

EQUITY

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GENERAL MEETINGS STANDING ORDERS

Approved by the Council to take effect from: 1 February 2024

* References to Rules in these Standing Orders refer to the Rules in the Union's Rulebook

Nations & Regions

1. The Union's nations and regions are:
 - (a) East & South East England (excluding London)
 - (b) London
 - (c) Midlands
 - (d) North East England, Yorkshire and Humberside
 - (e) Northern Ireland
 - (f) North West England
 - (g) Scotland
 - (h) South West England
 - (i) Wales

Annual Meetings

2. The Council shall call an annual meeting of members who ordinarily reside in each of the nations and regions at 1. above.
3. The business of the annual national and regional meetings shall be to:
 - (a) decide on the motions to be submitted for debate at the Equity Conference in accordance with Rule T20; and
 - (b) consider any reports from the national/regional official and from the Council.

General Meetings

4. The Council may call general meetings on such dates as it decides from time to time in all or any of the areas at 1. above.
5. General meetings shall discuss only the business for which they have been called.

Authority

6. Except as otherwise provided for in these Standing Orders, no decision of an annual national or regional meeting or general meeting shall be acted upon without the prior approval of the Council or the General Secretary acting on its behalf.
7. Any decisions arising out of the meeting shall be in accordance with these Standing Orders, the Rules and the policies of the Union at all times. If there is any inconsistency between the Rules and these Standing Orders, the Rules shall apply.

Attendance

8. Any member in benefit who ordinarily resides and/or is a member of a branch in the nation or region of an annual national or regional meeting or general meeting may:
 - (a) attend and vote; and
 - (b) propose and second motions.
9. Members' addresses on Equity's membership register shall be proof of residence for these purposes.
10. Any member in benefit, who is working in a professional capacity in the nation or region of the meeting at the time of the meeting, may attend and speak. They shall not propose or second motions or vote.
11. The Union's Officers and other elected councillors may attend and speak at meetings. They shall not propose or second motions or vote unless qualified in accordance with 8. above.
12. Attendance shall be in person or online (or a combination of both) as the Council shall decide from time to time.
13. The Secretary may record meetings to assist them with minute keeping but no other recording shall be permitted.

Quorum

14. The minimum number of attendees for meetings shall be ten members qualified in accordance with 8. above. If this number are not present after 30 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting to start, the meeting shall be dissolved.

Duration

15. All meetings shall end no later than three hours after their start. If business is not complete, time may be extended by up to 30 minutes on a simple majority vote.

Chair

16. Except for the London regional meetings, the meetings shall be chaired by the councillor representing the nation or region in which the meeting is held or, in their absence, another councillor, nominated by the Council.
17. London regional meetings shall be chaired by the President or another Officer of the Union.

Secretary

18. The Secretary to the meetings shall be a member of Equity staff appointed from time to time by the General Secretary. They do not form part of the quorum and may not vote or propose or second a motion. They shall:
 - (a) convene the meeting/s;
 - (b) prepare the agenda in consultation with the Chair;
 - (c) record the date, attendees, apologies for absence, motions/decisions and agreed action points;
 - (d) advise the Chair on the Rules and procedure; and
 - (e) maintain liaison between the meeting/s and the General Secretary.

Motions for the Equity Conference

19. The National Committees and the Union's branches, other than the branches in the London region, may each submit one motion to the annual national or regional meeting in their area proposing a motion for debate at the Equity Conference in accordance with Rule T19. The branches in the London region may each submit two motions.

20. All motions shall be:
 - (a) in accordance with these Standing Orders, the Rules and the policies of the Union; and
 - (b) submitted to the Union's Governance Office in advance of the agenda being prepared.
21. A motion that does not comply with 20. above shall be held to be out of order by the Council whose decision shall be final and binding. Motions held to be in order shall be put on the agenda for the meeting by the Secretary.
22. The annual national and regional meetings shall vote on which one motion or, in the case of the East & South East England and London meetings, which two motions, on the agenda, shall be submitted for debate at Equity Conference. The motion (or in the case of the East & South East England and London meetings, the two motions) that receives the most votes shall be submitted to Equity Conference.

Notice

23. Notice of meetings shall be circulated by the Secretary to all members who ordinarily reside in the nation or region at least 28 days in advance of the meeting.

Agenda

24. The agenda for meetings shall be circulated by the Secretary at least five days in advance of the meeting to all members who ordinarily reside in the nation or region.
25. Where applicable, the agenda for the annual national and regional meetings shall include the Equity conference motions.

Rules of Debate

26. Rules V1 to V14 shall apply to annual national and regional meetings and general meetings.
27. The mover of a motion may speak for not more than five minutes in support of the motion. The seconder and subsequent speakers, including the mover exercising their right of reply, may each speak for not more than three minutes.

Chair's Vote

28. The Chair shall not vote on any question at a meeting unless there is a tied vote when they may exercise a casting vote.

Decisions of the Chair

29. The Chair's decision (on any point) shall be binding unless it is challenged by not less than two members entitled to vote, in which case, all members entitled to vote shall then immediately vote on whether to uphold the Chair's ruling. If passed by a simple majority, the Chair's decision shall apply.
30. No challenge is permitted to the Chair's decision whether or not to accept a motion to suspend Standing Orders.

Conduct

31. Attendees at meetings shall:
 - (a) abide by the procedures set out in these Standing Orders; and,
 - (b) refrain from behaviour that contravenes Rule D14.
32. A failure to do so may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Rule S.

Alteration & Suspension of Standing Orders

33. These Standing Orders shall not be altered without the prior approval of the Council.
34. The Chair may accept a motion to suspend these Standing Orders to allow a matter of urgency not on the agenda to be discussed. A motion to suspend shall be proposed and seconded by two members qualified in accordance with 8. above.
35. If passed by a two-thirds majority of those voting for and against, the suspension shall apply for not more than 30 minutes.

Interpretation

36. The Council shall interpret these Standing Orders if in dispute. The Council shall decide on any matters where these Standing Orders are silent. The Council's decisions shall be final and binding.

Copies of the Rules and Standing Orders

37. Copies of these Standing Orders and the Union's Rules are available to view and download on the Union's website at <https://www.equity.org.uk/about-us/how-were-run/rules-of-the-union/>