

Quick Guide to Conference Motions

Introduction

PCS is a democratic organisation, and as such it is open to any and all of us to help determine what the union does on our behalf.

One of the most common ways of doing this is for individuals or groups of members to submit a motion to the Group Conference. A motion is a formal proposal for the conference to adopt a specific policy, take a specific course of action or to work toward a specific goal, and if it is supported by a majority of those members attending the conference then it becomes part of our work programme for the coming year.

The PCS Forestry Commission Conference will be held in York on **6th and 7th May 2008**, and all members are invited to submit motions to the conference to help determine our policies and actions for 2008 and into 2009.

The 'motions' process

Getting a motion agreed as PCS policy involves three key stages:

1. Writing the motion.
2. Getting the motion agreed by your branch at its AGM.
3. Getting the motion agreed by the Annual Conference.

1. Writing the motion

Motions can be written in many forms, but in order to be accepted most need to contain several key elements:

- **What the issue of concern is.** This is usually phrased as coming from the conference itself, i.e. *This conference notes with concern that not all members have had a pay increase in line with inflation...*
- **What you want done about it.** This is usually phrased as an instruction to the group executive committee to do something, i.e. *...and therefore instructs the GEC to work with the other unions to organise a campaign for a further increase...*
- **What you want to achieve.** i.e. *... to ensure that the value of all members' salaries and pensions are increased at least in-line with inflation.*

So a full motion might read:

This conference notes with concern that not all members have had a pay increase in line with inflation and therefore instructs the GEC to work with the other unions to organise a campaign for a further increase to ensure that the value of all members' salaries and pensions are increased at least in-line with inflation.

2. Getting the motion agreed by your branch at its AGM

In order to be considered by the Group Conference, your motion must first be voted on and accepted by your branch at its AGM. Details for this will be sent to you by your Branch Secretary when he/she organises the AGM. Typically they will write to all members about one month before the meeting asking for details of motions and any other agenda items.

At the AGM, yourself or a colleague will be asked to propose the motion, and anyone else present will have an opportunity to give their views. It is not essential that you speak about your motion at the meeting, but doing so may help to convince others to support you. Once everyone has had an opportunity to comment, the branch chairperson will ask for a show of hands – if the meeting votes to support the motion then it goes forward to the Group Conference.

3. Getting the motion agreed by the Group Conference.

Getting the motion agreed by the Group Conference is essentially the same as that for getting support from your AGM. Once your motion has been accepted by your branch AGM, it is sent to the Group Secretary. The Group Secretary will then draw up an agenda for the Conference which is sent to all of the branches and delegates. Finally delegates to the conference will again discuss and vote on each motion, and those that are accepted will form part of the Group's policies and action plan for the coming year. Again whilst it is not essential that you actually attend the conference to speak about your motion, it will be important that someone from your branch is in attendance, otherwise the motion may not get the support which it deserves.

Further Information

This quick guide only covers the essential points about motions, AGMs and Conference; if you would like any further details or clarification then please speak to your Branch Secretary or contact the Unions' office at Silvan House.