how you can get involved and what's in the news

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*"There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish"*

*(Michelle Obama)*

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## STOP PRESS... NJC LOCAL GOVERNMENT & SCHOOLS PAY CLAIM 2026/27

The 2026/27 Pay offer has now been received. The headlines of the offer are an **increase of 3.3% to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 3 to 43 inclusive** and **an increase of 3.3% on all allowances**. The full & final offer can be viewed [here](#).

The consultative ballot asking members whether they wish to accept or reject the offer of 3.3% will run from **20 April until 12 noon on 22 May**. The NJC are not making a recommendation on this offer and have agreed it is for GMB members to decide whether they wish to accept or reject the offer. It is important you have your say on pay and only members of recognised unions for Local Government & School workers (GMB, UNISON, Unite) can vote on the pay offer.

Please do not waste your vote. If the majority reject the pay offer a further ballot will take place to seek a mandate for strike action.

## ARE YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE?

Please log onto **MyGMB** on our website or email [london.membership@gmb.org.uk](mailto:london.membership@gmb.org.uk) to provide any update to your details – changes to name / address / email / telephone / employer. Its really helpful if you disclose who your employer is as if we become aware of an issue we can contact you.

## WHO'S WHO – BRANCH PRESIDENT, KAREN

**How long have you been a GMB member and what made you want to be a GMB Activist?** I've been a member of GMB for over 20 years. I first joined when my Local Authority (Beds County Council) was formed into a unitary council and some of my work colleagues thought I would be best placed to be their voice when discussions about jobs and locations took place.



**Why did you want to be the GMB Branch President?** I have always taken an active role in the Branch, and the opportunity arose to work alongside our Branch Secretary Trudi Woodward, so I put myself forward at our elections meeting.

**What is your involvement with the GMB beyond the branch?** I sit on Regional Council and from that got nominated to sit on Regional Committee. I have for the past 7 years sat on the Standing Orders Committee (S.O.C) at Congress and for the past 4 years Chaired that committee.

**What do you see as the biggest challenges facing our members in their workplaces right now?**

Budget constraints on independent companies and Local Authorities, Workers Rights being eroded by Central Government

**What areas have you experienced working in?** Private, Public, Transport Distribution and retail

**If you could sum up the GMB in 3 words for any non-members, what would they be?** Support – Understanding – Caring

## QUICK-FIRE QUESTIONS

**Going out or staying in?**

*Staying in*

**Window or aisle seat?**

*Aisle*

**Sunrise or sunset?**

*Sunrise*

**What's your hidden talent?**

*Green fingered*

**Last show you binge-watched?**

*The Good Doctor*

**What's your favourite cheesy joke?**

*I can never remember jokes!*

## SPOTLIGHT... GMB CONGRESS 2026

GMB Congress is the union's supreme decision-making body and meets every June. It sets GMB policy by debating and voting on motions submitted by branches, Regional Committees and Central Executive Council (CEC). Congress also considers CEC Special Reports. Statements and financial proposals.

Congress is also a major opportunity to network, share organising and campaigning ideas, and explore key issues in more depth. Every session is broadcast live on the GMB website so members can watch online.

Branches nominate a delegate and this year Dee Walker is attending on behalf of our branch members. Our Branch President is also attending Congress, as Karen was elected as the Standing Orders Committee Chair for the London Region. This is a very important position as the committee oversees all aspects of Congress business and determines whether each motion submitted to Congress is in order for debate.

Dee & Karen will report back in the next newsletter.

## BRANCH MEETINGS

The branch meets via Teams approx. 4 times a year for an early evening meeting. Members are always welcome to attend and further reminders will be sent out via our social media to let you know what is on the agenda and how to join. The next meeting is taking place on Thursday 6 August at 1800, please email [dee.walker@gmbactivist.org.uk](mailto:dee.walker@gmbactivist.org.uk) for a meeting link or further information – we hope you can join us!

We also run specific branch meetings for individual employers / groups of staff when needed. We are happy to come in person to your workplace too.

## GMB EXTRA – MEMBERS BENEFITS

As well as protecting you at work and getting the best deal for you, GMB uses its size and influence to negotiate and make available a range of membership benefits and services at discounted or preferential rates to benefit you and your family. Please visit the [Members Benefits](#) for all the details.

More than just protection at work

# There's more to your GMB membership than you think

-  **Support when you need it**
  - + Free legal advice
  - + Personal injury support
-  **Money in your pocket**
  - + Credit Union
  - + Totum Discount Card & more everyday savings
-  **Looking ahead**
  - + Free will writing
  - + Learning & qualifications

 Many members don't use everything they're entitled to. Turn over to see what you could be using >

# Make the most of your membership

- Free legal advice**  
Get help with work and personal legal issues
- Learning & development**  
Access courses, qualifications and bursaries
- £5,000 accidental death cover**  
Included in your membership
- Free will writing**  
Set up your will at no extra cost
- Credit Union**  
Start saving and access fair, affordable loans
- Personal injury support**  
Keep 100% of your compensation

**AND MORE**  
Discounts on travel, insurance, family days out and more.

**Why GMB?**  
 GMB is run by members, not for profit. No shareholders taking a cut, just support for you.

Start using your benefits today:  
[gmb.org.uk/extra](http://gmb.org.uk/extra)

