

2024 Health Care Service Group Conference Bulletin

October 2023

Conference Team 020 7121 5123
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This bulletin contains the timetable and information for
2024 Health Care Service Group Conference.

Please note that both motions and delegations can only be submitted online.
There are no paper forms.

The Health Care Service Group Conference will be held at the Brighton Centre from 9.30am on Monday 8th April until 1.00pm on Wednesday 10th April 2024.

Brighton Centre
Kings Rd,
Brighton
BN1 2GR

Tel: 01273 290131

Website: www.brightoncentre.co.uk

Timetable

	Time	Dates
Deadline for Submission of Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Friday, 08 December 2023
Publication of Preliminary Agenda		Friday, 05 January 2024
Deadline for Submission of Delegates on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 18 January 2024
Deadline for Amendments to Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Friday, 09 February 2024
Deadline for babysitting and crèche requests on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 29 February 2024
Deadline for reasonable adjustment requests for access on the OCS	4:00pm	Thursday, 29 February 2024
Publication of Final Agenda		Friday, 08 March 2024
Deadline for reasonable adjustment requests for travel	12:00pm	Thursday, 21 March 2024
Deadline for Submission of Emergency Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Friday, 29 March 2024
Deadline for Submitting Change of Delegates on the OCS	11:59pm	Thursday, 04 April 2024

Enclosed in this Conference Bulletin, and available for download on the conference webpage are: <https://www.unison.org.uk/events/2024-health-care-sg-conference/>

- Health SGE Objectives 2024 (Page 10-11)
- Advice from the Standing Orders Committee (Page 12-15)

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

Which branch officers can use the OCS? Motions and delegations can be submitted at branch level by either the Branch Chair or Branch Secretary. The other will receive e-mail copies of the motion or delegation submission as soon as it is submitted. Branch employed staff will also be able to enter motions but will not have authority to submit them on behalf of a branch.

At regional level, the regional head of the service group will be authorised to submit the motion/delegation, with the chair of the regional committee 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 services such as reasonable adjustments, crèche places and babysitting, 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 '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	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	Elizabeth Britton	0796 147 5608	communicationsteam@unison.co.uk
	Bethany Martyn-Jones	0781 372 1902	
	Claire Harvey	0754 566 0341	
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

Disenfranchised Branches

Branches are reminded that under Rule D.1.3.3.1 you will be disenfranchised from sending delegates to attend National Delegate Conference and Service Group Conferences for the remainder of the financial year following the year to which the financial return applies, if you did not submit your annual financial returns (Rule G.10.1) to your UNISON regional office by no later than **15 March each year**.

National and Regional Representation

The following bodies are eligible to send two delegates (at least one of whom should be female) who shall be entitled to speak but not vote:

- National Self-Organised Groups
- Regional Health Committees
- National Sector Committees
- National Young Members' Forum
- Private Contractors National Forum

Each Professional and Sectional Body is entitled to send one delegate who shall be entitled to speak but not vote.

Branch Representation and Proportionality and Fair Representation

Please note that the NEC Scheme of Branch Representation for National Delegate Conference applies across all service groups.

- 1) Branches are entitled to one delegate per 1,000 members or part thereof.
- 2) If the delegation only comprises one full delegate, then this delegate may be male or female.
- 3) The gender make up of the delegation is based on the gender make up of the branch.
- 4) Branches with over 2,000 members must include one low paid, female member in the delegation.
- 5) Branches with over 3,000 members must include one young member in the delegation (ie. Age 30 or under at end of conference).
- 6) Branches can send two people, in any gender combination, to share one of the delegate places. However:
 - a. If the entire delegation entitlement comprises of just the two sharers, then at least one must be female.
 - b. if they are sharing the low paid seat, both sharers must be low paid;
 - c. if they are sharing the young members' seat, both sharers must be young members.

ie. Sending one sharer to meet either the low paid or young member requirement is not sufficient.
- 7) Branches must include Black members in their delegation in proportion to the workforce profile of the employers covered by the branch.
- 8) Branches should endeavour to include disabled members and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) members in the delegation.
- 9) Overall, branches should also consider factors such as the balance between full time and part time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations and skills.

Branch representation is based on membership as at **30 September 2022**.

30 September 2023 membership figures will be available from the RMS in early January 2024. At this point the Conference Office will run a check to see if any branches are entitled to more or fewer delegates and action this as necessary. Branches can check their membership figure via their regional RMS contact.

Transgender Members

UNISON applies strict rules on proportionality in branch conference delegations, to ensure proper representation of women. 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 Health Conference as a woman, but still be attending work as a man. Members will be registered for Health Conference as the gender in which they will attend the Conference, irrespective of their gender recorded on the RMS.

To ensure that branch delegations including transgender members are not rejected on grounds of proportionality, please contact the Conference Office on 020 7121 5123 with information on any 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 the Health Care 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 confidence.

Appeals

Regions monitor the delegations submitted by branches to ensure compliance with the scheme. Branches have a right of appeal against a decision by their region that their proposed branch delegation is not in line with this scheme.

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.

My Requirements

Requesting 'Extras' such as Childcare, 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 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, 29 February 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.

Reasonable adjustment requests for travel should be made by 12pm Thursday, 21 March 2024

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, 29 February 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, please ask them to indicate this with their online request.

Crèche and Babysitting

Please note that crèche provision is available **for delegates only** 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 **12pm, Thursday, 29 February 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.

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 **Thursday, 18 January 2024**. Any changes must be in accordance with the Scheme of Branch Representation.

After 11:59pm Thursday, 04 April 2024 no changes to delegates can be made. 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 **Friday, 05 April 2024** and will also be available from the Conference Desk.

Conference Budget and Expenses

The conference budget covers travel costs for branch delegates and regional and national representatives to conferences only. Branches cover subsistence and accommodation for branch delegates, plus incidental travel. Visitors/sharers 2 expenses and travel are covered solely by the branch.

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 Stewart 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/Sharer 2** 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) 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.

Reasonable adjustment requests for travel should be made by **12pm Thursday, 21 March 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 VisitBrighton 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/UHealth2024>

Email: delegates@visitbrighton.com

Phone: 01273 292626

Please ensure that members have written confirmation of any booked and paid for accommodation.

Submitting Motions, Amendments, Emergency Motions

Motions should be submitted via UNISON's Online Conference System (OCS).

The Preliminary Agenda will be published on **Friday, 05 January 2024**. The Final Agenda will be published on **Friday, 08 March 2024**.

Advice from the Health Service Group Executive (Annex 1)

The Service Group Executive has identified a number of priority areas for the Health Group's work programme. When branches meet to discuss their motions for submission to Health Conference, they are encouraged to take the SGE's priorities into account.

Advice from the Standing Orders Committee (Annex 2)

Attached as Annex 2 is guidance from the Standing Orders Committee outlining issues that submitting bodies need to be aware of when formulating motions for the health conference agenda. Please pay careful attention to this guidance.

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.

Please continue to next page.

HEALTH SERVICE GROUP EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2024 (Annex 1)

UNISON Objective: Bargaining and Equalities

Deliver increased funding for public services and secure real terms pay increases, improved terms and conditions, and high quality employment and pensions for UNISON members. Build confidence for industrial action when required, identify and support strategic industrial disputes at national and branch level and seek to co-ordinate action wherever possible. Promote equal pay and equality in public, community and private sectors. Actively challenge all forms of discrimination including racism and sexism, discrimination against LGBT+ people, against disabled people, and discrimination based on age, religion or social class. Provide support to migrant workers. Bargaining and lobbying to end two-tier workforce in outsourced public services and rolling out a strategy to ensure national agreements are awarded to outsourced workers. Provide assistance to those branches supporting outsourced members. Campaign for better facility time arrangements for our members in public services.

SGE Priority: Improving your terms and conditions

- Continue to support 'Earning Max' activity.
- Adapt UNISON NHS pay strategy to changing context.
- Lead and shape joint NHS union pay strategy.
- Make flexible working available to more NHS staff.
- Prioritise capacity-building for the NHS Job Evaluation Scheme.
- Monitor and respond to policy affecting the NHS pension schemes.
- Ensure the NHS Job Evaluation scheme works for Nursing & Midwifery staff.
- Protect position of members working in the ambulance service re unsocial hours and emergency service retirement age.

SGE Priority: Improving working life for NHS staff

- Take action to tackle discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace and promote equality.
- Keep staff safe at work and improve wellbeing.
- Develop a strategy for affordable, available and reliable NHS childcare.
- Press for better staffing across the NHS.
Ensure an effective pipeline for the supply of good jobs in the NHS.

UNISON Objective: Campaigning and influencing

Campaign against climate change and work with other relevant organisations to achieve a net-zero carbon economy in the UK at the earliest opportunity and recognise that the Climate emergency is a trade union issue and commit to sharing our values in order to protect our planet. Develop our campaigns in support of quality public services and in defence of the NHS, education, local government, social care, police, probation, Energy, WET and all public services including private and community sector. Build our political influence, forging alliances with other unions and appropriate campaigning and community groups to challenge the austerity programme, including attacks on the welfare state. Campaign for the election of UK governments and councils that value public services and working people, rejecting the arguments of the Tory government and far right parties. Promote the new political fund arrangements. Promote the union's international work.

SGE Priority: Standing up for patients and staff.

- Shape changes arising from the implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2022 and other legislation on the NHS and influence the Westminster Government on UNISON's key NHS priorities.

- Influence the NHS policy landscape on workforce, regulation and supply issues across the UK.
- Understand and work with allies to minimise the impact of Brexit on the NHS including on international recruitment.
- Support members through organisational change, prioritising challenges to privatisation.
- Maintain good standards of industrial relations input at all levels in the NHS
- Promote the value of the whole health team.
- Shape the discussion around the future of healthcare regulation.
- Improve working life for NHS staff including campaigning for better staffing.

UNISON Objective: Recruitment and organising.

Enhance our capability to recruit and retain members and meet the organising and representation challenges facing the union in the changing world of work. Ensure our union is relevant to all members who provide public services – including those who work in the community and private sectors. Identify and develop leadership from across the union, particularly among young members and provide support and resources for them to lead campaigns. Enhance our democracy by increasing and widening participation of our activists and members. Identify strategic growth areas such as social care and under-5s education and implement a national organising strategy in those sectors. Encourage the recruitment of local stewards and Health & Safety representatives. In all trade union activity to promote the benefits of the organising approach.

SGE Priority: recruiting and organising members and raising our profile

- Develop and implement healthcare student recruitment.
- Build profile for UNISON as the lead union for all health workers through the work of our Occupational Groups.
- Improve communications to activist and members.

UNISON Objective: Building an efficient and effective union

Ensure that the union's structures including organisational, lay member, ICT infrastructure, digital and internal management systems and the distribution of our resources are accessible, efficient and effective to meet the changing needs of all sections of the union and its members especially in relation to global sustainability and to include the ability to take effective industrial action when required. A root and branch review of the union's structure and operations taking account of climate change including travel, waste and efficiency. Ensure that branches are provided with the support they need, promptly, when they need it.

SGE Priority: Ensuring democratic input and oversight.

- Educate members about the NHS and encourage participation in formal structures.
- Facilitate decision-making by lay activists via HSGE structures.
- Support relationships with external bodies.
- Encourage members to take part in our work.

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Health Care Service Group Conference: 8 - 10 April 2024

Standing Orders Committee guidance on submitting motions (Annex 2)

Introduction

The aim of this guidance is to assist branches and other bodies submitting motions and amendments to the 2024 health service group conference. It outlines the criteria used by the standing orders committee (SOC) when considering whether motions and amendments will be admitted to the conference agenda, i.e., whether they are 'competent'. Branches and other bodies who are planning to submit motions to the 2024 Health Conference should read this guidance carefully.

Motions must be:

- From a body entitled to submit motions to a health service group conference.
- About a matter relevant to the health service group.
- Clearly written and include specific proposals for action.
- Submitted via the online conference system (OCS) within the specified deadlines: 12.00 noon on **Friday 8 December 2023** for motions and 12.00 noon on **Friday, 9 February 2024** for amendments.
- In line with UNISON rules.

Who can submit motions?

UNISON rule P.1.3.5 sets out the bodies eligible to submit motions to service group conferences. For health conference, these are: health service branches, the health service group executive, regional health committees, and national occupational groups. There is no limit on the number of motions that can be submitted by these bodies. In addition, the national self-organised groups, the national young members' forum, and the national private contractors' forum may submit up to two motions and two amendments.

Submitting motions using the OCS

The conference bulletin sets out advice on how to submit motions using UNISON's online conference system (OCS). Only the branch chair and branch secretary have OCS permission to submit motions. Please make sure motions are entered onto the OCS and submitted in good time before the deadline.

For branches, only the text of motions which have been considered and agreed by a quorate branch meeting or branch committee meeting, are eligible for conference. The date of the meeting where it was agreed to submit the motion must be recorded on the OCS, together with the type of meeting.

How the standing orders committee works

The SOC takes legal advice on the content of motions, particularly where there appears to be libel, or the content is or would lead to breaches of the law and/or rules. Motions are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Service group issues

Motions and amendments submitted to the agenda for health conference **must** be relevant to health service group members. Rule D.3.1.4 sets out the remit of the service group and the issues on which it has autonomy to act on behalf of its members. These are to:

- Determine the service group's general policy
- Negotiate:
 - Pay and conditions of service;
 - Professional and occupational rules, standards, conditions and policy;

- Industrial and other relations with employers and to represent its members and participate in any joint negotiating machinery with powers in these matters;
- The settlement of any disputes arising from the employment of its members.

The standing orders committee will only accept motions that are relevant to the areas of activity defined for service groups within rule D.3.1.4.

Citizenship issues

Some issues which appear relevant to the health service group may actually be 'citizenship' issues, of relevance to the whole union. This is because members experience the issues as workers **and** as members of the public or as service users.

Motions to health conference must have relevance to health service group members as 'workers', so that they fall within the remit of a service group conference as outlined in Rule D.3.1.4.

A number of motions are ruled out each year on the grounds that they are 'citizenship' issues and therefore appropriate for a national delegate conference which can instruct the whole union to adopt a policy or campaign. If in doubt, seek advice from the standing orders committee (contact details at the end of this guide.)

Staffing issues

Motions dealing with staffing matters are not appropriate for a service group conference. The national executive council or the general secretary have responsibility for the employment of UNISON staff, under Rule D.2.12.

Industrial action

Rule O gives the national executive council exclusive powers to authorise industrial action. To be lawful, the industrial action must be taken in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute which relates wholly (or mainly) to one or more matters listed under s.244 of the Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Before any call for industrial action, the union must have the majority support of a properly organised ballot and the union must comply with a number of procedural requirements. Motions calling for industrial action over privatisation or cuts to services do not fall within the legal definition of a trade dispute and so must not be debated as this would put the union in legal jeopardy. Motions relating to industrial action must not contravene Rule O on industrial action or Rule B.4.5, which requires the union to act lawfully. Motions or amendments must not describe previous or current trade disputes as being 'against privatisation' or similar such words, as this could leave the union open to legal challenge.

Political fund / Labour Link

Matters relating to the Labour Party, both in relation to internal issues and in respect of matters to be pursued at Labour Party conference, are dealt with by Labour Link through its own structures, not health conference.

Legal issues

Motions may be ruled out of order for a number of legal reasons. These include legal jeopardy – where a motion places the union at risk of legal action from a third party. The SOC will not enter into protracted legal arguments on whether or not this third party would have a strong case but will take the decision not to place the union at risk. Further, conference cannot compromise existing or potential legal proceedings for either party in a case. Proceedings include potential, past or current disciplinary issues. Motions can only call for actions or activities that the union can lawfully undertake. Motions that call on the union to break the law are not competent and will be ruled out of order.

Calls vs. Instructs

The standing orders committee draws a distinction between motions that 'call' on another body or part of the union to do something, and one which 'instructs' them. When using the term 'instruct' submitters of motions should be clear that the health conference does indeed have the power to instruct this body and in addition, that the body being instructed has the power to undertake the action.

Even when using the term 'call' or 'seek to ensure' submitters should still check that health conference has the power to call on this body and that the body has the power to undertake the action.

Amendments to motions

Amendments are subject to the same rules as motions. In addition, they should not be used to promote essentially alternative motions or as a substitute for voting against a motion. Amendments are likely to be out of order (as wrecking amendments) if they:

- Introduce a direct negative into the motion
- Reduce the motion to a mere restatement of existing policy
- Seek to change fundamentally the purpose of the motion.

Emergency motions

Emergency motions should be submitted in accordance with Rule P.11. The submitting body will have to show:

- The matter could not be raised in debate on the agenda
- The action called for is not covered by another motion, amendment, or composite
- The facts giving rise to the subject matter have occurred since the closing date for the 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 subject cannot be dealt with through normal channels other than health group conference.

Challenges to SOC decisions

If the SOC rules your motion or amendment out of order, you will receive notification, including the reasons why, via the online conference system. If you are not happy with the decision and want the SOC to reconsider, you must appeal **via the OCS**. Please remember, it is not possible to reword a motion after the deadline, to make it competent.

Appeals cannot be started at Conference or from the Conference floor. A written appeal must be made **via the OCS**, in advance of the Conference by the following deadlines:

To appeal against motions ruled out of order the deadline is: **12.00 noon on Friday, 26 January 2024.**

To appeal against amendments ruled out of order the deadline is **12.00 noon on Friday, 15 March 2024.**

Best practice on writing motions

Submitting bodies are encouraged to write clear, succinct motions that include specific proposals for action. Any quotations from other sources or documents must be identified with quotation marks. Links to websites are not appropriate. Wording should avoid language which may cause offence.

The following suggested format for the structure of your motion/s may be useful:

This Conference believes/supports/notes/recognises [insert relevant issue]

This issue is relevant and important to health service members as workers because [insert reasons]

This Conference calls upon the Service Group Executive to take the following actions [insert actions]

Advice is available from the SOC office on:

- Drafting motions prior to deadlines.
- Guidance and assistance on procedures and standing orders.

If you need assistance, contact your regional SOC representative. Details can be obtained by emailing the SOC Secretary, June Chandler j.chandler@unison.co.uk who is also available to assist and advise. Please note that receiving advice from individual committee members does not guarantee acceptance of a motion onto the agenda. Every motion/amendment is considered by the whole committee and decisions are made collectively.

End