



WE Party Conference

Kettering 7 – 9 September 2018

Title:

Special Debates at Conference

Proposed by:

Sophie Walker, Leader of the Women's Equality Party

Type of motion:

Emergency Motion

Motion text:

1 The Women's Equality Party Conference notes that WE are committed to collaborative working,
2 changing the combative culture of old political parties and promoting better research and
3 understanding of the challenges women face.

4 The Women's Equality Party Conference therefore resolves to introduce Special Debates, by
5 which members may, at Conference, fully explore a subject in an environment that encourages
6 confident exchanges and deeper deliberation and discussion towards the establishment of a
7 common position, without the pressure of an immediate vote on an official Party position.

8 Conference therefore agrees to amend point 4.8.1 of the WE constitution to read:

9 "The Steering Committee or a committee operating on its behalf shall be responsible for setting
10 the content of the Party Conference agenda ("the Conference Agenda") which shall include
11 sessions for motions, emergency motions, Special Debates and amendments to motions for
12 debate and any other Party business."

13 And agrees to amend the first sentence of point 4.8.3 of the WE constitution to read:

14 "Motions and emergency motions for debate, and Special Debates, or proposals relating to the
15 Party's business may be proposed by the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee, the
16 Leader, the Policy Committee, the Conference Committee, any Branch or Branches working not
17 together, or less than 20 Members working together."

18 And agrees to amend point 4.8.8 of the WE constitution to read:

19 "The proposers of a Motion or an emergency motion or a Special Debate may challenge a
20 decision to refuse a motion or a Special Debate at Party Conference at their discretion,
21 providing that they believe such motion or emergency motion or Special Debate needs the
22 immediate attention of the Party and that a majority of Party Conference would support it. In
23 such case, Conference Chair shall allow a vote in which the decision to refuse the motion can
24 be reversed by simple majority vote."



Motion rationale:

Members' responses to this year's Conference motion on the GRA have demonstrated that WE urgently need to add capacity - with immediate effect - for a different kind of debate, in order to support members to find a way through particularly thorny topics and ensure that Party democracy is protected by hearing as wide a range of voices and opinions as possible.

Feedback from members has highlighted a strong desire to give more time for deliberation on particularly sensitive issues and additional support and space for members to speak on complex topics. Members have expressed concern about placing a time limit on debates where finding consensus may require more consideration.

This motion will improve the Party's participative democracy and make space for members to hone ideas. From the GRA to climate change, from the need to rework the legislative response to sexual violence and to contest each fresh assault on reproductive rights, members feel many issues require more examination and debate and in a format that allows for more exploration.

The work of the Women's Equality Party is to build a strong feminist movement and compelling political party by winning support for targeted policies and by assisting women to be confident, effective advocates. Robust and fearless debate in a way that encourages member participation and decision-making is a core part of that work.

WE must also, in the current turbulent political environment, balance a need to respond swiftly against giving adequate time for members' deliberation and consultation on the issues. WE should provide an arena in which members can break ground in new ideas, hone existing ideas and state commitment to particular policies.

This motion gives our party members an additional tool for talking about, thinking about and deciding policy.