

A Quick Guide

How to make Conference work for you

Key Dates to remember.

29 May 2022 - Last date for submission of references back on the Annual Report.
(See below)

10 June 2022 at 12 noon - Final date to raise issues in writing with the SOC about the Conference Agenda. (see below)

10 June 2022 at 12 noon - Deadline for requesting an appointment to meet with Standing Orders Committee

11 June 2022 from 17:00 until 18:30 and 21:30 until 22:00, 12 June 2022 08:00 until 09:00 - Registration of delegates at Conference

11 June 2022 from 16:30 until 18:00 - Standing Orders Committee are available for consultation on Emergency Motions and other matters if you want to see them. (You can make an appointment to see the SOC by emailing sarah.powell@prospect.org.uk)

11 June 2022 from 18:15 until 19:00 - New delegates session with SOC to run through Conference procedure.

12 June 2022 at 09:20 - Opening session of Conference (don't forget to register your presence electronically)

13 June 2022 at 09:20 - Deadline for receipt of emergency motions

Introduction

The Standing Orders Committee is made up of three elected members drawn from the membership of the union. The job of the SOC is to help prepare and organise all aspects of Conference business, making sure that motions and rule changes submitted by members are in order, deciding on the order in which they appear on the agenda, and making sure there is sufficient time for delegates to debate and take decisions on the major policy issues which have been referred to Conference.

Standing Orders are the regulations that facilitate the smooth running of conference. They are decided by the Standing Orders Committee. You will find the full lists of Standing Orders printed in the agenda and are advised to familiarise yourself with them if possible. This guide is just a brief summary of some of the things you may find it useful to know, particularly if you are not familiar with the way the Conference works.

The Standing Orders Committee Report is printed in the Agenda and details the recommendations of the SOC for this specific conference and is put to the delegates for approval immediately before the formal opening of Conference Debate.

How to raise issues with the SOC before conference

In writing

If your delegation has a query about the placing or timing of Motions on the agenda, or any other matter to do with the ordering of Conference business please raise that matter in writing to the SOC via sarah.powell@prospect.org.uk before 10 June 2022 at 12 noon.

In person

For issues not resolved in writing, or that arise after the deadline, such as Emergency Motions, the SOC will also be available for consultation on 11 June 2022 at registration between 16:30 until 18:00. Meetings should be by appointment, which should be booked no later than 12 noon on 10 June 2022 via sarah.powell@prospect.org.uk

If you are still not satisfied

You can raise your issue in the form of an appeal against the Standing Orders Committee Report during the debate on that document at the start of Conference. This will require a delegate to address Conference and explain the change they want, and why they want it. Conference will then vote on whether they accept the change or not. (This procedure is only rarely used. It is hoped that most matters can be satisfactorily resolved before the start of conference).

Any appeals must be restricted to the rationale of the SOC decisions and not the substantive content of the business.

Raising issues with the SOC during Conference

The SOC may be contacted in the hall for advice.

The Annual Report (including Actions Taken since the previous conference)

After the SOC report has been voted on, the General Secretary presents the Annual Report to Conference. This includes Actions Taken since the previous conference.

Reference back of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts (incorporating Action Taken)

If a branch does not accept any part of the report it is open to them to refer that part back to the NEC for amendment or correction. References back have to be

submitted in writing to the SOC and the General Secretary by 29 May 2022. Please note the following details are required:

- Name of person submitting the Reference Back including contact details
- Branch name
- Which section/paragraph of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts (incorporating Action Taken) is being challenged
- Details of the Reference Back

If Conference has received a reference back of business on the Annual Report or the Actions Taken and the reference back is not accepted by the NEC, then that reference back will be taken as a motion at the appropriate place in the Agenda and will be voted on by Conference.

Order and Timing of Conference

Motions are printed on the Agenda in the order in which they are to be taken, within timed sections. Any motions left undebated when the Chair decides to end that timed section are in effect guillotined, which means they are not debated but remitted to the NEC for any final decision. (Remittance to the NEC means the NEC will undertake to look at the motion and work, as best they can, for its implementation.) However, there may be a second chance for some of these motions to be heard, at the Chair's discretion, if space opens up within the Conference schedule. They are not finally guillotined until the end of Conference. If your motion drops out of the timed section, be sure you are ready to move it at a later point if this happens.

Key speeches and other events

The conference agenda also includes time allocated by the SOC for a key speaker, for a panel debate and for presentations where more detailed information is required to allow Conference to reach a measured decision.

Elections

Provision is made within the timetable for the announcement of election results, and for the holding of any elections where individuals are directly elected from Conference.

Emergency Motions

Emergency motions deal with business that was not known at the time when other motions were submitted. They have to be in writing, signed by a representative of the branch, and submitted to the Standing Orders Committee by 13 June 2022 at 09:20. A branch delegate has the right to meet with the Standing Orders Committee to explain the reasons for the submission of the motion. Please note the following details are required:

- Name of person submitting the Emergency Motion including contact details
- Branch name
- Title of Emergency Motion
- Details of the Emergency Motion including a valid instruction to the NEC

Moving a Motion

A Motion must be moved by a member of the branch that submitted it and, if no one is present to speak from that branch, the Motion will fall. In exceptional circumstances, the Standing Orders Committee may agree in advance for the Motion to be presented by an alternative branch. (Exceptional circumstances do not mean turning up late for the debate and missing your slot...) If you are going to move a Motion, make sure you know where it is on the schedule and stay up to date with any last-minute changes to timings proposed by the Chair.

Types of Motion

The Standing Orders Committee may Composite two or more Motions together, if they are very similar. In these circumstances there will be one vote on the **Composite Motion**. Standing Orders will decide who the lead mover of the Composite will be. Every branch which is listed as one of the Composite movers will usually have the right to speak in the debate.

The SOC may also decide that some Motions are similar enough to warrant a **Common Debate** on the theme, but not so similar that they should be Compositated. In these cases, there will be a single debate on the listed Motions, but separate votes on each Motion.

The SOC may deem some Motions to be **existing policy, or non-controversial**, in which case they will be printed in the Agenda and accepted by Conference without a debate or vote.

There will be occasions where a decision on one piece of business affects the viability of another piece of business. This is classed as a **Consequential**. If this occurs, the SOC will notify Conference on how this is to be handled.

There is currently no provision for amending a Motion, either before or during Conference.

Rule Revisions

These Motions are proposed changes to the Prospect Rule Book.

Debate

Speaking

Debate on a motion is controlled by the Chair, who decides which speakers to call, and how many to call, depending on the time available, and the nature of the motion. If you want to speak, you should move to the front row and indicate using the cards in your agenda whether you wish to speak for or against the Motion. Seats at the front of the hall will be marked For or Against. Members of the NEC may also present factual information at the start of the debate.

When you are called to speak, you should move up to the rostrum and announce your name and the name of your branch. The mover speaks first and has three minutes to propose their Motion. Other speakers have two minutes, including the right to reply. A red light will demonstrate when your time is up and if you do not wind up immediately, your microphone will be switched off.

You can only speak once in a debate, unless you are the mover with a right of reply. Each mover of a Motion has the right of reply at the end of the debate on their Motion. You may only reply to points raised and may not raise new information. The mover may choose to waive their right of reply if they feel it is not necessary.

Ending the debate

The Chair will decide when to move to the Right of Reply and the vote. But if you think the debate should be cut short, you can move **“that the question be now put.”** This is a procedural motion on which there is no debate. If it is carried, the Chair will move straight to the vote. An alternative procedural motion is **“that Conference proceeds to next business.”** If this is carried there will be no vote on the Motion which is being debated but Conference will immediately move to the next item on the agenda.

Remitting to the National Executive Committee

If the NEC asks for a motion to be remitted, (usually when they agree with the sentiments but there are technical reasons why it won't work as worded) the Chair will ask the branch proposing the Motion if they will accept remittance. If they agree, a vote will be taken immediately to agree remittance. If not, or if Conference refuses remission, the debate will continue in the usual way.

Challenging a ruling of the Chair

A ruling from the Chair is always final, unless it is challenged by a delegate who must have the support of **at least thirty other delegates** before the challenge **‘to rescind the ruling’** is put to a vote.

Suspending Standing Orders

You can move to '**suspend Standing Orders**. This is generally done when the conference floor wishes to continue a debate that is about to be timed out. This can be done by "suspending the timetable". Any move to suspend Standing Orders has to be seconded by a delegate from a different branch.

Any delegate moving the suspension of Standing Order should make their intentions clear as to the effect of the suspension.

Point of Order

If you are speaking when someone raises a point of order, you must remain silent until it is heard. If you raise a point of order, it has to be about the business in hand at the time and you must preface it with the relevant rule or standing order, on which it is based.

Voting

It is essential that you register your attendance at the start of each session by the appropriate method in order to validate your vote. If you fail to do this, your vote may not count in an electronic vote.

The Chair will inform conference of the type of vote required.

Voting will normally be carried out electronically, which is deemed to be the equivalent of a show of hands of the delegates present, except where a card vote is required.

A card vote is not based on individuals present, but on branch strengths. (The bigger the branch, the more votes allocated to it under rule.)

Any revisions to the Prospect Rule Book require a two thirds majority card vote of the delegates present.

Any suspension of Standing Orders or appeals against SOC decisions requires a two thirds majority of delegates present and voting.

Admission of Emergency Motions also requires a two thirds majority of the delegates present and voting.

All other votes are on a simple majority of delegates present and voting.

Challenging a vote

If you want to challenge the result of a vote, you can call for a Card Vote. At least thirty delegates must make the call for it to be implemented.

Failure of electronic voting

In the event of failure of the electronic voting system alternative procedures will be explained to conference by the Chair.

You are strongly recommended to read the full list of standing orders printed in the agenda.

Produced by the Standing Orders Committee

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David Evans

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John Ferrett (Secretary)

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