



EQUITY
CONFERENCE 2026

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Paul W Fleming

General Secretary's Address

Welcome to Durham! Our two principal venues this year may be the most impressive yet. Durham Cathedral is one of the most remarkable buildings in the world, forged by countless working people, a place of peace in a world of chaos from the Vikings to Donald Trump, and often a place of radical prayer. Its enormous columns are more than just an architectural feature; if unfurled from the centre they form a perfect square. In mediæval symbolism, the square represented the temporal, that which is human made; the circle represented the divine, the metaphysical, the eternal. It's a great metaphor for the work our members do as artists - as workers they create art which speaks to something within and beyond the grinding material world, to the heart of the human condition.

Conference should be the same - the work of motion writing, passing, and campaigning, but also the joy of socialising, learning, and connexion. We're expecting more representatives than ever, with more motions than ever, and the busiest ever fringe. With our union facing major campaigns on pay across theatre, TV, and film - as well as the Spotlight case, and a radical new approach to areas like TV commercials, audio, and new media - we need this space to renew our solidarity, keep us energised, and ensure we represent the interests of the whole of our 50,000 strong membership.

Durham will again be a campaigning conference, and we're starting with a win. Our variety members, drag acts and other LGBTQ+ artists can celebrate the UK's first collective agreement for Pride in the City, pipping Manchester to the post.

At the heart of saving, and unionising, Durham Pride are our hosts at Redhills, the Durham Miners' Association, who've fought for and funded the festival when the Reform County Council pulled the plug. Our venue for debates and fringes is radically different to years gone by. We'll be seated in the Pitman's Parliament, an incredible place which is testament to what our movement can build when we're accountable, aspirational, collective, and industrial.

In these two very different spaces, working people have left testament to the power of solidarity and the collective. As we do in every corner of the country when we bring our conference to town: Equity will be doing the same these three days.

Paul W Fleming
GENERAL SECRETARY

Welcome to Equity Conference here at Redhills, the headquarters of the Durham Miners' Association and its proud role in the struggle for workers' rights and the rise of the trade union movement. Following last year's conference in the magnificent Guildhall in Derry, it is a true privilege to hold Equity's conference in the impressive Council Chambers, known as the Pitman's Parliament.

Just over 150 years ago a group of Primitive Methodists (a 19th century working class movement) met in the Market Tavern here in Durham, determined to improve the working lives of local miners. By 1915 their numbers had swelled to 150,000 members and a new home was needed, and here we are in Redhills.

Whilst many of us will have no direct connection to the Durham Miners, for some the 1984-85 Miners' Strike certainly had an impact. I remember working at the Liverpool Everyman Theatre during that period and making collections and donations to the mining communities on a weekly basis.

Set against the centuries of global capitalist expansion, 150 years of workers organising appears relatively brief, but as Equity approaches its 100 year anniversary, we also form part of that onward struggle. The miners' fight for better pay, shorter working hours, health and safety, and dignity and respect at work, is mirrored in our fight, as we push back against arts funding cuts across the UK, the threat of wage cuts in continuing dramas, AI and the greed of techno bosses. Let's be very clear little has changed.

What has changed is the Equity Conference; for those who have attended before you will see that the fringe events are now an established part of the agenda. Offering more time and space to discuss and interact with fellow attendees. Whilst motions continue to form a significant part of the schedule. There's still plenty of time to socialise!

Some of you will be familiar with Equity's conference and procedures; can I ask that you again extend a very warm welcome to any new attendees and offer support and encouragement where needed? If however you are new to Conference, and you most certainly won't be the only one, can I encourage you to take this opportunity to mingle, and meet members from different sectors of our industry. Circus performers can I introduce our members working in audio? Dancers and choreographers can I introduce you to our drag performers? We all share one thing in common, the need to unite, to make things better for everyone.

Let's also be proud and celebrate that Durham Pride, which had its funding cut by the Reform Council, will now have in place a formal agreement, that ensures that performers engaged by Durham Pride will benefit from the certainty of that Equity agreement.

I look forward to meeting you during the course of the three days of conference, as we gather together to build on our past efforts and make our industry a safer and better place to work in. Perhaps the motto of the Durham Miners' Association best sums it up: "The past we inherit, the future we build." In solidarity,

Lynda Rooke
PRESIDENT



Lynda Rooke

President's Address

CONFERENCE BUSINESS

Timetable and Agenda

SATURDAY 9 MAY

13:00	Doors open and registration begins for Councillors and CBC only
13:15	Registration begins for all other attendees
13:25	Council meeting convenes (Councillors only), Council Room
14:00	Chair formally convenes conference, Miners' Hall
14:05	Report from the Conference Business Committee
14:10	Obituaries
14:25	President's address (Lynda Rooke)
14:40	Motions on Equality and Inclusion
15:30	Comfort break
15:50	Report from AGS, Live Performance (Adam Adnyana)
16:00	Motions on Variety
16:15	Motions on Live Performance
17:30	Conference adjourns
17:45	Council meeting if necessary (Councillors only), Council Room
19:30	Reception, Miners' Hall

SUNDAY 10 MAY

09:30	Conference resumes, Miners' Hall
09:35	Report from Deputy General Secretary (Louise McMullan)
09:45	Motions on Recorded Media
10:35	General Secretary speech introducing 2025 annual report (Paul W Fleming)
10:50	Comfort break
11:10	Motions on Policy
12:40	Report from AGS, Policy and Communications (Sian Jones)
12:50	Appeal from the International Solidarity Committee
13:00	Conference adjourns
13:00-15:00	Lunch, Miners' Hall
13:30-17:30	Fringe events, Miners' Hall
19:30	Dinner, Durham Cathedral

MONDAY 11 MAY

09:30	Conference resumes, Miners' Hall
09:35	Mary Kelly Foy MP (City of Durham)
09:50	Paul Nowak (TUC General Secretary)
10:05	Equity motion to TUC
10:20	Motions on Policy (continued)
11:00	Comfort break
11:20	Honorary Treasurer's submission of 2025 accounts (David John)
11:30	Report from AGS, Operations (Beccy Reese)
11:40	Motions on Policy (continued)
12:25	Formal motions to adopt the 2025 annual report and accounts
12:30	Conference closes



Conference Business Committee

Julia Carson Sims (Chair), Ian Barritt (Vice-Chair), Laurence Bouvard, Dan Edge, Su Gilroy, Marina Hampton, Isabella Jarrett, Nana St Bartholomew-Brown, Sam Swann.
Secretary: Sam Winter.

Representatives with questions on this agenda or on conference procedure can visit the Conference Business Committee (CBC) at any time during Conference. Also, the CBC will be in formal session and available for advice in the CBC room at the following times:

Saturday 9 May
17:30-17:45

Sunday 10 May
13:00-13:15

Monday 11 May
11:00-11:15

All motions submitted for inclusion in the agenda have been vetted and (where required) amended by the CBC for punctuation, grammar and style in accordance with CBC protocols.

Issues relating to whether a motion is in or out of order were considered by the March CBC and Council meetings, following discussion with the union body submitting the motion.



Motions

Equality and Inclusion

MOTION 1: London North Branch (and selected by the London Regional Meeting)

Casting directors and agents need to provide clear self-tape instructions. Actors are regularly given no instructions on what casting wants to see. It's an issue throughout the industry but is particularly bad with commercial castings – containing full scenes of actions with almost no dialogue and no instructions, as if they want you to film the entire commercial. Actors are confused and frustrated.

For neurodivergent actors this problem is much bigger. Lack of clear instructions can be disabling and a huge barrier to opportunity, often ending with them unable to complete the tape, thus losing the job they were invited to audition for and are perfectly capable of. Actors are unable to ask clarifying questions to understand what they should do, without either appearing incompetent or disclosing their disability, a protected characteristic, which most often is irrelevant to the role but could result in conscious or unconscious bias when they are being considered for it. It's not difficult to provide clear instructions on what casting wants to see without directing the performance, so why can't these simple accommodations be made? They will be game-changing for neurodivergent people, and hugely beneficial to all actors.

Castings cannot claim to be inclusive if the audition process excludes people from being able to complete tapes. Conference calls on Council (in consultation with relevant committees) to organise a meeting/forum with casting directors and agents to discuss how to improve and clarify self-tape instructions to ensure castings are inclusive.

MOTION 2: Deaf and Disabled Members Committee

Despite years of campaigning for authentic casting, Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent (DDN) performers continue to face significant barriers in the industry. Many are excluded from audition rooms, overlooked in casting pools, or told their access requirements are too complex to accommodate.

At the same time, non-disabled actors continue to be cast in disabled roles. The practice of disabled mimicry, or 'cripping up,' is not a historical issue; it is re-emerging in current productions. This denies employment to Disabled performers and undermines authentic representation for audiences. Disability is not a costume, and lived experience is not optional.

Equity has already undertaken important work with the Casting Directors' Guild to promote authentic casting. However, progress remains uneven, and further action is needed, particularly in influencing directors, producers, and artistic leadership, where final casting decisions are often made.

Conference further notes that the Disabled Artists Alliance has developed the Disability Conscious Casting Framework, a clear and practical tool to support equitable casting, but it has yet to gain widespread industry adoption.

Conference urges Council to -

1. publicly recognise the Disability Conscious Casting Framework as best practice for the casting of disabled roles;
2. use the full weight of the union to promote and advocate for its adoption across theatre, screen and live performance; and
3. work with theatres and companies to encourage public commitment to the framework, and challenge those who continue to cast non-disabled actors in disabled roles.

MOTION 3: Race Equality Committee

Conference notes that over the past two years there has been a sustained and escalating pattern of violent disorder and intimidation associated with far-right activity, including riots targeting people of colour, aggressive protests outside migrant accommodation, and the display of nationalist symbols in public spaces, creating a hostile environment and a credible risk to the physical safety and psychological wellbeing of members of colour working across the UK's nations and regions.

Conference notes also that members of colour working in the entertainment industry have experienced organised and vociferous objections to their presence on stage and screen, alongside racist hostility from audiences and local communities, which reflects an ongoing pattern of intimidation rather than isolated incidents.

Conference calls upon Council to -

1. devise a strategy to allow Equity to work closely with theatres, venues, and production companies to develop and implement safeguarding arrangements that are operational and practical, including -
 - risk assessments for productions and touring, particularly in regions identified as high risk;
 - clear escalation procedures for safety concerns;
 - named safeguarding contacts known to cast and crew; and
 - front-of-house protocols for responding to racist or intimidatory audience behaviour; and
2. include in this strategy a focus that theatres, venues, and production companies adopt, actively implement, and regularly review comprehensive anti-racist policies and monitor compliance and challenge failures where such policies are absent or ineffective.

MOTION 4: Women's Committee

The government is consulting on provisions in a new Employment Rights Act, including improvements on a range of rights that disproportionately affect women:

- statutory right to bereavement leave, including the loss of a child of under 24 weeks;
- strengthened rights to maternity pay and leave; and
- the right not to be discriminated against and dismissed on the basis of pregnancy and maternity issues.

This is to be welcomed. However, these only apply to employees, while workers and freelancers in the creative industries who experience loss or discrimination are not equally protected under the law. They tend not to be eligible at all for maternity pay and even maternity allowance – due to the complicated calculation of eligibility. Pregnant performers routinely do not submit, are not submitted by agents, and are not chosen for work. Performers are dismissed from jobs because they are pregnant or in a maternity period.

We need the relevant government departments to take these issues seriously, to enable our workers to benefit from these key rights. These would enable women to gain a foothold in the industry and to develop and lengthen their careers without fear of discrimination.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. lobby the government to consult on how the above rights could apply in the creative industries for freelancers;
2. carry out a properly-funded research project on how the above rights function in our industries, make recommendations for reforms, and research evidentiary case studies; and
3. join with other unions representing gig economy workers to present a joint approach.

Variety

MOTION 5: Variety, Circus and Entertainers Committee

Conference notes that the recent survey into London Nightlife completed by those working in cabaret demonstrates that many members are still facing unacceptable conditions at work, making them feel less safe than in previous years.

Almost 28% of respondents to the survey explicitly described an increase in homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, racism, and far-right sentiment in their working lives, experiencing regular instances of violence, aggression, and inappropriate touching.

Conference therefore asks Council to look at further actions, such as workplace agreements, to protect these workers at their workplaces and when travelling to and from work. This would be in line with the new duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment at work.

Live Performance

MOTION 6: Stage Management Committee

Stage managers are regularly given duties that cross union lines with our comrades in other technical disciplines.

Used as a cost cutting method by producers to reduce staffing, these responsibilities are imposed upon stage management often after point of contract (despite producers' prior knowledge), or as needs arise during productions. In both cases, there is normally little compensation for the additional duties.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to -

- operation of sound, which can include powering up the sound system, rig checks, and prepping any production sound elements;
- operating lighting, which is more complex than 'simply pressing GO' and can include powering up and rig checks;
- operating automation or 'pyro', involving being responsible for powering up, rig checking and loading pyros which normally requires training;
- wardrobe duties, which can include laundry calls, costume maintenance and covering a dresser's plot; and
- puppetry duties, which can include maintenance and repairs of specialised puppet mechanisms and electronics, and covering stage plots.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. highlight that these roles are not in the standard remit of stage management, are therefore not included in the published job descriptions created by the SMC, and should incur recompense;
2. support members receiving these requests from producers, and help push back against being made to feel extra duties must be accepted in order to secure a role, or to take them on during a contract without reasonable conversation; and
3. develop wording with the SMC that could be codified into future agreements to support stage managers.

MOTION 7: Directors and Designers Committee

Conference notes that -

- inadequate remuneration is a shared issue for theatre workers of all disciplines. Whether weekly rates for performers and stage management or fees for directors, designers and other creative team workers, the money we receive for the job we do too often fails to reflect the time, skill, value, and experience we bring to our roles;
- as genuinely self-employed persons, the creative team is excluded from important statutory protections such as the National Minimum Wage and holiday pay that performers and stage management can fall back on in the absence of collective agreements, thanks to their categorisation as workers for the purposes of employment rights;
- negotiations over the industry standard agreements for designers are ongoing, and that later in 2026 claims will be submitted on our agreements for directors and choreographers;
- cuts to arts funding have had a direct impact on the fees creative workers can achieve in the subsidised sector; and
- the overall reduction in work across subsidised theatre further reduces theatre workers' earning potential.

Conference believes united we bargain, divided we beg.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. pledge its full support to all creative team disciplines Equity represents in seeking substantial, groundbreaking uplifts to minimum fees along with comprehensive improvements to other terms and conditions;
2. participate in wider trade union movement initiatives on improving the statutory rights of the genuinely self-employed; and
3. develop specific 'creative team' member materials and briefings for local and national decision makers in Equity lobbying and campaigning over arts funding.

MOTION 8: South Wales Branch (and selected by the Wales National Meeting)

Conference notes that -

- AI-generated 'patients' are beginning to be used in medical education and communication skills training;
- this reduces employment opportunities for professional medical role-players, particularly those engaged for complex interpersonal communication work;
- realistic human interaction is central to high-quality clinical communication training, with long-term implications for patient care across the NHS (or HSC in Northern Ireland); and
- Equity's Medical Role-Play Best Practice Guide sets out standards on pay, preparation, and professional respect, but does not yet address the use of AI in place of human role-players.

Conference believes that -

- the unregulated introduction of AI 'patients' risks undermining both members' livelihoods and the quality and safety of healthcare training; and
- Equity should take a proactive role in ensuring technology is not used to replace skilled performance work without scrutiny, standards, and collective input from workers.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. support the establishment of a Medical Role-Players' Network, beginning with a pilot in Wales, to gather evidence, share information, and build collective organisation in this sector;
2. develop, as a matter of urgency, guidance on AI use in medical training to complement the Best Practice Guide, including model contractual protections and minimum standards;
3. engage with medical schools, training providers, and relevant regulators to promote the value of professional role-players and advocate for ethical, worker-informed approaches to AI in healthcare education; and
4. request that the pilot network reports regularly to Council, so that findings can inform union policy and support the development of similar organising approaches in other nations and regions.

MOTION 9: Stage Actors Committee

Conference notes that -

- actors and stage managers frequently work under contracts and rehearsal schedules that demand rigid availability, long and irregular hours, and limited consideration for caring or parenting responsibilities;
- the lack of flexibility in rehearsal scheduling, performance structure, understudy/alternate scheduled shows, touring expectations, and casting practices contributes to talented theatre makers leaving the profession or being unable to access opportunities; and
- improving working flexibility is essential to making the industry more inclusive, sustainable, and representative of wider society.

Conference believes that -

- caring and parenting responsibilities should not be treated as personal inconveniences but as a normal and respected part of working life;
- meaningful cultural change, rather than ad hoc goodwill, is required to ensure genuine accessibility for those with dependents; and
- introducing flexible working practices and exploring innovative models such as job sharing would strengthen, rather than weaken, the creative and economic health of the industry.

Conference asks for Council to -

1. champion sector-wide cultural change – call on funding bodies and industry leaders to recognise flexible and family-friendly practices as markers of responsible production management and to incentivise such practices in funding and commissioning decisions;
2. create an accessible bank of resources (for members and managers), applicable all sectors (e.g. West End, Commercial, Subsidised, Fringe) that raise awareness of the statutory rights and how flexible working practices can be achieved; and
3. write a letter to managers sharing positive case studies of job sharing, to educate managers in some of the different ways flexible working practices can be achieved.

MOTION 10: Singers Committee

Conference notes that many singers undertake highly international, portfolio careers.

Cuts to public funding for classical music and the wider arts sector, and shifting audience behaviours, mean that international work can prove ever-more crucial for UK-based classical singers in pursuing and remaining in a singing career. Members are left vulnerable to exploitation without full union protection when working overseas, and some singers cite their highly international working pattern as a barrier to their joining the union.

Despite this reliance on international work, it is less available to UK-based singers, not least because of a reduction in freedom of movement and the administrative, financial, and time-consuming burden of acquiring visas and other documentation.

Conference notes the international solidarity initiative taken by EuroFIA members to create a 'Dancers Passport', enabling dancers who engage in similarly international careers to benefit from union support when undertaking work with international engagers.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. continue lobbying work to protect and expand freedom of movement for singers and other performers and creative practitioners who are reliant on overseas work for their income, including lobbying to improve the process of acquiring A1 forms from HMRC;
2. continue lobbying work at local, regional and national levels to protect and further arts funding, including those institutions which engage singers of opera and classical music; and
3. explore the creation of a 'Singers Passport' style arrangement with other unions overseas, enabling singers to access support from sister unions when working internationally.

MOTION 11: Opera Houses Deputies Committee

Conference notes that Equity's opera membership has been engaged in a fight against cuts to the public funding of opera and against management tendencies to pass cuts on to the workforce. Cuts have taken several forms. There have been sweeping proposals to change terms and conditions. Members have fought these through the threat of industrial action, but members have also received below-inflation pay uplifts.

A more subtle attack comes from a drift towards increased workload for the same (or in real terms lower) pay. As total pay and weeks of employment are reduced, the arrangements for parts and covers (for choristers) and acting up (for stage management) remain substantively unchanged. Such arrangements were initially negotiated alongside a full-time, permanent salary and do not reflect the part-year contracts now used by some houses.

Beyond the national houses, commercial producers are also seeking to reduce their costs. Many consistently refuse to offer work on union-negotiated terms, and they engage individuals as choristers, while expecting them to undertake covers with no or minimal fees for learning, rehearsing or covering.

Conference asks Council to -

1. continue to fight vociferously against cuts to public funding of the arts, including opera and classical music;
2. carefully consider and claim for fit-for-purpose chorus parts-and-covers arrangements and stage management acting-up payments, both in industrial negotiations with individual houses and in discussions with relevant management associations; and
3. build and use industrial power to move those companies not currently using union agreements towards doing so, thus protecting Equity's opera workforce.

Recorded Media

MOTION 12: Kent Branch (and selected by the East and SE Regional Meeting)

Conference calls upon Council to develop clear and comprehensive guidance on members' engagement with vertical drama productions.

This guidance should address, but not be limited to, minimum standards on pay, hours, working conditions, usage and rights, safeguarding, and routes for advice and support to members.

In developing these guidelines, Council is asked to give particular consideration to the risks of exploitation within the vertical drama sector, especially for younger and early-career performers working for non-union or overseas based producers.

Furthermore, Conference believes it is in the interest of all members to seek guidance from Equity staff whenever considering working on non-union contracts for vertical dramas, with the long-term aim of achieving proper industrial agreements with the producers of vertical dramas.

MOTION 13: Audio Committee

AI is decimating the audio sector. Our work is disappearing at scale now.

Major ad and marketing agencies as well as broadcasters like Channel 4, Sky, Comcast, Bauer Radio and HGTV are already using AI voices.

Audible has 60,000 AI-voiced audio books available for download.

This is nothing less than an existential crisis and, while it has begun with audio, it is already spreading into other areas.

As more members lose their livelihoods and leave the industry, the union itself may be facing contraction and extinction.

Today, the biggest threat to our sector no longer comes from the unauthorised scraping of our data but from the unethical, poorly paid and legally dubious contracts which members are signing with AI companies and/or their intermediaries, often selling their voices and likenesses for pennies.

Performers urgently need union-agreed terms and meaningful licence agreements that are genuinely ethical, that enable consent without coercion, control without caveat and compensation which truly reflects the value of our members and their work.

Conference applauds the AI campaigning and contract work done so far and urges Council to go further with a robust, proactive policy.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. create a template contract for voice and/or likeness licensing; and
2. use this to approach leading AI companies, like ElevenLabs, in order to formalise their procurement process and put a stop to their back door deals with unscrupulous intermediaries.

MOTION 14: Continuing Drama Deputies Committee

The government Green Paper on BBC Charter Review sets out clear ambitions for the BBC, including -

- playing a crucial role in finding and nurturing new talent;
- having obligations to provide certain genres that are at-risk or underserved; and
- enhancing its relevance to all communities across the UK and creating jobs.

Continuing drama and returning drama series, especially those that film for more than six months of the year, can deliver on these ambitions, thereby making it imperative that the BBC develops and invests in more of this type of production, not less.

In this current charter period, the BBC has reduced by half the number of continuing dramas on our screens. *Holby City* went in 2022, *Doctors* disappeared in 2024 and *River City* bows out in autumn 2026.

The BBC needs to increase investment, not merely maintain current spending levels, in continuing and returning drama if it is going to meet the ambitions it has for audiences in the next decade. Maintaining current investment levels when production costs are going up means artists and audiences lose out: shorter filming periods mean more precarious employment, and the same budget delivers fewer episodes to enjoy.

Conference calls on Council to advance the demand, as part of Charter Renewal, that the BBC is obligated to produce a continuing or returning drama series that films for more than six months of the year in each of the Ofcom regions. This would mean two new productions – in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

MOTION 15: Screen and New Media Actors Committee

Supporting artists are a vital part of the industry. They are the human texture that makes a scene believable. Without them, our screens would look unnaturally empty.

They should not, however, be put in the position of being asked to do the work of a featured artist without being re-contracted.

They should not be asked to engage in any dangerous activity that should be done by a professional stunt performer.

They should not be treated like cattle.

Supporting artists should be supported artists.

However, the agencies that they are booked through often do not represent the best interests of supporting artists, seeking instead to brush complaints aside and keep producers happy. All too often the union does not hear about poor practices until after the event.

Conference calls upon Council to -

1. seek to deliver a programme of sessions to educate members and non-members across the nations and regions about why such practices are unacceptable and how to deal with such situations in workplace settings. It is vital that supporting artists know their rights and understand their terms and conditions; and
2. work with the main agencies who engage supporting artists to assist with this and to get a commitment from those agencies to notify the union of any wrongdoing.

This work can also focus on the recruitment of supporting artists and building the Supporting Artist Network into a powerful, industrial force committed to stamping out poor practices and fighting for fair and proper treatment for all members.

Policy

MOTION 16: South Yorkshire Branch and Surrey & Berkshire Branch (Composite) (and selected by the NE, Yorks. and Humberside, and East and SE Regional Meetings respectively)

Conference notes -

- there is growing misuse of 'pencilling', where performers are asked to hold dates without firm commitment and are often neither booked nor formally released;
- while 'pencilling' used to indicate a strong likelihood of engagement, current practice increasingly sees performers placed on hold at recall stage and left in limbo, forcing them to remain available for protracted periods without financial remuneration or timely release; and
- this practice has damaging consequences for performers, including loss of income from other employment, pressure and reputational risk in 'day jobs,' and the unnecessary use of annual leave.

Conference believes -

- the current use of 'pencilling' is a misuse of an actor's time and availability, which have value and should not be treated as a free resource;
- the absence of clear standards allows poor practice and shifts commercial risk onto performers; and
- fair and respectful treatment must underpin all engagement practices, and performers should not bear the cost of uncertainty in commercial production.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. develop and promote clear standards on pencilling and timely release, including a definition of 'pencil' and a requirement to disclose the number of people on the shortlist;
2. seek to negotiate compensatory payments for performers who are held on a pencil and not released within a reasonable timeframe; and
3. engage with casting professionals and producers to improve transparency and communication and seek to obtain commitments from casting directors to release all pencils at least 48 hours (two working days) before the start of production.

AMENDMENT: Council

Council proposes amending the motion to the following:

Conference notes -

- the misuse of the practice of so-called 'pencilling', where artists are asked to hold dates without firm commitment and are often neither booked nor formally released;
- there is no consistent industry definition of so-called 'pencilling' which can mean anything from indicating strong likelihood of engagement, to artists being placed on hold at recall stage and left in limbo, tricking them into remaining available for protracted periods without financial remuneration or timely release; and
- this practice has damaging consequences for artists, including loss of income from other employment, pressure and reputational risk in 'day jobs', and the unnecessary use of annual leave.

Conference believes -

- the current practice of so-called 'pencilling' is a misuse of an artist's time and availability, which have value and should not be treated as a free resource;
- the absence of clear standards allows poor practice and shifts commercial risk onto artists;
- the so-called practice of 'pencilling' has little to no legal basis; and
- fair and respectful treatment must underpin all engagement practices, and artists should not bear the cost of uncertainty in commercial production.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. advise members that Equity opposes the practice of so-called 'pencilling', and develop a new member education campaign about their contractual rights in the casting process;
2. support members on an individual basis who are abused by the practice of so-called 'pencilling'; and
3. start a member campaign aimed at producers, engagers, agents, and funding bodies to end the practice of pencilling.

MOTION 17: LGBT+ Committee

Conference notes that -

- a significant number of adult sex workers are existing Equity members, reflecting the substantial intersection between adult sex work and performance work; and
- due to the criminalisation of sex work and the absence of standard union contracts in many performance-related spaces, these workers are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of exploitation and lack of health and safety regulations in the workplace.

Conference believes that -

- sexualised labour does not remove or diminish an employer's duty of care; and
- all performers, regardless of the nature of their work, should be able to work safely, without fear of physical or psychological harm, and with clear rules in place to ensure fair treatment and proper payment.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. actively encourage adult sex workers who undertake performance work to join Equity, including through targeted outreach by union staff and activists;
2. explore how the union can better facilitate the unionisation of adult sex workers by advocating for the adoption of union contracts and minimum standards in performance spaces across live performance and recorded media; and
3. work with relevant organisations, including sex worker-led groups and creative industry bodies, where appropriate, and support collaboration with other trade unions campaigning for the full decriminalisation of sex work.

AMENDMENT: Council

In the first ask, remove 'adult sex workers who undertake performance work' and replace it with 'artists engaged in performance work which is allied to sex work'.

In the second ask, remove 'of adult sex workers' and replace it with 'of such artists'.

MOTION 18: Scotland National Committee (and selected by the Scotland National Meeting)

Following an unprecedented number of cutthroat closures to creative arts spaces throughout Scotland and across the UK, Conference asks, where does that leave our artist and arts spaces?

The creative industries aren't seeing a fair return on the £29 billion a year they contribute to the economy (projected to rise to £53 billion by 2033); it is becoming increasingly difficult for our members to sustain and remain in this industry. The government has promised an increase to arts funding that works out at around 0.13% addition every year for the next 10 years. Therefore, we need to call on governments and local authorities to ensure financially viable spaces are available to artists and creatives on fair and accessible terms so that spaces cannot dictate the success or failure of vital creative resources, productions, and programmes.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. engage with government to seek to ensure that legislation protects artist tenants and service users' rights regarding spaces at risk of closure or eviction, including obligating local authority landlords/funders to find alternative options, particularly when Equity members are directly impacted;
2. encourage arts organisations to share under-used or vacant spaces that they have access to with artists and creative bodies who are needing facilities to create, produce, and deliver activity; and
3. consult with the relevant local authorities to develop a fair agreement and payment structure for small arts organisations and creatives to ensure buildings do not become vacant and creativity has a secure base to provide for communities.

MOTION 19: International Solidarity Committee

Multiple states have backed the bloody conflicts in both the Sudan and Palestine over the last year, with devastating consequences for those living and working in each.

Through our relationships with artists struggling against oppression the world over, the International Solidarity Committee regularly hears directly about the impact of war, genocide and strife on the ability of artists to live in their homes and among their communities, let alone produce artistic work.

As a major international player, the UK government has many powers at its disposal to bring an end to conflicts and advocate for peace, whether that is through sanctions on conflict-supporting states, arms embargoes or enforcing international law.

Conference urges Council to organise an Equity lobby of the UK Parliament in partnership with other cultural organisations (including sport) to demand that the British government oppose conflicts in Sudan and Palestine, including a call for UK sanctions to be applied to states, corporations, and entities profiting from these conflicts, funding them, or supplying weapons.

MOTION 20: Northern Ireland National Committee (and selected by the NI National Meeting)

In August 2025, a Drag Storytime event in a Belfast library was picketed by protestors claiming to be ‘keeping their children safe’ and accusing performers of inappropriate activity. At the end of the event, performers had to be escorted from the venue by police, who were themselves harangued for protecting them.

Minister for Communities Gordon Lyons issued a statement saying the event was inappropriate for children and should not have taken place, adding that it had ‘compromised the perception of our public libraries as a welcoming and inclusive space for all.’ This followed a letter of expectation he sent to the Arts Council Northern Ireland which, among other stipulations, stated: ‘To ensure maximum accessibility and inclusion, I expect the council in the terms and conditions of its funding programmes to ensure that any activity disrespectful of any tradition, in locations or by groups receiving council funding, results in specific and substantive action as regards funding.’

Equity’s NI official wrote to the minister; the reply reiterated his original statement. The NI Committee chair raised the matter with the minister’s party leader and MP Gavin Robinson. The response was: ‘Gordon is entitled to his opinion.’

In a position of power and influence, a minister’s responsibility must extend beyond personal belief or party politics.

Conference asks Council to mount an Equity campaign against political interference in the funding and delivery of the arts across the UK. The arts must develop free from censorship and political control. Ministers should champion the arts, not undermine them.

MOTION 21: Bristol and West of England Branch (and selected by the SW Regional Meeting)

Conference notes that while most are happy to support the occasional unpaid cause, the frequency of unpaid requests, often from large, well-funded, and sponsored organisations and events, has now become unsustainable for performers.

Conference believes that a Pay the Act campaign offers a simple, practical solution, rooted in compassion, empathy, fairness, and realism. In a cost-of-living crisis, paying performers is not optional, it is essential.

Performers, producers, fundraisers, and charities can sign up and use the Pay the Act campaign logo. Performers can then easily and professionally decline unpaid bookings by citing their participation.

For organisers, publicly supporting the campaign strengthens industry standards and demonstrates ethical practice.

Conference calls on Council to develop a Pay the Act campaign as a positive and necessary step forward for the industry, focused on a clear principle: that performers must be paid fairly by event producers, charities, fundraisers, and promoters.

MOTION 22: Student Deputies Committee

Conference notes -

- the funding crisis facing higher education (including nationwide redundancies) and its particular impact on performing arts education;
- that, in England, top-up funding for creative and performing arts courses has been frozen at £16.7 million from 2024/25, after being cut in half from £36 million in 2021;
- the scrapping of undergraduate courses at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, closure of East 15 Acting School's Southend campus and now reversed plans to create two-tier courses at Italia Conti; and
- increasing demands to overhaul the student finance system to relieve the unpayable debt burden on students and graduates.

Conference believes -

- underfunding increasingly privatises performing arts education provision and excludes those from working class and oppressed backgrounds from entering the industry;
- the future of the performing arts depends on high-quality, fully-funded public performing arts education which rewards talent, not wealth;
- the reversal of plans for two-tier courses at Italia Conti following pressure from Equity demonstrates we have power to address this issue; and
- we shouldn't rely on the exploitation of international students to fund higher education.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. support local campaigns to oppose fee increases, cuts, and increasing barriers to access performing arts education; and
2. campaign with the University and College Union, UK student union bodies, and other stakeholders for public funding, to increase top-up funding for performing arts courses, and to make higher education free at the point of use.

MOTION 23: Young Members Committee

Open castings are often seen as an important way to improve access to the industry, giving artists with no representation the opportunity to be seen by key industry players. However, they also present a unique set of challenges which can disproportionately affect members who are new to the industry.

Some of these challenges include -

- onerous preparation – extensive material is expected to be learnt and significant prep to be undertaken, with only a very small chance of being seen;
- high costs – often artists have to take time off work to attend, losing significant income; and
- scams and exploitation risks – some charge fees or push expensive workshops.

Conference calls on Council to -

1. launch a survey to collect data on the disproportionate impact of problematic open calls on young members;
2. draft guidance to deal with these specific challenges, extending Equity's existing guidance on self-tapes and auditions to open castings; and
3. run a campaign targeting casting directors, to drive up the conditions of open castings.

MOTION 24: London South Branch (and selected by the London Regional Meeting)

Funding in the arts and public services continues to deteriorate while major restrictions on workers' rights remain. Pro-worker legislation is an urgent need, especially in fields like AI. A consistent trade union voice in politics could only strengthen our campaigning. Our rulebook lets us 'work with others whose aims are the same or similar to the Union's... providing that the Union does not affiliate to any political party.'

Conference urges Council to consider -

1. continuing its work in approaching parties and candidates favourable to unions to publicly commit to Equity policy and supporting our campaigns;
2. inviting party leaders favourable to unions and who are aligned with Equity's aims and objectives to a meeting to explore ways they could adopt our policies and demands at local and national levels, through Equity's democratic structures and without affiliation;
3. writing to the executives of other unions examining these issues – which include Unite, University and College Union (UCU), National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) and Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) – to open discussion on a political voice accountable to trade unionists; and
4. opening a process of discussion at all levels of Equity on how to hold political representatives (including 'BEAU', the Broadcasting, Entertainment and Arts Unions All-Party Parliamentary Group) accountable to union policy and on establishing a dedicated political fund, not linked to affiliation, that could selectively support political candidates fighting for Equity policy.

MOTION 25: Merseyside and Cheshire Branch (and selected by the NW Regional Meeting)

A McKinsey report from 2023 stated that 91% of British adults had engaged with the arts in some way over the last 12 months, and in that same year, arts enterprises raised £126 billion in revenue, with creative industries accounting for nearly 8% of the UK's total exports. The benefits of arts in education are well documented, increasing self-esteem, cognitive capabilities, and mental wellbeing amongst many other attributes. Yet, arts funding is often the first to be cut when budgets are under pressure – as evidenced by Bristol's recent decision to cut culture funding in the city.

The threat of cuts to theatres is now existential. As more funding decisions get devolved to local councils and regional authorities, the removal of grants and subsidies becomes ever likelier, and the risk of theatres closing forever becomes inevitable. This will undermine the sector for generations to come, as well as undermining the UK's economic growth and global influence. Furthermore, ever since theatre's inception, it has been integral to democracy, allowing a forum for education, shared values, communal identity and political debate – all of which are more important than ever.

Conference calls on Council to seek to enshrine arts funding as a statutory obligation for councils and regional authorities, ensuring that multiple theatres across each region can continue their vital work within communities.

MOTION 26: Dance Committee

Choreographers and movement directors have been part of the theatre, film and television industry for over 75 years. Despite this, these professionals have continued to report unfairness and exploitation throughout the industry.

Two years ago, the Choreographers and Movement Directors Network was founded to address these issues. To date, 225 choreographers and movement directors have joined the network and more have got involved in the union.

It is widely felt among the membership that there is a disconnect between how our work is understood and treated by producers/employers, and the reality of the scope of our work and the creative input we actually provide to a production.

In some areas of the industry, movement directors are not recognised where agreements for choreographers are in place; in others, there is no agreement with provisions for movement directors and choreographers at all.

Conference calls on Council to seek to negotiate -

1. the specific recognition of movement directors in relevant agreements;
2. that the contributions of movement directors and choreographers are protected and credited via all relevant agreements; and
3. creative and material parity between choreographers, movement directors and other heads of departments/creative team leaders.

We are gathering a collective voice, but we need our contracts to reflect the reality of our work in order to protect our labour, our expertise, and our members.

MOTION 27: West End Deputies Committee

Conference notes that Equity members fought for and won decent pension provisions via enhanced employer contributions in all of our major theatre agreements. It also recognises that many Equity members struggle to decipher their payslips and pension statements and, therefore, find it hard to check what pension contributions they should be receiving.

As recent experiences of a number of West End deps show, this can lead to Equity members missing out on the pension contributions they are owed by engagers, often because producers have failed to pay contributions at the correct rate. Conference notes that there have been a number of recent successes in the West End, where deps have been able to raise discrepancies, resulting in the correct payments being made, to the benefit of all. This can only happen where members are equipped with the skills to know what to look for and the resulting confidence to ask questions of their bosses.

Conference calls on Council to help facilitate a new suite of educational resources to enable members to better understand their payslips and pension statements and, therefore, be more able to challenge any discrepancies, including but not limited to using the union's social media accounts to reach as many members as possible.

MOTION 28: East Midlands Branch (and selected by the Midlands Regional Meeting)

Travel is essential for performing arts workers: We have to travel to where the work is.

Public transport – the safest, most sustainable, lowest emissions travel – can cost a worker upwards of 20% of the job revenue.

Fares are too high.

Services are infrequent and/or unreliable.

Services don't run early enough in the morning or late enough at night.

Performing arts workers are more likely than the general population to be women, Disabled, neurologically atypical, or gender diverse. We work in the nighttime economy or unsociable hours.

Performing arts workers have variable, unpredictable, and precarious income. Running a car, for many, is impossible. The solution: an Equity travel card.

Equity travel card could give Equity members cheaper fares – by a suggested one third off – on every bus, coach, tram, and train.

Lower fares for performing arts workers would boost demand for public transport services, offsetting the cost of subsidies.

For transport companies, the business case exists to improve services: Earlier mornings, later nights, frequent, reliable and trustworthy.

Better services, with less overcrowding, reduce transport stress for early-rising, late-working, women, Disabled, neurodiverse, and gender-diverse workers.

Conference calls on Council to convene a working group to -

1. explore the challenges above;
2. establish the scope and business case for an Equity Travel Card that works for all: Equity members, public transport commissioners (e.g. local authorities) and transport companies;
3. run a feasibility study into piloting the Equity Travel Card; and
4. explore, with other creative worker unions, the possibility of a wider creative industries travel card.

Equity Motion to Tuc

*This motion is listed as the final motion, but will be taken as the first business following our guest speakers on the Monday morning.

MOTION 29*: Council

Conference supports Council in submitting the following motion to TUC 2026:

New rights to address AI-generated digital replicas

Congress notes that:

- i. AI tools to create a digital replica of an individual's likeness are now widely available;
- ii. many performers, particularly voice artists, have found that after a recording session for a particular purpose, their voice has been cloned and used for other commercial purposes without consent or pay;
- iii. unauthorised digital replicas undermine performers' income and personal autonomy and pose a threat to the sustainability of careers in performance;
- iv. current rights, such as under UK GDPR and intellectual property, are uncertain and patchy on how they apply in this context and do not provide adequate protection; and
- v. more widely, any individual, particularly women, may be subject to a degrading or misleading "deepfake" of their likeness disseminated online.

Therefore, Congress calls on the TUC to:

1. lobby the government to introduce personality rights, to give performers a clear route to control and license digital replicas within agreed limits, and to give all individuals a clear right to object to a harmful digital replica;
2. lobby for new rights to be enforceable via mechanisms familiar to copyright enforcement, such as notice-and-takedown and compensation for commercial uses; and
3. support licensing for any new rights via existing collective bargaining mechanisms.

Council's attitude to motions/amendments

It is the Council's policy to publish its attitude to motions and amendments submitted for consideration at the conference. Where it is suggested that a motion should be opposed, remitted, etc., the reason is included underneath.

	Attitude
EQUALITY AND INCLUSION	
MOTION 1: London North Branch	Support
MOTION 2: Deaf and Disabled Members Committee	Support
MOTION 3: Race Equality Committee	Support
MOTION 4: Women's Committee	Support
VARIETY	
MOTION 5: Variety, Circus and Entertainers Committee	Support
LIVE PERFORMANCE	
MOTION 6: Stage Management Committee	Support
MOTION 7: Directors and Designers Committee	Support
MOTION 8: South Wales Branch	Support
MOTION 9: Stage Actors Committee	Support
MOTION 10: Singers Committee	Support
MOTION 11: Opera Houses Deputies Committee	Support
RECORDED MEDIA	
MOTION 12: Kent Branch	Support
MOTION 13: Audio Committee	Support
MOTION 14: Continuing Drama Deputies Committee	Support
MOTION 15: Screen and New Media Actors Committee	Support
POLICY	
MOTION 16: S. Yorks./Surrey and Berks. Branches (Comp.)	Support (if amended)
AMENDMENT: Council	Support
MOTION 17: LGBT+ Committee	Support (if amended)
AMENDMENT: Council	Support
MOTION 18: Scotland National Committee	Support

MOTION 19: International Solidarity Committee	Support
MOTION 20: Northern Ireland Committee	Support
MOTION 21: Bristol and West of England Branch	Support
MOTION 22: Student Deputies Committee	Support
MOTION 23: Young Members Committee	Support
MOTION 24: London South Branch	Support
MOTION 25: Merseyside and Cheshire Branch	Support
MOTION 26: Dance Committee	Support
MOTION 27: West End Deputies Committee	Support
MOTION 28: East Midlands Branch	Oppose

Whilst the aims of the objective are laudable and relate to reducing costs for members in work and seeking work, the principal objective of the union is to negotiate terms and conditions with engagers, venues, and others, and advance the interest of the workforce as a workforce in our industry and beyond.

The objective cannot be secured by using the union's levers of power or influence which we hold over those with whom we negotiate. It is instead a commercial ask, and an ask which could be applied to many groups of working people who are burdened with the costs of a privatised public transport network.

Working with other unions, Equity advances the campaign to address the structural issue of profiteering at the heart of unreasonable transport costs for all passengers; it is neither realistic nor reasonable to think that we have either the incentives or the threats to secure such an ambitious scheme negotiating for union members as consumers.

EQUITY MOTION TO TUC

MOTION 29: Council	Support
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Sam Winter

SECRETARY TO THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Annual Accounts

A copy of last year's annual accounts has been provided to every member attending the conference. Each member has the right to submit a written question to the Honorary Treasurer regarding the accounts. These questions will be then be dealt with as part of his speech at the conference. In order to submit a question, please write to:

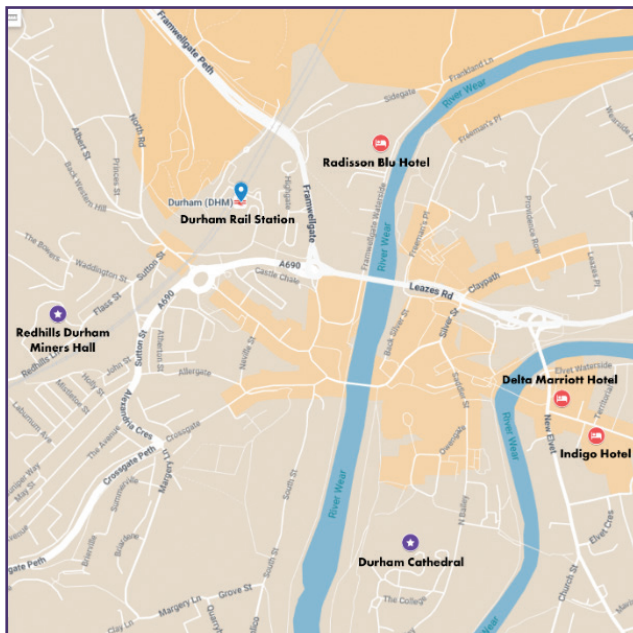
David John, Honorary Treasurer
cllrjohn@equitycouncillors.org.uk

By the deadline of 12 noon on Tuesday 5 May



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Arriving at Conference



Conference venue

The conference venue is the Redhills Durham Miners' Hall, DH1 4BE. The Miners' Hall is also the venue for the Saturday evening social.

Dinner on Sunday evening is at Durham Cathedral, DH1 3EH.

Hotels

There are three. If you do not know which hotel you are staying in, contact Sam Winter at swinter@equity.org.uk. The hotels are:

- Radisson Blu Hotel, Frankland Lane, DH1 5TA
- Delta Marriot Hotel, 59 Old Elvet, DH1 3JN
- Hotel Indigo, 9 Old Elvet, DH1 3HL

Travel to Durham

Members travelling from across the UK can claim reasonable expenses in line with our expenses policy. For most conference attendees, the fastest way to travel will be to take the train to Durham rail station.

Durham's official tourism website has information about travel that may be useful:

www.thisisdurham.com/travelling-in-and-around-durham

For any questions about travel, contact Sam Winter.

Getting to the hotels/venue

It's a 10-20 minute walk between most conference locations. Generally, travelling on foot will be the most straightforward, but the bus is also an option.

Arriving from the train station: From the train station, the Miners' Hall is an 8 minute walk. The Radisson Blu Hotel is an 11 minute walk. The Indigo and Delta Marriott hotels are a 15 minute walk, or you can take the 42 bus from outside the station, getting off after three stops at New Elvet – Three Tuns.

If you arrive in time for the start of conference (14:00 on Saturday 9 May), you won't be able to check in to your hotel yet. So we recommend coming straight to the Miners' Hall, and checking in to your hotel at the end of the day.

Minibuses organised by Equity: If you ticked the box to say you would like to use the minibus, then you should be staying in the Radisson Hotel. Minibus journeys will be arranged from the Radisson to the conference venues. More information will be shared on this by email, to those who requested it.

There will also be minibuses doing shuttle runs between Durham train station and the Miner's Hall, for the couple of hours before conference starts on the Saturday, and at the end of conference on the Monday.

Bus journeys: For more information on bus journeys, use Google Maps (www.google.com/maps), or you can find bus information at www.thisisdurham.com/visitor-information/getting-around/bus

Taxi journeys: To claim a taxi journey as an expense, please get this cleared in advance by contacting Sam Winter at swinter@equity.org.uk

See below phone numbers for available taxi services:

- Park Taxis: 0191 3731578
- A C Taxis: 0191 386 5732
- Fonacabdurham: 0191 301 7666

Parking: There is on-site car parking at all three hotels. The Radisson Blu costs £2 per hour or £14 per night, the Indigo is £20 for 24 hours, and Delta Marriott is £11 per night. If you requested a parking space in advance, you should be in the Radisson hotel.

Parking cannot generally be claimed as an expense, unless you're required to drive for accessibility reasons. To request for parking to be paid as an expense, contact: swinter@equity.org.uk

Arriving at the hotel/venue

If you are staying in the hotel, please check-in at the hotel front desk with a member of hotel staff. Please use your Equity name to check-in.

On arrival at the conference venue on each day, please register at the Equity registration desk with an Equity member of staff.

On the first day you attend, you will be provided with your name badge. For Representatives and Councillors, this name badge is also your voting card. Please wear it at all times, both for security and so that other members can see who you are.

The Local Area

The hotels and venue are all in the centre of Durham, among an array of cafés, shops and amenities.

Pharmacy

There is a Boots in the city centre 2-5 Market Pl, DH1 3NB. It's open Monday-Saturday 8.30-17.30, and on Sunday 11.00-17.00.

Hospital/Accident & Emergency

In case of any emergency, please call 999.

The University Hospital of North Durham, DH1 5TW, is a short bus journey from the venue on the Park and Ride (PR1) bus, getting on at the Wharton Park bus stop. It is a 7 minute journey via car, but the hospital's website warns that the car park gets congested and advises bus travel. The phone number for their main reception is 0191 3332333.

Emergency dentist

For out-of-hours care, call 111.

Emergency dental care is available at Bupa Dental Care, 2A Maynards Row, DH1 1QF, though they are not open on Saturdays and Sundays. Their contact number is 0191 384 4433. Durham Smile Clinic also offers emergency dental care (not open on Sundays). They are based at the Crossgate Centre, DH1 4HF, and the phone number is 0191 375 7522.

Coffee shops

There are a variety of coffee shops and cafes in the area:

- Riverview Kitchen, 20 Silver St, DH1 3RB. A café with view of the river (as the name suggests!)
- Flat White Kitchen, 40 Saddler St, DH1 3NU. Renovated 17th century townhouse in the city centre
- Wharton Park café, Wharton Park, DH1 4FJ. Spot close to the conference venue
- Vennels café, 71 Saddler St, DH1 3NP. Cozy coffee shop in a 16th century building in the city centre.

Hotel Information

Accommodation has been arranged in line with the form you returned. For most members living outside of Durham, this means a room has been booked on the evenings of Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 May (unless alternative arrangements have been confirmed for you).

We will be using three different hotels - details will be confirmed with each individual directly. Breakfast is included at all.

Luggage storage is available at the Miners' Hall (the main conference venue) on the Saturday and Monday.

A buffet lunch will be provided at the Miners' Hall to everyone attending on the Sunday, and a packed lunch will be available on the Monday as you leave. Food will also be provided at the evening reception on the Saturday, and at the dinner at the cathedral on the Sunday. Please note that the cathedral may be cold in the evening, so you might want to bring an extra layer.

Accessibility

Everyone attending has been asked for their full requirements in order to attend and participate in the conference. If you have access requirements which you have not informed Equity of through the conference attendee form, please contact swinter@equity.org.uk as soon as you can.

- In general, speakers will be asked to remain in their place and speak using a roving mic.
- The main stage is wheelchair accessible via a lift from backstage.
- The main conference business will have BSL interpretation and will be subtitled.
- If you need to use a hearing loop, please let us know in advance so we can inform the venue.
- Copies of papers on coloured paper (required by some with dyslexia) and large print copies can be provided if requested in advance.
- We produce an audio version of the agenda/guide.
- There will be a quiet room available at the main venue.
- A separate document can be provided with more detail on accessibility at the venue.

Expenses

Expenses will be reimbursed by bank transfer, after the conference. Every member will be sent a digital expenses form in advance, or you can collect a paper form from the information desk. Please remember to include copies of receipts.

Claims will be processed within seven days of receipt of forms. If you cannot wait until after the conference, you may submit your travel expenses in advance, providing they are properly receipted.

You can send them digitally to:
financeoffice@equity.org.uk

or by post to:
Finance Office, Equity,
FREEPOST RTKS-BRUB-LYJR, Guild House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EG (no stamp required).

Revised Meetings Statement

At this conference we will ensure the powerful are held to account, speak aspirationally about the industry our members deserve, recognise that our power lies in the collective not the individual, and that our union builds power by being industrial.

We will move our workforce from resilience to resistance.

To all artists: Good work!

To all workers: Good art!

To all people: Equity!

Key Contacts

Sam Winter
Conference Organiser
swinter@equity.org.uk
07850 539 031

Natalie Barker
Assistant Conference Organiser
nbarker@equity.org.uk
07595 780 154

Conference Business Committee

If you have any queries around conference business/procedure, you can visit the Conference Business Committee in the CBC room. Or you can contact the Secretary to the CBC: swinter@equity.org.uk

In an emergency, please call 999

Fringe Events



Fringe events are organised by different parts of the union, independently of the main conference – for example, by a committee, branch or network. They're a great way to discover new ways to get involved with the union, hear about the huge range of work going on across the union, and meet other members.

There are 16 fringe events taking place this year, our largest ever programme. All events will be subject to capacity and we would strongly encourage everyone attending conference to attend as many events as you can.

They will all be taking place on the Sunday afternoon in various spaces around the Miners' Hall. A buffet lunch will also be served from 13:00-15:00. Please grab some lunch as you head to a session, or in between sessions.

SUNDAY 10 MAY

Conference hall (ground floor)

The Equity/PACT Indicative Ballot: How You Hit 75%

13:30-14:20, Conference hall

In December 2025, Equity members working in Film and TV took part in the first industrial action ballot in the sector in a generation. 75% of eligible members cast their votes in an indicative ballot on AI, returning a 99.6% yes vote. This result brought the bosses back to the table. What preparation went into this? How did we reach 6,000 people, spread all over the country – and the world? And was this all done by a handful of full-timers in HQ – or was it done by hundreds of you?

Join this session to learn about the organising behind this, and to talk about what needs to be done to get an even higher turnout next time.

Taking Back What's Yours: Organising to Win in Recorded Media's Wild West

14:30-15:20, Conference hall

Why do you earn peanuts when working for multibillion pound multinational corporations? Why does your agent take commission when you're only being paid the National Minimum Wage? How do we stop your performances being used to train AI and to steal your livelihood? What can we do about it if this has already happened, and why is none of this on union agreements? The new Greenfield Organising section for commercials, models, audio, videogames, students, and agents will organise around all of these questions and more besides: building member power to take back what belongs to you and fight for the industry you deserve. Come and join us to discuss the development of our industrial strategy and how you can win, together.

Equity and the Miners: The Power of Radical Theatre

15:30-16:20, Conference hall

In 2014, Unite asked Red Ladder, the radical theatre company based in Leeds, to come up with a theatrical commemoration of the miners' strike. Boff Whalley wrote a musical not about miners but about their wives. It opened here at Redhills to an audience full of ex-miners and their families, with Ann Scargill in the middle of the front row. Rose Hunter, a member of the North Staffs Miners Wives Action Group, was part of the team of women who occupied Trentham Super Pit. They have had not one but two plays written about them. Boff and Rose, joined by Chris Lloyd (Executive Producer - Red Ladder Theatre) and Paul Fleming, will discuss how the activism can inspire actors and theatre can support our fellow workers.

How Does Equity Fight the Far Right?

16:30-17:20, Conference hall

Equity was formed during a time of mass upheaval and rising far right politics in the UK. The local and national elections taking place days before this conference may point to a return to this state of affairs today. Following our cordon sanitaire policy against Reform at the recent election, what should come next in Equity's fight against the far right?

Banner room (lower ground floor)

Health and Safety as an Organising Tool and a Brand New "Safe Home" Member Organising Toolkit

15:30-16:20, Banner room

From physical injuries to mental wellbeing, poor health and safety can have a significant impact on you and your colleagues, but we can organise and make our workplaces safer. This is an interactive session where you'll conduct your own Health and Safety inspection using venue models and then work in groups to plan a campaign that addresses one of these hazards, namely late night working. You'll leave the session knowing how to carry out health and safety inspections, and how to use health and safety to win!

Time's Up on Crippling Up

16:30-17:20, Banner room

A panel with disabled and ally industry voices, facilitated by the DDMC.

Disability is not simply a medical construct - it's a social, cultural and political identity. When disability is distilled down to an impermanent performance, it becomes a runway for non-disabled esteem and award for the best mimicry of a physical, medical experience; stripping disabled workers and audiences of vital humanity.

Time's up on excuses. Time's up on a systemic ableist system that prizes accolade over employment justice. Time's up on disabled mimicry to raise awareness and understanding that ultimately never arrives.

Cinema room (lower ground floor)

Creative Teams, Collective Power: Negotiating Change in 2026

13:30-14:20, Cinema room

2026 is a crucial year for Equity's creative team members. Negotiations on our Designers agreements are already underway, and we'll soon be submitting claims to improve our agreements for Directors, Choreographers and Movement Directors. Across the creative team, we are united in pushing for ambitious improvements to our terms and conditions — alongside performers and stage management. Join the Directors and Designers Committee, together with members of the Choreographers and Movement Directors Network, for a conversation about how we win better conditions for all theatre workers and how we can stand together in demanding more.

Moving the Movement: Making Choreography and Movement Direction Visible at Equity

14:30-15:20, Cinema room

The panel will explore why choreography and movement direction are essential creative forces in storytelling across TV, film, animation, VR, and games — even when their impact often goes unseen. Set against the backdrop of the PACT negotiations, this panel will unpack the scope of the work, how it intersects with other departments, and why movement deserves recognition as a core discipline in the production process. It will also chart the journey of building the Choreographers and Movement Directors Network within Equity: from the need that sparked it, to the challenges of getting it off the ground, to what its members are fighting to achieve next. This conversation opens up how members can organise, collaborate, and help shape the future of their profession within Equity.

Putting International Solidarity on Your Agenda

15:30-16:20, Cinema room

This interactive workshop run by International Solidarity Committee is your opportunity to explore connecting with other international entertainment unions and organisations in countries around the world. Together we will explore how workers rights intersect and the truth that ‘None of us are free, until all of us are free.’

Speak Union: Member-Powered Comms

16:30-17:20, Cinema room

Did you hear about the payout that Equity won for a street performer being ripped off by a big film company? OMG, that Spotlight verdict was wild – not a work-seeking platform – what?! POV: shocking TV and film global majority hair and make-up fail exposed! When members speak out on union issues, others listen. Help us harness this resource and put members front and centre in Equity comms. Join us for a fun and practical session.

Committee room (ground floor)

Sexual Harassment: New Rights, New Duties and a New Approach for Equity

13:30-14:20, Committee room

In this session we’ll focus on the new legislative duties on engagers to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment in workplaces. We’ll discuss how to organise around these new rights and win important protections for Equity members.

Making Tax Digital: Free Tools Developed for Freelancers

14:30-15:20, Committee room

Volunteers, led by members of the West End Deps Committee, share free tools they have been developing to help people such as actors, stage managers and creatives comply with the requirements of Making Tax Digital, without the need for expensive subscription services.

“In No Other Industry”: How Equity Members’ Struggle is Not as Different from Others as You Might Think

15:30-16:20, Committee room

Work for Equity members is unique. Your issues, and your workplaces are like no others. Or are they?

From builders to chefs, let’s talk about other workers on our shores and beyond who have similar relationships to work as you. We’ll talk about their struggle, how they’ve organised, and what they’ve won. We’ll talk about AI and automation, and how workers in other industries have opposed it. And we’ll pull together some ideas from this and see how they can work for your struggle.

Accessible Performing Arts Education For All

16:30-17:20, Committee room

Join Equity’s Student Deputies Committee to discuss how to make performing arts education accessible for all and launch their Neurodiverse Student Guide. The guide collates neurodiverse students’ experiences and expert advice to support performing arts institutions in becoming more accessible for neurodiverse students. We’ll consider what other collective action we can take to make performing arts education accessible to people from disabled and working-class backgrounds in the face of cuts across the sector.

Muniment room (first floor)

Job Sharing Working Party Launch: Help Shape Equity's Role in Supporting More Flexible, Sustainable and Inclusive Ways of Working

13:30-14:20, Muniment room

Join members of the Stage Management Committee at the launch of Equity's Job Sharing Working Party. Job shares are a brilliant way to make workplaces more inclusive and help retain staff who want or need to work part-time. Many people want to work this way for a variety of reasons, however many/some producers appear to be hesitant to employ workers on these terms, mistakenly viewing job shares as risky and expensive. There is also a lack of guidance available to help employers approach requests confidently.

The SMC invites comrades from across the union to join us in forming a working party to help remove barriers to job sharing, create better support systems for job sharers and employers alike, build solidarity between job sharers across disciplines, and make this way of working a reality for more of our work force. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.

Art as Political Identity: A Radical History of Pit Banners

Running three times across the afternoon:

14:30-15:20, 15:30-16:20 and 16:30-17:20, Muniment room

Discover how hand-painted banners representing individual pits and communities depicting socialism, education, and solidarity unite communities in the past and today. Join this tour at various times throughout the afternoon. Meet in the Muniment Room.

Reception: Know Your History; Pride in Your Future

There is no higher compliment you can receive in the North East than 'dead canny'!

Come along to our Saturday evening reception as we celebrate the proud history of this region and an industry that has shaped our movement. You will be joining members from across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the home of the Pitman's Parliament. These walls have reverberated with the demands of our people; these grounds have shook with the march against oppression; and these seats have borne the hopes of communities!

Take the time to explore the building before joining with comrades to ensure the future of Pride in this city and beyond.

Local specialities in food and drink will be served.

Gan canny!

SATURDAY 9 MAY
19:30
REDHILLS MINERS' HALL



DRINKS RECEPTION AND DINNER
WITH A CASH BAR

CONFERENCE DINNER

DURHAM CATHEDRAL
19:30
SUNDAY 10 MAY

With thanks to
Verlingue for their
kind support


VERLINGUE



The International Solidarity Committee supports artists facing persecution throughout the globe.

Since Equity conference last year, the International Solidarity Committee has helped:

- Members of our Colombian sister union ACA who have been affected by their decades-long conflict
- Several individual artists fleeing Gaza, a drama therapy school for Gazan children and the Alrowwad Cultural Centre in Aida refugee camp
- Jamaican artists rebuilding in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa
- Members of the Sudanese Dramatists' Union affected by the civil war
- The Cuban cultural union, who are providing emergency relief to their members

The International Solidarity Committee's work is partially funded through donations and bequests from Equity members and branches. Any members, branches, committees and other networks within the union can donate to the International Solidarity Committee at any time (bank details are included below). Committee members are available to come and speak about this work at any time.

All donations go towards supporting artists internationally who are facing oppression or persecution. Those individuals are incredibly grateful for the generous support they have received from Equity Conference.

Account name: EQUITY - I.C.A.F. ACCOUNT

Account number: 70582639

Sort code: 089061

CONFERENCE GUIDANCE

Standing Orders

A summary is included below. For the full Standing Orders, please go to:

<https://www.equity.org.uk/about-us/how-were-run/rules-of-the-union/standing-orders>

TELLERS AND STEWARDS

The tellers and stewards are union staff. They examine the credentials of those attending and count the votes.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDINGS

Only the union's official communications team may take videos or any form of audio recording in the conference hall. Photography is permitted during Conference sessions, but not during voting.

FLYERS

No Councillor, Representative, other member or guest shall place any flyer on the tables in the conference hall.

AGENDA

Compositing motions The movers of motions and amendments shall be asked to co-operate with the Conference Business Committee to composite (join together) motions where possible.

Remitting motions Remitting a motion means asking Council to decide it instead of Conference. A motion which has been moved and seconded may not be remitted by the mover without the consent of Conference.

Withdrawal of motions or amendments A motion or amendment which has been moved and seconded may not be withdrawn by the mover without the consent of Conference.

Unfinished business All matters on the agenda not reached at the conclusion of the last day of Conference shall be remitted to Council.

ORDER OF DEBATE

Limitation of speeches The mover of a motion can speak for up to five minutes. The seconder and subsequent speakers, including the right of reply, can speak for up to three minutes. One minute before the end of each speaker's time a warning shall be given, and again at the end of the speaker's time.

Amendments No amendments will be accepted at Conference. Requests to withdraw a motion, to composite (join) motions, or any other request that may alter the timetable must be made to the Conference Business Committee in its committee room and not from the floor of the meeting.

Rules of debate See Rule V in the Union's Rulebook: [Rules of the Union | Equity](#)

ADDRESSING CONFERENCE

- Representatives and Councillors shall indicate they wish to speak by holding up a voting card.
- Representatives and Councillors shall speak to motions only when called by the Chair. They shall address the Chair and give their name and the part of the union they represent.
- Please wait for the roving mic before speaking.
- No Representative or Councillor shall interrupt a speaker except on a point of procedure. In particular, there shall be no heckling of speeches.
- If the Chair stands during a debate, the Representative or Councillor speaking shall immediately give way and shall wait for the Chair's permission to continue.
- No speaker shall ask those present in the conference hall to identify themselves by means of a show of hands as a member of any group or category.

VOTING

- Only elected Representatives and members of Council shall be allowed to vote.
- All voting shall be by a show of voting cards.

Guide to Conference

What is Equity Conference?

Equity Conference takes place each year, usually in May. Every year it is held in a different nation/region.

Conference brings together members of the Council and elected representatives of the union's committees and branches to discuss and decide matters of general policy and/or any rule changes.

The formal purpose of conference is to debate and vote on motions and amendments submitted by the Council, branches and committees, and to receive reports from the Officers, staff and hear guest speakers.

Rules T1-3

We also hold social events so you can meet other members, and a fringe programme to educate, empower and engage members in the industrial and campaigning work of the union.

The agenda and timetable can be found towards the start of this guide.

Who gets to go?

Each type of member attending conference plays a different role:

- **REPRESENTATIVES** are elected by branches and committees, and attend on their behalf (though they cannot be mandated to vote in any particular way by their branch or committee). They can vote and speak on the conference floor.
- **COUNCILLORS** (including the Officers) can all attend, vote and speak.
- **CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (CBC) MEMBERS** are responsible for managing the business of the conference. They support aspects of conference and give procedural advice. They cannot vote, and they can only speak to conference about procedure.
- **TRUSTEES** are entitled to attend. They can speak but not vote.
- **OBSERVERS** are members who have applied to attend conference, to experience the event and see what goes on. They cannot vote or speak.



Some members will be at conference in multiple roles. For example, some CBC members are also Councillors. They carry all the rights of each role with them.

Certain invited guests, as well as journalists and members of the press, will also be in attendance. Please bear in mind that the press may report on what you say.

Each member attending plays a vital role in the running of conference, and more importantly in strengthening the union. We thank every one of you.

Who gets to send a motion?

Each industrial and equalities committee is entitled to submit one motion to be included on the agenda. Each branch and national committee is entitled to submit one motion (or two in the case of the London branches) to their national/regional meeting. Each national/regional meeting may then select one motion (or two in the case of the East & South East and London regions) to be submitted to conference on behalf of their nation/region. The Council may submit more than one motion and may also submit amendments.

Rules T17-20 and T23

Motions which have been sent in by the closing date set by Council are reviewed by the CBC and those which are not in breach of the rules will be put together to form the agenda for conference. The agenda will be sent to all representatives.

Rules T21-22 and T24

The purpose of a motion to conference is to get the union to do something. Motions should therefore propose some action. While motions may outline the reason for proposing the action, the arguments in favour should not be included, but should be saved for the proposing speech.

Motions must be about matters of general policy (policies that concern the union as a whole) or Rule changes. The Council decides which motions do not deal with matters of general policy and therefore are not allowed on to the agenda. General policy includes those policies that provide for the union's political and industrial aims, its governance and democratic structures, and its services to members, and excludes day-to-day operational, financial and administrative functions and decisions. The Council's guidance on what constitutes general policy gives two examples: motions can properly set broad aims for negotiations but should not include specific levels of fees to be achieved; motions should not make proposals on detailed matters of the staffing of the union.

Rule T22

What happens to the motions at conference?

Motions must be moved and seconded before they can be debated. The mover of the motion, who will normally (but not necessarily) be a member of the body in whose name the motion stands, is allowed up to five minutes to move the motion. The seconder and each subsequent speaker are allowed three minutes.

Standing Orders

An amendment seeks to change some part of a motion. An amendment usually adds some words to a motion, takes some words away from a motion or takes some words away and substitutes some new words. A direct negative to a motion is not an amendment and will not be allowed. Only the Council can submit an amendment.

Citrine and Rule T23

A committee, branch or the Council may submit a late motion (sometimes called an emergency motion) after the closing date set by Council. Late motions shall not be accepted unless Council decides that the motion concerns an urgent matter that arose after, or could not reasonably have been known about prior to, the deadline. If Council decides that a late motion qualifies, the CBC will decide where it should be placed on the agenda.

Rule T25

If two or more motions deal with similar subject matter, the CBC may ask the committees or branches concerned to agree to them being composited into a single motion. If this is agreed by all the branches/committees involved, the motions will be composited by the CBC. The resulting composite motion can exceed 250 words in length.

Rule T26

A committee or branch may choose to remit their motion to Council at any time before the motion has been moved at conference. "Remitting" means that the motion will be decided by Council at a later date, instead of being debated at conference. The representative moving the motion may choose to use the time allotted to their speech to argue for the merits of the motion but (at the conclusion of their speech) announce to conference that the motion is being remitted to Council – provided that the representative has not used the words "I move" (or any variation of those words) in the speech. In such an

instance, the motion will be remitted to Council, there will be no further debate on the motion and the chair will immediately move on to the next business on the agenda.

Once a motion has been moved at conference, it cannot be remitted by the mover. All that the mover can do is to make a request to conference that the motion be remitted (which they can do up to and including their right of reply). If the request is made, the chair shall immediately proceed to a vote as to whether the motion shall be remitted or not. If there is a simple majority in favour of remittance, the motion will be remitted to Council, there will be no further debate on the motion and the chair will immediately move on to the next item on the agenda. If conference votes against remittance, the debate and subsequent vote on the motion shall proceed.

Standing Orders

A motion or an amendment may be withdrawn at any time before it has been moved and seconded at conference, but thereafter it requires the consent of conference. A motion or an amendment that has been composited with another motion or amendment may not be withdrawn.

Standing Orders and Rule V8

Who gets to speak?

Everyone attending as a representative or Councillor can speak and vote at conference. All representatives and Councillors are encouraged to contribute to the debates at conference. The more different viewpoints that are heard, the better. This is, after all, your conference.

It doesn't matter how long you've been active within the union or what status you may hold – if you've been elected to attend, you have the same rights as everyone else to take part in the debate and make your voice heard on any issue.

We would really encourage those who are attending for the first time to speak. This is your conference, and you have as much right to the space as anyone else. You have been elected to attend on behalf of your branch/committee for a reason and we would encourage you to feel able to use your voice.

If you've attended before, please think about how you could encourage those who may be newer to a conference environment to speak.

For everyone attending, we would ask you to think carefully about the number of contributions you make. We are stronger as a collective if everyone's voice is heard, and it is important that we all think about how we can make space for others and ensure that conference hears from a diverse range of members in every sense.

It is up to the chair to manage this and decide who to take contributions from. If they feel that you have already made a number of contributions and conference might benefit from hearing from others, they have the right not to take you again.

If you are attending as an observer, then you cannot speak or vote at conference. Conference Business Committee (CBC) members can speak, but only on procedural matters, and they cannot vote. Trustees can speak, but they cannot vote.

Order of debate

At conference, we move through the agenda in order. When we get to a motion, the chair will ask the mover (also called the proposer) to make the case for the motion (up to five minutes). The mover will usually be from the part of the union that submitted the motion, but they don't have to be if those who submitted it agree this in advance.

The seconder will then be invited to make their speech. Their role is to give additional support to the motion (up to three minutes). Sometimes, a member will formally second, which means they're recorded as the seconder but don't want to make a speech.

This process will then be repeated for any amendments to the motion. Movers and seconders will be invited to come up (up to three minutes each) and make the case for the amendment.

Once that's all done, the chair will ask if anyone would like to come up and speak in opposition to the motion (up to three minutes).

After that, the chair will open it up to debate and invite contributions. If you want to speak, please raise your voting card (your red name badge). If the chair acknowledges you, please remain in your place and wait for a roving mic to come to you (don't go up to the front).

The chair can take as many or as few contributions as they decide but will attempt to balance the debate as they consider appropriate. (Each contribution can be up to three minutes.) The order in which speakers are taken is at the discretion of the chair.

Standing Orders

The debate is over when the chair decides that both sides have been given a fair hearing. This may mean that some who want to speak on a particular item will not get the chance. Once the chair has decided the debate is over, they will offer the mover a right of reply (up to three minutes). This is their chance to respond to some of the points raised and make the final case for their motion.

No further contributions to the debate will be taken after the right of reply. Movers of motions may not use the right of reply to introduce any new matter into the debate. Movers of amendments do not get a right of reply.

Rules V9-10

Next, the chair will call for the vote to be taken – see next section.

Speakers must address the chair at all times and no member shall interrupt a speaker except on a point of procedure or a question (with the chair’s permission).

Rules V2-3

If a representative believes that the procedures of conference have been breached, they may raise a point of procedure at any time.

Standing Orders and Rule V3

If a representative wants to ask a question (also known as a point of information), they may ask the chair if they can do so. A question may not be used to make a contribution to the debate.

Standing Orders and Rule V3

If you’re making a point of procedure or asking a question, please stay in your place and a roving mic will come to you. Please wait for it to arrive before you start to speak so that everyone can hear you.

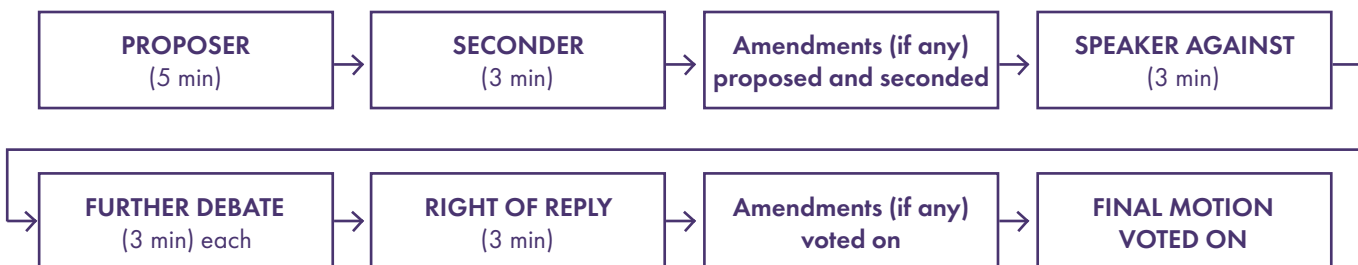
A member who has not previously spoken in the discussion of a motion may move that it has been sufficiently debated and should now be put to a vote, effectively curtailing the debate. If accepted by the chair and carried (without discussion), the mover of the motion may reply before it is put to a vote.

Rule V12

How are motions voted on?

When the debate is finished, the chair will call for the vote to be taken. Any amendments will be voted on first, to determine the final content of the motion. That final motion (which is now called a substantive motion if it has been amended) is then voted on. All votes take place by showing your voting card (your red name badge). The chair will announce the result of the vote and will then move on to the next motion.

Rule V11



If a motion is passed at conference by two-thirds of those voting for and against, it is binding on Council. This means that Council must either carry out the motion or put the motion to a referendum of the entire membership. If a motion is passed by a simple majority but not by two-thirds, it will be passed to Council for their decision at a later date.

Rules T14-16

Motions debated together but voted on separately

In some instances, the CBC timetables two or more motions for debate together since they are on a common subject and this will save members from having to make the same points more than once in debate. When motions are timetabled in this way, the mover and seconder of the first motion speak first, followed by the mover(s) and seconder(s) of any amendment(s)

to that motion. Then the mover(s) and seconder(s) of the subsequent motion(s) shall be invited by the chair to speak in order, with the motion preceding any amendment(s) to it. Only after they have all had the opportunity to speak shall the chair invite contributions to the debate from others.

After the chair has declared the end of the debate, the mover of the first motion shall be offered the right to reply. After this right of reply, the mover(s) of the subsequent motion(s) shall be asked to exercise their right(s) of reply. Only after all the rights of reply have been taken shall the chair proceed immediately to take the votes on the motions (and any amendments) in the order in which they were moved originally.

Standing Orders

A ruling by the chair on any matter is binding unless it is challenged by at least ten members who are entitled to vote, in which case the motion "that the chair's ruling be upheld" is immediately put to the vote by the General Secretary without discussion.

Standing Orders and Rule V4

Advice for speakers

Key things to remember:

- Your contribution is important. We are stronger as a collective if all voices are heard.
- Please remain respectful at all times.
- Anyone can speak on any issue, but the chair does not have to call you every time. If you've spoken already or it's time to move on, you might miss out.
- If you do want to speak, please consider whether your point has already been made by someone else.
- Before every speech, always start by giving your full Equity name and who you're representing (e.g. your branch/committee).
- Speeches to move/propose a motion are a maximum of five minutes and all other speeches are a maximum of three minutes.
- If you know you're going to give a speech, please prepare in advance. You may want to bring a printed copy of your speech (in case your phone/laptop runs out of battery).
- If we run ahead of time, your speech could come sooner in the timetable (including the day before!)

Making a speech for the first time can be a potentially intimidating experience. However, you will find that if you announce that you are giving your first speech at a conference, your listeners will be particularly receptive to hear what you have to say.

On the other hand, if you overuse the privilege of making speeches, your listeners will gradually become less receptive and the chair may cease calling you to speak. Before volunteering to speak, always ask yourself first if what you have to say adds a new perspective or idea to the debate.

This year, the chair will not invite members proposing, seconding or contributing to the debate to come up to the rostrum - all speeches during the debates will be from the conference floor, using a roving mic. Please wait for it to arrive before you start to speak so that everyone can hear you.

If you know you'll be proposing or seconding a motion, or if there are items on the agenda on which you know you would like to speak, then we would recommend preparing a speech in advance.

You are absolutely free to speak without preparing anything, and we would encourage you to do so if you feel you have a meaningful contribution to make which adds something new to the debate.

If you need any help preparing a speech, we would recommend speaking to other activists (perhaps within your branch/committee) for support and feedback.

Conference uses a representative structure, as opposed to a delegate structure. This means you cannot be bound to speak or vote in a particular way by your branch/committee.

In the past, some members have said they are speaking "in a personal capacity." Please note that this is not strictly possible – members are always speaking as a representative of the part of the union that sent them. You are there because some part of the

union elected you to be there, and not as an individual in your own right. Councillors may sometimes want to clarify when they are speaking on behalf of Council as a whole.

Conference Business Committee

These notes have been prepared by the Conference Business Committee as guidance only. They are based on Equity's Rulebook, the Equity Conference Standing Orders and Walter Citrine's ABC of Chairmanship. The Rules governing conference are Rule T: Equity Conference, Rule V: Rules of Debate, Rule X: Conference Business Committee and Rule Z: Rule Changes.

If you're interested in some of the finer details, the Equity Conference Standing Orders, which are the formal rules for how conference will be conducted, are available in full online: <https://www.equity.org.uk/about-us/how-were-run/rules-of-the-union/standing-orders/>

The Conference Business Committee is made up of five members elected by the membership and four Council members elected by Council. Its role is to arrange the business of the conference. The CBC decides in what order the motions and amendments will be debated and at what time the motions and reports from officers and staff will be taken. The CBC is responsible for changes to the business or timetable for the conference.

Rules T27-30 and X

If you have any further questions, please feel free to write to the Conference Organiser (Sam Winter: swinter@equity.org.uk), your Branch Official or Committee Secretary. Once we're at conference, you can also approach the CBC to ask for advice.

Thank you for contributing to this year's conference!

Motions Glossary

This glossary provides definitions for words or phrases in this year's Equity Conference motions.

Word or Phrase	Definition
A1 forms	An A1 form (or certificate) is an HMRC-issued document for workers temporarily employed or self-employed in the EU. It acts as evidence that the worker remains in the UK National Insurance system, meaning they don't have to pay social security contributions in the EU country they're working in.
Access Support Workers	Workers providing tailored assistance to individuals with disabilities, health conditions or neurodivergence. Helping those individuals overcome barriers to employment.
Access to Work	A government scheme aimed at helping disabled people take up or remain in work.
AI (Artificial Intelligence)	Artificial Intelligence refers to the ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. Information can be found on Equity's website on 'Understanding AI' and the union's 'AI Toolkit'. The union recently ran an indicative ballot very effectively during the latest PACT negotiations, the ballot indicated members' willingness for action short of strike to fight for AI protections in the PACT collective agreement. (See Indicative ballot below)
Arts Council England (ACE)	The arts council for England since 1994 when the Arts Council of Great Britain was divided into three separate national bodies.
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	The Arts Council for Northern Ireland since 1964 when it replaced the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA).
Arts Council Wales	The arts council for Wales since 1994 when the Arts Council of Great Britain was divided into three separate national bodies.
Arts councils	National public funding bodies for arts organisations and individuals.
Audible	An online audiobook and podcast service. It is a subsidiary of Amazon owned by billionaire Jeff Bezos.
Bauer Radio	Now Bauer Media Audio UK. A UK-based radio division of Bauer Media Group which owns: Absolute Radio, Heat Radio, Kerrang! Radio, KISS, Magic among others.
BBC Charter (The Royal Charter for the continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation)	The BBC Charter sets the arrangements for the governance of the BBC including recognising its editorial independence and sets out its public obligations. The Charter is subject to a government review.
BFAWU (Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union)	A trade union representing workers in the UK food industry.
Broadcasting, Entertainment and Arts Unions APPG	An APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) is an informal group of cross party MPs formed to discuss certain policy areas. The Broadcasting, Entertainment and Arts Unions APPG is there to be an active voice for all those working in the sector, supported by Equity, BECTU, the National Union of Journalists, the Musicians Union, and the Writers Guild of Great Britain.
Casting Directors' Guild (CDG)	A professional organisation of casting directors in theatre, film, television and commercials sectors in the UK and Ireland.
The Charity Commission	A non-ministerial department of government that regulates registered charities in England and Wales. In Scotland they are regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, and in Northern Ireland it is the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.
Comcast	A US-based multinational mass media, telecommunications and entertainment conglomerate which owns NBCUniversal and Sky Group among others.
Council (Equity Council)	The executive governing committee of our union. Council is made up of members elected every 2 years.
Creative Scotland	The arts council for Scotland since 1994 when the Arts Council of Great Britain was divided into three separate national bodies.

Creative Team	In the theatre, Creative Team primarily refers to the director, designer, lighting designer and sound designer, and often includes the movement director, choreographer, video designer, fight director, puppet designer and director, intimacy director...
Dance Passport	A union solidarity initiative designed for professional dancers in Europe to access local union support, legal advice and services while working temporarily in another European country.
DCMS (The Department for Culture, Media & Sport)	A department of government responsible for arts, culture and sport.
Deputies / Deps	An Equity member in a workplace appointed by other Equity members to be the unions representative in said workplace. Their duties include liaising between members and union staff, raising issues with management, updating fellow members on the work of the union, and recruiting non members in the workplace if any.
Dignity in Digs	Equity's campaign to improve accommodation for members working away from home.
Drag Storytime	Children's events promoting reading and diversity hosted by drag artists. The events and our members have been the target of abuse by the far-right.
Emergency Motion	(See Equity Council's Standing Orders point 10) A motion sent to Equity Council (our union's governing body) that could not have been sent before the deadline for the first circulation of council papers. The subject matter shall be a genuine emergency.
Employment charters	Employment charters set standards of "what good work should look like in local areas or sectors, above the legal requirements" (TUC website). They may but do not necessarily have input from trade unions.
Employment Rights Act 2025	The latest Employment Right Act enacted by the Labour government in 2025. With aims stated including: boosting wages, enhancing security, and updating workplace protections.
Equity agreements	Collective agreements negotiated between the union and the employer.
EuroFIA	The European group of FIA (Fédération Internationale des Acteurs).
Ffilm Cymru	The development agency for Welsh film.
FIA (Fédération Internationale des Acteurs)	A global federation of trade unions representing actors. Equity established the federation in 1952 alongside the Syndicat Français des Artistes-Intèrètes
GDP (Gross Domestic Product)	A monetary measure of the total market value of services and good produced in a country or countries in a specific timeframe.
GDPR (the General Data Protection Regulation)	A European Union regulation on data privacy and data protection in the EU and the European Economic Area, which came into effect in 2018.
Global Majority	"Global Majority" is a term that refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, and/or have been racialised as "ethnic minorities," representing over 80% of the world's population.
Graeae	A renowned theatre company led by deaf and Disabled artists.
Green paper (Government)	A government Green Paper is a consultative document that sets out initial policy proposals for discussion both inside and outside of parliament, whereas White Papers detail firmed up, detailed policy intentions preceding legislation.
HGTV	A former free-to-air television channel launched in 1997 by the broadcaster UKTV. HGTV closed on 13th January 2026. When it closed it was owned by Warner Bros. Discovery, a mass media and entertainment conglomerate operating from New York, USA.
HSCNI	Health & Social Care (Northern Ireland) is the publicly funded healthcare system in Northern Ireland, operating as a distinct part of the UK's NHS.
ICAF (International Committee for Artists Freedom)	A group formed over 50 years ago - originally named the International Solidarity and Aid Committee, then renamed ICAF in 1978. ICAF campaigned on behalf of artists who would be eligible for Equity membership were they based in the UK and Northern Ireland. The group has helped countless individual artists suffering oppression, persecution or hardship around the world, often in countries with no union to support them. In 2024, ICAF was made an official committee within the union, renamed the International Solidarity Committee (ISC), given £10,000 a year to do its vital work rather than relying on donations, and now has the ability to pass motions to go to Council and Conference.

IMDb (Internet Movie Database)	An online database of information related to films, television series, video games, etc. Since 1998 it has been a subsidiary of Amazon.
Indicative ballot	A non-binding consultative vote to gauge member support for proposed actions. Equity used an indicative ballot very effectively during the latest PACT negotiations, the ballot indicated members' willingness for action short of strike to fight for AI protections in the PACT collective agreement. 99.6% of members voted yes, indicating that, yes, members would overwhelmingly be willing to refuse to be digitally scanned on set to secure adequate AI protections.
Industry management associations	A group of producers that negotiate with Equity as one body - like SOLT or UK Theatre.
Information Commissioner	The Information Commissioner's Office is responsible for upholding information rights in the public interest. It is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology.
ISC (International Solidarity Committee)	Equity's International Solidarity Committee formerly ICAF (see above). Newly official committee in the union, given resources so that the body no longer needs to rely solely on donations to do its vital work. It has done essential work with artists and arts organisations from Belarus, Chile, Palestine, Ukraine to name just a few.
ITC (Independent Theatre Council)	The Independent Theatre Council is a management association and membership body for performing arts venues, companies and producers across the UK.
LGBT+ Committee (Equity's Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender + Committee)	The LGBT+ Committee advises Equity's Council on issues affecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and other queer members and takes action to promote their interests on both industrial matters and wider social issues affecting them. This might include anything from risks of harassment and violence facing LGBT+ members, at work and in public, to producing casting guidelines for producers working with LGBT+ performers.
Manchester Pride Limited	A charity and limited campaign for LGBTQ+ equality across the UK. The charity offers dialogue, training, research, and policy analysis, advocacy and outreach activities focusing on LGBTQ+ rights.
Manchester Village Pride CIC (Community Interest Company)	After the collapse of Manchester Pride in October 2025, which left many performers at last year's event out of pocket, Manchester Village Pride is a new Community Interest Company set up by village businesses and community stakeholders from Manchester's Gay Village to run Pride in coming years. The organisation recently confirmed it would sign a collective agreement with Equity. The new union agreement should be a guarantee against a repeat of Manchester Pride 2025 and its poor treatment of the performers who are at the heart of the event.
Minimum rates	The minimum rates of pay negotiated between an employer and our union. Often misconstrued as Equity minimum as opposed to the employer's minimum.
Move (a motion)	All motions must be moved (ie proposed) by a member and also seconded (ie officially supported by a second member) before they can be discussed and voted on.
Northern Ireland Screen	The development agency for Northern Ireland's film and TV industry.
NUS (National Union of Students)	The National Union of Students is a confederation of student unions across the United Kingdom.
Ofcom	Ofcom is the UK's government approved regulator and competition authority for broadcasting, internet, telecommunications and postal industries. The name comes from the Office of Communications Act 2002 that created it.
Out of Order	Not following the formal rules of the meeting, motions, etc.
PACT (Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television)	An organisation representing UK producers of cinema and television. Equity negotiates new collective agreements with PACT every couple of years. Negotiations are (at time of writing) currently ongoing. Our union has six core demands: improvements to pay, secondary payments, AI protections, self tape provisions, fair contracts, and recognition for choreographers and movement directors - see the union's website for more details.
"Pencilling"	So called "pencilling" is the non-binding practice of asking performers, but also other workers, to keep a date or dates available for potential work. The implication is that because it is not in "pen" it is awaiting confirmation. But the practice is, as mentioned, non-binding on anyone who agrees to a "pencil" - so workers are under no obligation to turn down other work for the sake of the "pencil"
Performing Arts for All	Equity's manifesto for a thriving performing arts and entertainment industry, which built on the work of Performance for All.

Point of Order	A query in a formal debate or meeting as to whether correct procedure is being followed.
Pride (events)	Events celebrating LGBTQ+ life, resistance, dignity, joy, love, self-acceptance and pride (hence the name). It began as a protest of resistance to a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighbourhood of Lower Manhattan, New York City in 1969. Pride events, demonstrations and marches have spread across the globe ever since.
RMT (National Union of Rail and Maritime Workers)	A trade union representing members in the transport sector.
S4C (Sianel Pedwar Cymru / Channel 4 Wales)	S4C is a Welsh language free-to-air public broadcast television channel.
SAG-AFTRA	Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, our sister union that went on strike last year over residual payments and assurances over AI usage.
Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)	A federation of trades unions in Scotland, representing most unionised workers in the country.
ScreenSkills	A non-profit organisation offering sector insight, training and career advice for existing and emerging talent.
Screen Scotland	The development agency for Scotland's film and TV industry.
Second (a motion)	All motions must be moved (ie proposed) by a member and also seconded (ie officially supported by a second member) before they can be discussed and voted on. If a motion does not have a member to second it, it is most typically a clear indication that the motion does not have the necessary support to be discussed or indeed voted on.
Sky	Sky UK, formerly BSkyB (British Sky Broadcasting), is a UK broadcaster and telecommunications company owned by Comcast.
The Social Model of Disability	As Graeae put it, "Under the Social Model of disability, people are disabled by barriers within society, rather than being 'victims' of their impairments or conditions." The Social Model of Disability is adopted by Equity.
Society of London Theatre (SOLT)	The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) is the Membership Organisation for London Theatre Producers, Managers, Owners and Operators. They work in partnership with their sister organisation, UK Theatre.
Spotlight	The dominant casting directory service in the UK. Eight Equity members filed a class action lawsuit against the company last year. Unfortunately the union was unsuccessful with members being surprised at the judge's finding that Spotlight "does not provide services for the purposes of finding persons employment with employers, or of supplying employers with persons for employment by them." Because this is of course not the experience of actors who do subscribe to Spotlight for the sole purpose of finding work, Equity is seeking to appeal the High Court decision. A successful judgment would mean that the courts agree that Spotlight must show that their rates of subscription to their members amount to no more than a reasonable estimate of the cost of production and distribution of their directory.
Standing Orders	Procedure rules that regulate the conduct of a meeting.
Statutory Right	Legal minimum entitlements guaranteed by law.
Subsidised Sector	Organisations that received funding from public bodies.
Trade Union Act 2016	A parliamentary bill introduced in 2016 by the then Conservative government. According to the TUC "the Act represents the most serious attack on the rights of trade unions and their members in a generation..." including: "arbitrary thresholds in industrial action ballots; complicated new balloting designed to make industrial action more difficult for unions to organise; new restrictions on pickets; [and] an expensive levy paid by unions for the costs of being regulated."
TUC (Trades Union Congress)	A federation of trades unions in England and Wales, representing most unionised workers in the countries.
UCU (University and College Union)	The University and College Union is a trade union in further and higher education representing over 120,000 academics and support staff.
UK Theatre	UK Theatre is another membership organisation for theatre producers, managers, owners and operators. They work in partnership with their sister organisation, Society of London Theatre (SOLT).

Unite (Unite the Union)	A general union of over 1 million members working in a huge variety of different sectors and workplaces.
Vertical Drama Productions	Narrative drama that is specifically created and formatted to be viewed on mobile devices in portrait rather than landscape.
Working Party	Working Parties within Equity are groups convened from time to time in order to think through specific areas of work, which typically will then provide guidance to the Council and Officers of the union.



To all artists: good work

To all workers: good art

To all people: Equity

