



Civil Service Group Annual Delegate Conference

Clayton Hotel, Belfast

Agenda 2026

Thursday 5 November 2026

Timetable

Thursday 5th November 2026

10am	Chairperson's address	
10.15am	Appointment of Scrutineers and Tellers Adoption of Standing Orders Report No.1	
10.30am	Pay and Grading	Motions 1 - 2
11.00am	Terms and Conditions	Motions 5 - 14
1.00pm	Lunch	
2.00pm	Recruitment and Promotion	Motions 17 – 24
3.15pm	Allowances	Motions 27 - 30
3.50pm	Staffing and Resourcing	Motions 33 - 36
4.30pm	Equality	Motions 39 - 42
5.05pm	Health and Safety	Motion 45
5.15pm	Guillotined Motions	
5.30pm	Close of Conference	

Special Notice to Delegates

The Standing Orders and Standing Orders Committee Report No.1 should be read in conjunction with the list of motions. In accordance with Standing Order 37, Branches wishing to move reference back to Standing Orders Report No.1 or at any part of it, should notify their intention to do so in writing to the Secretary, NIPSA Standing Orders Committee, Harkin House, 54 Wellington Park, Belfast, BT9 6DP not later than **12.00 noon, Thursday 29th October 2026**.

Those branches who have so notified their intention to move reference back of Report No.1 will be required to meet the Standing Orders Committee prior to Conference on **Friday 30th October 2026**.

Only those branches who have complied with Standing Order 37 will be permitted to move reference back of Standing Orders Committee Report No.1.

Branches should note that reference back of Standing Orders 1 to 43, or any amendment to them, is not permissible. This rule does not apply to any additional Standing Orders included in Standing Orders Committee Report No.1.

Standing Orders for Conferences

1. These standing orders will apply to General and Group Conferences until they are amended or rescinded by a motion adopted by an annual Delegate General Conference. If any such motion is adopted it shall not come into effect until the conclusion of the conference at which it is adopted.
7. The **secondary agenda** will include the following categories:
 - (a) Category A - motions which are covered by a composite or comprehensive motion on the primary agenda.
 - (b) Category B - motions which restate existing union policy.
 - (c) Category C - motions which can be dealt with by correspondence with Union Headquarters.
 - (d) Category D - motions which are competent to be dealt with by a body established under rule 6.9(a) of the rules of the Union and which are to be remitted to the General Council for reference to that body.
 - (e) Category X - motions which the President has ruled are out of order.

Reports of Standing Orders Committee

2. Subject to the provisions of these standing orders, the Standing Orders Committee will draw up reports for each conference, setting out its recommendations on the timetable, agenda and such other matters as it considers necessary for the business of the conference. The reports of the Standing Orders Committee will be presented to the conference for consideration and decision.
3. The Standing Orders Committee may, if it considers it necessary recommend **additional standing orders** on matters not covered in these standing orders. Such additional standing orders shall apply only to the conference at which they are adopted.
4. The first report of the Standing Orders Committee to an Annual Conference hereinafter referred to as "**Report No.1**", shall comprise the agenda, which shall contain all the motions received in accordance with these standing orders and the Committee's recommendation on the timetable and other matters.
8. **Composite motions** will be used whenever possible to cover a number of motions directed at the same issue. The motion selected as a composite is the one which, in the opinion of the Standing Orders Committee, incorporates the points made in motions covered by it.
9. **Comprehensive motions** will whenever possible be constructed by the Standing Orders Committee to cover motions, when although directed on the same issue, contain a number of diverse points. The Standing Orders Committee will recommend who should move a comprehensive motion.

The Agenda

5. The Standing Orders Committee will include in a **primary agenda** those motions which require a decision by conference and will place the remaining motions in a secondary agenda.
6. In each section of the primary agenda any motions which relate to pay and conditions of service shall be placed at the beginning of the section.
10. The passage of a **composite or comprehensive motion** does not imply acceptance of the detailed variants in the motions which they cover.
11. Motions which seek to **amend the rules of the Union or the annexes to them or which would require an amendment to the rules of the Union or the annexes to them** will be out of order, unless they are presented in a form which sets out clearly the wording of the amendment(s) necessary.

12. An emergency motion shall deal only with urgent business which has arisen since the final date for the submission of motions to conference and shall require a decision by conference. The Standing Orders Committee shall include in Report No.1, the procedure for dealing with emergency motions.
13. The Standing Orders Committee shall have the sole authority to decide whether or not a motion is competent for consideration as a matter of urgency. It shall publish those motions which it considers to be emergency motions in a report which shall also include provisions for their discussion.
18. In order to make the maximum use of conference time for the discussion of motions on which there may be differing opinions, the General Council will indicate which **motions, if any, on the primary agenda it is willing to have adopted without discussion.** These motions will be listed in a report of the Standing Orders Committee and by adopting the report the conference will carry the motions.
19. **Motions which are not taken because of lack of time** shall be dealt with as if they had been remitted by conference to the General Council.

The Timetable

14. The Standing Orders Committee will arrange motions in the primary agenda into sections and specify periods of time for the discussion of each section and for other conference business. If alterations to the timetable become necessary during the course of a conference the Standing Orders Committee shall submit recommendations to the conference. For such an alteration it is not necessary to resort to the procedure set out in Standing Order No.35.
15. The time allotted to each section of the agenda shall be adhered to as far as possible.
16. The Standing Orders Committee may recommend an opportunity, before motions in a section of the agenda are discussed, for the General Council to place before the delegates any **factual material necessary to bring up-to-date the annual report** in respect of subjects to which the section relates. The time allocated for this purpose to a speaker for the General Council shall be limited to 4 minutes, subject to the President's discretion in exceptional circumstances.
17. Motions shall be taken in the order in which they appear on the agenda. The time allotted to each motion shall be at the discretion of the President.

Conduct of Debates

20. It shall **not be necessary to second motions** or emergency motions included in a Standing Orders Committee report which has been adopted by conference.
21. If the **mover of any motion is not present** when it is called, the President may invite a Branch or the General Council, to move the motion. If the motion is not moved, it will be deemed to have fallen.
22. Each **speaker shall announce his or her name** and Branch or, in the case of a person speaking on behalf of the General Council or the Standing Orders Committee, his or her name and office before speaking on any point.
23. Speeches by movers of motions shall be limited to **4 minutes** and other speeches to **3 minutes**, but these times may be varied at the discretion of the President.
24. The mover of a motion on the agenda shall have the **right of reply** at the close of the debate upon the motion, if anyone has expressed opposition to the motion.
25. Immediately before the mover of a motion on the agenda exercises his or her right of reply or before the vote is taken if there is no right of reply or it is waived, a **speaker on behalf of the General Council** will be afforded the opportunity of addressing conference.

26. A **motion may be withdrawn** only by the proposers with the approval of conference.
27. No one other than a delegate or a member of the Standing Orders Committee may address conference unless authorised by the General Council.
28. Speakers must on all occasions confine themselves strictly to the matter under discussion.
29. **Points of information** shall be allowed only at the discretion of the President.
30. If the President, rises **to call a member to order**, or for any purpose connected with the proceedings, the member speaking shall thereon resume his or her seat and no other member shall rise until the chair is resumed.
31. **The ruling of the President** on any question under standing orders or on points of order or explanation, shall be final unless challenged by not less than 10 delegates. In the event of such a challenge the President shall vacate the chair. The Vice-President, failing whom a member of the General Council, shall then take the chair and shall put it to the vote that the ruling of the President be upheld. Unless two-thirds of the delegates present and voting vote against the motion that the ruling of the President be upheld, the ruling of the President shall stand. When the result of the vote has been declared, the President shall resume the chair and proceed in accordance with the result of the vote.
32. Subject to the rules of the union, **a card vote** may be taken. Card votes for, against or abstaining on the motion under debate will be collected simultaneously.
33. No question which has not been included in Report No.1 of the Standing Orders Committee and no emergency motion shall be decided on a card vote.

Procedural Motions

34. Motions on procedural matters must be moved **and** seconded by delegates or members of the General Council. The mover of a procedural motion may speak on the motion only once and no other speeches shall be allowed save as provided elsewhere in these standing orders.
35. **These standing orders** or any part of them or any provision of a Standing Orders Committee report made under them shall be **suspended** if a motion to that effect is supported by two-thirds of the delegates present and voting. The mover of such a motion shall be allowed by the President sufficient time to explain the purpose of the proposed suspension within the time limit for speeches then applying. If the motion is seconded the President shall similarly allow the Standing Orders Committee to reply before taking the vote.
36. When the motion to adopt a report of the Standing Orders Committee has been moved the President may call any Branch or the General Council, which wishes to move reference back to vary or delete a part of the report. The Standing Orders Committee may reply to such a **reference back** before it is voted upon. If subsequently the motion to adopt the report is carried, the report shall have effect as amended by any reference back accepted by the conference.
37. Reference back of Report No.1 of the Standing Orders Committee or any part of it, must be notified to the Committee in writing at least one week before the start of conference and should be discussed with the Committee before the conference. The Standing Orders Committee shall announce arrangements for such discussions.
38. A debate shall be closed if:
 - (a) A motion **"that the vote now be taken"** is carried but such a motion cannot be put to Conference until the opportunity to oppose the motion under debate has been given. Then if such a motion is moved and seconded it shall be put to the vote without discussion. Such a motion shall not be moved or seconded by a delegate who has previously spoken in the debate. If such a motion is carried the mover of the motion under debate shall, before the

motion is put exercise any right of reply that s/he may have but no other speeches shall be allowed.

(b) A motion **“that conference proceed to next business”** is carried but such a motion cannot be put to Conference until the opportunity to oppose the motion under debate has been given. Then if such a motion is moved and seconded it shall not be moved or seconded by a delegate who has previously spoken in the debate. If such a motion is carried, conference shall proceed forthwith to the next item on the agenda.

39. A motion **“that this motion be remitted to the General Council”** may be moved and seconded by delegates or members of the General Council. The debate on the original motion may continue after the motion to remit it to the General Council has been proposed and seconded, unless the President decides otherwise. At the conclusion of the debate the mover of the original motion shall exercise his or her right of reply, following which the President shall immediately put to conference the proposal that the motion be remitted to the General Council. If the motion to remit is carried, conference shall proceed forthwith to the next item on the agenda, otherwise the original motion will be put to conference.

Miscellaneous

40. In the **absence of the President** the Vice President shall preside at conference. In the absence of both the President and Vice President, the General Council shall elect a member of the Council to preside. The use of the term “President” in these standing orders shall be construed to include the person, other than the President, who presides at conference in accordance with this standing order.

41. Delegates must give one week’s notice in writing to the General Secretary of their intention to ask any question on **the annual report** or the **financial statement**.

42. Delegates must give one week’s notice in writing to the General Secretary of their intention to move a **reference back** of part of the **annual report** and **financial statement** specifying which section(s) they propose to refer back. A motion to refer back the annual report or financial statement must be moved and seconded by delegates. The mover of the motion may speak on the motion only once and no other speeches shall be allowed, save that a speaker on behalf of the General Council will be afforded the opportunity of addressing Conference.

43. During conference **smoking** will not be permitted.

Standing Orders Report No.1

1. A Primary and Secondary Agenda have been devised in accordance with Standing Orders 5, 6 and 7.
2. Composite Motions have been used in accordance with Standing Order 8.
3. Delegates representing Branches whose motions are covered by a Composite Motion which their Branch is not due to propose shall be afforded an opportunity to speak to the relevant Composite Motion.

Motions	Motion covered by it
Composite Motion No.17	48
Composite Motion No.21	49

4. In order to expedite Conference business, Standing Orders Committee recommend that delegates wishing to speak to a Motion once it has been moved, occupy seats reserved for such persons at the front of the Conference hall. Only those delegates who comply with this procedure may be called upon to address Conference.
5. In accordance with Standing Order 12. Branches are hereby informed that Notice of Emergency Motions must be submitted in writing to the Standing Orders Committee at Harkin House not later than **12 noon on Thursday 29 October 2026**. Such submission must be signed by two Branch Officers and indicate the date of the General Meeting at which the Emergency Motions were adopted by the Branch.

Signed: A Boal (Chairperson)

E Donaghy

B O'Neill

Primary Agenda

Motions in this Agenda are due to be discussed.

● Pay and Grading

Motion No.1 (Executive Committee)

Conference recognises the continued efforts of the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to lobby NI Assembly parties to support a budget that appropriately addresses need and allows public services here to recover from decades of underfunding. It is disappointing that, at the time of writing, although the Treasury has put forward a small amount of additional funding, further money is still needed to resolve the budget position for pay awards and public services. Conference notes previous NIPSA policy which set out the case for a multi-year pay claim if a multi-year budget is agreed. The claim included the key element of a review clause to protect from economic changes, such as an increase in inflation.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to build on the progress made through the pay awards of recent years and ensure Civil Service pay is fair and is implemented without delay once the budget is agreed.

Conference recognises, however, that our members have been patient but will not wait indefinitely for the award, which is now significantly overdue. If adequate and timely funding is not secured for Civil Service pay, Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to develop a campaign strategy which will include engaging with politicians both here and in Westminster, engaging with the media and potentially preparing members for an intelligent industrial response, when necessary, to win fair pay for civil servants.

Motion No.2 (Branch 119)

Conference notes that in the vast majority of instances our pay award has been paid long after it is due. These delays have several negative impacts on our members, such as having to borrow to meet rising day-to-day costs in the interim, or the lump sum when it is finally paid affecting their Universal Credit payments.

Conference recognises that the political landscape we operate in has many unique attributes which affect the processes of how our pay deals are arrived at. This can mean that there are different reasons for the delays from one year to the next.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to put steps in place to analyse and assess these delays each year with a view to reducing or eliminating them for future pay deals.

Motions No.3–No.4 unallocated

● Terms and Conditions

Motion No.5 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that some of our members have caring responsibilities for elderly parents, relatives or other dependant adults and may periodically need time away from work to provide care, attend medical appointments, respond to emergencies or make arrangements for ongoing support.

Conference further notes that under current special leave arrangements, requests for unpaid carers' leave may be subject to managerial discretion, leading to inconsistency in decision-making and uncertainty for members who are already balancing significant caring responsibilities.

Carers should not be required to rely on discretionary approval where they can demonstrate that they have genuine and ongoing caring responsibilities. A consistent and fair approach would provide greater support to carers, improve wellbeing, and help retain experienced employees within the Civil Service.

Conference calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to revise the Special Leave Policy to provide a non-discretionary entitlement to unpaid carers' leave for staff who can provide evidence of their caring responsibilities.

Motion No.6 (Executive Committee)

Conference recognises the huge body of work being delivered currently under the Integr8 programme. Management Side have undertaken to review and improve Employee Relations policies across the NICS, including those such as Grievance and Dignity at Work.

Conference notes that other policies now being looked at include Employee Mobility and Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to defend the principle of internal promotion competitions, if necessary, taking on some facets of the Trawl system, and to improve scope for sideways moves.

Conference acknowledges that policies will be introduced that will benefit members such as Reasonable Adjustment and Special Leave. Some policies have seen minimal changes, whilst others will see changes that are less helpful. The new Supporting Attendance and Discipline policies, for instance, have improved language but appear to be predicated on a decision-making process with delegation to the line management at its core.

- Conference notes previous NIPSA policy to resist this development and instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to take the necessary steps to oppose this delegation of decision making to the line management, registering disagreement if needed.
- Conference also instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to challenge as necessary and mitigate against the Management Side proposals where they are not in the best interests of members, and to improve other policy to deliver best practice and better policies in the interests of all members in the NICS.

Motion No.7 (Branch 117)

It was with great sadness earlier this year that we learnt that a young female Civil Servant in HM Treasury took her own life the day following a “fact finding” meeting with her managers on a potential disciplinary case.

The member of staff was convinced that she was going to be sacked when the most likely penalty of the disciplinary action would be a written warning. On asking if she would lose her job, the coroner said the senior manager told the member she “could not predict the outcome at this stage”.

The coroner determined that the manner in which the disciplinary action had been taken had “materially contributed” to the woman’s decision to end her own life.

Whilst this was a GB Civil Servant working in a GB Civil Service department their disciplinary processes especially the holding of informal “Fact Finding” meetings are similar if not identical to NICS disciplinary policy and processes.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage urgently with HR to ensure that internal NICS disciplinary policy and processes are sufficiently straightforward and clear especially with regards to likely outcome and if necessary, press for changes to current disciplinary policy so that a simple misunderstanding of the likely penalty of any disciplinary process could not lead to a similar tragic outcome.

Motion No.8 (Branch 47)

Conference notes that there is currently no specific statutory right to time off work (either paid or unpaid) solely because an employee is undergoing fertility treatment.

IVF is one of the most physically and emotionally demanding and stressful medical processes anyone can go through and yet there is no legal right to time off work for either the treatment itself or related sickness.

This situation leaves our members who are going through this treatment feeling both anxious and uncertain and having to use their annual leave or take time off work sick.

This is unacceptable in a modern workplace.

Conference, therefore, calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to commence negotiations with management for the introduction of a standalone NICS Fertility Leave workplace policy for paid fertility leave and time off for employees undergoing fertility treatment.

Motion No.9 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that employees experiencing long-term sickness absence are often referred to Occupational Health to identify ongoing health concerns, workplace adjustments, and support measures to facilitate a successful return to work. Conference further notes that, although there is no policy requirement to cancel Occupational Health referrals once an employee returns to work, it has become common practice for assessments to be withdrawn when an employee returns to work of their own accord before the assessment takes place.

Conference believes that Occupational Health referrals exist not only to determine fitness to return to work, but also to provide professional advice on supporting a sustainable return, managing ongoing health conditions, and preventing further absence. Conference is concerned that cancelling referrals because an employee has returned to work can deny them access to specialist advice and support when it may be most beneficial.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to ensure that Occupational Health referrals are not cancelled solely because an employee has returned to work of their own accord, and that referrals remain in place unless the employee chooses to withdraw them. Conference further calls for members to continue to have access to Occupational Health assessments where ongoing support, workplace adjustments, or medical guidance may be required.

Motion No.10 (Branch 70)

Conference notes serious concerns regarding the inconsistent application of NICS HR policies and procedures across departments.

Conference is concerned by reports from members that complaints against senior managers are not always investigated with the same rigour as complaints against junior staff. There are also concerns around the lack of transparency surrounding the outcomes of grievances and investigations involving senior grades.

There is a perception that NICS HR functions are increasingly focused on protecting departments and senior management from challenge rather than ensuring fairness, impartiality and compliance with agreed policies.

It is imperative that members have confidence in NICS HR processes if employees are to trust workplace procedures and outcomes.

NICS HR has a duty to act impartially and ensure policies are applied consistently and fairly to all staff, irrespective of grade.

No member should face a different standard of treatment because they occupy a lower grade than those involved in a dispute or complaint. Justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done. A workplace culture where senior management are perceived to be beyond accountability undermines staff morale, confidence and trust in the Civil Service.

Conference instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to seek urgent engagement with NICS HR to address concerns regarding consistency, transparency and accountability. Demand an independent review of how disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work policies are applied across Departments across all grades.

Also seek stronger safeguards to ensure complaints involving senior managers are investigated independently and without undue influence and campaign for a formal right to independent oversight where members raise concerns regarding procedural fairness.

The Civil Service cannot expect employees to uphold the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality unless those same standards are applied equally to every employee, including the most senior managers.

Motion No.11 (Branch 117)

Conference recognises that many members experience short-term health conditions such as injuries, colds, flu, migraines, and gastrointestinal upsets which can make office attendance extremely difficult. However, it is important to highlight, that although these conditions can make it difficult or almost impossible to attend office, in many cases, they would still be capable of carrying out their duties from home.

Under current hybrid working some managers are requiring staff with short-term health conditions to take sick leave despite being well enough to work remotely, resulting in unnecessary absences and a loss of productivity.

Where an employee has the capacity and wishes to do so, they should be permitted to work from home during short-term health conditions to aid recovery, reduce the spread of infection within the workplace, and maintain productivity.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to advise managers to allow staff experiencing a short-term health condition to work from home where operationally feasible and where they are fit to do so, rather than being forced to take a period of sickness or attend the workplace.

Motion No.12 (Branch 118)

Conference notes that there is currently no statutory right to pet bereavement leave in NI. Under The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996, employees have the right to “reasonable” time off to deal with an emergency situation, which includes the death of a dependant.

However, this does not include the death of a pet. For many of our members, their pet is an integral part of their family – often more so than human relatives – and their death is a traumatic and emotionally devastating event. ACAS have stated that “the death of a beloved pet can impact a worker’s mental health, and a good employer should be sensitive and mindful of their employees’ wellbeing.”

Increasingly many employers are recognising the impact a pet’s death can have on their employees and are introducing compassionate leave.

Conference calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to liaise with NICS HR senior management to explore how more pet-friendly, compassionate leave policies can be developed and introduced.

Motion No.13 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that many members working under hybrid arrangements organise their personal and caring responsibilities, travel arrangements, and other commitments around their agreed office days. However, there are occasions where staff are given little or no notice of changes to these arrangements due to business needs, causing unnecessary disruption, inconvenience and expense.

Whilst there may be legitimate operational reasons for requiring attendance on a different day, staff should be given sufficient notice to make alternative arrangements and should not be disadvantaged by last-minute changes.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to establish clear guidance, within the hybrid working policy, requiring a minimum of two weeks' notice when changing an employee's agreed office attendance days.

Motion No.14 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that many members experience significant delays in receiving outcomes and decisions from HR. This leaves staff waiting months for decisions on matters that can have a substantial impact on their employment, pay, wellbeing and career progression.

These delays can cause unnecessary stress and uncertainty for members and may result in employees being left without clarity on issues affecting their working lives.

Conference believes that Service Level Agreements should be put in place between HR and Staff to provide reasonable timescales and expectations on an anticipated outcome/decision.

Once implemented they should be monitored, adhered to and regularly reviewed to ensure that staff receive timely updates and outcomes. Staff should be kept informed of progress and informed when delays occur and provided with revised timescales.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to implement mandatory HR Service Level Agreements across HR functions, and to include transparent reporting, regular communication with affected staff, and appropriate escalation procedures where agreed deadlines are exceeded.

Motions No.15–No.16 unallocated

● Recruitment and Promotion

Composite Motion No.17 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference recognises that the proposed Job Families Framework and Employee Mobility Policy will replace general service volume competitions and have the potential to shape career progression, deployment, promotion and development opportunities across the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Conference believes that, if these policies are to command the confidence of staff, they must be developed and implemented in a fair, transparent and properly resourced way, with meaningful consultation with NIPSA.

Conference is clear that job families and employee mobility must not be used to disadvantage existing staff, restrict access to promotion, undermine existing experience, or create new barriers to career progression. Staff must not be forced into narrow career routes or left behind because they have not previously had access to particular professional pathways, training or development opportunities.

Conference further believes that the framework must support movement across professions and Departments, rather than creating silos which lock staff into one job family or limit future opportunities. Mobility must be genuine, practical and open to all staff, not restricted by grade, location, working pattern, department or current profession. Staff who, through no fault of their own, need to move post due to illness or other circumstances must not be denied the move they require, or placed in an unsuitable post, because of arbitrary job titles or restrictive job family categories.

Conference also believes that the internal promotion element of the policy must be able to deliver real opportunities for existing staff, recognise their skills and experience, and provide clear, fair and transparent routes for advancement within the Civil Service.

Conference further believes that learning and development must be easily available, properly funded and accessible to all staff, so that employees have a realistic opportunity to gain the skills, qualifications and experience needed to move across professions and apply for promotion or mobility opportunities on an equal basis.

Conference therefore instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to:

- Ensure that any Job Families Framework and Employee Mobility Policy contain clear protections so existing staff are not disadvantaged in recruitment, promotion, deployment, grading, access to development, or future career opportunities.
- Ensure that the framework does not create professional or departmental silos.
- Ensure that internal promotion is a central and measurable part of the policy.
- Ensure that learning and development is easily accessible to all staff, properly resourced, and available in time to support staff who wish to move across professions or compete for promotion and mobility opportunities.

- Ensure that staff are supported through training, mentoring, shadowing, upskilling and clear career information, so that mobility is not limited to those who have already had access to specialist opportunities.
- Ensure that NIPSA is fully consulted before any policy is agreed or implemented, and that equality impacts are properly assessed, monitored and addressed to ensure no detriment.

Motion No.18 (Branch 91)

Conference notes that, in recent years, HR have directed to external recruitment to fill vacancies.

This has led to numerous difficulties for members across many branches.

Lack of internal promotion means experienced staff are not retained within the work area. This leads to lapses in customer service and increased workloads for remaining staff, as replacements require training.

Lack of internal promotion leads to poor staff morale and lower job satisfaction rates.

Lack of internal promotion means bigger, more generic competitions – putting more stress on those staff involved in competitions. Competition leads are not allocated time to complete the necessary sifts, panels and allocation of staff on top of their daily jobs. Similarly, any staff sitting on panels do not have weekly workloads decreased.

Poaching of staff from dedicated disciplines e.g. scientific and professional and technical as promotional opportunities are depleted. Not only does this dilute the disciplines, but it leads to lower opportunities for admin staff as they are unable to avail of the specialist vacancies.

Limiting staff's ability to be promoted within the NICS that best reflects their talents and interests and hampers their career development has to stop, as this creates depression, low morale and high levels of sick leave which ultimately impacts on service delivery and set targets.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to encourage Departments to organise smaller, more discrete internal recruitment campaigns, before seeking external recruitment.

Motion No.19 (Executive Committee)

Conference notes that the Northern Ireland Civil Service is planning to replace the existing Competency Framework with a Success Profiles framework as the standard approach to recruitment and promotion.

Whilst the competency element will still exist, Management Side wish to add further criteria to test a wider range of criteria including strengths, experience and technical skills.

Conference believes that recruitment and promotion must be fair, transparent and genuinely open to existing staff. NIPSA has raised concerns that current processes have relied too heavily on external recruitment, reducing meaningful internal promotion and career progression opportunities for civil servants already in post.

Conference is also concerned that Success Profiles may allow too much subjectivity in assessment, rather than clearly and consistently measuring ability, skills and potential. There must be clear evidence that the framework is fair, effective and does not disadvantage staff because of gender, community background, age, disability, working pattern, grade or Department.

Conference therefore instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to ensure that Success Profiles is not allowed to become a barrier to progression, and that NIPSA are fully consulted on how the framework is to operate in practice.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to:

- Ensure that any changes to recruitment and promotion processes are subject to meaningful consultation with NIPSA before they are introduced.
- Seek clear information from Management Side on how Success Profiles is designed, marked, moderated and quality assured, including full equality monitoring data for competitions.
- Ensure that the recruitment and promotion system supports promotion from within, recognises the skills and experience of existing staff, and does not rely on external recruitment at the expense of internal career progression.
- If necessary, press for an independent audit of Success Profiles to assess whether it disadvantages any section of the workforce, including groups protected under Section 75.

Motion No.20 (Branch 14)

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to continue to challenge the quality of feedback currently provided to applicants during Recruitment and some Trawl exercises carried out in the NICS.

The current process involving HR Connect aided recruitment competitions does no more than repeat the original criteria and adding that “the candidate did not demonstrate the required standard.”

This practice does not provide meaningful and constructive guidance to candidates.

It fails to explain precisely how or why a candidate did not meet the criteria, nor does it offer actionable advice on what was missing or how they might improve their application in the future.

The current approach leaves candidates unable to learn or develop from the interview experience, making the feedback process largely useless.

For the process to be genuinely constructive, feedback must do more than highlight shortcomings, it should clearly identify specific areas for improvement and provide tangible suggestions that candidates can act upon.

Otherwise, the purpose of offering feedback is lost, as it does not empower applicants to progress or strengthen future applications.

Furthermore, the lack of detail and actionable guidance undermines confidence in the fairness and openness of the process. Candidates are left uncertain whether their applications were evaluated objectively and the absence of transparency creates opportunities for inconsistency or misuse.

Conference notes Resourcing will be one of the functions coming back in-house to the NICS and Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to work with Management Side to improve the quality of feedback and the transparency of NICS Recruitment and Promotion competitions.

Composite Motion No.21 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference notes that Talent Dog was originally introduced as a short-term recruitment solution for entry-grade NICS competitions. Management Side subsequently advised that its use would be restricted to hard-to-fill vacancies where there were simple and clearly defined eligibility requirements. However, there is growing concern that what was presented as a temporary recruitment tool is becoming an established method of recruitment without meaningful consultation with CTUS.

Talent Dog is operated by a private sector company and therefore represents a significant departure from traditional NICS recruitment processes. While technology can assist recruitment processes, responsibility for ensuring fair, transparent and merit-based appointments must remain with the employer. The increasing reliance on a third-party provider raises legitimate concerns regarding accountability, transparency and oversight of decision-making.

There are also concerns arising from previous recruitment exercises where issues were raised regarding sifting and candidate assessment. The Civil Service Group Executive Committee has consistently highlighted the importance of recruitment processes being transparent, objective and capable of scrutiny. Employees and applicants must have a clear understanding of how decisions affecting their progression are being reached.

The continued expansion of Talent Dog beyond its originally stated purpose risks creating a recruitment process that lacks sufficient consultation, transparency and agreed safeguards. If Talent Dog is to be used, its application should remain limited, proportionate and subject to clear governance arrangements.

Therefore, the Civil Service Group Executive Committee must ensure that:

- Any proposed use of Talent Dog is subject to central consultation and agreement with CTUS before implementation.
- Talent Dog is used only in exceptional circumstances, where all other methods of filling vacancies have been fully explored and exhausted.
- The original commitment that Talent Dog would be used only for hard-to-fill vacancies with straightforward eligibility criteria is maintained.
- Full transparency is provided regarding the operation of Talent Dog, including how candidates are sifted, assessed and progressed through competitions.
- Any equality, diversity and adverse impact assessments relating to the use of Talent Dog are shared with CTUS.
- Talent Dog is used only as a tool to support the selection of candidates for interview and is not used in the compilation or ranking of merit lists.

Motion No.22 (Branch 13)

For many years the NICS has been providing an excellent service to the private ICT sector in Northern Ireland by taking on ICT Placement Students and training them for 51 weeks before releasing them back into the wild to complete their degree course.

Responses are largely positive when these students are surveyed as to whether they would consider returning to the NICS once their degree is complete. But as no mechanism currently exists within the NICS to make these students conditional job offers - as is done by every other private sector ICT company who avails of the same placement scheme - they are invariably already employed elsewhere on higher salaries by the time the NICS next comes to recruit.

Concurrently, the average age of ICT staff within the NICS continues to rise. Despite the unrelenting directive to recruit externally this continues to be the case; largely down to uncompetitive NICS salaries in the profession.

Wouldn't it be great if there was some way in which both these problems were able to be resolved?

This has been a live issue for at least 10 years now. And while the list of senior staff who have accepted the arguments for change during that time is extensive, to date, nothing of substance appears to have been done to actually resolve the issue.

Conference requests that the ability for the NICS to retain ICT Placement Students via conditional offers of employment be investigated as a matter of urgency. No doubt the mechanisms around this may need to be navigated carefully, but Conference has every confidence that between NICSHR, Senior ICT Management and the NIPSA ICTCC, surely we can overcome this challenge!

Motion No.23 (Branch 11)

Reform of the NICS Competition Sift Review Process.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Uniform Appeals Process is a formal mechanism allowing employees to appeal specific human resource decisions. It allows for an issue to be re-examined by a party who did not make the original decision.

Unfortunately, the Uniform Appeals Process does not apply to NICS Competition Sifts. Instead, candidates may request a review of the decision.

The reasons why this process is unfair are clear. Firstly, the sift feedback received is often so generic that candidates are unsure what weaknesses, if any, were identified in their original application. This places them at a disadvantage when preparing a review request.

Secondly, review requests are considered by the same panel who made the original decision. This creates an obvious risk of bias and undermines confidence in the process.

To give a real example, in the NISRA Grade 7 Principal Statistician competition (IRC315177), 24 review requests were submitted and none were successful. Similar outcomes have been observed in other competitions.

Conference calls upon the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to work with the Department of Finance and NICS HR to replace the current Competition Sift Review Process with an independent appeals mechanism, ensuring that applications are reviewed objectively by individuals who were not involved in the original sift decision.

Motion No.24 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that many members undertake temporary promotion opportunities to support operational delivery and gain valuable experience. Frequently due to business reasons TPs are extended beyond the original scope of the expression of interest often for many months or in some cases years.

When this happens staff can become accustomed not just to the job role, but also to the financial impact of working at a higher grade for a significant period of time. However, even in these types of circumstances members are often given very little notice when a temporary promotion is due to end, sometimes only a few days before returning to their substantive grade.

Staff who have adjusted their budgets, childcare arrangements, travel plans and other responsibilities based on their temporary promotion should be afforded sufficient time to prepare for any change in circumstances. This lack of notice can create unnecessary financial uncertainty and hardship.

Staff who have accepted a temporary promotion deserve to be treated fairly and with respect, and reasonable notice should be provided whenever a temporary promotion is due to end.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to establish a reasonable mandatory minimum notice period when ending a Temporary Promotion.

Motions No.25–No.26 unallocated

● Allowances

Motion No.27 (Branch 35)

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with management regarding the analysis being conducted by the Department of Finance of posts which attract pay leads or allowances with a recruitment or retention element. Areas across the Civil Service have been asked to provide justification for these pay leads or allowances. Conference asks the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to remain fully informed of developments and to act to protect the interests of affected members.

Motion No.28 (Branch 191)

The cost-of-living crisis shows no signs of abating. Hard working families are still struggling and the delay in negotiating this year's pay rise is not helping. For some members this wait is compounded by the continued stagnation of the Shift Disturbance Allowance Ceiling – ongoing now for 18 years.

Shift Disturbance Allowance is not a fixed rate allowance; it is paid as a percentage of your basic salary based on the type of shift pattern you work ... until it hits a ceiling of £31,536. A ceiling which has seen no increase since 2008. Members should be paid fairly for their alternative working pattern and not have that compensation suppressed by a number picked just one year after the smoking ban arrived in Northern Ireland.

At the top end members are losing thousands of pounds a year and the rest of us are catching up fast with only AOs yet to hit this ceiling. When it was set it was in the middle of the DP pay point – now it sits at the bottom of the EOII scale. This should never have been allowed to happen, and we must address it without delay. If the 2008 number had risen with inflation it would be £51,905. If it had remained in the middle of the DP scale it would be £48,408, yet it remains firmly stuck in the past, costing members money on a daily basis.

To have an allowance be set in 2008 and stagnate ever since is simply unacceptable and we must do everything we can to ensure it does not continue. Therefore, Conference asks the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to take appropriate steps to seek an increase to the shift disturbance allowance ceiling as part of this year's and future pay negotiations. It should be restored as fast as possible to a level which reflects members' current salaries with the ultimate goal of eradicating it entirely, allowing members to be paid what they deserve for their time and efforts.

Motion No.29 (Branch 124)

Conference is extremely concerned that the current application of NICS travel and subsistence policies unfairly disadvantages staff who live significant distances from their office base.

Staff who live over an hour from their designated office are often required to attend additional training courses, meetings, and other official business at alternative locations. In many cases, employees whose designated office is in Belfast are required to attend training and meetings at other Belfast locations.

While these journeys are undertaken at the employer's direction, travel expenses are calculated from the employee's designated office rather than from their home. As a result, an employee from the West/North West/South West may travel up to 170 miles return from their home to attend official business yet be eligible to claim only a small mileage allowance (less than 10 miles).

These additional costs are incurred on top of normal commuting expenses, which are not reimbursed, creating a disproportionate financial burden for staff who live significant distances from their designated office.

Furthermore, working time for such journeys may not be recognised until an employee reaches or passes their designated office location, resulting in a significant loss of flexi time despite substantial travel being undertaken on official business at the employer's direction. Consequently, staff may be required to undertake lengthy journeys before and after a full working day, leading to extended days away from home, later finishing times and increased fatigue.

This motion instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to seek to negotiate changes to the current arrangements to ensure that staff who reside significant distances (over an hour) from their designated office receive fair treatment when required to attend official business at locations other than their designated office.

Motion No.30 (Branch 11)

Conference notes that civil servants directly employed by organisations such as the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) are eligible for Environmental Allowances associated with their workplace and duties.

Conference further notes that NISRA statisticians and other civil servants on secondment to organisations such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) are denied equivalent allowances on the basis that they remain employed by their parent department, despite carrying out their duties within the same working environment.

Conference believes that employees working in the same environment should receive the same allowances, regardless of whether they are directly employed or seconded.

Conference further believes that the current arrangements create an unfair disparity in treatment and financially disadvantage members who undertake secondments.

Conference calls upon the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to:

- Challenge the current policy which prevents seconded civil servants from receiving Environmental Allowances available to directly employed colleagues working in the same environment.
- Seek full clarification from the Department of Finance and NICS HR on the legal and policy basis for this differential treatment.
- Pursue negotiations to secure equal treatment for seconded staff carrying out duties in environments that attract Environmental Allowances.
- Consider legal and industrial avenues to challenge the current arrangements should negotiations fail.

Motions No.31–No.32 unallocated

● Staffing and Resourcing

Motion No.33 (Executive Committee)

Conference notes the launch of the consultation process on Public Sector Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy by the NICS in August this year. This was overseen and led by The Executive Office (TEO) and there was recognition that the necessary consultation process with Trade Union Side was not followed.

Conference welcomes the fact that the Civil Service Group Executive Committee again raised concerns with the TEO and senior NICS Management Side on 14 September about the failure to properly consult and underlined our concerns in relation to the impacts AI may have on employment, terms and conditions, job content, work processes and the environment. Conference also notes that an apology was received by NIPSA from the NICS regarding this failure.

Conference further notes that in 2025, General Conference policy committed NIPSA to:-

- Defending jobs, working towards a shorter working week with no loss of pay, and ensuring employers provide ongoing training to keep workers apace with changing workplaces.
- Meaningful consultation and negotiation on any introduction of AI or transformational projects.
- Involving trade union reps in workplaces to ensure ethical usage and consideration of environmental concerns.
- Ensuring that employers respect the data security and privacy of workers in the workplace with clear regulations on the collection and usage of any personal data.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to ensure that the ongoing consultation with the NICS will be formalised, progressed and will build on the safeguards of the AI policy adopted at the 2025 General Conference.

Motion No.34 (Branch 31)

Conference notes the continued increase in workloads across many areas of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), the persistent failure to fill vacant posts in a timely manner, resulting in existing staff being required to absorb additional duties and responsibilities. The growing reliance on goodwill from staff to maintain services and deliver departmental priorities has led to increasing numbers of members reporting stress, anxiety, burnout and other mental health difficulties directly linked to excessive workloads and sustained workplace pressures as members are being continually expected to do more with less, with increasing demands placed upon them despite reduced staffing levels.

Repeated public statements by the NICS regarding its commitment to staff wellbeing, mental health and creating a supportive working environment show that there is a significant disconnect between the NICS's stated commitment to staff wellbeing and the lived experience of many members. Wellbeing initiatives, awareness campaigns and support services cannot compensate for excessive workloads, chronic understaffing and unrealistic expectations. The most effective way to improve staff wellbeing is to ensure adequate staffing levels, realistic workloads and meaningful workforce planning. (Decent pay would help too but

that's a different discussion!) The current situation is unsustainable and risks damaging both the health of staff and the quality of public services.

Conference condemns the continued failure to effectively address long-standing staffing shortages across the NICS, the expectation that staff should continually absorb additional work arising from unfilled vacancies, and any organisational approach that prioritises delivery targets over the health and wellbeing of employees.

Conference therefore calls upon the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to campaign for the immediate filling of vacant posts across the NICS, press NICS senior management to undertake a comprehensive review of staffing levels and workload pressures across all Departments, and consider all appropriate strategies and actions where employers fail to take meaningful action to address workload pressures and staffing deficits.

Conference further resolves that the Civil Service Group Executive Committee should continue to highlight the link between understaffing, excessive workloads and deteriorating mental health, and make the achievement of safe, sustainable workloads a key industrial relations priority.

Motion No.35 (Executive Committee)

Conference welcomes the planned return of NICS functions previously outsourced to HR Connect and notes the work carried out at Central Whitley to deliver this result under the Integr8 programme.

Members have been frustrated by the need to use the private sector provider in, for example, recruitment competitions and personal cases covered by Resourcing and Employee Relations functions. NIPSA representatives have shared this frustration and the need to engage with such providers.

It is envisaged that the outsourced functions will be limited to payroll as the Integr8 programme will see the first 3 'Waves', or stages, of work deliver Finance functions back to the NICS by August 2027. This will be followed by Employee Information, Pay and Reward, Recruitment, Absence Management in Wave 4, and Talent Management, Performance Management, Learning & Development and Workforce Planning in Wave 5, currently scheduled for January 2028.

Conference welcomes that the Civil Service Group Executive Committee has engaged with Management Side regarding the consequences of the change and instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to continue to negotiate the return in house of as many of these functions as possible.

Motion No.36 (Branch 70)

With the release of the draft AI strategy for the public sector, Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to ensure a robust push back around the use of artificial intelligence in the NICS.

Our members are increasingly concerned that AI is being viewed as a mechanism to reduce staffing levels, suppress recruitment, centralise functions and drive “efficiency savings” at the expense of workers. There is also the narrative from governments that AI can replace tasks currently undertaken by civil servants. The value of public services comes from the knowledge, experience and judgement of public servants, not from algorithms.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to develop an industrial strategy, including consideration of collective industrial action, where the NICS seek to impose AI-driven workforce reductions.

To commission a report identifying the jobs and grades most vulnerable to automation in the Civil Service and work with other trade unions across the North to build a coordinated campaign against the use of AI as a tool for public sector jobs.

Every AI system introduced into the Civil Service must be judged against one fundamental principle: if technology threatens jobs, grades or conditions, NIPSA should organise, campaign and, where necessary, industrially resist its implementation.

Motions No.37–No.38 unallocated

● Equality

Motion No.39 (Branch 175)

Conference recognises that current NI Civil Service policy on paternity leave does not offer all parents equal support at a most important and vulnerable time when a worker takes time off work to bond with and look after a child. Ensuring paternity leave matches maternity leave is entirely consistent with the NI Civil Service's commitment to being a diverse and inclusive employer with supportive family friendly policies that also meet business needs. Equalising maternity leave and paternity leave would be in the interests of equality and would ensure that both parents can support the child in the earliest stages of their development. This would also have the benefit of equalising the impact of having children on both parents, rather than the implied presumption that mothers are primary carers. Noting the gendered language of maternity and paternity leave policies, matching paternity leave to maternity leave would also benefit same sex couples who have children. This motion calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to work towards ensuring in a timely manner that paternity leave in the NI Civil Service is extended to match maternity leave.

Motion No.40 (Branch 118)

A workplace crèche is an on-site or employer-affiliated childcare facility that helps working parents balance their job duties with family responsibilities.

Conference asks the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to investigate the benefits of a workplace-based crèches for our members.

Benefits for Employees

- Less Stress: Parents feel more relaxed knowing their child is close by and safe.
- Save Time: Families skip long commutes to separate daycare centres.
- Better Focus: Knowing kids are well cared for helps staff concentrate on tasks.
- Easier Visits: Parents can check in or feed their young children during breaks.

Benefits for Employers

- Happy Staff: Access to reliable childcare improves job satisfaction and morale.
- Attract Talent: Family-friendly perks help companies stand out when hiring new workers.
- Keep Workers: Employees are less likely to quit when good childcare support is available.
- Lower Absence: Staff miss fewer days of work due to last-minute childcare breakdowns.

Key Considerations

- Setup and Rules: Facilities must meet strict local safety, staffing, and space standards.
- Management Options: Companies can run an in-house room or partner with local providers.
- Short-Term vs Long-Term: Some crèches offer flexible, short-stay care (a few hours), while others function as full day nurseries.

Motion No.41 (Branch 119)

With our members now required to attend the office for 40% of the working week. Members with childcare responsibilities are affected by inflexible childcare availability. Access to affordable and reliable childcare remains a significant challenge and can increase stress for our members. No member should be disadvantaged in their employment because they cannot secure suitable childcare.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to work with the NICS and local childcare providers to establish a scheme for members to reserve childcare places on their office days and to explore partnerships with childcare facilities within a reasonable distance from workplace locations.

Motion No.42 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that many members disclose health conditions or workplace barriers that may require reasonable adjustments to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. However, Occupational Health referrals are not always considered or offered at an early stage, which can result in opportunities to identify additional support measures being missed.

Occupational Health assessments can play an important role in identifying barriers to work, recommending appropriate adjustments, and supporting managers and employees in creating an inclusive working environment. Conference further believes that the offer of an Occupational Health assessment should complement, not delay, the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

Conference recognises that where a need for reasonable adjustments has been identified, managers should take timely action and should not wait for an Occupational Health report before implementing straightforward or obvious adjustments.

Conference calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to ensure that whenever reasonable adjustments are discussed or requested, an Occupational Health assessment is offered to the staff member, whilst making clear that this should not delay the implementation of reasonable adjustments where these can be put in place immediately.

Motions No.43–No.44 unallocated

● Health and Safety

Motion No.45 (Branch 119)

Conference notes that in many buildings on the estate that post-Covid standards of cleaning are of a substandard and that this is not acceptable. With the prevalence of “hot desking” this only amplifies the need to ensure a basic standard of cleanliness. Reports of drugstore beetles in one building, where there was no sense of urgency to inform staff and delays in eradicating them is not acceptable. As well as reports of hand soap not being available in staff bathrooms. Staff should not be expected to work in environments that could be detrimental to their health. Safe and clean working environments should be a basic requirement and Conference asks the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to take this forward as a priority and ask for a guarantee that cleaning contracts are up to the job.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage the relevant bodies within the NICS and arms length bodies to ensure staff attending office buildings & civil service estate, are attending a clean and safe working environment.

Motions No.46–No.47 unallocated

Secondary Agenda

Motions in this Agenda are not to be discussed

● **Category A**

Motions covered by composite motions contained in the Primary Agenda.

Composite Motion No.17

Motion No.48 (Branch 119)

Conference notes that the words “The NICS is committed to career development and offers attractive career prospects across a wide variety of roles and professions. Career development is an integral part of the performance management system. Personal Development Plans identify learning and development needs with a view to enhancing skills and capabilities. NI Civil Servants have access to a wide range of internal job opportunities, including secondments with external organisations and are encouraged and supported in proactively managing their career” appear on many Candidate Information Booklets. However, the reality does not match this aspiration. The changing processes and requirements for promotion within the NICS and the shift toward external recruitment have left our members at a disadvantage to those who work elsewhere. Although training is provided for the role people are currently doing, training that will help with development into other roles is often denied to them.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to liaise with the NICS and ALBs with a view to ensuring that all staff who wish have access to learning and development opportunities which will directly support their career development.

Composite Motion No.21

Motion No.49 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that in the recent permanent AO Competition applicants were required to complete an online assessment based on workplace preferences and behaviours. Candidates were informed that there were no right or wrong answers, yet responses were weighted and scored, with only the highest-scoring candidates progressing to the next stage of recruitment.

Conference believes this approach is contradictory and lacks transparency. If responses are scored and used to decide which candidates progress, then some answers are clearly considered more desirable than others. Conference is concerned that candidates were rejected based on preference-based assessments without having the opportunity to demonstrate their skills, experience, and competencies.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to review the use of preference-based assessments in recruitment exercises and ensure that recruitment processes remain fair, transparent, and based on candidates’ ability to perform the role.

● Category B

Motions which restate NIPSA policy and therefore do not require a Conference decision.

Motion No.50 (Branch 13)

The ceiling of annual leave in the NICS has been in place in its current form for many decades now.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to explore an uplift of the existing quantum of annual leave days that is currently provided to staff. Specifically:

- An increase from 30 days to at least 32 days, after 5 years' service
- Additional days after 10, 15 or 20 years to reward and incentivise long service

Motion No.51 (Branch 14)

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to challenge the current inefficiency policy regarding the start date of written warnings.

At present, a written warning takes effect from the date the letter is issued.

Conference seeks to replace this with the employee's first date of return to work, as there can be considerable delay between the start and conclusion of the process, during which any improvement in attendance is not taken into account.

Where that delay is due to a lack of NICS HR resources, it is unfair for an already stressful and extended process to be prolonged further.

Motion No.52 (Branch 110)

Strengthening Internal Recruitment, Career Progression and Workforce Stability in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Many NICS staff face limited career progression and promotion opportunities due to restricted internal pathways, leaving experienced workers unable to progress despite proven capability.

Furthermore, the NICS grading structure differs from the GB Civil Service—particularly across Executive Officer grades—creating inconsistencies in workforce planning, mobility, and comparability.

Long-serving agency staff continue to make vital contributions—often standing shoulder to shoulder on picket lines—yet remain trapped in precarious employment without fair access to permanent roles.

When agency workers do secure permanent posts, they frequently suffer a detriment by returning to the bottom of the pay scale and losing earned entitlements, such as additional annual leave. Excessive reliance on aptitude-based testing further disadvantages long-serving staff and agency workers who have demonstrated workplace competence over years of service.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with relevant NICS Departments to:

- Review Internal Recruitment & Progression: Strengthen internal promotion pathways to give existing staff fair, timely, and accessible progression opportunities.
- Assess Grading Alignment: Conduct a formal review into aligning NICS EO2 and EO1 grades with GB Civil Service equivalents to improve consistency, mobility, and fairness.
- Reform Recruitment Methods: Review the use of aptitude-based testing to ensure practical workplace experience, service history, and demonstrated competence are appropriately valued over standardised examinations.
- Create Direct Pathways for Agency Workers: Establish a clear mechanism for long-serving agency staff to transition into permanent roles without loss of pay increments or accrued annual leave entitlements earned through their prior service.

Motion No.53 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that under current attendance management procedures, formal sickness warnings remain live for up to two years from the date they are issued.

Due to the time taken to arrange attendance meetings, review evidence and issue outcomes, members can find that a warning remains active significantly longer than two years from the date of their last sickness absence. Even if all actions are taken timeously, normally 2-3 months pass between date of absence, to date of warning issued.

Obviously, this can be much longer during periods when HR are particularly busy and there can be substantial delays between the final absence and the warning by up to 6 months or even longer.

Conference believes that attendance warnings should be linked to the period of absence that gave rise to the warning, rather than administrative timescales that are largely outside the employee's control.

Members should not be disadvantaged by delays in the attendance management process. Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to amend attendance management policies so that the duration of any formal sickness warning is calculated from the employee's last day of sickness absence, rather than the date on which the warning is issued.

Motion No.54 (Branch 117)

Conference, you will all be aware that the Civil Service has undergone a significant transformation in working practices following the pandemic, in which staff have consistently demonstrated their ability to deliver high-quality public services whilst working remotely. Productivity and performance have continued to be maintained across many business areas which has proved that a physical presence in an office is not a primary determinant of effective work.

Despite this, many members are required to attend the office for 40% of their working time regardless of performance, operational need or individual circumstances.

Mandatory attendance requirements place additional financial pressures on staff through commuting and associated costs, it negatively impacts work-life balance, and has created challenges for those with caring responsibilities, disabilities or health conditions.

Reducing mandatory office attendance would improve staff wellbeing, support recruitment and retention, reduce environmental impact, and maintain effective service delivery.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR with a view to reducing the mandatory office attendance requirement from 40% to 20% for roles suitable for hybrid working.

Motion No.55 (Branch 117)

Conference notes that new entrants to the Civil Service are subject to a probationary period of at least 12 months, which may be extended by a further 6 months. This is considerably longer than probationary periods commonly found in the private sector and can leave employees facing prolonged uncertainty regarding their employment status.

Where staff have demonstrated the required skills, behaviours and performance standards, there is little justification for extending uncertainty beyond what is necessary to assess suitability for the role.

The Civil Service should provide new staff with job security and certainty at the earliest reasonable opportunity. This will allow the new staff member to feel competent, trusted, and will help to build their confidence.

Conference therefore calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to review existing probationary arrangements with a view to reducing probation periods to align more closely with those commonly found within other workplaces.

● Category D

Motions which are competent to be dealt with by a body established under Rule 6.9(a) of the Rules of the Union which are remitted to the Executive Committee for reference to that body.

Motion No.56 (Branch 118)

In the UK, the conversation around AI and employment is gaining legislative traction. Conference asks the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to seriously audit the government's usage of AI to assist workers in their roles. As we move forward and AI is adapted into the workplace, we must ensure that:

- TUS side is consulted before implementing high-risk AI systems.
- Ensure transparency by providing personalised explanations for AI-driven decisions.
- Scrutinise the usage and storage of GDPR protected information, that people outside the government should not be privy to.
- Enhance life skills and expand educational opportunities to adapt to workforce changes.
- Protect against unfair dismissal by classifying AI-driven terminations as "automatically unfair".

Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance

Civil Service Group

Annual Delegate Conference 2026

The following candidates have been nominated for election at the Annual Delegate Conference 2026:

Chairperson

Creaney, T*

Vice Chairpersons (2 Votes)

Candidate's Name

Glass, L

Lowry, D

McKee, M

O'Sandair, R

Executive Committee 22 (votes)

Candidate's Name

Brooks, W.	Glass, L.	Morgan, C.
Callan, B.	Gowdy, S.	Morgan, J.
Coghlan, K.	Kennedy, M.	Mulholland, B.
Cobain, P.	Loughran, M.	O' Neill, M.
Collins, L.	Lowry, D.	O' Reilly, B.
Crane, S.	McAtamney, E.	O' Sandair, R.
Crilly, D.	McCartney, G.	Rice, T.
Dale, P.	McErlean, D.	Russell, V.
Davidson, J.	McGeehan, B.	Sloan, D.
Eaton, B.	McKee, M.	Soto-Kelly, P.
England, B.	McLernon, G.	Veighey, J.
Garland, H.	Millar, A.	

**Returned Unopposed*

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