

FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS



ANNUAL²⁴
CONFERENCE

Annual Conference 2024 – Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs are designed to answer some of the most frequently asked questions. The list of questions isn't exhaustive, but it should at least help to demystify the basics. If you have any further questions, please email: annconf@mail.nasuwt.org.uk

Who you will see at Annual Conference?

What is Annual Conference?

Annual Conference is the group of NASUWT members who come together each year to set the policy of the Union and to hold the National Executive to account. Annual Conference takes place once a year, usually over the Easter weekend.

The Conference is the sovereign decision-making body of the Union. As well as setting policy, Annual Conference agrees changes to the Union's Rules and debates and agrees the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Who attends Annual Conference?

Every NASUWT Local Association is allowed to send at least two 'elected representatives' to Annual Conference. These can either be self-nominated or elected at a quorate meeting of their Local Association or Federation. Each Local Association is allocated a maximum number of elected representatives based on its total membership.

In addition, a number of other NASUWT members participate because of positions they hold in the Union's democratic structures, including:

- members of the National Executive Committee and the National Officers;
- two representatives for the Federation of Retired Members' Association (FRMA);
- two representatives of the Executives Councils of each of the devolved nations (Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales);
- Past Presidents of the Union.

Who sits on the stage?

- The Chair – usually the President
- The other National Officers, i.e. the Ex-President, Senior Vice-President, Junior Vice-President and Honorary Treasurer
- The General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary
- Members of the National Executive Committee (in rotation)
- The Chair of the Standing Orders Committee

Who else attends Conference?

- Press
 - Observers – can nominate and self-fund themselves
 - Past Presidents
 - Medal holders
 - Staff, including contractors who help deliver this important event.
- Most sessions of Annual Conference are 'public'. This means that any member of the public is welcome to register and attend and watch the debate.

Conference will once again be available to view online. The public session will be available to watch via the Annual Conference 2024 page.

What are Standing Orders?

Standing Orders are the rules by which Conference is run.

Many of them are covered in other FAQs, but a full document is available and is supplied as an Annual Conference publication on the App and on our Annual Conference 2024 Publications web page.

What is the Standing Orders Committee?

The Standing Orders Committee is a group of members who help to run Annual Conference and advise the Chair on the conduct of business and interpretation of the standing orders that govern how the Annual Conference is run.

Some of its members are elected from the National Executive and others are elected by members of Annual Conference following the nomination of candidates by Local Associations. Members serve for one year, but can be re-elected for further terms of office.

The Standing Orders Committee decides which Local Associations (or the National Executive) move and second motions and amendments.

If a single Local Association has submitted a motion and it isn't composited, they will both move and second. Where more than one Local Association submits a motion, or where the motions of more than one Local Association are composited, the Standing Orders Committee will usually divide the proposing and seconding across more than one Local Association.

During Conference, anyone wishing to speak, to should submit an amendment to a motion, move a procedural motion or to raise a point of order submit this to the Standing Orders Committee who will bring this to the attention of the Chair.

What is a private (or closed) session?

Guests, including the media, are invited to watch Annual Conference. This helps to create a buzz around what we do, but there are some things we discuss that we don't want reported in the media; for example, sensitive items such as the Union's Financial Statements or any contentious motions.

These can be held in private (or closed) sessions. Only members of the Union and staff are allowed to be present. Everyone else is required to leave.

Who decides what motions are debated?

Each Local Association and the National Executive are invited to submit motions in the run-up to Annual Conference.

All motions are checked by the Standing Orders Committee for accuracy, to ensure they are competent and to make sure they would not commit the Union to do something that was impossible to achieve, against its Rules or illegal.

Where motions from more than one Local Association are on the same topic, the Standing Orders Committee will sometimes amalgamate them to form a 'composite' motion.

The Standing Orders Committee additionally sorts motions into sections, such as:

- Education;
- Equality;
- Health, Safety and Wellbeing;
- Pay, Pensions and Conditions of Service;
- Social, Economic and International; and
- Training, Recruitment and Union Organising.

There are always more motions submitted than Conference will have time to debate, so a full list is sent to all members for them to vote on the 20 they most want to see on the final list, called the Annual Conference Agenda.

The top six motions are scheduled to take place at the start of six of the public sessions of Annual Conference.

In addition, the National Executive can table one or more urgency (2b) motions and the Executive Council from each of the devolved nations can submit a motion (2c) highlighting policy concerns specific to their jurisdiction.

What are amendments?

The final list of prioritised motions is sent to Local Associations before the Agenda is printed. If they feel they could improve on motions by adding to them, changing the wording, etc., they can submit amendments if they have been agreed at a quorate meeting.

Amendments go through the same process of checking and compositing¹ as motions before being added to the Agenda.

How can I speak in a debate (and what are speakers' cards)?

The first to speak is always the member moving the motion. The mover is given up to eight minutes to speak. The seconder, also speaking in favour of the motion, is given five minutes.

After this, other members of Annual Conference can speak for, against or to the motion. To be considered to speak by the Chair, you must complete a speaker's form. You will have the link to the form on the Annual Conference App.

The members of the Standing Orders Committee, who are seated at a desk near block A, will be able to help with filling in the form if you need it.

The first time you speak in a debate, you're going to be nervous! Many first-timers break the ice by telling Conference they've not spoken before. That always guarantees a warm reception.

What happens if there is an amendment to a motion?

If an amendment appears under a motion in the agenda, it will be debated after the motion has been moved and seconded, but before any further speakers are taken.

If it is voted on and approved, the now amended motion will be debated. If there is more than one amendment, this process will continue until all amendments are heard or Annual Conference stops the process – see the section below on procedural motions.

Amendments are debated in the same way as motions and the proposer has up to four minutes to speak.

What is the 'right of reply'?

At the end of the debate, the original mover has a 'right of reply'; this gives them an additional four minutes to respond.

The right of reply is always the last speech before the vote.

When does the debate stop?

If Annual Conference runs out of time or out of speakers, or if there are lots of speakers for the motion, but no more against or vice versa, the Chair will usually call for a vote.

There are other ways Annual Conference can request debates be finished. These are covered in the procedural motions section below.

How does Conference vote on motions?

Voting is done by a show of hands. Members of Annual Conference can vote for the motion, or amendment, or they can vote against it. There is no provision for abstentions.

Usually, a show of hands is clear and the Chair declares the result. Conference can also demand a card vote by a show of hands. This involves representatives of no fewer than 40 Local Associations, whose combined membership is 8,000 or more, rising from their places and claiming a card vote.

How is a Card Vote different from a show of hands?

A show of hands vote gives each member who votes one vote, but this doesn't represent the actual number of votes everyone holds.

Members of Annual Conference who attend as a member of National Executive, or as a result of another office they hold, have one vote each, but members who are representing their Local Association carry a share of the total vote of their Local Association.

For example, if a Local Association has 3,000 members, that Local Association will have 3,000 votes. When a card vote is called, this larger number is counted and the vote is more accurate.

Your Local Association representative will be given a book of card votes and asked to use it when a card vote is called. It's very simple to use.

What are procedural motions?

Procedural motions allow Annual Conference to exert its control on debate.

They need to be moved, seconded and debated, but the process is much quicker than normal motions.

The following procedural motions may be moved and only at the discretion of the Chair:

- that the speaker be further heard;
- that the speaker be not further heard;
- that the question be now put;
- that the question be not put;
- that the motion be referred to the National Executive for further consideration;
- that the time for speakers provided by Standing Order 15 be reduced to a specified time for the remainder of the session or for the remainder of Conference;
- that a motion allocated to private session be debated in public;
- that a motion allocated to public session be debated in private;
- that an urgency motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 8 be called for debate; and
- that a Standing Order be suspended for a specified purpose.

Where/how do I book my accommodation?

Elected representatives at Annual Conference are entitled to claim for the Friday and Saturday nights of Conference only.

Accommodation bookings for all Conference representatives must be made using the Reservation Highway central booking system.

The Reservation Highway system is intended to save Local Associations time and money without restricting your independence. The benefits include:

- all payment administration is processed by Reservation Highway on behalf of NASUWT;
- discounted rates only available by booking through Reservation Highway;
- no need to pay up front;
- no need to supply credit cards or raise invoices;
- simply book your room(s) and let Reservation Highway do the rest;
- a wide choice of hotel options situated close to the Conference venue, with all hotel listings available in one place to save time and effort searching;
- flexibility of options to assist Local Associations; and
- easy-to-use online booking system and telephone/email enquiries handled by the Reservation Highway office.

This service can be accessed via www.reservation-highway.co.uk/nasuwt24.

Further support can be accessed via **01423 525577** or admin@reservation-highway.co.uk.

If you have any questions or need any clarification on this partnership or on the benefits to your Local Association, please email annconf@mail.nasuwt.org.uk.

Please note, the Conference Tariff states that any accommodation not booked using the highway must not be funded by the Union, either locally or from the central fund.

A decision for family members to accompany elected representatives to Annual Conference and the reimbursement and tariff rates for family accommodation, travel and subsistence must be considered and approved at a quorate local meeting.

Please ensure you are familiar with the Conference tariff paper before making any bookings. This is available from your Local Secretary and Local Treasurer.

How do I book a crèche place?

A crèche facility will be provided for those elected representatives who require childcare provision over the course of the Conference. Due to high demand, crèche places are allocated to elected representatives who are attending the event:

- alone with their child(ren); or
- with a partner who is also registered to attend the event.

Those who require crèche provision and meet the above criteria should email annconf@mail.nasuwt.org.uk with their requirements before 22 February 2024.

Claiming expenses

Before incurring any expenditure, please ensure you are familiar with the Conference tariff paper. This is available from your Local Secretary and Local Treasurer.

An expense claims form will be available from your Local Association. The form will need to be completed in full and sent to your Local Association, along with receipts for this to be authorised and reimbursed.

All expenses must be claimed by 7 June 2024.

Footnote

1 Where motions from more than one Local Association are on the same topic, the Standing Orders Committee will sometimes amalgamate them to form a 'composite' motion.

Harrogate Convention Centre

Accessibility and Inclusion

Is the venue fully accessible?

Stewards are always available during events, should you require any assistance. Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) holds regular meetings with local disability groups to ensure that the venue is as accessible as possible to everyone.

I would like to assistance understanding the layouts of the venue to maximize my independence. Is any assistance available?

Assistance is available at the venue by the HCC stewards and a map of the venue will be available at the registration desk and on the Conference App. There are also stewards available inside the hall to support you with individual needs.

There will be a dedicated area in the main hall for wheelchairs and those who require DSE chairs.

Will I be able to register early?

There is early registration from 11:30 and entry to the Conference hall available for disabled members and lower registration desks for wheelchair access.

Is there accessible accommodation?

Yes. Harrogate has a number of fully accessible bedrooms. Please inform Reservations Highway and add your request to your registration details so that they can secure the best possible bedroom for you.

Can I bring carer to ensure my needs are catered for?

Yes. Please include them in the booking of your accommodation and let the Annual Conference Team know at annconf@mail.nasuwt.org.uk that they will be attending with you.

Can I bring my assistance dog?

Yes. Your assistance dog is welcome to stay and attend all sessions. Please let us know in advance if you will be bringing an assistance dog, to ensure the animal is catered for.

Can I get assistance with BSL interpretation?

Yes. NASUWT will provide you with BSL interpretation throughout the event. Closed captions will also be available in the main auditorium for this event.

Is there a hearing loop at the venue?

There are fixed-loop hearing systems in the auditorium.

Do you have disability scooters available?

If you require the use of a mobility scooter whilst at the Conference, here are the details of local company to arrange the hire: **Mobility Scooter Hire – Harrogate**. There will be sockets available around the hotel for charging purposes. Please ask a member of the Conference Team for further details.

What disabled parking is available?

There is Blue Badge parking in HCC's underground car park with direct lift access to Entrance One of our auditorium. Otherwise, the most accessible car park is Jubilee Car Park, free for Blue Badge holders and nearer than the main HCC parking.

Where are the disabled toilets?

There are accessible toilets throughout the venue.

I struggle in large groups or noisy environments. Is there any support?

Yes. We will do everything we can to make your experience comfortable and enjoyable. If you would like to discuss your needs in confidence, please include your requests during the registration process. Your details are private and confidential. Please also speak with a member of the events team so that we can support and help you with any specific needs.

Will there be quiet space I can use to take time out from the Conference?

There will be a quiet space available for use in the Conference Link 2 Room on the ground floor (near registration) for those delegates that need a little time away from the hustle and bustle. We also have made available short 2–5-minute wellness videos which can be viewed via the App.

Is there a space I can use for prayer or contemplation?

Yes. A dedicated space is provided for prayer and contemplation in Conference Link 1. This is a designated 'no work' space and all forms of communication must be switched off.

Local restaurants

If looking for nearby restaurants which are accessible, please use the following link: **Euans Guide**.