



Civil Service Group Annual Delegate Conference

Clayton Hotel, Belfast

Agenda 2025

Thursday 6 November 2025

Timetable

Thursday 6 November 2025

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 - 5
11.30am	Terms and Conditions	Motions 8 - 16
1.00pm	Lunch	
2.00pm	Terms and Conditions continued	
2.15pm	Recruitment and Promotion	Motions 19 – 21
2.50pm	Allowances	Motions 24 - 25
3.15pm	Staffing and Resourcing	Motions 28 - 29
3.35pm	Equality	Motions 32 - 34
4.05pm	Organisation and Administration	Motion 37
4.20pm	Guillotined Motions	
4.30pm	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 30 October 2025**.

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 31 October 2025**.

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 These standing orders will apply to General and Group Conferences until they are amended or rescinded by a motion adopted by an annual Delegate General Conference.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.

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.

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.
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.

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.
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.

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.
 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.
- ## 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. Comprehensive Motions have been used in accordance with Standing Order 9.
3. Delegates representing Branches whose motions are covered by either a Composite Motion or Comprehensive Motion which their Branch is not due to propose shall be afforded an opportunity to speak to the relevant Composite or Comprehensive Motion.

Motions	Motion covered by it
Composite Motion No.9	<i>40, 41 and 42.</i>
Composite Motion No.19	<i>43</i>
Composite Motion No.24	<i>44</i>

4. If Motion 9 is carried, Motion 10 falls.
5. 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.
6. 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 30 October 2025**. 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: E Donaghy (Chairperson)

A Boal

Primary Agenda

Motions in this Agenda are due to be discussed.

● Pay and Grading

Motion No.1 (Executive Committee)

Conference congratulates the Civil Service Group Executive Committee and Branches on securing the 20-month 2024/26 NICS pay deal, that equated to between 9% and 11% for members. This has once again put civil servants at the forefront of public sector pay awards.

Conference recognises that 2024 conference policy called on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to explore strategies including multi-year pay deals. Taking account of the 3-year budget that will be in place from April 2026, conference welcomes the Civil Service Group Executive Committee's recommendation to submit a 3-year pay claim to match the period of the budget.

Members were consulted on the claim that seeks to achieve:

- inflationary pay awards on all scale points and allowances and 9% to address restoration;
- the amalgamation of the AA and AO grades and for the new combined grade to have a single point scale; and
- the removal of the bottom point on all other pay scales (EOII to Grade 6).

Conference acknowledges the fact that economic changes, such as inflation, could affect the value of the award over time and, therefore, a re-opening clause is a key element of the multi-year claim.

Conference restates that civil servants must never again be left behind. We must build on the gains made over the last number of years and continue to progress pay restoration to allow members a decent and fair standard of living.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to strive to deliver the claim in negotiations with Management Side and calls on them to explore additional avenues to further the claim, including political lobbying and industrial action if necessary.

Motion No.2 (Branch 119)

Our agency members have stood with us on picket lines when the call for strike came out. They have contributed to the Union and the workplace.

Currently an agency member of staff who has years of experience will go back to the bottom of the pay scale and lose the extra 5 days annual leave, earned after 5 years' service, if they take on a permanent post at the same grade. This is especially galling when they "move" into the post they had been doing for years. The rationale of the increments is to represent the experience that has been gained. And the 5 extra days leave to reward the loyalty of sticking in the post. Our agency members have gained the experience, and it could be argued they've shown more loyalty as they have stayed in posts despite the precariousness of their position.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to explore ways in which our agency members will not suffer a detriment in pay and annual leave when they take up full time posts within the NICS and associated Arm's-length bodies.

Motion No.3 (Branch 31)

At a time when many members are living pay cheque to pay cheque and relying on credit cards and overdrafts to get by, the NICS could make life a little bit easier by giving members a fixed salary payment date. With our salary payment date changing every month it can be difficult to manage monthly bills, especially in those months where we are paid on the 29th as happened 4 times in 2024 and will happen twice this year.

Many companies will not allow direct debits to be set for a date later than the 28th meaning that members can have significant bills due to go out the day before they are paid. This can result in missed payments or further debt and creates a lot of unnecessary stress for members.

Our branch believes that a fixed salary payment date of the 28th, with the exception of December where early payment could still continue, would be a great help to the members. However, we recognise that there may be other options which are more beneficial to members. We therefore ask that this conference instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to examine the matter of salary payment dates, consult members to see how wide and deeply felt this motion is and, if appropriate, formulate proposals to management side to address the concerns of members.

Motion No.4 (Branch 119)

Conference is thankful for the recent uplift in the Overtime Cap. This has followed a period where many staff were not getting the full overtime rates due to the Cap not being increased in line with pay increases.

Overtime rates are capped at the top of the EO1 scale for grades AA to EO1 and the top of the Grade 7 scale for grades up to Grade 6. But as the figures are quoted in the Policy, this means if they are not updated at the same time as our wages increase, the Cap cuts part of the overtime pay away.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to liaise with management with a view to ensuring that the Overtime Cap will not reduce the relative value of overtime work for our members. This could be achieved by future proofing the policy by removing the figures and replacing them with the appropriate grade, or by gaining agreement that the Cap will increase in line with pay increases.

Motion No.5 (Branch 119)

Job Evaluation and Grading Support (JEGS), are required to ensure that each group within the NICS is carrying out work suitable to their grade. We currently have a very wide array of duties assigned to the AO grade, dependent on what area they are placed. Some areas have seen the type of work, as well as the level of work change drastically over recent years.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to liaise with management side across the NICS, and Arm's-length Bodies where appropriate to carry out JEGS exercises for the AO role in each area of the NICS. These exercises should begin in areas where the work assigned to AOs is seen as being at the higher level of the grade.

Motions No.6–No.7 unallocated

● Terms and Conditions

Motion No.8 (Executive Committee)

Motion 13 of the 2024 Civil Service Conference acknowledged the need to engage with Northern Ireland Civil Service management on a programme of necessary policy reviews. That work is firmly underway with NICS consulting on several draft policies at this time. We have seen improvements secured on Maternity and Adoption Leave and some improvements on Allowances as our conference policy on these is progressed. We hope to secure further progression on Paternity and Annual Leave and to defend gains previously secured on policies still to be reviewed.

Conference believes we should continue to engage with the Integr8 transformation projects and work to remove outsourcing and the involvement of HR Connect, as far as possible, from the NICS.

Some policy reviews will be complex and we need to be vigilant as to NICS management's intentions and to ensure roles are not overburdened such as those involved in line management duties.

Conference calls on the incoming Executive Committee to progress the reviews and secure the best result possible on future changes. Conference also reaffirms the need for full scrutiny of all policy changes to ensure there is no detriment to members and no diminution on our hard-won terms and conditions of service.

Composite Motion No.9 (to be moved by Branch 13)

If Motion 9 is carried, Motion 10 falls.

Conference has concerns around v2.0 of the Hybrid Working Policy.

While we commend the outgoing NIPSA Central Whitley team for successfully negotiating a number of concessions from the original Management proposal and for ultimately refusing to give NIPSA agreement to this badly thought-out policy which rather daringly no justification or rationale has been provided for, numerous concerns persist. Unsurprisingly the enforced policy change remains a major issue that lots of members right across the grade spectrum are not happy about. It's also clear that the high-level decision to actively disgruntle the NICS workforce was inspired more by political optics and baiting from shock-jock radio hosts than by logic or reality. The prior status quo which formed organically to meet business needs yet still maximise employee flexibility has now given way to an equalisation of misery for all staff. The 'strategy' appears to be to just force it through against the wishes of staff and then deal with the fallout later.

A tacit hierarchy has now been created where an office-based day is deemed to be worth more than a day spent working from home, regardless of output. In real terms that means more time wasted commuting, increased costs incurred from additional commuting, and for zero gain. Whatever happened to all the environmental arguments made only a few years ago of having fewer cars on the road? Presumably that doesn't matter anymore. If so, it's great news that all those worrying climate concerns must now be over...

The management and enforcement of the 40% minimum is inevitably going to become an industry in itself. The number of collective hours wasted in doing so does not bear thinking about... The vast majority of line managers do not want this, or to be forced to implement it. A flexible 'at line managers discretion' approach is a common theme across the NICS handbook and a key tenet of the principles of the wider organisation. It ensures that line managers at all levels are trusted to best manage their own work areas. The more rigidly needless restrictive policies

like this are enforced, the more problems it will inevitably cause for all. Yet even in its infancy this is already proving to be less flexible than it needs to be even within its own terms, with staff being asked to commit to routine days in a workstyle agreement, rather than simply having the flexibility to choose their office-based days week-by-week within the 40% target. Others are being mandated specific days they do not want, based on a rota, due to capacity issues of the now reduced NICS estate. It's not the fault of our members that the NICS no longer have the capacity to house all staff on their preferred days.

Are people with low level anxiety issues all going to be forced to get notes from their doctor for reasonable adjustments in order to continue primarily working from home, as they have been doing very successfully for the last 5½ years? Particularly as we move into winter, will managers allow people with a bad cold or Covid to work from home, or will staff be forced to make a choice between coming in to spread the virus vs needlessly taking sick leave? This is a huge regression for employees and the business alike.

In some areas, such as ICT, where a WFH culture is commonplace / borderline expected within the industry, introduction of mandatory minimum office days will likely impact staff retention efforts. It also has the likely consequence of accelerating a loss of key business knowledge due to an increase in early retirement requests.

Members will note that the recent external Executive Officer II recruitment competition was published with a large 'Work Life Balance' graphic as its cover page image. This is how the NICS wishes to portray itself to prospective employees. However, in reality, Management increasingly appears to be seeking to curtail T&Cs around such flexibility. Are the NICS 'Investors in People' in name only?

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to continue to actively challenge the implementation of this illogical policy at all levels, as and when issues arise. Going forward TUS need to monitor spikes in sick leave, increases in discipline cases, as well as resignations or requests for early retirement. We must ensure that the reasons for these are documented accordingly. Management needs to fully own any consequences stemming from this.

The ultimate goal needs to remain returning to the most flexible version of a hybrid working policy possible, where staff are able to work from their chosen location as much as possible, only being forced into specific locations when there is an explicit business need to do so.

Motion No.10 (Branch 70)

With the recent changes to the hybrid working arrangements across the NICS, Conference asks the incoming Executive to ensure there is no return to a five-day working within the service. Members have greatly valued the change in their work-life balance since 2020. The recent increase to 40% attendance in the office feels the stance of an employer who does not trust their staff to work from home even though the statistics show that productivity has not reduced.

We do need to be mindful of members who cannot work from home for specific reasons but those who do require five days working in the office can currently avail of this within the NICS. The white elephants that are the Connect 2 hubs which were launched in a blaze of glory in 2022 have now been reduced to a side show, with NICS staff only allowed to use these in exceptional circumstances under the current policy.

The gap between the NICS and the private sector grows ever narrower in respect of flexible working arrangements. NICS management should take heed of that

fact and that 40% is more than enough mandated attendance at the office for our members. Conference calls on the incoming Executive Committee to robustly defend this position and to ensure that there is no drip-drip return to a five-day office week.

Motion No.11 (Branch 117)

Conference, members will be aware that bereavement is one of the most stressful things that a person can face and yet we find ourselves working for an employer who at the time of writing does not have an established bereavement policy.

Whilst there is a right to 2 weeks bereavement leave for permanent staff this is only the case when it is a “close family member” which means parent, child or sibling.

In our local society many people have very close relationships with grandparents or aunts and uncles and death of one of these relative who do not fall within the NICS definition of close family will have a similar impact on the bereaved person. Many people also have close personal relationships with their friends both inside and outside of work whose passing would have a similar impact to a family member and there is no right to time off for these bereavements, any time off granted is discretionary.

There is minimal training for Line-Managers/Team Leaders for dealing with members of staff who are recently bereaved.

We therefore call upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR with a view to widening the definition of close family member, for allowable (not discretionary) leave for bereavement leave for friends and wider family and for the creation of better training and guidance for managers of bereaved staff.

Motion No.12 (Branch 92)

Conference, we note that, in recent years, it has become more difficult for staff to transfer to other departments. Weekly Opportunity Bulletins can be hit-and-miss with elective transfer opportunities, especially at specific grades and departments. Meanwhile HR processes for transferring staff for health or other reasons try to find a place within the staff member’s own division first before considering the wider department and only then if this fails, considering other departments. This has the disadvantages of delaying a return to work and limiting staff’s ability to find a post within the NICS that best reflects their talents and interests and hampers their career development. We call on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to work alongside NICS HR to look into ways existing processes could be modified to allow for more routine inter-departmental transfers.

Motion No.13 (Branch 119)

Conference welcomes the appointment of former agency staff to permanent NICS positions. Unfortunately, Conference is alarmed that these newly appointed Civil Servants have to go through a 1-year probationary period before their appointment is confirmed which for former agency staff is not fair as they have had to ‘toe the line’ due to the threat of monitoring forms.

Many posts in HMRC and the wider Home Civil Service currently run a 6-month probation period.

The prospect of having to serve 1 years' probation, when much shorter probationary periods are more commonplace, has most likely served as an impediment to recruitment at a time when the NICS is crying out for staff.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to push for the reduction in the probationary period to 6 months.

Motion No.14 (Branch 117)

Conference we have in the past 12 – 18 months started recruiting permanent staff again at AO level after many years with very limited external recruitment.

Whilst the recruitment of permanent staff is a good thing and is to be applauded and encouraged it has left us in the position of having large numbers of staff in their probation period.

Staff in their probation period have no specific review points which trigger the consideration of the inefficiency sick absence process, rather any absence can trigger consideration of “first and final” written warning.

This has led to permanent staff coming out of their probation period with a 2-year written warning for sick leave hanging over them sometimes for a little as 1 absence of as few as 2 days sick.

This is a patently unfair situation to put these new staff in. We call upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to discuss and where necessary review the existing inefficiency sick absence policy for probationary staff to make it fairer.

Motion No.15 (Branch 47)

Conference notes with concern that members seeking partial retirement have been required to leave their established posts in order to access the scheme. This has led to long-serving staff being displaced from teams where they have built up decades of experience, forced into retraining at the end of their careers, and valuable knowledge being lost to the service.

Conference believes this practice is unfair, disrespectful, and contrary to the purpose of partial retirement, which should allow members to step down gradually with dignity while continuing in the roles they know best.

Conference therefore instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to negotiate with management to secure a clear policy that:

- 1.** Members applying for partial retirement are accommodated within their existing roles.
- 2.** “Business needs” are not used as a blanket excuse to displace long-serving staff.
- 3.** Any move from a current role is permitted only in the most exceptional circumstances, and only with the full agreement of the member concerned.

Conference affirms that members deserve to conclude their working lives with respect, security, and recognition of their loyal service.

Motion No.16 (Branch 13)

The existing NICS annual leave terms and conditions have been in place in their current form for quite a long time now.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to explore an uplift to the existing quantum of annual leave days provided.

Without wishing to tie the incoming Executive to specifics, and therefore purely by way of example, the following ideas were floated locally in relation to improving these terms:

- An increase (from 25) to 27 days for new staff, and (from 30) to 32 days after 5 years' service
- An additional 5 days after 10 / 20 years, to reward longer service

Motions No.17–No.18 unallocated

● Recruitment and Promotion

Composite Motion No.19 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

NIPSA notes with concern the ongoing challenges in recruitment within the Northern Ireland Civil Service, including:

- A persistently high number of vacancies across departments, currently standing at over 5600 in July 2025.
- A significant reliance on temporary promotions to fill essential roles, numbering over 3300 at July 2025.
- The increased use of agency staff, which now accounts for approximately 17% of the workforce in certain areas and stood at over 5000 in July 2025.

NIPSA believes that internal promotion should be prioritised in recruitment processes, recognising the value, experience and dedication of existing staff to public service.

Conference calls on the incoming Executive to continue meaningful engagement with NICSHR to:

- Ensure internal promotion is considered as the first port of call in recruitment, supporting career progression and retention of skilled staff.
- Devise processes that allow the NICS to develop its staff through in-house retraining and reskilling programmes particularly in roles for which recruitment and retention is challenging.
- Review and streamline current recruitment practices to accelerate future recruitment and reduce delays.
- Explore all available avenues to support the transition of temporary workers into substantive posts, providing stability and fairness for those already contributing to the service.

Motion No.20 (Branch 113)

Conference welcomes the news that further promotion opportunities are going to be available in the near future, as this will be a great career development chance for many of our members.

However, it has to be stated that while Civil Servants can apply for vacancies, once again NICS Management, instead of filling that vast number of vacancies at

all grades, from internal promotion boards, and have instead decided to proceed with external recruitment.

It also has to be stated that there have been a large number of members who passed previous tests and or interviews but instead of obtaining promotion, have received letters stating that their list has been removed as it is now timebound.

This leads to a drop in morale of those that have been efficient enough to show that they can succeed at the higher grade, and it leads to large numbers of temporary promotions instead of full-time substantive positions.

Conference therefore calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to continue to fight for internal promotion and negotiate to remove (or at the very minimum extend) the two-year time bar limit on promotion and or recruitment lists.

Motion No.21 (Branch 137)

Conference notes that internal general promotion opportunities for existing Civil Servants have largely become a thing of the past. Conference welcomes the recent Grade 7 competition being internal due to the good work of the Executive Committee with a successful Registered Disagreement.

The policy of External by Default is nothing but a simplistic blunt instrument which was implemented by the NICS in response to the Capacity and Capability in the NICS report following the RHI debacle. It has been to the detriment of existing Civil Servants who no longer have the opportunity of progressing through the grading structure, grade by grade, during their careers; resentment among members is growing as each competition is announced. Rightly or wrongly our members hold the view, that the very people who actually benefited from internal promotions over the years are now denying Civil Servants the same career prospects that they have benefited from over the years. The fact is that the Civil Service is no longer a workplace with career development opportunities for general service grades.

Conference instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with management to ensure there is a separate mechanism for promotion to the next grade for internal candidates. This should ensure, internal candidates are guaranteed an interview for promotion to the next grade above without the need for an aptitude or psychometric test, which many members simply don't apply for, solely because of the test.

Motions No.22–No.23 unallocated

● Allowances

Composite Motion No.24 (to be moved by Branch 13)

It is now more than two decades since the NICS ICT Allowance was introduced “to recognise the skills and competencies that are required of and exercised by staff in the ICT discipline”. Since its October 2005 inception and cessation of the Automatic Data Processing Allowance, embarrassingly, despite the in built policy commitment for ‘biennial reviews’ (which aren’t conducted), to date, the totality of extensive efforts to improve the quantum has resulted only in two negligible 1% increases (back in 2018). Even getting these awarded was like pulling teeth; and commitments made at that time for a substantial evidence-based review has still not been honoured.

Not only has the allowance remained almost static for 20 years (while NICS basic salary has increased by between 32.5% - 115.6% during that period), but the real terms value of this allowance has obviously therefore fallen considerably through inflation!

Where the NICS once merely struggled to compete (on pay terms) with low-paying private sector ICT companies, we are now even being blown out of the water by rival public sector employers: The NI Assembly, for example, who already offered higher salaries, now pay an additional effective ICT Allowance of £10k p/a. The British Civil Service (who remotely employ people from N.Ireland) pay approaching double what the NICS do for a Senior Developer (ICT Level 4)!

The ICT Allowance also remains an outlier in payroll terms. While this pensionable sum is paid automatically and unconditionally to all ICT grade staff, and is therefore considered an element of staff salaries, the payroll mechanism used to remunerate staff via a combination of basic salary and an 'allowance' rather than via separate scales as is done for other specialist professional staff such as Staff Officer Accountants, Forest Officers, Fisheries Officers, Agriculture Inspectors etc. has the negative consequence of any negotiated pay award percentages not being applied to this element of salary. This cannot go on any longer...

Over the last year there finally appears to be more openness from the NICS ICT Head of Profession and digital leaders on the Information Governance Board to address this issue, with provisional talk of the creation of a business case to increase the allowance in the first instance.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to prioritise properly resolving this issue permanently as soon as possible with:

- the rate of ICT remuneration increased to an acceptable level
- a proper payroll mechanism being utilised (as is done for other professions) where pay award increases apply to the full salary

We must safeguard the future of an internal, properly resourced, adequately remunerated ICT Profession in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Motion No.25 (Branch 47)

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to negotiate for the introduction of a universal clothing allowance for all civil servants, including those employed in Arm's-Length Bodies, where there is a clear expectation to dress in formal or smart attire as part of their role.

Conference notes:

1. Many staff, including those who work in a formal environment such as a court or tribunal, or alongside a Permanent Secretary or Minister are required to wear suits or other formal clothing daily in order to uphold the professional image of the service. This is not a matter of choice but a clear workplace expectation.
2. The cost of maintaining such clothing — suits, shirts, smart shoes, and dry cleaning — is a recurring and significant financial burden, especially in the context of rising living costs and civil service pay that has lagged behind inflation.
3. Other public sector workers are supported with clothing or uniforms at no personal cost: police officers, prison staff, health service staff, and many local government workers all receive uniforms or allowances. Civil servants should not be treated differently.

4. The current situation creates inequality across departments and Arm's-Length Bodies, with some staff receiving support while others are left to meet costs personally.
5. Smart dress requirements benefit the employer by ensuring staff present a professional, impartial, and authoritative image. It is therefore reasonable that the employer should share the cost.
6. Providing a clothing allowance would help improve morale, retention, and inclusion, ensuring that staff from all backgrounds – especially new entrants and lower-paid grades – can meet expectations without financial strain.

Conference believes:

- The expectation to dress formally is a hidden cost of the job that should not fall solely on staff.
- A universal clothing allowance would ensure a fair, consistent, and supportive approach across the Civil Service and its Arm's-Length Bodies.

Conference resolves:

- To instruct the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to negotiate with management for the introduction of a universal clothing allowance for all staff in roles where smart dress is an explicit or implicit requirement of the job.

Motions No.26–No.27 unallocated

● Staffing and Resourcing

Motion No.28 (Executive Committee)

Conference notes that NIPSA has consistently called for a clear and robust approach to workforce planning within the Northern Ireland Civil Service. Conference welcomes the current review of strategic workforce planning by NICS, including the introduction of a Strategic Workforce Planning Guide and the consideration of a Professions Framework.

Conference believes that any changes to the workforce model must be developed in full consultation with trade unions and must prioritise the interests and well-being of staff.

Conference therefore calls on the incoming Executive Committee to ensure that:

- Meaningful negotiation takes place with trade unions at all stages of the review process.
- There is no detriment to members, and their interests remain at the forefront of all discussions and decisions.
- The approach to strategic workforce planning is developed in a fair, transparent, and inclusive manner, with clear consideration given to training, promotion and career development opportunities for all staff.

Motion No.29 (Executive Committee)

Conference recognises that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is having an increasing impact on work and workplaces across the Northern Ireland Civil Service. We also are aware of the many Transformation projects and initiatives that aim to deliver

technological change across our departments. Both can create new opportunities, improve working conditions and job roles and possibly improve productivity.

However, they also bring risks and challenges to civil service roles and posts. They can bring extra surveillance and monitoring and can erode workers' rights, terms and conditions. We expect the employer to utilise both AI and Transformation in a manner which is fair, transparent and beneficial to members in the NICS. We expect these changes to enhance work roles in the NICS with savings invested back into our workplaces and business areas to deliver full staffing complements.

Conference calls on the Executive Committee to remain vigilant and to ensure:

- Policies are negotiated to enhance job roles, prevent job losses by reskilling and retraining of workers to include consideration of reduced working weeks with no loss of pay.
- Meaningful negotiation in business areas facing AI and Transformation initiatives to ensure workers' concerns are addressed.
- Trade union reps are involved in design and deployment of new systems ensuring they are used ethically and with consideration for workers' dignity.
- New technology respects workers' privacy, data security and personal rights.
- Investment in training and workplace education programmes to upskill members to work alongside and utilise new technologies for best results.

Motions No.30–No.31 unallocated

● Equality

Motion No.32 (Branch 91)

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to look at providing equal opportunities during recruitment to existing staff who have additional learning needs.

Throughout external competitions, the Guaranteed Interview Scheme is included in the recruitment process as part of the package of measures to attract candidates from all walks of life and not put any candidate at a disadvantage.

Recent internal competitions have not included the Guaranteed Interview Scheme. This scheme provides the opportunity for staff with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, to be interviewed for post/promotion providing they meet the requirements for the post. This means that any internal neurodiverse candidate with additional learning needs is at a disadvantage in the internal recruitment process.

NICS HR and HR Connect only state that this has been decided by senior management.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to liaise with NICS HR to ensure that all internal competitions provide the facility of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme and any further measures that provide equality for all staff and not just those who are neurotypical.

Please support the motion.

Motion No.33 (Branch 119)

Conference commends the great work from Branch 117 in driving the development and roll out of a Mental Health and Neurodiversity Survey within their own area and the rest of their Grade 5 Command.

Mental health issues will affect approximately 1 in 4 people and approximately 1 in 7 of us are neurodivergent. And yet both are often overlooked or sidelined, meaning that valuable workers are not being given the opportunity to show their strengths, and worse are sometimes undermined which can have further health and personal effects.

This Survey will gather valuable information for us to help our friends and co-workers who either suffer from mental health issues or are neurodivergent.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to press management for this survey to be rolled out across the whole of the Civil Service.

Motion No.34 (Branch 33)

Conference condemns the ongoing discrimination being faced by workers in the NICS who are living with disabilities.

Reps are regularly meeting members whose employers are failing to implement reasonable adjustments in line with their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and subsequent amendments.

This discrimination often occurs as line managers are not trained, educated or empowered to understand the employers' obligations, or their roles in enacting those obligations.

Conference, we clearly state to our employers that our reps and this union will continue to provide robust representation to our colleagues when we see ongoing evidence of discrimination.

We further state that the implementation of a Reasonable Adjustments policy, 30 years after the laying of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, is unlikely to stop this discrimination.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with central management to ensure that they take all steps to end disability discrimination in the employing departments.

This is likely to include making mandatory training around DDA 1995 and reasonable adjustments available to ALL line managers.

Conference further calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to consider whether the training available for our reps regarding DDA and reasonable adjustments can be refreshed. This would increase our knowledge on this matter and ensure that we are providing the best representation to some of our most vulnerable members.

Motions No.35–No.36 unallocated

● Organisation and Administration

Motion No.37 (Branch 117)

NIPSA along with the wider Trade Union movement prides itself as a fully inclusive organisation that tries to ensure that all members are given the ability to attend and contribute to meetings and especially conference.

It is therefore with a degree of surprise that I discovered that this year's conference is an in-person event only.

This decision has prohibited those who are unable to attend in person due to poor health conditions, caring responsibilities or financial constraints the opportunity to contribute on an equal basis with those who can attend.

While we are aware that bringing in outside providers to allow remote participation is costly, it is surprising that management side can hold meetings using tools like Teams to make their meetings and events accessible to all.

We therefore call on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to explore all various ways in which it can make future meetings and events, especially Civil Service Group Conference fully accessible to all our members.

Motions No.38–No.39 unallocated

Secondary Agenda

Motions in this Agenda are not to be discussed

Category A

Motions covered by composite/comprehensive motions contained in the Primary Agenda.

Composite Motion No.9

Motion No.40 (Branch 92)

Conference is concerned that the new Hybrid Working Policy has imposed a mandatory 40% designated workplace attendance requirement across the NICS. This 40% requirement is arbitrary, unnecessary, negatively affects members with caring responsibilities and is not conducive to the work-life balance the NICS claims to promote. It also increases traffic and therefore has a negative environmental impact, particularly in the case of members who will need to use their car, as their office is not easily accessible by public transport.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to amend the policy so that members may negotiate individualised Workstyle Agreements instead of this arbitrary approach.

Motion No.41 (Branch 119)

Conference is disappointed that the Civil Service management saw fit to implement a revised Hybrid Policy without Agreement from all the Unions. Particularly disappointing was the draconian one size fits all approach of insisting on a minimum level of office attendance of 40%.

Many of us already do more than 40% in the office, but this is when there is a tangible need for it. The setting of an arbitrary minimum level goes against rhyme and reason, seemingly driven by ideological rather than practical concerns.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to re-open talks with management for the removal of the minimum office attendance in the Hybrid Policy.

Motion No.42 (Branch 119)

We are in a very different world than that of the pre-Covid days. Public transport and other services have not returned to the level they were at prior to the pandemic. As a result things which were simple before may have become a major task. Early starts and late evening finishes are especially hit with the reduction in trains and buses, and so these can potentially be an expensive inconvenience or even a risk to health and safety to our members as they may need to wait for a long period for their next bus.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with management to ensure that flexibility is enshrined in policy to ensure that workers are not made to unnecessarily attend offices and workplaces at times when it may not be safe, or practical for them to do so.

Composite Motion No.19

Motion No.43 (Branch 7)

Conference is aware of the current difficulties faced by the NICS in the area of staff recruitment. It is long past time to carry out a root and branch review in this area. This can be achieved in a number of ways not least through a change in

policy but also by simplifying the process for those who apply. In the recent AO external recruitment there were around 1900 candidates who were successful out of somewhere in the region of 10000 people who applied. Many of those who were unsuccessful were agency colleagues who in many cases have spent many years doing the jobs they were applying for. These workers have already undergone extensive training programs that are not only time consuming but are carried out at great expense to the taxpayer.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to investigate the potential for our Agency colleagues employed in the NICS to have their good work and time spent in NICS roles recognised when it comes to recruiting for those posts. This could take the form of a guaranteed interview in future recruitment competitions. This should ensure a higher success rate across these competitions, a reduction in the amount of training required, recognise the contribution of Agency colleagues and ease pressure on the public purse.

Composite Motion No.24

Motion No.44 (Branch 190)

I would like to formally propose that NIPSA negotiate an increase in the ICT Allowance. The purpose of the ICT Allowance is as an incentive to retain skilled and qualified IT professionals within the Northern Ireland Civil Service and associated agencies. Similar jobs in the Private Sector are generally paid higher than in the Public Sector and the ICT allowance was put in place to compensate for this. The last major increase to the ICT allowance was in 2008 when it was set at £3640 p.a. and since then it has only slightly increased to the current amount of £3713 p.a. In 2011, an NICS HR Management Board Meeting agreed that no further biennial reviews would take place and that the Pay and Grading Review Team would be responsible for reviewing allowances as part of the wider pay and grading review..... Unfortunately this does not seem to have happened. The ICS Allowance has not seen an increase for years, whilst trained and qualified ICT professionals are leaving the Public Sector to work in more lucrative Private Sector jobs. On top of this, it has had a direct impact on recruitment. In recent ICT 3 and ICT 4 external competitions, from the applicants who successfully passed the interview, by the time they got their security clearance and were offered a job, many actually turned the job down as in the meantime they had been offered a higher paid job in the Private Sector.

Category B

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

Motion No.45 (Branch 33)

The chronic malaise of understaffing of NICS departments has been an ongoing problem for many years now with departments carrying massive levels of vacancies.

Out of a sense of duty to citizens, the obvious outcome is that our members are left to carry the weight of doing the work of their own post as well as that of the vacant posts in their areas.

Over many years now, Departmental leaders and NICS HR have failed to address the problem.

The current AO competition has been ongoing for over 1 year, at the time of writing the second tranche of 400 successful applicants have still not been made formal offers of employment.

The recent G7 and G6 competitions were scheduled in a nonsensical sequence.

NICS senior management have indicated that the next competition will be at the EO2 grade rather than moving to the next grade down, DP.

All of this leads to a growing sense of a lack of any strategic plan to resolve the staffing crisis in NICS employing departments.

It is obvious that the current recruitment efforts are failing our members, NICS departments and citizens.

Conference therefore calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage as a priority with Management Side to demand for mass recruitment at the lowest grade and a process of internal promotion boards through all grades, in an organised sequence to be launched forthwith.

Motion No.46 (Branch 33)

Conference welcomes this union's efforts through the most recent pay claim, to seek an amalgamation of the AA and AO grades in NICS employing departments.

Conference notes that there is still a grade separation at the EO2 – EO1 level. The case for this separation of grades is hard to justify for various reasons, including;

- The competencies required to work at either EO2 or EO1 are exactly the same.
- The GB civil service does not have a separate EO2 and EO1 grade.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS management to seek to amalgamate the EO2 and EO1 grades at as early a point as possible.

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.47 (Branch 117)

Conference we are immensely proud of our members at all grades within the NI Civil Service and the work they do, the pressures they face and the service they deliver to the community within NI. However, staff working within DWP Services in DFC face significantly different pressures and responsibilities than colleagues working in NICS proper. Colleagues working in DWP Services in GB performing exactly the same job are paid at a considerably higher rate.

Previously it was recognised that although staff were the same grade i.e. AO their actual job roles varied so greatly that some attracted an additional pay allowance. An example of this is the old SSO2 and SSO1 grading for AO's and EO2's respectively working in the old SSA. Indeed there are still various roles which attract an additional allowance such as the IT allowance paid to staff in certain IT roles.

While we aren't suggesting that staff working in DWP services should have a completely different grading structure than colleagues within the rest of the NICS we do believe that there should be an allowance to reflect the significant differences in the DWP Services job roles and the challenges faced by those working there which at times can be almost double the caseload of our NI colleagues or can involve working additional opening times such as 8pm at night on weekdays.

We therefore call upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with HR either as part of the next round of pay negotiations or separately with a view to establishing an allowance payable to staff working within DWP services that reflects their job role.

Motion No.48 (Branch 33)

Conference notes that Lough Neagh is the largest freshwater lake in these islands and a vital ecological, cultural, and economic resource. The lough is currently in ecological crisis, suffering from pollution, algal blooms, and mismanagement. Legal personhood has been granted to natural entities in other jurisdictions (e.g. the Whanganui River in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the Magpie River in Quebec, and Mar Menor in Spain) as a means of protecting their rights and ensuring sustainable stewardship. The concept of legal personhood for nature recognises that ecosystems have intrinsic rights to exist, flourish, and be restored. NIPSA has a proud tradition of environmental advocacy and defending the public good.

Conference believes that Lough Neagh should be recognised as a living entity with legal rights. Legal personhood would provide a framework for protecting the lough from further degradation and ensuring its long-term health. NIPSA, as a democratic and progressive trade union rooted in public service, is well-placed to act as a guardian or co-guardian of Lough Neagh, representing the interests of both the environment and the communities who depend on it.

Category X

Motions which the chairperson has ruled out of order

Motion No.49 (Branch 33) This motion is ruled out of order as it is insufficiently clear as a means of determining policy.

Conference notes the on-going difficulties relating to the recruitment and retention of accountancy professionals within the NICS.

Conference further recognises both the short and longer term impact and implications of same, not only in respect of the delivery of service to the public but more importantly on the health, safety and welfare of NIPSA members employed within the various NICS departments.

Conference should note that members employed within the accountancy profession have previously undertaken a body of work to identify remedies to the problem of recruitment and retention, so we are already some way down the road as far as understanding the required solutions.

Chief amongst their recommendations is a call for an increase to the current SO Accountant pay lead and a call that the outworking of said review must be reflected in the pay scales for DP and G7 Accountants, where there is currently no accountancy allowance in their pay (an historic anomaly where members employed with the accountancy profession lose their allowance at the point of promotion beyond staff officer).

It is the considered opinion of members employed within the profession that only such a holistic approach, addressing the key issues of pay and pay leads, will effect change in the areas of recruitment and retention, and reduce the severe work pressures currently faced by our members employed in the NICS accountancy profession.

Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance

Civil Service Group

Annual Delegate Conference 2025

The following candidates have been nominated for election at the Annual Delegate Conference 2025:

Candidate's Name

Candidate's Name

Chairperson (1 Vote)

Creaney, T

McErlean, D

Vice Chairpersons (2 Votes)

Dale, P

McKee, M

Mulholland, B

Standing Orders Committee

*Donaghy, E

*O'Neill, B

Executive Committee 22 (votes)

Candidate's Name

Brooks, W

England, B

Millar, A

Cobain, P

Garland, H

Morgan, C

Coghlan, K

Glass, L

Mulholland, B

Collins, L

Godfrey, T

O'Reilly, B

Coyle, A

Gowdy, S

O'Sandair, R

Crane, S

Gunn, A

Rice, T

Creaney, T

Lowry, D

Russell, V

Crilly, D

McAtamney, E

Sloan, D

Dale, P

McCartney, G

Turner, P

Davidson, J

McLernon, G

Veighey, J

**Returned Unopposed*



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