

Scottish Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference

8 September 2018

Vine Venue, Dunfermline

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10.00 Conference opens

WELCOME ADDRESS

SC1: Undiagnosed and Untreated Adult ADHD in Scotland

Submitted by 36 members

Conference notes:

1. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is commonly thought to be a childhood disorder, yet two-thirds of children diagnosed with ADHD continue to experience clinically significant symptoms beyond the age of 18.
2. Research carried out by Demos this year suggests that most of the economic costs of ADHD are associated with adults, not children. Undiagnosed ADHD across the UK costs the economy billions of pounds per year, and this cost is much greater than the total cost of treating diagnosed ADHD.
3. In the 2016/17 financial year, only 3,304 patients aged 20 and above were prescribed medication for ADHD in Scotland, indicating that the vast majority of adults with ADHD remain undiagnosed.
4. The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2012-2015 recognised that work is needed to improve diagnosis of and response to ADHD in adults, with commitments to improve awareness, develop specialist services, and make linkages with justice services. However, the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027 does not assess the outcomes of these commitments—in fact, none of the 40 actions laid out in the new strategy relate to ADHD in adults in any way.
5. There is no nationally recognised clinical pathway for the diagnosis and treatment of adult ADHD in Scotland. This leads to a highly variable patient experience between regions:
 - a) NHS Lothian is the only health board offering specialist services for the diagnosis and management of ADHD in adults.
 - b) In June, NHS Grampian sent a letter to a patient, refusing to arrange a referral, citing “policy that no assessment or treatment for ADHD in adults is offered, if the diagnosis has not been established before the age of 18” despite the latest NICE guidance clearly stating that the DSM-5 criteria can be used to make a diagnosis in adults.
6. In 2017 the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland produced good practice guidelines for ADHD in adults, recommending that all psychiatrists dealing with adults must be competent in diagnosing and managing ADHD, that health boards provide necessary training opportunities to all relevant clinicians, and that local services provide validated screening tools to referrers.

Conference believes:

1. The Scottish Government failed to adequately meet the commitments made in their Mental Health Strategy 2012-2015 regarding diagnosis and treatment of ADHD in adults. Instead of analysing the outcomes of those commitments, their response was to simply leave the issue entirely unaddressed in the subsequent strategy. This is an unacceptable betrayal of an already neglected patient group.
2. As diagnosis of ADHD in children and adolescents is only now beginning to reach expected levels, many adults missed out on diagnosis as children. Popular misconceptions about ADHD, and stigma around its treatment, make it less likely that adults will seek a diagnosis for themselves.
3. Failure to detect and treat ADHD has a significant economic impact and has widespread consequences for society with respect to family life, education, employment, healthcare and crime.
4. For individuals with a comorbid mental health condition, unrecognised and untreated ADHD impairs their ability to manage their diagnosed condition. Increased diagnosis of ADHD within the existing case-loads of mental health services would improve quality of life and reduce levels of mental health disability.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. Produce a strategy for ADHD that will work alongside the existing Mental Health Strategy. This strategy should specifically address the needs of the four adult patient groups identified by the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland:
 - a) Patients transitioning from treatment of ADHD within child and adolescent mental health services to adult care;
 - b) Adults who were diagnosed with ADHD in childhood, who now need to re-initiate treatment;
 - c) Adults who have no previous contact with mental health services and have undiagnosed or newly diagnosed ADHD;
 - d) Individuals who are already engaged with mental health services with a previously missed primary or comorbid diagnosis of ADHD.
2. Include specific commitments in the strategy for ADHD relating to the criminal justice system, in order to ensure that:
 - a) Screening tools for ADHD are made available across police custody suites, courts, prison and probation services;
 - b) Training exists across the entire criminal justice system, including prison staff, on the management of adult ADHD;
 - c) Diagnosis and treatment for adults with ADHD can take place within the prison system.
 - d) Provide funding for the training of psychiatrists and other relevant clinicians in the latest best practice around diagnosis and management of ADHD in adults.
3. Include specific content on adult ADHD in future mental health awareness campaigns.

Conference further calls for:

1. NHS boards to learn from the experience of NHS Lothian's Adults with ADHD Clinic, and ensure that:
 - a) Every patient has access to specialist services for the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD;
 - b) GPs are aware of the referral pathway for adult ADHD within their area.

2. Healthcare Improvement Scotland to urgently ensure that a recognised clinical pathway is introduced for the diagnosis and treatment of adult ADHD in Scotland.

Cards:

Mover: Ross Stalker, Edinburgh North, called
Summator: Caron Lindsay, West Lothian, called
Andrew Muir, Dumbarton, called
George Boyd, East Lothian, called
Alan Rennie, East Renfrewshire, called

Votes:

Motion – carried

SC2: Teachers at the Centre of Education in Scotland

Submitted by Policy Committee

Conference notes:

1. Growing concern among teachers at the declining status, strength and resilience of their profession in Scotland, with recent research showing more than 70% of teachers do not feel valued;
2. Recent research that shows that only a minority of current teachers would recommend the career to their friends;
3. Scottish educational attainment is not keeping pace with the best in the world;
4. The McCrone Commission review into teachers' terms and conditions in 2001 resulted in a huge, beneficial increase in applications for initial teacher training, high levels of satisfaction and industrial harmony;
5. Teacher recruitment is currently proving challenging in many parts of Scotland, including for core subjects;
6. Experienced teachers are leaving the profession yet training places remain unfilled;
7. Teachers are now expected to successfully manage children with a wider range of additional support needs than ever before, at the same time as support staff numbers continue to fall, resulting in a workload which is the second highest of all OECD countries.

Conference believes education is the key that unlocks the potential of individuals to achieve all they can in life. It is the greatest liberal task. Teachers should be at the very centre of efforts to improve attainment and create a strong education system, working as individual professionals in the classroom with children and young people.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to establish a McCrone 2 independent Commission to review teachers' terms and conditions. Such a Commission should be designed to deliver the following specific outcomes:

1. A new "teacher premium" for schools in disadvantaged areas consisting of pay supplements designed to attract and rewards the best teachers for the schools in greatest need;

2. New, optional, three-year packages for probationer teachers – consisting of the current one-year probationary period plus two further guaranteed years – to help local authorities get graduates to take up posts in certain geographical areas;
3. New retention bonuses paid to new teachers who commit to posts in hard-to-fill areas;
4. A guaranteed minimum level of support staff in every school to allow teachers to focus on the needs of each individual pupil;
5. A pay rise for teachers to reflect that starting salaries are 20% lower than comparable professions;
6. An appropriate gap in remuneration between head and depute in order to encourage more people to take up headships, especially in primary schools.

Such a Commission should, through balance and negotiations between stakeholders, seek agreement for the following:

7. New steps by which teachers can be supported by local authorities and government in the face of challenging and poor pupil behaviour;
8. Simplified processes to allow qualified teachers from overseas, the rest of the UK and from other professions to have an easier route to join the Scottish teaching profession whilst maintaining professional standards, including innovative ways to allow career switchers to continue to receive a salary from their previous job;
9. A review of the structure of promoted posts in secondary schools to tackle a main criticism of the original McCrone Commission which cut down such posts in secondary schools with an unintended impact on career satisfaction;
10. Review the management of non-contact time in schools to make sure teachers and pupils are better served;
11. Maintain teaching in Scotland as a professional, graduate career with no short-cuts that jeopardise a well-trained workforce.

Conference further calls for the Scottish Government to fund this package of proposals through additional resources for education, particularly in maintaining and improving support staff numbers for point 4 above.

Cards:

Mover: Ewan McRobert, Central Scotland, called
Summator: Carole Ford, Central Scotland, called
Kris Chapman, Borders, called
Tim Hustler, East Lothian, called
Willie Wilson, Perth & Kinross, called
Nicoletta Policek, Edinburgh North, called
Bruce Wilson, Edinburgh North, called
Alistair Carmichael, Orkney & Shetland, called
Laura Thomas, East Dunbartonshire, called

Votes:

Motion – carried

Speech by Tavish Scott MSP.

SC3: Public Finance for Capital Expenditure

Submitted by Central Scotland Liberal Democrats

Conference notes:

1. That finance models (such as PFI and NPD) are expensive methods to finance infrastructure, often resulting in the total cost of the project coming in at several multiples over the original build cost.
2. That with long payback periods the government could still be paying for some infrastructure projects when they need renewed or rebuilt.
3. That significant savings have been made elsewhere in the U.K. through buying out PFI contracts and the associated early repayment penalty.
4. That some PFI and NPD partners have experience failures which have required government intervention to resolve or mitigate the impacts.

Conference believes:

1. That PFI and NPD push today's infrastructure costs onto the next generations and that this is not a sustainable model.
2. That the change in accounting treatment that saw NPD and PFI finance treated as capital expenditure (on balance sheet) rather than revenue expenditure on a service (off balance sheet) has had a detrimental impact on our borrowing capacity as it means the Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) budget is now approaching capacity limiting our ability to borrow for future projects.
3. That the longevity of supply chain relationships within the NPD/PFI contracts adds risk should the private partner/s fail.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. Cease all use of NPD contracts.
2. If there is a significant cost saving, buy out existing PFI/PPP/NPD contracts and use a less expensive funding method such as traditional borrowing.
3. Provide greater transparency on total cost and the rationale behind the finance model chosen for projects.

Cards:

Mover: Yvonne Finlayson, Central Scotland, called
Summator: Ewan McRobert, Central Scotland, called
Austin Reid, Central Scotland, called
Jacquie Bell, Edinburgh North, called
Fayzan Rehman, Stirling, called

Votes:

Motion – carried

SC4: Subscription Rates for 2019

Submitted by Finance & Membership Committee

Conference notes that:

1. The subscription rates for 2018 are:
 - Minimum - £12
 - Concession - £6
 - Recommended - £72
 - Special Fresher's Fair rate - £1

2. The Finance and Membership Committee is proposing that there be no increase in the Recommended rate or the Minimum, Concessionary, Youth and Student or Freshers' Fair subscription rates for 2017.

Conference therefore resolves that all subscription rates remain unchanged for 2019.

Cards:

Mover: Caron Lindsay

Votes:

Motion – carried

12.15-13.45 Lunch

12.30-13.30 Fringe meetings

The afternoon session runs from 13.45 to 17.00.

EM1: Activities of the Russian state in the UK

Conference notes:

- i. The recent assessment of the UK Government that members of Russia's military intelligence service deployed the chemical nerve agent Novichok in Salisbury on 4 March 2018 – an attempt to assassinate Sergei and Yulia Skripal and an incident that caused the death of Dawn Sturgess;

- ii. The Crown Prosecution Service has obtained a European Arrest Warrant for two individuals suspected of carrying out the attack;
- iii. Russian state-backed news outlets operating in the UK have sought to deny Russian involvement and discredit the investigation into the incident, as they have done previously with events from human rights breaches to the Russian invasion of Crimea.

Conference believes:

- a. This unlawful release of a chemical weapon on UK soil was a barbaric and brazen attack;
- b. The UK's access to the European Arrest Warrant will be critical in bringing the individuals involved to justice and that there is no justification for the UK's access to this measure being in jeopardy as a result of Brexit;
- c. The UK is stronger in standing up to the threats posed by foreign powers as a member of the EU;
- d. The Russian state is deploying an array of instruments and tools to undermine democracies around the world and conduct information interference.

Conference calls for:

- 1. A robust response to the Salisbury attack, and any other form of interference or threat posed by Russia to the British people or their democratic processes;
- 2. Full investigations to be conducted whenever there is evidence that a foreign power has posed a threat to British people or interfered with the country's democratic processes and institutions;
- 3. UK access to and involvement in the system of the European Arrest Warrant
- 4. Media organisations which have been identified as agents and propaganda tools of the Russian by international authorities and institutions to have their broadcasting licence removed;
- 5. Scottish Liberal Democrat elected representatives, and any other person with an interest in Scottish public life, to refuse any request to appear or have any form of commercial relationship with such media organisations.

Cards:

Move – Christine Jardine, Edinburgh West, called
Jeremy Purvis, Tweeddale Lauderdale & Midlothian South
Vita Zaporozcenko, Edinburgh North, called
Alex Cole-Hamilton, Edinburgh West, called
Alisdair Gilbert, North East Fife, called
Fayzan Rehman, Stirling, called

Votes:

Motion – carried, nem con

Speech by Willie Rennie MSP, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

SC5: Investing in M.E. - Recognition, Research, and Education

Submitted by West Edinburgh Liberal Democrats

Conference notes:

1. Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (M.E.) is a neurological condition that affects over 21,000 people living in Scotland, more than the number of patients living with Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's combined.
2. Although symptoms often present for the first time after a viral infection, the exact cause is still unknown. Despite this, research funding is critically low. There has been no public funding for M.E. research in Scotland for the past 10 years.
3. In April 2018 the Scottish Government announced it would provide PhD funding to the value of £15,000 a year for three years - a total of £45,000 (75p per person living with M.E. in Scotland per year).
4. M.E. is the most common cause of long-term school sickness absence in Scotland. Less than 10% of people with M.E. are in full time paid work, education or training.
5. There are no effective treatments available for M.E. on the NHS. The only treatments that are currently offered on the NHS are Graded Exercise Therapy (GET) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). These treatments are based on discredited research which claimed that M.E. can be cured by exercise and/or changing the way patients' think about themselves. The majority of patients report finding GET harmful, with the most recent study reporting 74% having a negative response (Geraghty K et al 2017, Journal of Health Psychology).

Conference also notes:

1. M.E. causes profound, life-changing ill-health. A quarter of all patients are severely affected and are house-bound or bed-bound. M.E. patients score more poorly on quality of life surveys compared to patients with all other diseases measured, including multiple sclerosis, stroke, renal failure, and lung cancer
2. There is no M.E. specialist consultant in Scotland. GPs are misinformed and lack training and education. Action for M.E. asked 50 GPs in NHS Dumfries & Galloway, NHS Fife and NHS Highland about their educational needs for M.E.. 82% said they had not undertaken any training about the condition
3. The impact that any disease has on its patients is referred to as the burden of disease. It measures the impact of a health condition using indicators such as financial cost, quality-adjusted life years and mortality. Despite M.E. having a greater detrimental impact than diseases such as Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis, the Scottish Public Health Observatory's Burden of Disease Study (2015) does not include M.E.

Conference calls for:

1. ~~NHS Scotland to remove GET and CBT treatments from the Scottish Good Practice Statement, and for their abolition as a treatment for M.E. from all healthcare services across Scotland.~~ "NHS Scotland to consider the removal of Graded Exercise Therapy from the Scottish Good Practice Statement and for the guidelines to emphasise to health professionals the importance of presenting CBT as a treatment that helps many sufferers of long-term, physical health conditions cope with the symptoms they experience."

2. The Scottish Chief Scientist Office to commit to a biomedical research programme which has an investment directly in proportion to the burden of disease (once the burden of disease for Scotland has been established).
3. The Scottish Government to invest in a centre of excellence (focusing on research and care), along with established clinical networks across Scotland.
4. The Scottish Government to review NHS Education Scotland's approach to training and educational material, before committing to a programme of GP training and education in M.E. across the country.

Amendment:

~~Remove from Conference notes item 5 the words~~

~~"There are no effective treatments available for M.E. on the NHS. The only treatments that are currently offered on the NHS are Graded Exercise Therapy (GET) and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). These treatments are based on discredited research which claimed that M.E. can be cured by exercise and/or changing the way patients' think about themselves.~~

And replace with

~~"The treatment of M.E. is controversial, with Graded Exercise Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy as treatment provoking considerable resistance from the patient community. "Pacing" is widely considered to be a helpful intervention and has a growing evidence base in its support.~~

Remove Conference calls for item 1.

And replace with

"NHS Scotland to consider the removal of Graded Exercise Therapy from the Scottish Good Practice Statement and for the guidelines to emphasise to health professionals the importance of presenting CBT as a treatment that helps many sufferers of long-term, physical health conditions cope with the symptoms they experience."

Cards:

Mover: Emma Walker, Edinburgh West, called
Summator: Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, Edinburgh West, called
Amd – Ewan Hoyle, Glasgow, called
Alison Graham, Dunfermline & West Fife

Votes:

Amd (Conference Notes section) – defeated
Amd (Conference Calls For section) – Count – For 29, Against 28 - carried
Motion as amended –carried

SC6: The role of the Church in the Education System

Submitted by 25 members

Conference notes:

1. — That the education system in Scotland was borne out of a culture of religious prejudice and inequality, when the church had to fund schools in order for children of a particular faith to receive an education.
2. — That society, religious belief, education and equal rights have evolved significantly in the intervening period and schools are no longer funded by the church and are now funded by the state.
3. — That countries across the globe have reduced or removed the links with the church in state funded schools.
4. — That some local authorities apply faith as a selection criteria for denominational schools, yet faith (or no faith) is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
5. — That the Church continues to have a role in advising on the suitability for employment of teachers in faith schools funded by a local authority.
6. — That authorities must reserve three non-elected seats on education boards for religious representatives, as set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

Conference believes:

1. — That state-funded schools should not have entry or placement criteria based on faith.
2. — That teachers who do not fulfil particular religious or lifestyle criteria are discriminated against in some denominational schools as they can't apply for promoted posts.
3. — That the non-elected posts for religious representatives on education boards should cease, and be replaced by the introduction of elected posts.

Conference calls for the Scottish Government to:

1. — Pursue a single secular model of state-funded education.
2. — Remove religious belief as a placing criteria for Scottish state-funded schools.
3. — Enable schools to introduce an optional "religion hour" before or after the school day providing the opportunity for pupils to practice their faith and receive religious instruction if they so wish.
4. — Remove faith as a criteria for selecting or recommending teachers for employment or promotion.
5. — Remove the non-elected church positions from local authority education boards and replace with elected positions open to residents residing in the local authority.

AMENDMENT 1:

Delete all after Conference Notes and insert

1. — Society, religious belief, education and equal rights have evolved significantly since the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 brought certain religious schools into the state system;

2. ~~The popularity of many religious schools authorised under the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 and other denominational schools which currently provide an education to thousands of children across Scotland, with examples including Holyrood Secondary School which with 2000 pupils has the largest pupil role of any school in Scotland and one of the largest in Europe;~~
3. ~~People of all faiths recognise the value of the education that religious schools authorised under the Education (Scotland) Act 1918 provide and many will choose to enrol their child at such a school for the values and culture that school adopts, with no precondition on religious observance, for example, St Albert's School in Pollokshields has a predominantly Muslim pupil population;~~
4. ~~The contribution made by religious schools authorised under the Education (Scotland) Act 1918, their staff and pupils, over the last 100 years as a result of an Act of Parliament which also raised the school leaving age and established education boards;~~
5. ~~The contribution made by all faith communities to Scottish public life~~

Conference recognises:

- a) ~~That successful schools are built on a strong system of values within schools and that denominational schools have a strong track record in HMIE inspections;~~
- b) ~~That the Scottish education system should continue to be inclusive and pluralist, recognising the importance of parental choice, and offering high quality education to all children, whatever their background or creed;~~
- c) ~~The religious education in Scotland has always been regarded as a proper part of the curriculum, both in denominational and non-denominational schools;~~
- d) ~~That denominational schools are run in the same way as other state schools including being subject to the Curriculum for Excellence, national inspection by HMIE, and the national qualifications framework;~~

Conference calls for:

1. ~~Continued recognition of the rights of parents to choose to educate their children in a denominational school within the state sector;~~
2. ~~Education Scotland, working alongside the Scottish Government and COSLA, to conduct a review of employment practices and education authority guidance to ensure compatibility with equal opportunities legislation and to validate any recommendations through the inspection regime.~~

Amendment 2:

Add at end of Conference Notes (after line 20 in Agenda)

7. ~~There remains a statutory obligation for all non-denominational schools that religious observance should occur at least six times in each school year and that it is up to parents to actively withdraw their children from religious instruction or observance.~~

Add at end of Conference believes (after line 30 in Agenda)

4. ~~Children should be able to decide for themselves whether they wish to participate in religious instruction or observance.~~

Add at end of Conference calls for (after line 43 in Agenda)

6. ~~Remove the statutory obligation for religious observance in non-denominational schools and ensure any religious observance at schools is made available on an opt-in basis for children to choose for themselves.~~

Cards:

Mover: Yvonne Finlayson, Central Scotland, called
Summator: Mark Ruston, Central Scotland
Amd 1: Alex Cole-Hamilton, Edinburgh West, called
Amd 2: Ewan Hoyle, Glasgow South, called
Summate Amd 1: Carole Ford, Glasgow South
Caron Lindsay, West Lothian, called
Galen Milne, Stirling and Clackmannanshire, called
Katy Gordon, East Dunbartonshire, called
Peter Barrett, Perth & Kinross, called
Robert Brown, Rutherglen, called
Alan Reid, Argyll & Bute, called
Alison Monk, Edinburgh West, called
Parag Vyas, Glasgow, called
Eileen McCartin, Paisley & Renfrewshire, called
Fayzan Rehman, Stirling & Clackmannanshire, called
Teresa Little, Dunfermline, called
John Waddell, Aberdeen West, called, Request for a Reference Back
Malcolm Wood, Edinburgh West, called
David Stevens, Edinburgh North & Leith, called
Jim Goodall, East Dunbartonshire, not called
Andrew Muir, Dumbarton, not called
Willie Rennie, North East Fife, called
Flora Sharp, Edinburgh West, not called
Isobel Davidson, Aberdeenshire East, not called

Votes:

Hear Reference Back – Reference back debate will be heard

Reference Back – carried

Motion is referred back to the policy committee

~~Amd 1~~

~~Sep Vote on Amd 2 (Conference Believes new item)~~

~~Amd 2~~

~~Motion~~

Party Business Session and Elections Briefing

Report Back on Diversity

BM1: Diversity Fund

Conference welcomes:

1. The introduction of the Diversity Fund in 2016, which has provided funding to candidates from under-represented groups and helped train, encourage and motivate those becoming approved candidates.
2. The increase in the number of women MPs elected in 2017 meaning that Scottish Liberal Democrat representation in the House of Commons is now gender balanced.
3. The progress made in providing encouragement, support and training to potential new women candidates.
4. The unprecedented high number of Scottish participants in the recent round of Future Women MPs weekends.

Conference believes:

1. The work is not done and our membership as a whole and our elected representatives still do not reflect the wider population.
2. We have a long way to go in improving the representation of people from ethnic minority groups both within our party membership and elected representatives.
3. Whilst we have achieved gender balance in the House of Commons, there is still much work to be done to ensure we continue to select and the elect more female MPs, MSPs and Councillors.

Conference agrees:

1. To widen the scope of the Diversity Fund set up in 2016 to allow funding to be given to projects aimed at recruiting members from a more diverse background and to fund participation in events aimed at under-represented groups, especially in non-election years,
2. That every local party should make a concerted effort to recruit new members from under-represented groups.
3. That Local Party Officers should undergo unconscious bias training.

Cards:

Mover: Rebecca Bell, Edinburgh North East & Leith, called

Summator: Bruce Wilson, Edinburgh North East & Leith, not called

Votes:

Motion – carried

Election Briefing

Cards:

Ian Powney, Edinburgh West

Keith Ripperts, Edinburgh South

CLOSE OF PLENARY

Scottish Liberal Democrats - Standing Orders

1. The Conference Committee

1.1. The Conference Committee shall be constituted as specified in Section E10 of the Constitution. The annual election of members by the conference shall be by Single Transferable Vote in a ballot of all members of the Party registered to attend Conference ('Conference Representatives').

1.2. The Conference Convener shall be the Chair of the Conference Committee. At its first meeting after a new election under Section E10 of the Constitution, the Conference Committee may elect one or more Vice-Conveners.

2. The Timetable and Agenda - Normal Meetings

2.1. The Agenda for each ordinary meeting of Conference shall include time for:

2.1.1. Motions;

2.1.2. Emergency motions;

2.1.3. Topical motions;

2.1.4. A business session or sessions; and

2.1.5. Any other business deemed appropriate by the Conference Committee. The time to be allocated to each type of business and the order of business shall be decided by the Conference Committee.

2.2. The Conference Committee shall, before each meeting of the Conference, prepare a timetable which includes:

2.2.1. The closing date for the receipt of motions (other than Emergency or Topical motions), which shall not normally be less than eight weeks before the start of the meeting;

2.2.2. The due date for the publication of the Agenda, which shall not normally be less than six weeks before the start of the meeting;

2.2.3. The closing date for the receipt of Topical Motions, which shall not normally be less than two weeks before the start of the meeting; and

2.2.4. The closing date for receipt of amendments which shall not normally be less than two working days before the start of the meeting.

2.2.5. The Conference Committee may, in special circumstances, specify dates later than the normal dates under this Standing Order. It shall report to the Conference its reasons for doing so.

2.3. Submitting organisations shall detail at the time of submission the name and contact details of a person authorised to agree any redrafting of a motion or amendment and the name of the mover and summator of the motion or amendment, should it be selected for debate at Conference.

2.4. The Conference Committee shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included within the Agenda. The proposers of the motions selected for debate shall be informed of the Conference Committee's decision. The Agenda shall be circulated to Local Parties and other bodies entitled to submit motions and amendments under the provisions of Section E19 of the Constitution so that amendments can be tabled to these motions by such bodies. Copies of motions not selected for inclusion in the Agenda shall be available for inspection.

2.5. The Conference Committee shall meet the day after the deadline for submission of amendments to motions on the Agenda and shall decide which amendments should be accepted and those rejected. The proposers of the amendments selected for debate shall be informed of the Conference Committee's decision.

2.6. The Conference Committee shall also meet as soon as practicable after the closing date for the receipt of topical motions and shall decide which of the topical motions duly submitted shall be debated, and the proposers of topical motions selected shall be informed of the Conference Committee's decision. The text of any topical motions selected for debate shall be circulated to Conference Representatives, Local Parties and bodies authorised to submit motions.

2.7. The Conference Committee shall also prepare an agenda for the business session of each meeting of Conference. The Committee shall circulate this, with the text of proposed amendments to the Constitution in accordance with Section L of the Constitution, amendments to Standing Orders, and other party business motions, with the Agenda as per Section 2.4

2.8. The Party's Principal Committees may submit holding motions, which shall identify the issues to be dealt with within the motion but which may be amended and expanded upon later. Standing Orders 2 and 3 shall apply to holding motions as they would apply to ordinary motions, except that:

2.8.1. The final version of the motion shall be submitted not less than two weeks before the start of the meeting of Conference;

2.8.2. The text of the final version shall be circulated to Conference Representatives, Local Parties and other bodies authorised to submit motions under the provisions of Section E19 of the Constitution, who may submit amendments no later than two working days before the start of the meeting of Conference; and

2.8.3. The Committee shall make available to Conference Representatives the text of the final version and any amendments chosen for debate, either by their publication in the Conference Daily Bulletin or by any other means the Committee considers most appropriate

2.9. The Conference Committee may, if the circumstances require, propose to Conference a variation in the order of business as set out in the Agenda. Such variation shall be put to the vote and shall take effect if approved by a majority of those voting.

3. Submission of Motions and Amendments

3.1. The Conference Committee may refuse to select a motion for the amendment of the Constitution or Standing Orders if, in the opinion of the Committee, it is similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate at the same meeting of Conference. All other motions in these categories shall be circulated with the Agenda.

3.2. No amendment shall be selected if, in the opinion of the Conference Committee, it is insubstantial, outside the legitimate scope of the motion or tantamount to a direct negative of the motion.

3.3. The movers of any motion or amendment that has not been selected shall be notified as soon as is practicable and may appeal to the Conference Committee in accordance with directions given by the Committee. If an appeal is allowed, the motion or amendment shall be treated as an emergency motion or amendment notwithstanding that it does not comply with Standing Order 5.

3.4. This Standing Order and Standing Order 2 do not apply to procedural motions under Standing Order 8.

3.5. No Topical Motion may be selected for debate at Conference unless the Conference Committee is satisfied that the content of the motion is such that it could not have been submitted in time for the deadline as set out in Section 2.2 for ordinary motions. No Topical Motion can be a holding motion from a Party Committee.

4. The Agenda - Special Conferences

4.1. Special Conferences shall deal only with the business stated in the notice of requisition, save that the Conference Committee may allow time for emergency motions and for business which is formal or, in the opinion of the Committee, uncontentious.

4.2. The Conference Committee shall draw up an Agenda and circulate in line with Section 2.4. If the Committee deems it necessary the Agenda can be circulated with amendments to be submitted as Emergency Amendments.

4.3. The provisions of Standing Orders 2 and 3 shall, so far as they are not inconsistent with Standing Orders 4.1 and 4.2, apply to special meetings of the Conference.

5. Emergency Motions

5.1. An emergency motion or amendment must relate to significant developments which have occurred since the relevant closing date or so shortly before that date as to make it impracticable to submit a motion, Topical Motion or amendment in due time. It must be brief and specific.

5.2. An emergency motion or amendment may be submitted by five Conference Representatives or by any persons or bodies authorised to submit motions under the provisions of Section E9 of the Constitution.

5.3. The Conference Committee may, for each day of the meeting of Conference, set aside time convenient for the debate of Emergency Motions. In such an event, proposed Emergency Motions must be submitted to the Conference Committee, duly signed, by 5pm the day before they are to be debated. Emergency Amendments to motions already on the Agenda for that meeting of Conference must be submitted by 5pm the day before the motion is to be debated.

5.4. The Conference Committee may refuse to select an emergency motion or amendment if, in the opinion of the Committee, it is similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate at the relevant meeting of Conference.

5.5. The Conference Committee will choose the emergency motions or amendments which, in the opinion of the Committee, are most relevant to the concerns of the Conference and can be debated within the time available. The Committee shall make available the text of all emergency motions and amendments chosen for debate either by publication in the Conference Daily Bulletin or any other means the Committee finds most appropriate.

5.6. Amendments shall not normally be taken to the text of an Emergency Motion. However Conference Committee may consider amendments duly signed by 5 Conference Representatives or by any body authorised to submit motions under the provisions of Section E9 of the Constitution. These amendments must be brief, suitable for debate and of a similar emergency nature. The deadline for submitting amendments to an Emergency Motion will be listed in the Conference Daily Bulletin alongside the text of the Emergency Motion. The movers of the Emergency Motion must be given the opportunity to agree that the text of the amendment be accepted without debate or vote, and the text must be circulated to voting representatives before the start of the debate.

6. Conduct of Debate

6.1. Length of Speeches

6.1.1. The Conference Committee shall decide the time to be allocated for each debate. The Conference Committee shall determine the times allocated to speakers in debates.

6.1.2. Movers of motions shall normally be allocated not more than 12 minutes to move and summate on a motion. Movers of amendments shall normally be allocated not more than 8 minutes to move and summate on a motion. Movers of emergency and topical motions shall normally be allocated 5 minutes to move the motion. Speakers from the floor shall normally be allocated 4 minutes but this may be varied at the discretion of the chair of the debate.

6.1.3. The allocation of the time between moving and summing shall be at the discretion of the mover subject only to notification of the Chair of the debate before the start of the debate. In the absence of such notification the Chair shall be entitled to limit speeches to three quarters of the time allocation for moving and one quarter for summation.

6.2. Order of Debate

6.2.1. The Conference Committee shall direct the order of debate. Generally, however, a motion will be moved and immediately thereafter the amendments will be moved in the order directed by the Committee. There will then be a general debate. The movers of amendments (or their nominees) shall have the right to summate in the same order, after which the mover of the motion (or their nominee) shall have the right to summate.

6.2.2. Votes will be taken on amendments in the order in which they have been moved and finally, a vote shall be taken on the substantive motion.

6.3. The Conference Committee may direct that parts of any motion or amendment or group of amendments may be the subject of a separate debate the Conference Committee may also direct that a debate may comprise of more than one substantive motion. In this case it shall be up to the discretion of the Chair as to the allotment of speakers, save that the rights of movers of motions or amendments shall not be infringed.

6.4. The Committee may authorise members of other State or Regional Parties to speak. The Committee may also, with the approval of conference, invite any person to address a Conference as a guest.

6.5. On any topical motion, policy motion or emergency motion not moved on behalf of the Policy Committee, the Policy Committee shall have the right to nominate one of its members to report to the Conference its views on the motions and/or amendments under debate. Such persons shall be called to speak at any time up to the conclusion of the debate and before any replies and shall be entitled to speak for the same length of time as the mover of the motion. The Executive Committee shall have similar rights on business motions or motions to amend the constitution and the Conference Committee shall have similar rights in relation to motions to amend Standing Orders or motions otherwise relating to the proceedings of the Conference.

6.6. Save as provided in Standing Orders, no person may speak more than once in any debate.

6.7. All members wishing to speak in any debate, including the movers and summators of motions and amendments, must submit a speaker's card and indicate whether they wish to speak in favour or against a motion or amendment. The Chair of the session shall be responsible for providing a balanced debate between the different viewpoints in the Conference. In circumstances where there is a preponderance of members wishing to speak on the same side in any debate, the Chair may announce a departure from this rule.

7. Voting

7.1. Voting cards shall be issued to all Conference Representatives and shall be shown in respect of all votes taken. A count of voting cards will be taken when either:

7.1.1. This is felt necessary by the Chair of the session to resolve uncertainty as to the outcome, or

7.1.2. A request for a count has been made by 12 Conference Representatives standing in their places and showing their voting cards.

7.2. In the event of a count of voting cards being required, the Chair of the session shall appoint tellers for the purpose. A recount will be held only if the Chair of the session is not satisfied that the first count was accurate.

8. Points of Order and Procedural Motions

8.1. Any voting member may rise on a point of order. A point of order shall be taken immediately, except that, during a vote no point of order shall be taken that does not refer to the vote itself. The decision of the Chair of the session on all points of order shall be final.

8.2. References Back

8.2.1. A voting member may, at any time before the end of speeches in reply to the debate, submit in writing a motion to refer back the motion under debate. Such a submission shall state to whom the motion is to be referred and shall include a short statement of the reasons.

8.2.2. The Chair may decide either to take the motion to refer back immediately or defer it until the end of debate. If more than one request for a reference back is received, the Chair shall have the discretion as to which to take but shall give consideration to the appropriateness of the bodies to which the motion is being referred, the degree to which the stated reasons for reference back reflect views expressed in the debate and the order in which the requests were submitted, before exercising the rights of discretion. No more than one reference back shall be taken to any motion.

8.2.3. The Chair shall, upon taking the motion to refer back, read it and the statement of reasons and ask conference whether it wishes to debate the motion. If the conference decides not to debate the reference back, the reference back automatically falls. If the conference decides, by a majority of those voting to debate the reference back the mover of that motion may speak and the mover of the substantive motion or their nominee may reply. The Chair shall have discretion whether to allow other speakers on the motion.

8.2.4. The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If the substantive motion is referred to the Executive, Policy Committee or Conference Committee that body shall report to the next meeting of conference stating the action it has taken on the reference back.

8.3. Suspension of Standing Orders

8.3.1. A voting member may, during any session of a conference, move for the suspension of Standing Orders. The mover shall submit the motion together with a written statement of its purpose, not exceeding 100 words, to the Chair who shall read them to the Conference.

8.3.2. No motion to suspend Standing Orders may suspend any requirement of the Constitution, not Standing Orders 2 and 3.

8.3.3. No motion to suspend Standing Orders to introduce a motion or amendment onto the Agenda can be taken unless the motion or amendment has been submitted to the Conference Committee in accordance with the published timetable and any right of appeal has been exercised.

8.3.4. The Chair shall read the statement of purpose and if the suspension is allowable, ask Conference whether it wishes to debate the request to suspend Standing Orders. If the Conference decides not to debate the request, it falls. If the Conference decides to hear the request the mover may speak and a representative of the Conference may reply. The Chair has the discretion to call other speakers and all speeches will be limited to two minutes.

8.3.5. A motion to suspend Standing Orders shall only be carried if supported by at least two thirds of voting Representatives present and voting. If the procedural motion is carried all Standing Orders shall remain in force except only for the purposes set out in the motion.

8.4. Separate Votes

8.4.1. A Separate Vote shall be taken on a part of a motion or amendment.

8.4.2. At the direction of the Conference Committee; or

8.4.3. At the discretion of the Chair, when requested to do so by a voting representative. Any voting representative may submit a request for a separate vote to the Chair of a debate. Such a request must be in writing and received before the commencement of the speeches in reply to the debate. The Chair has complete discretion in such a case on whether to take a separate vote.

8.5. These Standing Orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority of Conference Representatives present and voting on a motion duly submitted under the terms of Standing Order 3. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from Conference to Conference.