

2024 NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Bulletin

July 2023

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This bulletin contains the timetable for the 2024 National Women's Conference
Please note that both motions and delegations can only be submitted online.
There are no paper forms for registration

The UNISON **2024 National Women's Conference** will be held at **Brighton Centre** from 12pm Thursday **15th February** to 1pm Saturday **17th February 2024**.

Brighton Centre
 Kings Rd,
 Brighton
 BN1 2GR
 Tel: 01273 290131

Fax: 01273 779980

Website: www.brightoncentre.co.uk

Timetable

	Time	Dates
Deadline for Submission of Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Friday, 13 October 2023
Publication of Preliminary Agenda		Friday, 17 November 2023
Deadline for Submission of Delegates on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 23 November 2023
Deadline for Amendments to Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 07 December 2023
Deadline for babysitting and crèche requests on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 04 January 2024
Deadline for reasonable adjustment requests for access on the OCS	4:00pm	Thursday, 04 January 2024
Publication of Final Agenda		Friday, 05 January 2024
Deadline for reasonable adjustment requests for travel	12:00pm	Thursday, 01 February 2024
Deadline for Submission of Emergency Motions on the OCS	17:00pm	Friday, 09 February 2024
Deadline for Submitting Change of Delegates on the OCS	11:59pm	Monday, 12 February 2024

Enclosed with this conference bulletin, and available for download on the conference webpage <https://www.unison.org.uk/events/2024-nwc/> :

- Womens Conf Advice from SOC (from page 10-12)

Information on how to submit motions and delegations using UNISON's Online Conference System (OCS)

Which branch officers can use the OCS? Motions can be submitted at branch level by the Branch Secretary, the Branch Women's Officer or the Branch Equal Opportunities Officer. Branch employed staff are also able to enter motions but do not have authority to submit them on behalf of a branch. Delegates can be submitted at branch level by either the Branch Secretary or the Branch Chair. At regional level, the regional secretary is authorised to submit the motion/delegation, with the regional convenors receiving an instant e-mail copy. This process is replicated at national level for national bodies and their relevant chairs and secretaries.

Which members can use the OCS? When a member is registered as a delegate to a conference, they will receive an e-mail informing them of this as long as their e-mail address is listed on the RMS. They can then also access the OCS to upload their photograph, to make online requests for reasonable adjustments and crèche places, which should be made by the stated deadline.

How will these people access the OCS? Users access the OCS via the UNISON website at www.unison.org.uk and clicking on 'My UNISON' - which is located at the top of the front page. Using your UNISON membership number and surname, register once and you will be issued with a password. For subsequent access, simply click on 'My UNISON' and then 'Sign-in now' and you will need your membership number and the password you were issued. Branch employed staff should call their regional contact.

What if the correct branch people have accessed 'My UNISON' but then cannot access the OCS? Key to accessing the OCS is ensuring that the data held on UNISON's membership system, the RMS, is correct. It records which members hold the key positions of Branch Secretary and Branch Chair. If this information is incorrect, or if it changes, the branch needs to ensure that the RMS records are updated immediately. Then the individual should call their regional contact.

What else needs to happen? It will help the system to function if these key branch people also have an e-mail address stored on their RMS records. Please contact your branch or regional RMS team urgently, to make this happen. Each delegate within a delegation should also have their date of birth stored on the RMS.

Delegates and Visitors to Conference: It is important that we collect e-mail addresses for those members wishing to participate in any way in the conference. The e-mail address can be any one that you have easy access to e.g. your personal e-mail, branch e-mail or that of a friend or relative.

- If you already have an e-mail address and access to the UNISON website, the quickest way to update your details is to go to the UNISON website and click on My UNISON – you will need your UNISON membership number.
- If you don't have an e-mail address or don't have access to the UNISON webpage, you can contact UNISONdirect on 0800 0857 857 and provide them with the details of your preferred e-mail address to update your UNISON Membership records – you will need your UNISON membership number.
- Or, you can contact your local UNISON branch and provide them with the details of your preferred e-mail address to update your UNISON membership records – you will need your UNISON membership number.

Key contacts:

If you have a 'My UNISON' registration issue: UNISONdirect on 0800 0857 857.

If you have an OCS issue, please contact your relevant regional contact:

Listed below are the Conference contacts for each region, who can also assist with online conference registration:

Region	Contact	Tel	E-mail
Eastern	Amanda Tickner	01245 608909	a.tickner@unison.co.uk
	Yvonne Gilbey	01245 608901	y.gilbey@unison.co.uk
	Viv Wortley	01245 608915	v.wortley@unison.co.uk
East Midlands	Colleen Forrest	0115 847 5468	eastmidlandsadminteam@unison.co.uk
	Wendie Taylor	0115 847 5415	
	Jennifer Rimmer	0754 566 0750	
	Donna Franklin	0115 8475 5414	
	Admin team	0115 847 5435	
Greater London	Shelley Davey	0207 535 6648	glrconference@unison.co.uk
	Lorraine Tant		
	Cally Thompson		
Northern	Allison Jackson	0191 245 0805	a.jackson2@unison.co.uk
	Catherine Davison	0191 245 0830	c.davison@unison.co.uk
Northern Ireland	Elizabeth Robinson	02890 270190	e.robinson@unison.co.uk
North West	Kim Scott	0161 661 6777	k.scott@unison.co.uk
	Gillian Gorman	0161 661 6743	g.gorman@unison.co.uk
Scotland	Rosaleen Rodgers	0141 342 2816	r.rodgers@unison.co.uk
	Jean Fraser	0141 342 2880	j.fraser@unison.co.uk
South East	Claire Harvey	0754 566 0341	communicationsteam@unison.co.uk
South West	Jenn Gollings	01823 285336	sw.events@unison.co.uk
	TJ Milburn	01392 442676	
	Carol Thyer	01823 285301	
Cymru/Wales	Beverley Powell	02920 729475	b.powell@unison.co.uk
West Midlands	Claire Kenny	0121 685 3174	c.kenny@unison.co.uk
	Kate Walker	0121 685 3164	k.walker@unison.co.uk
Yorkshire & Humberside	Laraine Senior	0113 2182333	l.senior@unison.co.uk
	Joanne Turnbull	0113 2182322	j.turnbull@unison.co.uk

Branch Representation

The scheme of branch representation provides for a **national conference of women members** with representatives from regional and branch groups, women members of the NEC and members of the National Women's Committee, the national SOG committees and national young members' forum.

Branch Delegations

Representation is on the basis outlined below, up to a maximum of five delegates:

1 - 2000 women members	:	1 delegate
2001 - 4000 women members	:	2 delegates
4001 - 8000 women members	:	3 delegates
8001 - 12,000 women members:	:	4 delegates
12,001 + women members	:	5 delegates

If you are uncertain how many women members there are in your branch, your regional RMS department will be able to advise you.

Proportionality and Fair Representation

In line with all other UNISON conferences, the principles of proportionality and fair representation contained in the NEC's Scheme of Branch Representation will be applied to encourage participation of groups such as young and low paid members in particular.

- 1) Branches sending 3 delegates must include one low paid woman member in the delegation. Low paid members are those with a basic hourly rate as identified in Rule Q, Definitions.
- 2) Branches sending 4 delegates must include one young member in the delegation (i.e. age 30 or under at the end of conference).

Branches must be pro-active in filling the low paid member's seat. In identifying low paid members, branches should ensure they consider all employers and all workforces covered by the branch. Branches with more than one delegate should also seek to achieve fair representation as defined in Rule Q:

"Fair Representation is the broad balance of representation of members of the electorate, taking into account such factors as age and low pay, the balance between full time and part time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations, skills, race, sexual orientation, disability and gender identity".

National and Regional Representation

The following bodies are eligible to send two delegates: Regional Women's Groups, National Black Members' SOG, National Disabled Members' SOG, National LGBT SOG, National Young Members' Forum, National Retired Members' Organisation.

Transgender Members

Members who are in the process of transitioning gender may not yet have changed their UNISON membership details. For example, a member may wish to attend conference as a woman, but may still be attending work as a man. Members will therefore be registered for conference as the gender in which they will attend the conference, irrespective of their gender recorded on the RMS. Please note, however, that only members identifying as women are eligible to attend this conference. To ensure that nominations are not rejected, please contact the **Conference Office on 020 7121 5123** with information on any online delegate submissions which include members attending conference in a different gender to that recorded on the RMS. Their confidentiality will be respected at conference.

Fitness to Attend Conference

With the introduction of Fitness to Work sick notes are slightly different now. Members who are off sick from work may have an illness/condition which means they can't perform some tasks but can perform others. They may have a fitness to work certificate which means they return to work with certain caveats – e.g. places limits on the types of tasks they can perform at work and duration.

So if a member is not at work and off sick and wants to attend Women's Conference they need to ask for a note from their GP indicating they are fit to attend the conference (travel/sitting for long periods). We also advise them to get a note from their employer agreeing to their attendance at conference, as this may be a different activity from those at work which they are not able to do.

Members should send a copy of the Fitness to Attend note to Tracey Ayton Harding, Head of Conferences and Designated Health & Safety Manager, in advance of the conference. This information will be treated with confidentiality.

Please help us to help the environment

We're doing our best to reduce the environmental impact of our conferences. This year, we are providing all delegates with the chance to opt out of being sent paper copies of our conference materials as part of the delegates' despatch. All these documents will be available online via the conference app, and on the UNISON website. You can then download them onto your laptop or tablet to view online while you are at conference. If you wish to opt out please indicate this on the 'Extras' screen options on the Online Conference System (OCS). If you do not opt out, you will be sent all documentation in hard copy form.

Visitors

Branches and regions may send **women visitors** to the Conference. All expenses, including travel, must be met by the branch or region. There is no deadline for visitor registration, seats are available on a first come first served basis. However visitors wishing to use the crèche must register by **Thursday, 04 January 2024** as no requests for crèche places can be guaranteed after this date.

My Requirements *IMPORTANT INFORMATION*****

Requesting 'Extras' such as Reasonable Adjustments or Personal Assistants on the Online Conference System (OCS) can only be done by the registered delegate themselves. Once a delegate is registered, the OCS will automatically send out an e-mail to the person with a web link which they can click on to access the OCS and input the Extras they require. For any assistance please contact your regional conference contact from the list (page 3) in this bulletin.

Reasonable Adjustments

UNISON aims to provide a fully accessible event to disabled members in accordance with our duties under the Equality Act. Requests for reasonable adjustments must be submitted by **4pm, Thursday, 04 January 2024**. For any reasonable adjustments required, please complete the request online by the stated deadline. Authorisation for personal assistance/facilitation is required from your Branch Secretary that this expenditure will be approved.

Please remember that BSL Interpreters will only be available if requested in advance.

While we work within the context of the social model of disability this does not mean that UNISON can automatically provide all resources that are requested as adjustments. We have to consider the finite resources available both in terms of space and finances in order that we can balance our commitment to the social model with the resources available, and channel them to where they are needed most. Where resources are allocated, this is done on the understanding that the member will use the resources at all times that they are in the conference hall. Failure to do so may result in the resources being reallocated.

Members requesting seating, tables, footrests, which impact on the space available on the floor of conference, will be asked what barriers they face that require this adjustment for their participation.

While not requesting detailed personal information, UNISON will require sufficient information in order to understand the barriers faced to get the right resources to the right people for this Conference. This will assist us in making adjustments that are meaningful and appropriate to the individual.

The union will determine the allocation of limited resources. If necessary, this may include reserving the right to seek additional information.

We will apply a necessary cut off point for requests, as close as possible to the conference while not impacting on the requirements to produce regional seating plans in good time for advance circulation. The deadline is **4pm, Thursday, 04 January 2024**. We will retain a limited ability to respond to unexpected circumstances that affect a delegate at short notice prior to the conference.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

If a delegate or visitor from your branch requires a PEEP for the conference venue, please ask them to indicate this with their online request.

Crèche and Babysitting

Please note that crèche provision is available for children up to and including the age of 16 years. Arrangements have been made for Nipperbout, the company contracted to provide crèche facilities at all UNISON national conferences, to provide babysitting. Should you require this service please complete the request online, by **Thursday, 04 January 2024**. Delegates and visitors are reminded that the cost for babysitting is borne by the branch so authorisation is required from your branch secretary that this expenditure will be approved.

Language

The language we use is important and reflects deep-rooted and long-standing power structures and beliefs. Racist, disablist, sexist, transphobic, ageist, biphobic or homophobic language will not be tolerated. Generalisations are seldom helpful and seldom true: please avoid making them. Jokes or comments based on sexist, racist, disablist, ageist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic ideas should not be made. Remember that some of us do not identify on the gender binary, so expressions such as 'sisters and brother' do not include us all.

Conduct of delegates

All delegates, visitors, staff and facilitators are expected to behave in a courteous manner. Aggressive, offensive, intimidatory, disrespectful or unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. This applies to all aspects of communication, at or in connection with the conference, including postings on social media. Complaints will be treated seriously. As trade unionists we do not expect any of these problems to arise, however issues of unsatisfactory conduct by anyone attending conference can be raised with the conference information desk.

Change of Delegate

Branches may change delegates up to the start of Conference. A member registering as a substitute branch delegate must have been eligible to represent the branch at the closing date for registration of delegates by **Thursday, 23 November 2023**. Any changes must be in accordance with the Scheme of Branch Representation.

After **11.59pm, Monday, 12 February 2024** no more changes can be made on the OCS. If a branch needs to make an emergency change to its delegation after this date then an 'Emergency Change of Delegate' form will need to be completed.

This form will be available on the UNISON website from **Tuesday, 13 February 2024** and will also be available from the Conference Desk.

Motions : Amendments to Standing Orders : Amendments to Motions : Emergency Motions

- Motions **must** be submitted online.
- Motions **must** state the date of the meeting at which the motion was agreed.
- Motions must be submitted by the deadline.
- Motions should cover one subject only and can only instruct the National Women's Committee. Motions should not instruct the NEC, Service Groups or other national committees or outside bodies, such as the Labour Party.

Further guidance is enclosed (page 10-12)

Annual Report

The Annual Report of the National Women's Committee will be published by **Friday, 05 January 2024**. If branch or regional women's groups wish to raise questions on the Annual Report, these must be submitted in writing by **Friday, 02 February 2024**. At National Women's Conference, only questions supplementary to written questions will be taken. This is to ensure that proper consideration can be given to questions raised, and a considered response can be given.

Travel Arrangements

Please consider the impact on the environment when making your decision on how to travel to Conference. Branches are asked to book all travel arrangements for Conference through Stewart Corporate Travel via email at unison@stewarttravelmanagement.com or call [0800 091 4272](tel:08000914272). Please advise Stewart Corporate Travel if your delegates have railcards.

Travel can also be booked online using the Steward Travel Online Portal at <https://www.gtp-marketplace.com/>

Branches are reminded that:

- Travel costs for **Delegates only** will be funded from National Office
- Travel costs for **Visitors** must be paid for by the branch. Please note that a booking fee is applicable – further details from Stewart Corporate Travel.

Conference Travel should be booked by the cheapest possible means.

Driving is discouraged for conference unless delegates are travelling together or as a reasonable adjustment. Total reclaimable will be the cost of standard tickets or cost of car travel – whichever is the lesser.

The 250 mile / upgraded or 1st Class travel rule is not applicable for conference travel

All travel requests (including upgraded or 1st Class Travel or Driving) as a reasonable adjustment must be reviewed and authorised by the Head of Conferences.

Branches are responsible for funding their delegates' and visitors' attendance at conference. Subsistence should cover the cost of accommodation, meals, childcare, dependent care and facilitation.

Branches are reminded of the Organising for Equality guidelines which state that "Branch delegates to self-organised group conferences should normally be given the same level of subsistence as branch delegates to other UNISON conferences". The guidelines can be found at: <https://www.unison.org.uk/search/organising+for+equality+guidelines/>

Any branches that may suffer financial difficulties as a result of these procedures may apply in writing to the Finance Officer for consideration for additional branch funding.

Reasonable adjustment requests for travel should be made by 12pm Thursday, 01 February 2024

Accommodation

Booking accommodation – please book any accommodation required with a reputable provider with a generous cancellation policy. Please ensure that members have written confirmation of any booked and paid for accommodation.

Branches are encouraged to arrange accommodation through **Visit Brighton Accommodation Booking Service**. Using the Booking Service supports the work of our members in local government and ensures our continuing ability, as a not-for-profit organisation, to secure preferential rates for our conference venues. For full details of current availability and for bookings please go to:

Link: <https://book.passkey.com/go/UNWC2024>

Email: delegates@visitbrighton.com

Phone: **01273 292626**

Prepaid Cards

Union Income Ltd have agreed to provide a corporate version of its prepaid card still with the UNISON branding. If your branch requires a prepaid card then this is the card that is the preferred option above others generally available.

An application will normally take about 14 working days to turnaround and you can request an information pack and application form by contacting:

UNISON Prepaid Plus Customer Services, 39-51 Highgate Road. London NW5 1RT or email customerservices@unisonprepaid.com

Credit Cards

If your branch does not specifically require a prepaid card the other best option is a credit card from Unity Trust Bank called Unity Corporate MultiPay Card. It is more flexible and is linked to branch current account. Details of the Corporate MultiPay card and further information on how to apply are available from their website at www.unity.co.uk/multipay. To help branches switch to this Unity Trust credit card, the bank has agreed to waive the one off administration fee of £50 for all current ALTO card customers who apply for a Multipay card.

Data Protection

The information you provide via the OCS, in addition to your information held on UNISON's membership database, will be used for the organisation and administration of Conference. It may also be used for statistical purposes as this helps us plan future conferences. We will process your personal data in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). You can find out more about how UNISON processes your personal data by going to unison.org.uk/privacy-policy or emailing dataprotection@unison.co.uk.

ADVICE FROM THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE ON SUBMITTING MOTIONS TO NATIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The Standing Orders Committee decides whether motions are competent, or out of order. We do not approve the policy content of the subject matter but we do decide whether the motion is competent for debate.

Who can submit motions

- Branch Women's Groups
- Regional Women's Groups
- National Women's Committee
- National Self-Organised Groups
- National Young Members' Forum

If there is no women's group in your branch, you can contact your regional women's group to get involved.

How

- Input your motion on line on the Online Conference System (OCS) by the deadline. You need to state the date of the meeting at which the motion was agreed.
- The word quorate is included on the OCS to ensure that meetings that submit motions to conferences have been properly convened within the local rules and do have the power to take the action of submitting the motion. This is best practice used at National Delegate Conference. If there is no quorum for the meeting then the term does not apply.

Who can authorise Motions

- The Branch Secretary, Branch Women's Officer or the Branch Equal Opps Officer.

Subject Matter

- The subject matter and the instructions contained in the motion must be wholly or predominantly of concern and relevance to women members. The motion must make clear why it is an issue for debate

at National Women's Conference rather than, say, National Delegate Conference.

So, for example, a motion on a health and safety issue would have to highlight the particular impact on women and identify action the National Women's Committee can take to address the issue in relation to women members.

Action

- A motion is a means of indicating why you want something to happen, what you want done and by whom.
- National Women's Conference may instruct the National Women's Committee to take action within its remit.
- National Women's Conference may not instruct other bodies within the union, such as the NEC or service groups or external bodies.
- Don't use the phrases:
 - “Conference agrees to”
 - “Conference resolves to”
 - “Conference calls on the NEC”
 - “Conference calls upon the union at all levels”

as Conference does not exist after the end of business. Conference cannot resolve to take action itself. The Women's Conference's relationship with the rest of the union, and the outside world, is through the National Women's Committee, so any proposed action must be taken through the National Women's Committee.

- Don't use the phrase:
 - “Conference calls directly on the National Executive Council to”

Because the Conference has no direct representation on the National Executive Council. Again such proposals have to be channelled through the National Women's Committee, which does have NEC representation.

So make sure your motion reflects this.

Staffing

- As a general rule, motions to National Women's Conference should not deal with staffing matters since these are outside the remit of the National Women's Committee. Under Rule D2.10.1 and Rule D2.10.2, the National Executive Council and the General Secretary have responsibility for the employment of staff and staffing matters. Motions can be considered on their merit where they deal with general policy on staff resources. But motions dealing with the details of the staffing complement would be ruled out of order, since responsibility in this area rests with the NEC and the General Secretary.
- For example motions may not propose additions or deletion of staff posts, or job descriptions for staff, or interfere with management of staff but motions may include staffing as an element of allocation of resources for a project.

Rule Changes

- The National Women's Conference cannot amend UNISON's National Rules. Only National Delegate Conference may amend the National Rules.
- National Women's Conference may agree a motion to submit a particular rule change to National Delegate Conference. It then needs to be chosen as one of the Women's Conference motions to the next National Delegate Conference, to get on to that agenda.

Amendments to Standing Orders

- The National Women's Conference can amend its own Standing Orders. All changes to standing orders require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

Amendments to Standing Orders are not open to further amendment.

Amendments to Motions

- An amendment is a proposed change to a motion that deletes from and/or adds to it.
- To be competent the amendment must:
 - refer to the original motion;
 - not change a positive motion into a negative one;
 - not contradict the intention of the motion;
 - not introduce substantially new subject matter to the extent that it unduly changes the balance of the motion or the substance;
 - not be from the proposer of the main motion

Emergency Motions

- An emergency motion must relate to an issue that could not be addressed in accordance with the timetable for submitting motions and amendments.
- Emergency motions should also be submitted online by the deadline given. In addition to the normal procedures for submitting motions, the following criteria will also be used in considering all emergency motions:
 - the facts giving rise to the subject matter have occurred since the closing date for submission of motions and amendments - it is not sufficient that the submitting body was not aware of the facts until after the closing date
 - the matter could not be raised in debate on the agenda;
 - the action called for is not covered by another motion, amendment or composite;
- 1. the action must refer directly to the new information in the motion;

the subject cannot be dealt with through normal channels other than National Women's Conference.

Can the Standing Orders Committee change the wording of a motion to make it competent?

The SOC has the power to make minor wording changes of a technical nature so:

- points may be renumbered or re-lettered using a common format, to avoid confusion at amendment stage;
- references to line numbers in amendments will be replaced by reference to a paragraph numbers;
- any clearly incorrect spelling will be corrected.

but:

- where there is any ambiguity as to the intention of the motion, no change may be made;
 - no alterations to grammar may be made, unless there is a query over what the motion means, in which case the women's group will be contacted for its interpretation;
1. and a motion cannot be reworded to change its meaning.

A checklist is attached to help you when writing a motion and submitting it to the Women's Conference.

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**The Standing Orders Committee can be contacted via:**

**Anita Edwards  
Secretary  
Women's Standing Orders Committee  
c/o UNISON  
130 Euston Road  
LONDON  
NW1 2AY**

**Tel no: 020-7121 5487  
Email: [j.walker@unison.co.uk](mailto:j.walker@unison.co.uk)**

**CHECKLIST FOR COMPETENCY OF MOTIONS**

- From a body with submission rights
- Submit online on the OCS
- Date of meeting
- Submitted within the deadline
- Subject matter wholly or predominantly relevant to women members
- Not National Delegate Conference business;
- Not service group business;
- Not APF/GPF business
- Not seeking a donation
- Not a statement
- Does it make sense?/Is it sufficiently clear?
  
- Is it identical to previous motions/superfluous, or does it contain new policy/action?
  
- Clear action points
  
- Does it instruct/ask the correct body to take action? Can only instruct the NWC. Cannot call directly on the NEC, must go via the NWC.
  
- Cannot commit Conference to spend national funds
  
- Does not contravene union rules
  
- Does not contain instructions for unlawful action
  
- Does not refer to staffing issues