



Civil Service Group Annual Delegate Conference

Clayton Hotel, Belfast

Agenda 2024

Thursday 7 November 2024

Timetable

Thursday 7 November 2024

| | | |
|---------|---|-----------------|
| 10.00am | Chairperson's Address | |
| 10.15am | Appointment of Scrutineers and Tellers Adoption of Standing Orders Report No.1 | |
| 10.30am | Pay | Motions 1 - 5 |
| 11.30am | Tea Break | |
| 11.45am | Terms and Conditions | Motions 8 - 16 |
| 1.00pm | Lunch | |
| 2.00pm | Terms and Conditions continued | |
| 2.15pm | Staffing and Resourcing | Motions 19 – 21 |
| 2.55pm | Allowances | Motions 24 - 25 |
| 3.25pm | Recruitment and Promotion | Motions 28 - 29 |
| 3.45pm | Trade Union Issues | Motions 32 - 34 |
| 4.15pm | 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 31 October 2024.**

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 1 November 2024.**

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 These standing orders will apply to General and Group Conferences until they are amended or rescinded by a motion adopted by an annual Delegate General Conference.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.1 | <i>37 and 38</i> |
| Composite Motion No.3 | <i>39</i> |
| Composite Motion No.8 | <i>40, 41 and 42</i> |
| Composite Motion No.9 | <i>43</i> |
| Comprehensive Motion No.24 | <i>44, 45 and 46</i> |
| Composite Motion No.28 | <i>47</i> |

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 31 October 2024**. 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)

A Dickson

E Donaghy

Primary Agenda

Motions in this Agenda are due to be discussed.

● Pay

Composite Motion No.1 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference congratulates the Civil Service Executive Committee for the successful campaign around the 2023/24 pay award. The campaign which included strike action, selective strike action and action short of strike action clearly demonstrated the anger and determination felt by NIPSA members. Conference congratulates members for their fight.

Conference also recognises the significant work that was done through meetings with politicians, lobbying, protesting and the excellent work of highlighting pay as a key issue through banners, placards, social media and membership bulletins.

The work done culminated in an offer that mirrored offers in health and, for the first time in decades, civil servants were on a par with some other public sector workers.

Conference is aware that the new government in Westminster is already signalling difficult budgets ahead, but is cognisant that the new Comprehensive Spending Review from 2025 has the potential to deliver multi-year budgets, that might assist in addressing some longer-term issues identified by NIPSA.

Conference recommits to ensuring that civil servants are never again treated as second class citizens and to this end calls upon the Civil Service Executive Committee to consider how best to protect the pay and living standards of members, which may include multi-year pay deals as part of a pay strategy to tackle grading, allowances, leave, mileage and the other issues that require longer term financial commitments.

Motion No.2 (Branch 117)

Conference is aware that the National Living Wage (NLW) is increasing by 5.7% from £11.44 to £12.10 in April 2025, and whilst we are happy that the lowest paid workers are receiving this increase, we have noticed that the percentage increase in 2024's to 2025's NLW is higher than the rate of inflation.

The rate of Inflation has historically been the starting point for NIPSA Pay deal negotiations and therefore conference calls for the incoming CSG Executive to use either the percentage increase of NLW or Rate of Inflation, whichever is higher, as the starting point for CS Pay Negotiations.

Composite Motion No.3 (to be moved by Branch 91)

Every year, our pay rise is due 1st August. It is never agreed in time. The consequence of this is that there is a wait on any pay rise and each month that passes, the owed pay accumulates. As with this year, the amount due amounted to 11 months back pay. While many staff welcome this back pay, the accumulated amount of back pay has caused significant issues for many of our colleagues who rely on benefits support. When our colleagues received the back pay, many ended up sanctioned from income based benefits for a significant period of time. Some other members found themselves being taxed in the higher tax band due to the back pay and did not receive the full amount due.

Branch 91 therefore ask that with any delayed pay rise, NIPSA should include a caveat within any pay award that protects members from sanctions and that they ask/instruct the NICS to work with HMRC to ensure that no-one suffers financial detriment.

Motion No.4 (Branch 117)

Conference has noticed that there is a startling disparity throughout the pay-scales.

These disparities are both within the band increases per grade (steps), and also the gaps between one grade and the next.

Steps in pay bands can vary between as low as 1.02%, and as high as 3.1%.

Disparity in grade gaps can also vary between as low as AA to AO at just 4.5% between top of the AA scale and bottom of the AO scale and as high as 21.73% between the top of the DP Scale and the bottom of the Grade 7 scale.

We are not looking to reduce the amount members moving from DP to Grade 7 get on promotion but we fervently believe that promotion at lower grades needs better reflected in terms of pay.

To that end Conference calls for the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to ensure that when negotiating future pay deals, that this includes consideration to remove these inequalities to help ensure civil service promotion from one grade to the next is better and more equally reflected in the pay scales.

Motion No.5 (Branch 118)

Conference is concerned that recent pay awards may have been unduly influenced by recommendations of the outgoing Civil Service Group Executive. Therefore, we instruct that the incoming Civil Service Group Executive when analysing any pay offers from Management and bulletins that are issued to members **do not** include any recommendations from the Group Executive on whether to accept or reject any offer.

Conference considers this as an unnecessary way of influencing what way people should or should not vote on any proposed offer.

Conference feels it would be best practice going forward to let individual members make their own choice and decision. Conference believes that this should be more in line with what was originally envisaged with the establishment of the Civil Service Group Executive whereby they take their lead from members rather than the other way around.

Motions No.6–No.7 unallocated

● Terms and Conditions

Composite Motion No.8 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference notes that in the post pandemic world, hybrid working is now accepted as the norm for most workspaces. In the NICS, the value of hybrid working has been acknowledged and accepted and is implemented through the centrally agreed Hybrid Working Policy.

Conference also notes that Motion 27 of the 2022 Civil Service Conference expressed concerns that in some areas of the NICS, enforced attendance was being considered and there was concern that arbitrary attendance percentages might be imposed at the whim of managers. The motion called on this to be challenged.

It is now the case that arbitrary percentages for minimum attendance are being imposed by the most senior management across parts of the NICS. This “one size fits all” approach is neither necessary nor welcomed by members. Conference acknowledges the value of personal interactions in the workplace, and this was agreed in the central Hybrid Working Policy, but this can be achieved through local agreement and the application of common sense.

Conference is, therefore, alarmed that the pragmatic approach of agreeing attendance for members at a local level, to suit the needs of the individual and the business area, is being overridden by arbitrary minimum attendance requirements.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive to engage urgently, at a central level with NICS HR, to ensure that the current central policy is applied in all departments and work areas across the NICS.

Conference further asks the Civil Service Executive Committee to seek to ensure that any changes or reviews which impinge on the content, application or intent of that policy, are properly consulted upon at a central level to ensure there is no detriment to members and that individual departments do not deviate from the agreed central policy.

Composite Motion No.9 (to be moved by Branch 119)

Currently fathers only receive two weeks of Paternity Leave upon the birth of their child. They may take more time if the mother gives up some of her Maternity Leave. This is not right. We should not be asking mothers who have just been through childbirth, and who may be facing the complications, such as post-partum depression and the exhaustion that often comes with a recent birth, to sacrifice their recovery time. What we should be doing is asking for more time for fathers to be with their family when there is a newborn in the household. A father should be able to be there to bond with his newborn as well as to support his partner while they recover. In 2020 France doubled its Paternity Leave for fathers. We should be pushing for this change to be made here as well.

We would ask that the incoming Civil Service Group Executive seek expansion of Paternity Leave, to support our members at an important time in their lives.

Motion No.10 (Branch 77)

This Motion instructs the Civil Service Executive to pursue every avenue for the payment of work-related tuition by the Northern Ireland Civil Service in negotiations, including pushing for:

- **Removal of the £1000 cap on fees present in the NICS ‘Assistance to Study’ programme and equivalent Departmental programme’s e.g. Department for Infrastructure’s Staff Development Programme:** When the Assistance to Study scheme was introduced the average price of a year of part-time tuition was less than £1000. Now the price of tuition for a part-time foundation and bachelor’s degree is over £2500. Current funding opportunities offered by the NICS only cover 40% of tuition. With fees only set to increase in future, the £1000 cap needs to be lifted to give qualifications our members need to properly fulfil their roles and develop within the NICS.

- **‘Higher Level Apprenticeships for All’:** Currently the Higher-Level Apprenticeship (HLA) Scheme, (a scheme designed to fund opportunities to gain quality training and a recognised higher qualification while in paid employment) excludes Public Sector Workers. This is even though NICS and other Public Sector Bodies pay into the apprenticeship fund that goes towards the funding of the HLA Scheme. This creates a two-tiered system where private interests benefits at the expense of good Public Sector Jobs. If passed this motion will instruct the Civil Service Executive and NIPSA to challenge this double standard and provide equal funding to all.

The goal of this motion is to ensure that our members always have access to the development opportunities they need to perform their roles safely without paying out of pocket.

Motion No.11 (Branch 119)

When this motion mentions a 4 day work week, this means working 4 standard days with no loss of pay or expansion of hours per day. A 4 day work week has been shown to boost recruitment and retention of staff, an issue which the NICS has long struggled with. Workers are generally happier and more focused at work and this has been shown to have the effect of boosting productivity while people are at work, while allowing them more time with their families and leisure pursuits. This in turn can increase workers health and well-being, which could help to tackle another issues which the NICS faces regularly, sickness absence. And of course the potential for it to reduce the environmental impact of our work lives, a benefit to us, our employers, and to future generations.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to formulate and submit a firm proposal to the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Arms Length Bodies and other associated organisations, for a transition to a 4 day work week.

Motion No.12 (Branch 127)

Conference is concerned that the Dignity at Work process does not deliver for our members. The personal toll it takes on a member compounds the poor treatment they have already received in work.

It is difficult for the distraught member to see a Dignity at Work case through to the end and obtain a successful outcome. The scrutiny and burden of proof required as a witness is a damaging process.

The Dignity at Work process is there to provide some sort of consolation to the victim, but it usually only deals with an individual bully or harasser and does nothing to improve a toxic workplace. Lessons are never learned on a corporate basis.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR about the Dignity at Work process. It would be useful to analyse results, so lessons can be learnt from successful DAW and Tribunal cases. An awareness package could be developed that could help to reduce toxic atmospheres and prevent discrimination in our workplaces.

Motion No.13 (Executive Committee)

Conference recognises the need to work with NICS management on a programme of necessary policy reviews.

Conference is concerned, however, that at a time of scarce financial resources, such reviews may be seen by the NICS as an opportunity for efficiency savings or as a means to undermine the terms and conditions of members.

Conference calls upon the Civil Service Executive Committee to ensure there is full scrutiny of all policy changes to ensure there is no detriment to members and no diminution of our hard-won terms and conditions of service.

Motion No.14 (Branch 117)

Conference is glad that large numbers of the Agency workers employed in the NICS were successful in the recent Permanent AO competition. However we were disappointed to learn that these workers, some of whom had been working for the NICS, albeit via a 3rd party, for 5 years or more and had moved up the pay-scales during this time immediately dropped back down to the bottom of the pay scale when they took up their permanent post.

Conference believes that these workers should have the time they have worked whilst employed via an agency for the NICS treated as service when calculating their point on the pay scale and also count towards their qualifying for the additional leave awarded after 5 years' service.

Conference calls on the incoming CSGE to engage with NICS HR to ensure that the time these workers **who move directly** from being employed in the NICS via an agency to permanent NICS employment have their time already spent working for the NICS properly acknowledged and recognised as service when calculating their pay and their leave entitlement.

Motion No.15 (Branch 119)

When Hybrid was announced, it went along with the opening of Hubs which could be used to carry out your work without having to endure a wasteful and often unhealthy and expensive commute. This silver lining in the cloud of returning to the office was quickly snatched away upon reading of the Hybrid Policy which detailed how attending a Hub did not count toward your office days. The Hub bubble further burst when large areas of the NICS were informed that the work they carry out was not suitable for doing in Hubs at all, and that if they had issues at home preventing them from working from there they would need to make the trek to their office every working day, sometimes passing several Hubs on their way.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to raise the issue of only certain work being suitable for Hubs with an aim to overcoming whatever obstacles are preventing all NICS workers from availing of the Hubs when they are unable to work from home.

Conference further calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to raise the possibility of workers being able to count days worked in Hubs toward their level of office attendance.

Motion No.16 (Branch 118)

Conference notes that whilst there is an NICS menopause policy, it is not fit for purpose. It has not been revisited or updated since publication despite increased awareness of this issue. Medical research has changed since the initial policy was drafted. Conference instructs the incoming Group Executive to liaise with HR to ensure that the menopause policy remains a priority and that any future iteration is regularly updated being aware of current medical advice.

Motions No.17–No.18 unallocated

● Staffing and Resourcing

Motion No.19 (Executive Committee)

Conference is concerned by the continuing, significant vacancy levels, temporary promotions and delays in filling essential posts in the NICS. Conference is also concerned by the increasing number of posts at Senior Civil Service level which is skewing the NICS pay bill despite the insignificant pay awards members have received.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Executive Committee to open discussions with NICS management in relation to workforce planning and the future shape of the NICS to ensure we have a service that is fit for purpose.

Motion No.20 (Branch 94)

The policy of equivalency by which non administrative grades are pinned to the administrative grades pay and grading structure has had and continues to have a negative effect on scientific/technical members. The implementation of this policy resulted in the loss of pay for a swathe of staff as they had what was labelled as “pay leads” but which those staff saw as their pay eroded. This policy also resulted in grades which had before been seen as career promotion within those disciplines being forced into the same administrative pay bands, overturning established career paths and management roles as line managers found themselves on the same pay and at the same “substantive grade”.

The flaws in this policy were acknowledged by management with the reintroduction of what is now commonly referred to as “pay leads” for some but not all of those initially affected.

At last year’s conference a motion to support the amalgamation of the EO1 and EO2 grades was passed. If enacted by NICS this will further exasperate the problem with more grades from various disciplines being pushed into the same pay bands. Again, disrupting the limited career progression for those staff in lower grades that already have a “glass ceiling”. As well as removing line management roles for the higher grades further disadvantaging them when JEGS is applied.

Compounding this is the continued use of JEGS to evaluate scientific/technical posts. Which is now acknowledged by many as wholly unsuitable. As the main point of these posts, their technical and or scientific knowledge and duties are not evaluated. This has resulted in many staff being informed they are not working at their admin equivalency level and having extra duties added to fulfil a mechanism that neglects the fundamental requirement for the post.

For these reasons we call on conference to work towards the end of equivalency to reinstate a pay structure that recognises the technical/scientific skills of those posts and the years of training knowledge and dedication those staff have invested in their chosen field, and to work towards the replacement of JEGS for technical/scientific grades.

Motion No.21 (Executive Committee)

Conference welcomes the work undertaken by the Civil Service Executive Committee to persuade the Department for Communities to recruit permanent workers at AO grade for DWP work.

The use of agencies for this work had been justified by the NICS on the pretext that the work was not secure, even though the work has been in the NICS for decades. The decision to make the posts permanent, which came about after

years of pressure from NIPSA, provides welcome stability to former agency workers who are now new entrants to the NICS.

NIPSA's stance, coupled with the excellent representation by local branch representatives, has clearly been appreciated by former agency workers who have joined NIPSA in significant numbers over recent months.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to continue to fight for full harmonisation of terms and conditions for agency workers and for full parity with their substantive colleagues.

Permanent posts have the added benefit of creating the necessary stability in the provision of government services and departments should set the example for other employers to bring an end to precarious employment. Conference calls on the incoming Executive Committee to continue to lobby for an end to agency working in the NICS.

Motions No.22–No.23 unallocated

● Allowances

Comprehensive Motion No.24 (to be moved by Branch 92)

Conference notes that travel and subsistence allowances have not kept pace with rising costs, particularly for those required to travel in Great Britain (GB) and the Republic of Ireland (ROI) for work. Current rates are insufficient to cover real expenses, leaving many members out of pocket when fulfilling their duties.

Additionally, many allowances across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) have stagnated for years, failing to keep up with inflation. This has resulted in a real-terms reduction in the value of these allowances, creating significant financial strain for members who rely on them to perform their roles effectively.

Conference further notes that the current mileage rate of 45p per mile, offered by the NICS, does not reflect the rising costs associated with vehicle maintenance, fuel prices, and other related expenses. This places a financial burden on members required to travel as part of their work duties.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive to engage in negotiations with NICS to increase travel and subsistence allowances for GB and ROI to reflect the actual costs of travel and accommodation. Conference also calls for the restoration of all allowances in line with inflation, ensuring they maintain their real-terms value. Finally, conference calls for a review of the 45p per mile mileage rate with a view to increasing it to reflect the rising costs of vehicle ownership and operation, ensuring that members who use their personal vehicles for work are adequately compensated.

Motion No.25 (Branch 77)

This motion instructs the Civil Service Executive to negotiate to bring the Professional and Technical Grades in line with Information Computer Technology Grades by expanding the ICT Allowance to all Professional and Technical staff within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

- Currently the ICT Allowance is a bonus paid exclusively to staff occupying posts within the ICT discipline and require the postholder to exercise particular ICT skills and competences as an integral feature of the job. The ICT Allowance, currently set at £3,713 per annum, was proactively introduced by management as a staff retention incentive as workers with

ICT skills were difficult to attract and retain in the Civil Service with the standard pay structures.

- Now we face a situation where PTO grades face massive staff shortages with 45% of Department for Infrastructure Staff set to retire in the next 10 years, placing a massive strain on the workforce. In addition to this PTO grades often require specialised training and accreditation that open them up to greater legal responsibility and liability, which is currently not recognised at all in current pay structures. In order to prevent a loss of functions to private contractors we must act now.
- This demand is separate and distinct from the demand for financial recognition of Professional Qualifications such as the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) Chartership which should be pushed for in its own right given the specific legal responsibilities it requires of the holder.
- Considering this, this motion instructs the Executive to urgently negotiate for the equivalent of the ICT Allowance to be expanded to preserve jobs, stop unsafe staff shortages and recognise the unique and essential contribution of Professional and Technical staff.

Motions No.26–No.27 unallocated

● Recruitment and Promotion

Composite Motion No.28 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference is alarmed that the NICS is continuing to implement a recruitment policy based on 'external by default' despite there being no basis for such a policy. The lack of a rationale for external recruitment was plainly demonstrated in the recent negotiations around the G6 and G7 competitions.

NIPSA clearly established, based on the NICS demographics, that there were no equality grounds for an external competition and that external recruitment has hindered rather than helped the service address the under-representation of young people, those with a disability and those from an ethnic minority.

External recruitment competitions are more expensive to run than internal ones. They add to the number of civil servants in an unplanned manner and do not, therefore, make sense unless there is a proper workforce plan in place – particularly in light of the difficult budgets departments may face in the coming year.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Executive Committee to continue to challenge the decision by the NICS Board to proceed with external recruitment competitions particularly since there has been no clear rationale for such decisions.

Motion No.29 (Branch 117)

Conference welcomes the fact that the NICS has started recruiting permanent staff rather than just relying on staff supplied via employment agencies. Conference however recognises the amount of support provided by Agency Staff working in the NICS, many of whom have been employed continuously in that capacity for many years.

Accordingly conference calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to engage with NICS HR, with a view to reviewing the current hiring structure for external recruitment competitions.

We call upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to press for an experience based exception, for those agency workers who have spent more than a year in the grade being recruited, to remove the necessity for them to have to complete the tests at the start of the application process, as we believe that they have already demonstrated their grasp of the competencies working in the Civil Service and allow them to proceed straight to the interview phase of the competition.

Motions No.30–No.31 unallocated

● Trade Union Issues

Motion No.32 (Branch 117)

More and more agency workers are being employed not just in DfC but right across the NICS. Not only are they being employed to work for the NICS but many are also joining NIPSA.

Whilst existing reps will always represent our agency worker members to the best of our ability, we do not always understand the circumstances they find themselves in or the difficulties they are facing. It would be much easier if we had reps who actually were agency workers. The problem is that agency workers are not allowed facility time to undertake union duties and therefore they can't attend meetings or more importantly attend training.

Conference calls upon the incoming CSGE to engage with NICS management with a view to enabling agency workers to be awarded facility time or such similar arrangement so that time spent undertaking union duties or attending union training courses during work hours is regarded as and credited as time at work.

Motion No.33 (Branch 119)

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred encounters. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

Information is vital to the organising and planning of any campaign. Our Pay Campaigns are no exception to this. There is a need to know the successes and failures of previous efforts, or else we are doomed to repeat our mistakes and miss out on opportunities.

To this end we propose that following any Industrial Action the Civil Service Group Executive Committee be provided with as detailed information, including figures, percentages and breakdowns, as possible on the activity in previous campaigns, including the participation levels in the Industrial Action.

Motion No.34 (Branch 119)

A lack of transparency results in distrust and a deep sense of insecurity. This in turn can lead to a lack of engagement and participation, an issue which has dogged NIPSA for many years now. It is a potentially a dangerous spiral which we must escape before it becomes insurmountable. We already share the results of elections, which are by recorded or "card" votes, and we propose to widen this to all such votes which are taken at the Civil Service Group Conference.

Therefore, Conference calls on all future votes at Civil Service Group Conference, where a record is taken, to be shared with all Branches on the Civil Service Side of the Union.

Motions No.35–No.36 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.1

Motion No.37 (Branch 7)

Conference notes the tremendous campaign of strike action, selective strike action and action short of strike action that brought last year's Pay campaign to a successful conclusion. We commend all of our members, reps and HQ staff who supported and made the action such a success. As a union we ensured that NI Civil Service Pay was 'front and centre' in the Public Sector Pay disputes, that we were not left behind and that the Pay offer was accepted by a large proportion of the members who voted on the Offer.

We welcome the fact that this year's pay claim was consulted on in a timely manner and lodged with the employer by the 31st July 2024. Conference also welcomes the aim to realign pay consultations with the fiscal year beginning in April.

At the time of writing, the employer has not been in a position to meet NIPSA on the claim but meetings are scheduled for late September.

Our members in the NICS and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) deserve a pay increase of Inflation plus 5% and conference instructs the Civil Service Executive committee to apply all possible pressure to bring any negotiations to a successful conclusion.

We are committed to real pay restoration and conference supports building and delivering a campaign of Industrial action, if necessary, to move our employer to meet our 2024 NICS Pay demands.

Motion No.38 (Branch 119)

Many of us are aware of the problems surrounding the yearly pay deals and huge effort and stress involved in never-ending negotiations that cause, without exception, delays and uncertainty as well as heartache for struggling members.

Multi-year pay deals have been successfully implemented in various sectors, providing stability and predictability for workers and allowing for more strategic planning for both Unions and employers.

While we have our unique circumstances of being under the Executive and its yearly spending plans. It is noted a significant effort in time and capital on both Trade Union Side and management is expended in ceaseless year long negotiations.

Our branch supports the idea of pursuing the possibility of a new policy of multi-year deals on a model of "inflation + negotiated percentage".

This benefits every stakeholder in the negotiations, employers are aware of budgets moving forward, members are not waiting upwards of 10 months for an increase to pay, management are not spending time and effort in negotiations and calculating backpay and Trade Union side has time to mount a robust and well co-ordinated campaign for the next pay deal with years to prepare.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive Committee to develop a detailed proposal outlining a framework for multi-year pay deals, which would include a mechanism for inflation adjustments and periodic reviews, and to pursue this where it is advantageous to our members.

Conference further calls on the Executive to monitor and assess any future multi-year pay deal which is implemented and to report back to the branches

Composite Motion No.3

Motion No.39 (Branch 119)

Pay Deals are seldom a straightforward affair, with the headline figures often used to disguise the detail, and that is where the devil lies. It can often be easy to miss out on factors, even important ones, when in the middle of a dispute or negotiation. Factors such as the effect on members in receipt of Universal Credit, Overtime Caps and those transitioning from Agency to Direct NICS employment. We do not want to accidentally make our fellow workers lives worse, or promote to them a positive to which they will be unable to avail.

Conference Instructs the Civil Service Group Executive to ensure that all pertinent issues are considered when negotiating and prior to recommending acceptance or rejection of a pay offer.

Composite Motion No.8

Motion No.40 (Branch 7)

Conference has welcomed the move to Hybrid Working in the NICS, and over the last 4 years our members have proven that the majority of staff can, and want to, work in a hybrid manner. Business areas in the NICS have experienced the benefits of Hybrid Working in delivering increased efficiency, less waste and in many areas reduced sick absence rates.

Many Departments are content to work in a hybrid manner and acknowledge that this can deliver a much improved work life balance for our members. Other Departments seem to be unwilling to do so and do not appear to want to maximise or embrace the benefits to their employees of Hybrid Working.

Conference condemns any artificial target of attendance in the office – such as the 40% in some Departments – where there is no proven business need for it. The last 4 years have shown what is required regarding delivering results and working in a hybrid manner and that should be the basis of Work Style Agreements between members and their line managers.

There should be no diktats from senior managers regarding attendance as high as 40% in offices where it is not required. This only cuts across and undermines line manager relationships with staff, both roles carried out by our members in many cases.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Executive Committee to defend Hybrid Working, thereby improving the work life balance of our members and to oppose arbitrary percentages of attendance in work offices where it is not needed to deliver the work.

Motion No.41 (Branch 119)

Conference is alarmed by the imposition of a minimum of 40% office attendance across Department for Communities and other Departments, especially given that the rationale behind these moves has been questionable at best. This sort of imposition is entirely contrary to the wording, and we would hope the spirit also, of the Hybrid Working Policy. It entirely nullifies the agreement part of the Work Style Agreements and therefore undermines the centrally agreed policy. Conference applauds the efforts of the NIPSA DfC Committee in pursuing a registered disagreement and advising staff not to sign amended Work Style Agreements unless they are content to do so.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to work to prevent any further impositions by senior management and to ensure that the agreement part of the policy is preserved as a key component of it.

Motion No.42 (Branch 145)

Conference condemns the attempts by Management to impose a return to office regime that circumvents the centrally agreed policy on Hybrid Working. Conference further notes that the drive to office attendance has no justifiable business reason beyond the need for team building. Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Executive Committee to oppose any revision of the central policy that will have a detrimental impact on our members and to hold management to the consultative process that specifies consultation before implementation.

Composite Motion No.9

Motion No.43 (Branch 117)

Conference is concerned that there is such a large discrepancy between the amount of paid Maternity Leave and Paternity leave.

Maternity Leave is for up to 26 weeks with the first 6 weeks being paid at full contractual pay. Paternity leave is for 2 days at the child's birth plus 1 or 2 weeks paid leave.

So that there is some form of equality Conference calls upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to engage with HR to press for a review of Paternity Leave with a view to getting a longer contractual pay period for the non-birthing parent.

Comprehensive Motion No.24

Motion No.44 (Branch 14)

This Conference calls upon the Executive Committee to engage with Management to increase allowances to reflect the actual cost of subsistence and travel today, to ensure workers are not out of pocket whilst engaged in work related here, in GB and ROI.

Motion No.45 (Branch 92)

While Conference welcomes the increased pay award for 2023/24, it is important to remember that most of our members still face a real loss of close to 20% since 2016.

In addition, allowances have not kept pace with inflation, with some allowances not having been increased for years.

The 2024/25 pay claim of inflation plus an additional cost of living increase of 5% on all points and allowances will go some way to mitigating this loss if successful, but Conference believes that it is important to consider the real terms reduction of allowances as well as the real terms reduction in pay.

Conference calls on the incoming Executive Committee to continue to fight for pay restoration and for restoration of the value of allowances when considering future pay claims.

Motion No.46 (Branch 143)

I started in the NICS almost 19 years ago. We've had multiple economic downturns, Brexit, the ongoing wars in Ukraine/Gaza, and a pandemic (just missing the partridge in a pear tree).

The one constant in that time is the mileage claim rate of 45p per mile. Figures provided from the Office of National Statistics state that in 2009 the UK average petrol price was 100.02p, with diesel being 104.38p. As of when this motion was written (September 2024) the average petrol price was 137.3p, whereas diesel was 142.1p.

Those of us that need our cars for business use, are expected to not only fuel our cars, but pay for insurance, repairs, tyres etc out of this pitiful amount. As per the statistics I have provided, this may have been reasonable whilst the UK average petrol price was 117p per mile by today's standard, this is no longer the case.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive to petition the permanent secretaries and those deemed necessary to have the mileage rates reviewed and increased as a matter of urgency.

Please support this motion.

Composite Motion No.28

Motion No.47 (Branch 119)

Conference notes the recent external competitions and the weekly opportunities bulletin which is majority external competitions. These regular external competitions are constantly eroding the Corporate Identity of the NICS as well as undermining the learning opportunities for workers from those more experienced. It is imperative that the Civil Service prioritises internal talent and recognizes the invaluable experience and commitment of its current workforce. This motion advocates for a formal endorsement of internal promotions within the Civil Service, aiming to enhance worker morale, institutional knowledge, and operational efficiency.

The Civil Service is supposed to stand as a cornerstone of effective governance, driven by dedicated professionals who contribute significantly to public welfare. Despite this, there remains a substantial reliance on external hires for all positions, which can undermine the motivation of existing workers and disrupt the continuity of essential services. As a consequence, some of our best workers can only see progression through "temporary" promotions. It was noted an article in the Belfast telegraph that their investigation found a temporary promotion that had lasted 19 years, the majority of someone's service.

Rationale:

- 1. Retention and Motivation:** Promoting from within serves is a powerful incentive for workers to remain with the Civil Service. It acknowledges their hard work and dedication, thereby boosting morale and fostering a culture of loyalty and commitment. Internal promotions also provide clear career progression pathways, which can enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates, a key problem for our business.
- 2. Preservation of Institutional Knowledge:** Internal candidates possess a deep understanding of the Civil Service's policies, procedures, and organisational culture. This intrinsic knowledge is invaluable and ensures a smoother transition into new roles, reducing the risk of disruptions and maintaining the gains trade union side makes with experienced staff aware of said policies.

3. **Cost-Effectiveness:** Recruiting externally often involves significant costs related to advertising, recruitment processes, and training. By promoting internally, the Civil Service can save on these expenses and allocate resources more efficiently, focusing on professional development and training for existing workers.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive to:

Develop and deliver a proposal to the NICS for the reversing of their policy of external first for all roles above Administration Officer. This would include clear and transparent criteria and processes for internal promotions to ensure fairness and accountability.

And to conduct regular reviews of promotion practices to assess their effectiveness and to propose necessary adjustments.

Category B

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

Motion No.48 (Branch 118)

Conference notes the increasing numbers of recruitment agency staff being employed within NICS – some branches have more than 50% of their membership as Agency Workers.

We are concerned that this practice is becoming more widespread and accepted.

We call upon the incoming Group Executive to liaise with NICS HR to end this practice and ensure that all future vacancies/job opportunities within the NICS are advertised as jobs for substantive civil servants.

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.49 (Branch 119)

The Childcare Voucher Schemes closed to new people on 4 October 2018. This meant that if you were in the scheme before this date and your employer continues the scheme, you can keep getting the vouchers. This has led to a disparity between parents who have had their children before this date and those after.

Conference calls on the Civil Service Group Executive to raise this issue wherever it has to be and campaign for the reopening of the Childcare Voucher Scheme within the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Arms Length Bodies and associated employers.

Motion No.50 (Branch 127)

NIPSA has a long history of availing of lay representative talents by having them seconded from the NICS to NIPSA. Secondees work in a variety of different roles, but most obviously in their departmental trade union office. They all enhance the

member experience and are an invaluable resource in assisting NIPSA and its members.

NIPSA pays them a gross premium of £1758 per annum to support them in their seconded role. However, Conference is concerned that this premium has not increased for over 20 years. While this may have been a commendable sum when it was established, inflation and the financial crisis have taken their toll on its value.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to start discussions to address this anomaly and with the aim of increasing the allowance.

Category X

Motions which the chairperson has ruled out of order

Motion No.51 (Branch 127) This motion is ruled out of order as it is not factually correct.

Currently NICS staff can transfer to the Home Civil Service (HCS) easily, should their domestic circumstances deem it necessary, and a few have been fortunate to do so.

Unfortunately, this is not a reciprocal agreement and there are no protocols in place to allow HSC staff to transfer into the NICS. Individuals who wish to return or move to the NICS must apply for an externally advertised job, compete with all the other applicants, and if successful, lose all their protected rights of pay and pensions.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to engage with NICS HR to explore possibilities to help address this disparity.

Motion No.52 (Branch 134) This motion is ruled out of order as it is insufficiently clear as a means of determining policy.

Conference, in 2024 the last minutes which were issued to members were sent in July were for months December 2023, January and February 2024.

At pivotal times in the past when all members need to know where NIPSA stood in terms of meetings and negotiations the minutes are always issued months behind the issues. There is a constant delay in the minutes being agreed and issued to members, as is their democratic right.

Conference calls on the incoming Group Executive to have all meetings minutes agreed and a deadline set for 2 weeks for all minutes to be circulated.

Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance

Civil Service Group

Annual Delegate Conference 2024

The following candidates have been nominated for election at the Annual Delegate Conference 2024:

Candidate's Name

Candidate's Name

Chairperson (1 Vote)

Creaney, T

Turner, P

Vice Chairpersons (2 Votes)

Dale, P

McErlean, D

McKee, M

Mulholland, B

Executive Committee 22 (votes)

Candidate's Name

Brooks, W

Dummigan, M

McGeehan B

O'Sandair, R

Cobain, P

Garland, H

McKee, M

Rice, T

Collins, L

Glass, L

McLernon, G

Russell, V

Coyle, A

Gowdy, S

McQuillan R

Skelcher, C

Creaney, T

Johnston, R

Millar, A

Sloan, D

Crilly, D

Lowry, D

Morgan, C

Soto-Kelly, P

Dale, P

McAtamney, E

Mulholland, B

Turner, P

Davidson, J

McDermott, B

Neeson, M

Veighey, J

Doherty, E

McErlean, D

O'Reilly, B

