



Civil Service Group
Conference 2021

nipsa
Protecting Public Services
Supporting Public Servants

Civil Service Group
Annual Delegate
Conference
Online

Agenda 2021

Thursday 4 November 2021

www.nipsa.org.uk



Timetable

Thursday 4 November 2021

10.00	Chairperson's Address	
10.15	Appointment of Scrutineers and Tellers Adoption of Standing Orders Report No.1 Adoption of Standing Orders Report No.2	
10.30	Pay	Motions 1-6
11.30	Tea break	
11.45	Policies	Motions 9-14
13.00	Lunch	
14.00	General	Motions 17-20
14.30	Terms and Conditions	Motions 23-26
15.00	Recruitment	Motions 29-33
15.40	Health and Safety	Motions 36-39
16.00	Guillotined Motions	
16.30	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 28 October 2021.**

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 **Monday 1 November 2021.**

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 These standing orders will apply to General and Group Conferences until they are amended or rescinded by a motion adopted by an annual Delegate General Conference.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

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

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	Motions covered by it
Composite Motion 9	Motions 42 and 43

4. If Motion 29 is carried then Motion 30 falls.
5. **Voting on Motions**

As this is a virtual conference, voting on motions will be done electronically. Each branch has nominated a voting delegate who will vote for their branch on all matters of debate. When the Chairperson puts a motion to conference, the voting delegate will have the option of voting for a motion, against a motion or abstaining from the vote. Only the nominated voting delegate will be allowed to vote on matters of debate. Voting delegates must ensure they are ready to vote when called to by the Chairperson.
6. **Time Limits for Speakers**

A clock will be displayed that will countdown the time allocated to each speaker. This will be visible to all delegates including the speaker. Delegates should ensure that they conclude their speech before the countdown has been completed.
7. **Delegates called to Speak**

While in the conference, cameras will be turned off and mics will be muted. However, when a delegate is called to speak on a motion, there will be slight delay before they are brought through and they will need to activate their camera and their own mic.
8. 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 28 October 2021**. 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: B White (Chairperson)

A Boal

B Dornan

Primary Agenda

Motions in this Agenda are due to be discussed.

● Pay

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

Conference notes with dismay the imposition of both the 2020 and 2021 pay awards. Conference is disappointed that the imposition took place following the recommendation by the Finance Minister to the Assembly Executive without any meaningful engagement with Trade Union Side. Conference recognises that the imposed awards represent a further cut in real terms to the pay of Civil Servants and those in the Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) that mirror NICS terms and conditions.

Conference calls upon the Executive Committee to:

- Begin early preparatory work on the 2022 pay claim;
- Continue with the recent positive engagement with the Assembly parties;
- Develop a 'Fair Pay for Civil Servants Charter' and encourage all the Assembly parties and others in civic society to become signatories to the Charter;
- Consider the economic arguments, including the benefits to society, for giving staff fair pay rises;
- Continue to build the capacity and organisational ability of branches to enable them to recruit new members, develop their branch structures and communication with members in furtherance of coordinated campaigning on pay;
- Develop material for distribution to members, politicians and the wider public to highlight the important work done by Civil Servants and staff in ALBs.

Conference believes that all members must be encouraged to actively engage with NIPSA in the branches to ensure we are prepared to face the challenge of securing the pay increases our members deserve.

Motion No.2 (Branch 92)

Conference condemns the continuing erosion of civil servants' pay, the failure of Management Side to engage in meaningful negotiations with Trade Union Side and the imposition of yet another 1% pay increase.

We have now endured eleven years of below inflation pay increases.

We are also witnessing huge increases in electricity and gas prices. Political representatives meanwhile show their complete disconnect with our members by calling for civil servants working from home to go back to the office to support local cafés and shops.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to urgently highlight to MLAs, the media and the public the effect of 11 years austerity on civil servants' pay.

Conference further calls on the incoming Committee to build a campaign of information and action to press political representatives for the need for decent pay increases and meaningful pay restoration for NI Civil Servants.

Motion No.3 (Branch 137)

Conference notes the disgraceful decision by the Westminster Government to increase National Insurance Contributions by 1.25% from April 2022.

The impact of this increase is that following the imposition of 20/21 Pay, Civil Servants will suffer a further real terms pay cut in April 2022.

Conference recognises the Finance Minister is an advocate of multi-year deals and believes this gives more leeway for a better offer to be table, however; this is the clear danger with multi-year deals, in that something has now changed to the detriment of our members.

If CSGE consider any further multi-year deals, they must include a facility to reopen negotiations to take account of events such as this.

Conference calls on the incoming Group Executive to engage the Finance Minister and call on them to honour the measly 1% consolidated pay rise imposed for 2021 by increasing NICS Pay by 1.25% to offset the impact of this Tory stealth tax.

Motion No.4 (Branch 119)

Conference notes that in the light of recent developments surrounding safety measures being implemented since the threat of COVID 19 and in particular the increased number of staff working from home over the last 18 months, there have been inevitable savings across the board. As more and more staff are working remotely and modifying their homes in order to make space for office equipment this may have resulted in a net financial gain. However, the financial gains that those who may have travelled considerable distances are benefitting from must be offset against the adverse mental health implications. For example, those living alone and working 37+ hours per week may not speak to their colleagues on a regular basis like they once would have done while in the office. Those with young families and dependants have inevitably had to make modifications to their home in order to facilitate a semblance of professionalism in the home. In essence for many this could be considered more as a “living in the office” scenario rather than “working from home”. Research and consultation has shown that many homeworkers feel that they have to work over and above their requirements in order to prove they are being efficient and can be trusted to do the job from home.

As well as this it would be interesting to learn how much the NICS have saved while not having to occupy as many floors on buildings and in some instances entire buildings have been vacated. What would the rental and insurance savings have been on this alone? Not to mention security staff, cleaners, equipment and right down to toilet paper, pens and other stationery.

Conference instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to ensure that any savings as a result of this new way of working are highlighted in future pay claims with a view that these are passed on to the staff in terms of a salary increase.

Motion No.5 (Branch 70)

Conference commends all the hard work from the Civil Service Group Executive in 2020 who carried out a review of the NIPSA Pay, Terms and Conditions campaign which produced an excellent piece of work to help improve NIPSA over a number of areas.

Conference also acknowledges this work was presented to NIPSA Civil Service Group Annual Delegate Conference 2020 by NIPSA General Secretary Alison Millar. However conference is concerned that branch committee’s hasn’t seen or been informed of progress with the review action points since then. Conference believes that among all the issues that have come out of this review NIPSA’s communication and disconnect with members is still a major issue.

Conference instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to address and progress action points from the NIPSA Pay, Terms and Conditions campaign review immediately.

Motion No.6 (Branch 51)

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service group executive to use all means necessary including garnering political support to ensure a seamless and prompt passage for pay remits for those members within Arm's length Bodies and NDPB's. The unacceptable and unjustified delays, of up to eighteen months at departmental level, particularly DoF are causing hardship for our members and diverting union resources away from other key priorities due to our tireless attempts to resolve this ongoing issue. There appears to be unnecessary bureaucracy to deliver on what is essentially a contractual entitlement. Conference asks that the CGE make this a priority.

Motions No.7–No.8 unallocated

● Policies

Composite Motion 9 (to be moved by the Executive Committee)

Conference commends the Executive Committee and Officials for the work done to agree a Homeworking/Hybrid Working Policy. Conference recognises that the policy will be welcomed by and will benefit many members particularly those who have long distances to travel to their office. The policy will improve the work-life balance of our members and will, hopefully, allow members to consider jobs that were previously impractical because of their physical location.

Conference is pleased to note that the default position in the policy is to agree a workstyle agreement that allows the option of homeworking/hybrid working where possible and unless it is precluded by the particular job or business area. With improving technology remote working is becoming accessible for more and more staff however conference recognises that many members cannot currently avail of it and instructs the Executive Committee to continue work to address this. Conference further calls upon the Executive Committee to ensure that the new policy is amended and revised as necessary going forward with particular attention to ensure that the health, well-being and safety of our members is not compromised in any way.

Motion No.10 (Branch 118)

Conference recognises the difficulties that the current and on-going pandemic has placed on our members.

Whilst there is a policy concerning alcohol/drugs in the workplace, we note that members working from home have an easier access to alcohol/drugs without the constraints of the work place parameters.

Often these members are isolated at home, feel not involved and are left to their own devices and their problem escalate. They are in their own bubble and can feel they have no one to turn to for support. Working from home can have a great deal of positive impacts on work life balance but there can be as many negatives. To cope with this management respond by invoking conduct and discipline protocols.

Conference, therefore, calls upon the incoming Group Executive to immediately begin to liaise with Civil Service management on the matter

with a view to developing a bespoke, fit for purpose, working from home compliant, member-focused alcohol/drug policy which also signposts members to appropriate agencies and self-help groups.

Motion No.11 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference recognises that the proposals to delegate responsibility for managing attendance to line managers was suspended because of the pandemic. Conference is alarmed to note, however, that NICS management is proposing to now proceed with their original plans. Conference is concerned that the intended changes will put the burden of decisions in relation to delicate and personal issues onto line managers who are not fully trained in disability legislation, equality and other legislation. Conference further recognises that the burden of this additional work is coming at a time when the service is not properly resourced and staff are dealing with significant additional work because of the ongoing pandemic.

Conference further recognises that the delegation of decisions on warnings may affect harmonious relations with the workplace and lead to staff feeling vulnerable and unsupported.

Conference calls upon the Executive Committee to resist these renewed plans to delegate the functions of NICS HR to line managers.

Motion No.12 (Branch 118)

Conference recognises the lack of employment opportunities for people living with a disability, particularly those who suffer from a sensory perception condition (such as autism).

Sensory perception disorders continue to affect our members. Now with more people working from home, often, their difficulties go unnoticed.

Given the continuing trajectory towards working from home, these more vulnerable members are becoming increasingly at risk of losing out on social interaction, and at increasing danger of social isolation and loneliness and are more susceptible to feelings of hopelessness.

Often these members are frightened to highlight their difficulties and concerns.

Conference calls upon the incoming Group Executive to actively engage with appropriate interested bodies/representative groups to develop bespoke fit for purpose policies to ensure that these members' issues are properly identified and addressed and they are able to feel valued in the role they do within the workplace.

Motion No.13 (Branch 119)

Conference notes that the Covid pandemic has highlighted the an issue with the potential delays in applying sick warnings. This combined with the position that warnings can only be active from the date they are given and not backdated to the persons return to work date means that people end up with an effective warning spanning much longer than the documented time. This can cause added strain to members who have gone through a difficult time and have managed to get back to work. In order to get around this we propose that where there is a delay in issuing a warning that the time delay from the return to work until the warning is issued is taken from the duration of the warning so that people only service a total of 2 years.

Conference therefore instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to engage with HR with the propose of ensuring that all future sick warnings are thusly shortened by the time from return to work to the issue of the warning.

Motion No.14 (Branch 118)

Conferences acknowledges with alacrity the foreboding undertone of Professor Siobhán O'Neill who has stated that there will be a 40% to 60% increase in people presenting with mental health difficulties over the next 18 to 24 months as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Conference is rightly concerned at the effect this will have on our members - particularly given that 35% of all long-term sick absence is due to mental health illness.

The North of Ireland, already, has the highest levels of mental health illness in Western Europe, and the least investment in preventative services and treatment.

Covid-19 has placed an intolerable pressure on the scarce resources we have and waiting lists continue to grow ever longer.

We call upon the incoming Group Executive to recognise the severity of the problem, acknowledge the inadequacies of the present status quo. Accept the issue of mental health has for too long been woefully addressed or ignored by Civil Service management yet has been subject to draconian interpretation by the managing attendance guidance.

In order to properly protect those members affected by these issues, we further call upon the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to liaise with all interested bodies/mental health experts to try to formulate a bespoke, fit for purpose mental health in the workplace policy, recognising the logistical complexities that have been complicated by working from home.

Motions No.15–No.16 unallocated

● General

Motion No.17 (Branch 127)

Conference is concerned about the current low level of female participation from the Civil Service Group within NIPSA. Whilst women are 55% of the members in the NICS, the current CSG Executive Committee make up of only 20% women and the low numbers of women representatives at local level is a clear indication of how much work is required. Given that the recent General Conference carried such a motion, this is an opportune time to redouble the efforts to highlight and eliminate real barriers which prevent women from being active in our Union.

Conference calls on the incoming CSG Executive Committee to develop a system, scheme or such-like, to support, encourage and boost the participation of women within the Civil Service Group of NIPSA. This could be developed with the participation of the Equality Committee. It could provide a vital open approach to assist in highlighting barrier areas, help raise the profiles of local female representatives, give them the support and encouragement needed and include training events for both men and women. Supporting Branches to encourage women to actively participate as representatives in their Branches should be a fundamental goal.

Motion No.18 (Branch 15)

Conference notes the current HR Connect contract is up for renewal, that it hasn't delivered real benefits or improved service delivery and that a real opportunity now exists to bring outsourced services back into the NICS.

We also welcome that the NICS have declined to go down the route of Shared Services and that NIPSA believes NICS should concentrate on finding NICS solutions for NICS requirements in areas such as HR and IT.

We have also seen the involvement of the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) and Ernst & Young (EY) in projects such as New Ways of Working that serves as a warning to all members in NICS of possible further loss of functions and work to private companies.

Conference believes the NICS should now acquire, develop and home grow the necessary skills and knowledge to minimise any need for outside expertise. Currently external contractors can be paid much higher rates of pay than NICS staff at similar grades and that inequality is unacceptable.

Conference instructs the incoming Executive Committee to utilise all possible arguments and campaign to defend current NICS work and maximise the return of as many of these outsourced functions back in house as possible. The huge funding saved from ending this outsourcing should then be redirected into properly resourcing those areas, such as NICS HR and IT services, that these functions would return to.

Motion No.19 (Branch 127)

Conference calls on the incoming CSG Executive Committee to address the unacceptable difference being made between key workers that work in the office and those that work from home. This is an issue across the Departments but is particularly noticeable in the Department for Communities, where there are a high number of staff working in offices.

Conference recognises that key workers are an essential part of the social security network to deliver benefits in our society. A dedicated presence is required in some offices but that should not deflect from the continued essential work being carried out by those working from home.

While a lot of Departments have our members working exclusively from home, in some Departments many members carry out a hybrid or blended approach, by both working from home and going into their office. However, some members in those Departments can only work from home due to many issues such as disabilities, caring responsibilities or the continued dangers of Covid 19.

Some members have reported that they are feeling isolated and ostracised by their colleagues. They have been excluded from Team Time, or had their flexi restricted or even removed. A division has occurred between them and their co-workers who have been working in offices during the pandemic. Whilst it may not be apparent how this has developed, there are clear examples of differential treatment.

NIPSA will always defend our members' rights and the ability to work from home on an individual basis but Conference calls on the incoming CSG Executive Committee to raise these issues with Management and eliminate this division going forward.

Motion No.20 (Branch 33)

Conference, clear and open consultation and dialogue is a fundamental pillar of a strong and democratic trade union. The transparency of how we do this is essential to ensure that the broad range of opinion within our union is being reflected in these consultations and dialogues.

Rule 30 (a) of our Rule Book states that;

“30. The duties of the Civil |Service Group Executive Committee shall be as follows;

(a) To protect and promote the interests of members in the Group and to deal with matters within its area of competence affecting members from more than one branch, subject to the overriding authority of the General Council and to the role of other bodies of the Union as set up under Rule 6.9 or any

other rule of the rules of the union.”

Rule 32 further states;

“The Civil Service Group Executive Committee shall establish such advisory sub-committees as are considered necessary, and shall prescribe their terms of reference and delegate to them the authority necessary for the effective management of their business. The Group Chairperson shall have the right to attend any meeting of any Sub-committee, and a report on each Sub-committee shall be presented to each meeting of the Group Executive Committee.”

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to ensure that all of its sub-committees report to and consult with the full Executive Committee before any final decision is arrived at in relation to matters which they, the sub-committee, are tasked with negotiating/consulting on with Management Side. This will ensure fuller democracy as it will enable all elected members of the full Civil Service group Executive to have the opportunity to analyse the report and raise any queries or suggestions they may have.

This will further ensure that the entire Executive is fulfilling its role of representing the views of the people and areas that have elected them.

Adherence to the rule removes any potential of a perception that sub-committees can arrive at an agreed position with Management Side before the full Executive has the opportunity to analyse and scrutinise policies or changes to terms and conditions.

Motions No.21 – No.22 unallocated

● **Terms and Conditions**

Motion No.23 (Branch 53)

Conference notes the difficulties experienced by parents/guardians of premature babies, especially those who are admitted to NICU. Currently, parents of premature children are not entitled to any additional leave which often results in them spending the majority of maternity/paternity leave, providing care from the side of an incubator in a hospital. Once special leave is exhausted, many parents have no option but to use annual or unpaid leave during these extremely difficult and worrying times. Research by Bliss & TinyLife has found that approximately 80% of parents with a child in a neonatal unit have reported significant negative impact on their own health, physical and mental. 88% of respondents also said they were financially worse off (by over £200 per week) after their baby's stay on a neonatal unit.

Whilst disappointment was felt at the UK Governments refusal to adopt the House of Commons Petitions Committee report recommendations in September 2020 to bring forward legislation, it is welcome that a Neonatal Leave & Pay Bill has been formed and is due to be introduced in England in April 2023. That will see parents of sick children receive up to an extra 12 weeks statutory paid leave on top of existing maternity/paternity allowance, with the government footing the bill. Whilst welcome, this still falls short of the contractual protection this motion is seeking.

Unfortunately, Ireland North and South fall well short of the proposals for England and the policies already in place in Scotland. Parents should be able to concentrate on providing care for their children and support to their families, not worrying about work and pay. Conference calls on the CSGEC to build on the successful element of the 2020/21 Pay Award which sees contractual paid paternity leave extended to 2 weeks.

Conference instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to negotiate

with NICS Management Side the implementation of a compassionate and fit for purpose policy that ensures automatic and protected contractual paid parental leave (neonatal leave & pay up to 12 weeks) for parents with babies in NICU as well as pre-term infants in NICU.

Motion No.24 (Branch 33)

Conference, this is the 4th time that this motion has been on the agenda. It has passed each time so far, yet we still wait for the legal advice that has been instructed to be sought and provided.

Conference continues to be aware of the negative impact that the reorganisation of the HR function of the employing departments has had since the inception of NICS HR in 2017. Conference again notes with concern that members are being disciplined and dismissed by DoF staff irrespective of what department that member is employed by. The current situation with regard the pandemic further highlights the importance of a clear understanding of who our employer is.

Conference is reminded of Motion 13 unanimously adopted at the 2018 Civil Service Group Conference, Motion 32 which was again adopted at the 2019 Civil Service Group Conference and Motion 14 which was adopted at the 2020 Civil Service Group Conference, all of which instructed the then Civil Service Group Executive Committee to seek the necessary legal advice as to who the employer is and report back to Branches. Conference notes that to date this instruction has still not been carried out.

Conference therefore again instructs the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to investigate this issue, seek the necessary legal advice as to who the employer is and report back to branches without further delay and within a period to be agreed between the Civil Service Group Executive Committee and Branch 33.

Motion No.25 (Branch 25)

Throughout the Civil Service there are increasing numbers of agency staff filling roles. Many of these agency staff took full part in our most recent industrial action. While we have made great strides in increasing the lot of our agency members, getting the increments and paid sick leave for Covid related absences, being the biggest wins, there are still perks and benefits that they are not entitled to. The Cycle to Work Scheme is one which many of our members have raised. While there are differences in two peoples terms at the same job, it will always be a threat to the one with the better terms.

We instruct the Civil Service Group Executive to explore options so that agency staff can avail of all the same benefits as direct NICS employees.

Motion No.26 (Branch 118)

Conference vehemently condemns the unseemly precipitant adoption of a working from home policy which myopically ignored those members who, for whatever reason, chose to remain working in the office.

Whilst those members WFH have been able to benefit from a different attitude to flexible working, while saving on travel to/from work costs (including car-parking).

Our office -based members have continued to put their health at risk on a daily basis, as Covid-19 infection rates remain stubbornly high, by utilising crowded public transport, going through increasingly busy streets and shops. They also have to incur car-parking fees and city centre lunch rates plus added travel to /from work travel time without recognition or acknowledgement.

We note that DWP have acknowledged the sterling efforts made by office-based workers in continuing to perform their duties in the midst of a global pandemic by awarding a weekly flexi credit .

We call upon the incoming Group Executive to immediately begin to advocate for similar recognition on behalf of office-based workers.

Motions No.27–No.28 unallocated

● **Recruitment**

Motion No.29 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference is concerned that the current review of recruitment in the NICS, which is being undertaken as part of a response to the September NI Audit Office Report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS, will fail to deliver the solutions required by the NICS to address the current shortfall in staffing.

Whilst the NIAO report highlighted some shortcomings in relation to capacity and capability, the report failed to properly document the key causes for those shortcomings which were, inter alia, the Voluntary Exit Scheme, the failure by the NICS to recruit new staff particularly at the lowest grades and in a timely fashion, the over-reliance on agency workers, and the moratorium on promotion. This led to vacancies across all areas of the service and to significant knowledge and skills gaps across many areas.

Conference is concerned that the steps taken by the NICS could, unless NIPSA is fully consulted in the process, lead to the wrong solutions being put in place to resolve the problems.

Conference recognises that for most civil servants the service is a career rather than just a job and calls on the Executive Committee to take all relevant steps to ensure that NIPSA's views are central to the outworking of the review of civil service recruitment. Consultation must focus on protecting the promotion and career prospects of members whilst ensuring that the NICS is fully staffed with permanent employees who are adequately trained and resourced for the work they do to ensure the NICS is 'fit for purpose'.

Motion No.30 (Branch 119) (falls if Motion 29 is carried)

Conference notes the recent communication from management advising that the Acting Permanent Secretary for the Department of Finance has decided to commission a full review of Civil Service Recruitment.

Conference understands that the Review is part of the response to the NIAO Report on Capacity and Capability in the NICS.

The use of External Competitions to fill posts at DP, SO, EO1, and EO2 grades has been the source of much anger and disappointment among members who have correctly viewed this development as having a negative impact on their career development. The DP and SO Competitions were both challenged by NIPSA via a Judicial Review and formed part of the last Civil Service Industrial Dispute.

There are currently around 2,500 Agency staff working in the NICS. These workers are effectively working in Precarious employment and our Agency members have no prospects of career development or a permanent contract. This practice must be ended by filling the posts with substantive staff or where posts cannot be considered as genuinely long term, the solution must be to at least insist on 51 Week Contracts. These can be converted into substantive posts after four years. The review may provide a means of addressing this.

In light of the above, Conference welcomes a review of Civil Service Recruitment, however it also notes that CTUS were not consulted on the terms of reference for this review. Once again, management has failed to properly consult on an issue that is of immense importance to our members. This a matter of great concern.

Conference now calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to ensure that CTUS are fully consulted regarding any out-workings from this review. Conference further calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to work to help ensure that the review addresses shortcomings in the current Recruitment policy where possible.

Motion No.31 (Branch 13)

For many years now the NICS has been providing an excellent unrewarded service to the burgeoning private ICT Sector in Northern Ireland by taking on ICT Placement Students and training them for 12 months before releasing them back into the wild to complete their degree course. The answers are generally positive when these students are surveyed about whether they would consider returning to the NICS once their degree had been completed. But as no mechanism currently exists within the NICS to make these students conditional job offers (as is done in every private sector ICT company in the country), they are invariably employed elsewhere (on higher salaries) by the time the NICS come to recruit.

Concurrently, the average age of ICT staff within the NICS continues to increase. Despite several efforts made to recruit externally this continues to be the case, largely down to the NICS's uncompetitive salaries in the profession.

Wouldn't it be an incredible thing if there was some way in which these two problems were able to be addressed?

Conference requests that the ability for the NICS to retain ICT Level 1 Placement Students be investigated as a matter of urgency.

This may include new provisions around conditional offers of employment. No doubt the mechanisms required may prove to be something that need to be navigated carefully, but Conference has every confidence that between NICS HR, Senior ICT Management and NIPSA's ICTCC, we surely must be able to overcome this challenge.

Motion No.32 (Branch 94)

Conference recognises the hard work from the Trade Union over many years to agree the Staff Handbook. Having a clear, transparent agreed rule book is a great benefit to us all. However there are some areas which could benefit from additional clarity.

Management can fill posts using a wide variety of methods. They use general promotion boards, specialist competitions, trawls, expression of interest, voluntary transfers and in some cases enforced transfers. Competitions may be restricted to particular disciplines or open to analogous grades. There appears to be a lack of consistency in how these are applied.

Conference calls on the incoming executive committee to engage with NICS management to agree a transparent specific set of guidelines to advise management and the TUS how posts should be filled.

Motion No.33 (Branch 33)

Conference notes with concern the continued insistence of employing Departments to continue with the use of external recruitment competitions, the latest example of which is the EO2 and EO1 competition.

In effect, this is a signal of the end of clear career paths for workers in the Civil Service who have kept the country running during periods of political stalemate and the global pandemic.

Once again the workers are paying for the failures of bosses. For years we have been calling for clear workforce planning in order to ensure that Departments have adequate resources and that opportunities are made available for working people to start in the lower grades and progress through their career.

There may be matters to be addressed as far as the workforce balance in the various departments is concerned, however external direct recruitment as is currently being used is not the fair solution to these questions. Indeed recent legal rulings such as *The Government Legal Service v. Brookes* and *BT Plc v. Meier* have determined that psychometric testing can in itself be discriminatory.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service group Executive to engage with the NICS employers and insist that they return to the longstanding arrangement of mass recruitment at the lowest grade followed by internal promotion boards through the grades.

This should ensure that the workforce demographics are balanced while also providing clear opportunities for the workers in the Civil Service.

Motions No.34–No.35 unallocated

● **Health and Safety**

Motion No.36 (Branch 119)

Conference recognises the good work of the Mental Health First Aiders in Universal Credit and Child Maintenance Service during the pandemic and calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to redouble efforts to get Mental Health First Aiders in place for all areas of the Civil Service.

Motion No.37 (to be moved by Executive Committee)

Conference commends NIPSA Representatives and Officials for the sterling work they have done through the last very difficult year. The pandemic has presented many challenges for those working at home and in the office but in particular has presented significant challenges to NIPSA's Health and Safety Representatives. Conference is grateful for the work they have undertaken which has preserved the lives, health and well-being of our members by keeping them and their workplaces as safe as possible.

As we move forward into still uncertain times, conference recognises the ongoing need to protect workers, their families and society as a whole. Conference calls upon the Executive Committee to do all it can to improve the numbers and the training of our Health and Safety Representatives and to ensure they are afforded all the time and resources they require as provided for in Health and Safety legislation. Conference further calls upon the Executive Committee to take all necessary action, including industrial action if necessary, to continue to protect the lives and safety of NIPSA members, their families and the public.

Motion No.38 (Branch 33)

Over the last 2 years we have all had to adapt to a new reality brought by the social restrictions made necessary by the global pandemic. Civil Servants have risen to the challenges of this new reality and have continued to provide excellent levels of public service.

There have been different experiences, depending on the circumstances of each of our lives, however it seems clear that the flexibilities provided by working from home are something that the majority of people want to be able to make use of.

Employing departments are now consulting on what the New Ways of Working in the Civil Service will look like for their employees. It is essential that this union does everything possible to ensure that this new way of working is one that will be of benefit to the workers of the Civil Service going forward and essentially that the health, safety and welfare of workers is at the forefront of this dialogue. No member of staff should suffer a detriment as a result of any new policy, change in terms and conditions or lack of protections in law.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to ensure that the employer is held to their duty of care and legal responsibilities under health and safety legislation when consulting on any policies which are being developed and that these developing policies do not attempt to move these burdens on to the individual employees, or place those workers at a material disadvantage.

The employers and their appointed competent persons must also be reminded of the legal obligation for an employer to consult with Trade Union appointed Health & Safety reps regarding the potential impacts on the health, safety and welfare of their employees caused by these new policies/new ways of working.

Motion No.39 (Branch 92)

Long COVID is a condition which has arisen as a direct result of contracting COVID-19 and is not linked to the severity of the virus. Long COVID can present in a cluster of symptoms that are often overlapping, including breathlessness, headaches, cough, fatigue and cognitive impairment (brain fog). There is also increasing evidence that sufferers may sustain organ damage. The condition can last for a year or more, but insufficient data is available beyond that point.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to ensure that staff suffering from long COVID are not treated detrimentally under the Managing Attendance policy.

Motions No.40–No.41 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.42 (Branch 7)

Conference recognises the excellent work done by NIPSA, HQ staff, the Executive committee, Central TUS, Departmental TUS and local TUS in ensuring as many staff as possible are able to work from home during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. NIPSA have also worked equally hard to ensure safe working conditions for those who had to attend their workplaces over the last 18 months.

As a result of these efforts around 95% of workers in the NICS have been able to work remotely from home and many now wish to continue to do so. The interim 'Working From Home' policy including FAQs was the result of intensive negotiation and kept our members safe during the time that it has applied. This is about to be replaced by a 'Hybrid Working Policy' after further intensive consultation and negotiation between NIPSA and the NICS.

This remarkable move to hybrid working will be on a voluntary basis and enables many members to enjoy a much reduced commute, an enhanced work life balance, amongst many other benefits and is to be greatly welcomed. Some political representatives, however, believe our members in the NICS and Arm's length bodies should be ordered back to the office to support local cafes, restaurants and other outlets, primarily in Belfast. These insulting views must be opposed on every level, and conference therefore instructs the incoming Executive committee to defend the right of members to decide how they wish to work in future in accordance with the new policy, either remotely, in the office, in a hub or a mix of all three.

Motion No.43 (Branch 119)

Conference is aware that the Northern Ireland Civil Service is intending to move to new ways of working with a mixture of home/Connect 2 hubs and office working. The benefits and drawbacks to each of the working locations are very much a personal matter with different options suiting different people. Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive to press management to ensure that members will be given the full range of options allowed by their duties to choose from.

Category B

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

Motion No.44 (Branch 119)

Conference notes with concern that management, at various levels, have attempted to avoid proper consultation with Trade Union Side.

They have done this under the various guises such as short time frames or business needs. This has resulted in changes being foisted upon our members. We cannot stand for this.

Conference instructs the income Civil Service Group Executive to recommit to ensuring that all pressure is brought to bear on management side to fully commit to their obligations to fully consult on all changes to work practices.

Motion No.45 (Branch 119)

The Northern Ireland Civil Service is a very varied workplace, with a wide range of roles being carried out at the different grades. With such a variety of jobs being carried out it is important that we make sure our members are getting paid for the correct role and are not working out of grade.

Conference instructs the Civil Service Group Executive to insist, through the appropriate avenues, on Job Evaluations being carried out in any area where they are likely to benefit our members.

Motion No.46 (Branch 127)

Conference calls on the incoming CSG Executive Committee to continue to actively promote the work that NIPSA members in the Department for Communities Make the Call team carry out. This team helps customers in Northern Ireland receive all of the social security benefits and services that they are entitled to.

A national poverty charity has recently warned that at least 7 million people across the UK are missing out on over £15 billion of unclaimed benefits. Current sources of data from government are guesstimates and researchers have found it very difficult to source correct data but have reported that there is an endemic issue of unclaimed benefits in the UK. The confusing, sometimes hostile and often stigmatising world of social security has led to millions of people not claiming their entitlements.

Research has also found that 45% of people have never even checked their benefit entitlement. However, the DfC Make the Call team helped 9500 people claim an additional £44.1 million in Northern Ireland for the 2019-20 year. These figures, whilst heart-warming, should be duplicated every year.

The team helps to increase awareness and take up of particular benefits for those that are unable to work, in poverty, elderly or infirm. All representatives should be encouraging their members to check if they, or their families and friends, are entitled to claim benefits.

Conference calls on the CSG Executive Committee to issue information about the Make the Call service on a regular basis. The information should be shared throughout the Departments so that members can reach out to check that they do not miss out on any help they are entitled to.

Category X

Motions which the chairperson has ruled out of order

Motion No.47 (Branch 92) This motion is ruled out of order as it is not factually accurate.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised the profile of suitable and sufficient risk assessments in all work areas. However a risk assessment is only valid at the point in time that it was written and so should be considered a living document that informs Management if the control measures that they have in place are adequate.

Conference calls on the incoming Civil Service Group Executive Committee to ensure that Management continually review these assessments on a regular basis taking into account guidance, transmission rates and outbreaks in work areas.

Conference further calls on the incoming Committee to emphasise to Management that in order to comply with the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1979, they must involve local health and safety reps in the process and ensure that completed risk assessments are shared with staff.

Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
Civil Service Group
Annual Delegate Conference 2021

The following candidates have been nominated for election at the
Annual Delegate Conference 2021

Chairperson (1 Vote)

Creaney, T

Turner, P

Veighey, J

Vice Chairpersons (2 Votes)

Dale, P

O'Sandair, R

Rooney, J

Lowry, D

Harvey, S

Standing Orders Committee

Crilly, D

Executive Committee 22 (votes)

Boersma, I	Godfrey, T	O'Reilly B
Brooks W	Hartin, L	O'Sandair, R
Callan, B	Harvey, S	Robinson, M
Cammock, F	Kennedy, M	Rooney, J
Cobain, P	Loughran, M	Russell, V
Collins, L	Lowry, D	Scott, W
Cowan, D	McAtamney, E	Skelcher, C
Creaney, T	McCready, R	Sloan, D
Crilly, D	McErlean, D	Soto-Kelly, P
Dale, P	McKee, M	Toner, D
Davidson, J	McNulty, J	Topping, D
Dobbin, M	McWilliams, P	Trainor, A
Doherty, E	Millar, T	Turner, P
Feighan, P	Mulholland, B	Veighey, J



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