



GMB

GMB@WORK



FIGHT THE CUTS
DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES
JOIN GMB'S CAMPAIGN



www.gmb.org.uk/join

IN DEFENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The Tory-Lib Dem cuts to public services are vindictive and wrong. The Coalition Government is attacking the services it took years of Labour investment to rebuild. This cannot go unchallenged.

GMB is a campaigning union and we must be at the forefront of the fight to defend our public services. There need to be major workplace campaigns mounted across the country to stop the mindless destruction of jobs and services.

Our job is to speak to as many staff affected as possible, tell them GMB thinks these cuts are wrong and unfair and let them know what we plan to do about it where they work.

The proposed cuts are huge. Tory Chancellor George Osborne is planning to cut public spending by £99bn per year by 2015. This is deficit reduction taken to a wholly unnecessary extreme. The economy simply can't cope.

The Tories and Lib Dems need to be reminded that building hospitals and schools didn't cause the deficit, it was the bank crash. Public spending actually kept Britain afloat during the worst downturn since the 1930s. The people who work in the public sector are not the culprits and they don't deserve to take the fall.

We have a fight on our hands, nationally and locally. The budget decisions of every council, NHS trust, etc, are open to scrutiny and challenge. No employer under the illusion that cuts to vital services can be "pain free" should be left undisturbed. Trade unions have an important role to play in exploring alternatives.

GMB's success depends on our organising in the workplace. So this campaign in defence of public services has to involve generating workplace activity and organising non-members into GMB membership.

We do not have to stand alone in this fight. GMB can campaign with service users, community groups and fellow trade unions in every instance where it's in the interests of GMB members to do so.

This booklet is designed to help you organise and campaign against the cuts.

Good luck.

IMPACT OF THE CUTS

Tory Chancellor George Osborne delivered his first Budget in June 2010. He announced plans to cut public spending by £99bn per year by 2015.

This will mean 20-30% cuts in the budgets of most Government departments, as spelled out in the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010.

Among other things, the Tory-Lib Dem Government has announced:


- a 28% cut in Government funding to local authorities between 2011 and 2015, with the deepest cuts coming at the start.
- £18bn cuts to benefits including:
 - a 10% cut to Council Tax Benefit
 - freezes to Child Benefit and Working Tax Credit along with restricted eligibility
 - a cut to the childcare element of Working Tax Credit
 - abolition of the baby and toddler elements of Child Tax Credit
 - restrictions on the Sure Start Maternity Grant
 - a cap on Housing Benefit and a separate cut to Housing Benefit for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants
 - removal of contributory Employment and Support Allowance
- abolition of the Future Jobs Fund which found work for the long-term young employed
- a 16% cut in the police budget
- cancellation of free school meals to 500,000 primary-school children
- a 24% cut in the Ministry of Justice and 18% cut in legal aid
- "efficiency savings" in the NHS worth £20bn
- a 9% cut to the Sure Start early years programme
- abolition of Education Maintenance Allowance
- a hike in employee contributions to public-sector pension schemes of 3 percentage points on average, e.g. from 6% of salary to 9%. A local-government worker on £16,000 could end up paying £480 extra per year or more.

These announcements only cover the period up to 2014-15, by which point the Government expects to have achieved its goal of eliminating the deficit. But Osborne's Budget nevertheless pencils-in more cuts for the following year, 2015-16.

The impact on jobs will be enormous. The Government's own forecasts say that

660,000 public-sector jobs will go. Independent analysts put the figure even higher: the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) estimates 725,000.

Already by September 2010, GMB research found nearly 150,000 public-sector job losses in the pipeline. Since the Comprehensive Spending Review in October



2010, there have been daily reports of council jobs under threat: 6,000 at Lancashire County Council, 1,270 at Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, 1,855 at Warwickshire County Council, 1,500 at Kent County Council, 2,000 at Newcastle City Council, 1,000 at Sefton Borough Council, and so on.

The Government says the private sector will step in to fill the gap. But jobs in the private sector are also at risk. Firms in construction, IT, business services, health, education, defence and other sectors rely heavily on public expenditure on goods and services. A third of all public spending actually flows directly through to the private sector. With cuts beginning to bite, the bankruptcy rate among private suppliers to the public sector is up 50%. PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that 500,000 private-sector jobs could be lost because of the cuts.

In total the CIPD predicts that Osborne's tax and spending plans will cost 1.6 million jobs: 725,000 in the public sector and 850,000 in the private sector. Part of the problem is

that Government austerity will strain household incomes and therefore put a chill on high-street spending.

The cuts are plainly unfair. TUC research calculates that the cuts will hurt the poorest 15 times more than the richest. Thanks to Osborne's axing of public services, the poorest households will lose provision equivalent to 30% of their household income. The richest households will lose only 2%.

Meanwhile part-time and low-paid women are bearing the brunt of the benefit cuts. The charity Family Action has concluded that low-income working families are being "pushed towards poverty" by the Tax Credit cuts and other welfare cuts.

So there is absolutely nothing "progressive" about what the Coalition Government is doing.

The Tories and Lib Dems are taking an almighty gamble with the whole UK economy. It's time to think again.

AUSTERITY CASE STUDIES

Britain in the 1980s.

Thatcher's spending cuts brought a deep recession with rising homelessness and child poverty, children taught in crumbling schools, and soaring hospital waiting lists. The cuts left a legacy of high unemployment in regions like the North and the West Midlands where the current round of Tory-Lib Dem austerity will do the most harm.

Ireland today.

The Irish Government began making swingeing cuts to education and health spending, social-security benefits and public-sector pay in 2009. They claimed that economic growth would pick up—it hasn't. Ireland is now on the brink of a double-dip recession.

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE— AND WE SHOULD SPEAK OUT

The public deficit grew in the aftermath of the Credit Crunch because:

- 1 the banks had to be bailed out, and
- 2 Government tax receipts fell as the economy contracted

The only sure-fire way of closing the deficit is to get Britain growing again. This will stimulate employment, swell the Government coffers, and increase consumer demand.

In fact this has already been happening. The deficit stood at £178 billion at the General Election. By the end of August 2010 and before any public spending cuts had been actioned, it had already reduced by £26bn to £152bn—as a result of the boost to the economy instigated by the previous Labour Government.

We should act now to sustain this recovery, not put it at risk by cutting state support.

There are plenty of progressive measures that could help the Treasury balance the books. We have to ensure that the banks and the very-rich pay a fair share. Every year we could raise:

- £3–4bn from a permanent tax on bankers' bonuses.
- £5bn from a 50% tax rate on incomes over £100,000.
- Another £5bn by an Empty Property Tax. Empty homes are a scandal at a time of housing shortage.
- £15bn by stopping tax reliefs being used to subsidise high earners.
- £20–30bn from a "Robin Hood" Transactions Tax on UK financial institutions. This would apply a tiny levy on the billions of pounds sloshing around daily in foreign-exchange transactions, derivatives trading and share deals.
- £50bn by cracking down on individual and corporate tax avoidance, including the systematic off-shoring of income streams in crucial industrial sectors



And now that they have returned to profit, the banks should meet the long-term cost of the bailouts they received during the financial crisis. The UK paid £66bn to rescue RBS and Lloyds and up to now it hasn't had a penny back.

There are also ways of cutting real waste in public spending. For example £3bn could be saved every year if PFI construction schemes were replaced with conventional public procurement: this would reduce interest charges and stop firms imposing rip-off user fees.

Billions of pounds could be freed up for patient care by scrapping the hideously complicated internal market in the NHS. Instead the Tories are planning to introduce dangerous new forms of privatisation.

The Tories and Lib Dems don't have to slash public spending to plug the deficit. Sustainable growth, together with the kind of tax measures and other actions outlined above, would do the job.

The UK faced a large deficit after the Second World War, but in the next 10 years we still found the money to build the NHS and much of the welfare state.

Tory-Lib Dem slash-and-burn is a political choice, not a fiscal necessity.

CAMPAIGN GUIDE

GMB has always been a campaigning union. The success of any campaign depends first and foremost on organising in the workplace. Our strength in the workplace is the essential foundation for any broader campaigning activity.

Everything you need to know about organising in the workplace and getting people active can be found in the GMB Workplace Organisers Toolkit. The Toolkit outlines the rules of thumb for any GMB@Work campaign:

- **Your campaign must have clear and winnable goals**
- **Your campaign must be widely supported and understood**
- **Your campaign must be visible in the workplace**
- **Your campaign must involve people doing something to support it**
- **Your campaign must be based on an issue identified by the workforce**
- **Your campaign must include everyone affected including non-members**
- **Your campaign must be aimed at recruiting non-members**
- **Your campaign must be focussed on the person/persons able to give you what you want**
- **Keep an eye on www.gmb.org.uk for up-to-date information that can help with your campaign**

Each campaign needs to have a clear target—the person or people who have the power to give us what we want. The objective should be to make these people change their minds. This is often done by making it clear through action that agreeing with the GMB is a softer option for them than opposing us.

Think about organisation and resources: what to do, when and how. There are numerous ways of building support and of demonstrating this support to your target. Inside the workplace you can organise meetings, petitions, delegations to managers, or working to contracts, all the way up to industrial action.

Outside the workplace there are complementary activities including press and media work, lobbies of politicians, and joint work with service users.

The key point is that all these are merely tactics and their success should only be measured by how much they (a) improve GMB workplace organisation and (b) help to change the minds of the decision-makers.

What events can help to get your message across? The main meetings of public bodies are often open to the public, so you should make your presence felt at them. If you want to demonstrate outside a public building, bear in mind that you are allowed to give out campaign material on a public right of way—so long as you aren't causing an obstruction.

WORKPLACE ORGANISING

Make sure that you are in face-to-face contact with as many people in the workplace as possible. This is a good first step, and a good on-going campaign tactic. E-mails, branch mailings and newsletters are good ways to get out information quickly but they can make GMB look remote if they are done instead of GMB meetings and face-to-face discussions. Newsletters do have an important place, but they should be delivered by hand to members in the workplace.

To build momentum, you could call a “campaign meeting” in the workplace. Non-members are welcome to attend and should be invited to join GMB.

Give each member a job to do. A petition is a good way to generate activity and gives members a reason to approach everyone in the workplace, inviting them to sign, explaining what the campaign is about, and inviting non-members to join GMB.

GMB members shouldn't just feel invited to GMB campaign events—they should get to organise the events themselves. Give members a vote on every issue you can and ask them to get involved in the campaign in every way they can.

Remember that what you do in the workplace in building membership, mobilising the members and making life difficult for middle and senior managers is what could make the difference to your campaign.

GMB has strength in numbers and you should engage with other GMB branches, not just those in public services. All GMB members are affected by the cuts, as the forecasted job losses in the private sector make clear. The campaign to defend public services is a whole-GMB effort.

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Identify your campaign aims and target
- ✓ Generate momentum through workplace activity
- ✓ Organise non-members into GMB
- ✓ Give all members a campaign role
- ✓ Produce and distribute a regular newsletter about the cuts where you work
- ✓ Check www.gmb.org.uk for up-to-date information



COMMUNITY OUT-REACH

Everyone in the community, especially service users, needs to know what we are campaigning for and how to get involved. Show that you have the community on your side.

Get in touch with relevant community groups in your area: those with a particular interest in the services under threat. So if one of the services being cut is Meals on Wheels, you should be trying to link up with support groups for the elderly and disabled.

There are plenty of other kinds of community groups: parent groups, children's groups, women's groups, resident's associations, faith groups, youth groups, sports clubs, ethnic minority groups, LGBT groups, student unions, friends of the local park or museum, etc.

GMB has the benefit of tens of thousands of retired members in branches up and down the country. Our retired members are committed to providing practical assistance to the organisational objectives of GMB. You will often find that they are well connected to community groups and service-user networks.

To find community groups in your area, try the noticeboard in your local library or your council's website. Many council websites provide a searchable database of community groups, typically located in the section concerned with "community" or the

"voluntary sector". Your council's information office may be able to help you access this information.

As well as local outfits, what about national organisations with local branches—for example:

Age UK

Call 0800 169 6565 to find your local Age UK or Age Concern partner, or go to www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/local-partners/find-your-local-age-uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

Call 08451 264 264 to find your nearest office

Disability Alliance

Look at the list of disability interest groups, including many local ones, at www.disabilityalliance.org/member6.htm

There is also a very useful national database of charities which can be searched by location and type of work at www.charitiesdirect.com/charities

Some community groups will be veteran campaigners, for others it will be something entirely new. But even if they aren't set up to do campaign work, their support might be worth obtaining. Invite them to a meeting or an information event, so that you can gauge how engaged they're likely to be.

Would community groups sign a letter of support that you could send to the local paper? Would they help to organise a public meeting, provide a speaker, and help to bring

along service users? Would they join you in lobbying councillors or MPs? Think about setting up an umbrella campaign group.

A new campaign website supported by the TUC, www.falseeconomy.org.uk, can help you to share relevant information with other local campaign groups.

COMMUNITY GROUPS CHECKLIST

- ✓ Identify which service users could lose out through the cuts
- ✓ Map community groups in your area
- ✓ Make contact with relevant groups—can GMB Retired Members help?
- ✓ Explore options for joint action

PRESS AND PUBLICITY

Communication is critical, before and after an event.

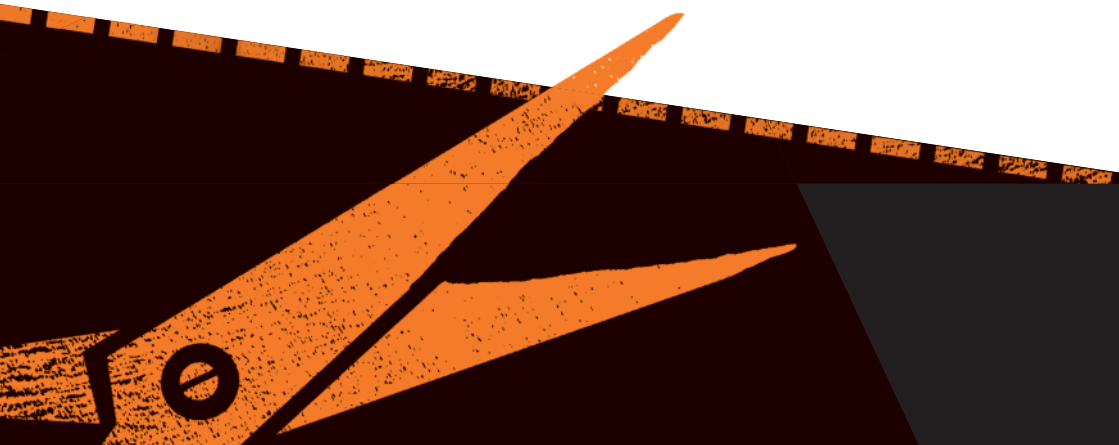
If you are planning an event and you want the media to report it, send out a press release ideally several days in advance.

Press releases have to be to-the-point: what's happening, when, where and why, and who's involved?

Make it clear that reporters, photographers and camera crews are welcome to attend. Include a quote from a relevant spokesperson, i.e. either a GMB member or official. Don't forget to add a contact name and phone number at the bottom.

The press office in your Region and/or at National Office can help you with press releases. Copy all your releases to **press.office@gmb.org.uk** so that they can go on the main GMB website.

Have you got members who would be willing to act as "case studies" and speak to the media? You could also explore other ways to get coverage, e.g. radio phone-ins. If journalists want to do a radio or TV interview, what do they want to ask? Will it be pre-



recorded or go out live? Will it be by phone, from a remote studio, or in the main studio? Who else is being interviewed?

When doing an interview, the trick is to keep it simple—stick to one or two key points. You don't have to answer an irrelevant question, but could instead say "I think the important issue here is..." You can challenge inaccurate statements. Be firm but polite.

LOBBYING

Councillors and MPs are there to do a job for their constituents, so ask for their support.

Find out who your local councillors are, their political affiliation, and who sits on relevant committees, e.g. the finance committee. The council's information office or website should help.

To obtain the name and address of your local MP, call the House of Commons on 020 7219 4272 or look online at **findyourmp.parliament.uk**

You can write to the MP's constituency office or attend one of the weekly "surgeries" which MPs hold to meet constituents. These are normally advertised in the local paper or on MP websites. Some surgeries work by appointment, at others you can just turn up.

Your GMB Region and/or the GMB Political Department at National Office can help you to make contact.

Before you meet the councillor or MP, think carefully about what you will say to them—you may not have a great deal of time. Explain the service area in which you work and what impact the cuts will have on you, your family, the people you serve and the wider constituency.

It is best to be as brief, clear and courteous as possible. Ask them to explain their views on the cuts, and record them. Also record any actions they promise to take. That way you can report back to your campaign team.

KEEP THE FAITH

In any campaign, there are bound to be reversals and quieter periods. These provide an opportunity to re-evaluate your strategy and to re-group.

Remember that all campaign activity will help to underline to employers, politicians and the media that cutting services isn't the easy option and won't go unchallenged.

We have a right to oppose the cuts and to defend our public services. With unity and good organisation, we can make a difference.

Good luck with your campaign.

FOR UNION
USE ONLY

Section

Branch No

Membership No

Date of joining

GMB membership application form PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

JOIN ONLINE AT WWW.GMB.ORG.UK or fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 below and hand the form to your local GMB

representative or post it to GMB, Freepost (WC2268), London SW19 4YY (you do not need a stamp).

If you have any questions call GMB on 020 8947 3131, email info@gmb.org.uk or visit our website www.gmb.org.uk

Even if you change jobs your GMB membership will still cover you wherever you work.

1 TELL US ABOUT YOU

Surname

First name

Title

Date of birth

Home
address

Home Tel

Email

Postcode

Mobile

I agree to abide by
GMB rules Signature

Date

We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members

Bangladeshi / Black African / Black Caribbean / Black British / Chinese / Indian / Irish / Pakistani / White

Other:

2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB

Employer

Your job

Address
where
you
work

How many hours a week do you work?

Pay No

Work Tel

Postcode

3 INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Please fill in the form and send to GMB, 22-24 Worpole Road, London SW19 4DD

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch

To the Manager of Bank/Building Society

Address

Postcode

Originator's Identification Number



For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.

Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/Building Society Account Number

Bank/Building Society Sort Code

Reference number (Office use only)

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society.

Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks or Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account