

ADVICE FROM YOUNG MEMBERS CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE ON SUBMISSION OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

1. WHO CAN SUBMIT MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS?

The following groups (submitting bodies) can submit **up to two motions and two amendments**:

- Regional Young Members Forums
- National Young Members Forum
- National Black Members Committee
- National Disabled Members Committee
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus (LGBT+) Committee
- National Women's Committee

2. HOW?

A motion or amendment must be agreed at a properly convened meeting of the submitting body. The text must be sent to the Standing Orders Committee, via the Online Conference System (OCS).

3. COMPETENCY OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS

A competent motion is one that works within the rules of the union and the Conference. Only competent motions are allowed on to the agenda for Conference. The Standing Orders Committee decides whether motions are competent.

Word limits

There is a word limit of 500 words for motions and 250 words for amendments.

The title is not included in the word count but bullet points and numbering are. We recommend you keep well within the word limit, to be sure. Where abbreviations are used in the main text, they must be given in full the first time. For example, "National Young Members Forum (NYMF)" in full at the first mention (which counts as five words), followed by "NYMF" for subsequent mentions (which counts as one word).

To qualify as a competent motion, the text of the motion must contain action. Action points should be clear, showing exactly what type of action is required and who needs to do it. A motion should ideally contain the following elements:

Who; What; When: Where; Why and How

Who: Who does the motion affect?
Who is causing the need for change?
Who can achieve/initiate/resolve the required action?

Important: Action should be directed via the National Young Members Forum. Do not use phrases such as “We believe that UNISON should do something” or “We call on Conference to do something” or “Conference resolves to do something”.

Who should be instructed? Remember you may only instruct the National Young Members Forum.

Motions that instruct the National Executive Council or other bodies in the union are not competent. Instead, use a phrase like “Conference asks the National Young Members Forum to call on the NEC to do something”.

What: What is the issue?
What is its effect?
What action is required?

When: When did the issue arise? (An important consideration for emergency motions). When does the action need to be taken?

Where: Where is the problem? (A particular region or area?)
Is there a particular place the action is needed?

Why: Why is it an issue?
Why is the action needed?

How: How can the issue best be resolved?

Your motion may not need to contain all of these elements. It is sometimes better to make these points as part of your speech when moving the motion at

Conference. Making a list under each of these headings will help focus on the issue, preferred action and outcome. Make the list and then tick off each point as you put it into the text of your motion.

The Standing Orders Committee will check that the motion:

- (a) is received before the published deadline, by an appropriate body, via the Online Conference System (OCS), and is within the word limit;
- (b) is appropriate for the Young Members Conference. It must deal with issues specifically related to young members, and not seek to set policy for the union as whole or another part of the union. Whole union policy is the business of national delegate conference. Motions relating to specific service group bargaining or policy issues are the business of service group conferences. UNISON's policies towards the Labour Party are the business of Labour Link Forum. However, motions may relate to young members' specific views on general issues;
- (a) only instructs the Young Member Forum, not other bodies or UNISON as a whole. Motions may instruct the National Young Members Forum to liaise with/call upon other sections of the union;
- (b) does not commit the Conference to spend UNISON funds, either directly or through the NEC. However general campaigning commitments may be made, as Conference decides policy and the National Young Members Forum interprets how to achieve the policy;
- (c) does not contravene union rules, for example, on offensive language;
- (d) does not contain instruction for unlawful action.

If the Standing Orders Committee has reason to believe the information on which the motion is based is not correct, it will rule the motion out of order.

All the above is also applicable to amendments. In addition:

- (a) amendments must refer to an original motion;
- (b) amendments cannot change a positive motion into a negative one;
- (c) amendments must not contradict the intention of the motion;
- (d) a mover may not amend their own motion;

- (e) amendments must not introduce substantially new subject matter to the extent that they unduly change the balance of the motion;
- (f) amendments must not delete the main point of a motion and introduce completely different issues instead, thereby changing the substance of the motion.

Motions and amendments ruled out of order

Submitting bodies for any motion or amendment ruled out of order (not competent for Young Members Conference) will be invited to appeal the SOC's decision. Details of how to do this will be sent via the OCS.

4. WHAT ARE EMERGENCY MOTIONS?

Emergency motions relate to events or issues that arise after the deadline for motions or amendments.

The Standing Orders Committee may invite the submitters of an emergency motion to meet with the Committee at Conference, for them to explain why in their view the motion constitutes an emergency, prior to taking a decision on competency.

In addition to complying with ordinary criteria, emergency motions:

- (a) should only refer to issues/events that occurred after the closing date for motions or amendments. In particular, the action called for must be something that could not have been included in a motion and submitted within the normal deadlines;
- (b) must state why the motion was not submitted within the normal deadlines.

The Standing Orders Committee will want to satisfy itself that the subject matter of the motion cannot be dealt with in another way.