WE Party Conference
15 - 18 October 2020

Motions Guidelines

Thank you for participating in shaping the future of our Party. These guidelines explain the three separate processes for submitting a motion, submitting an amendment to a motion, and submitting an emergency motion.

Proposals that don't adhere to these guidelines will be rejected.

Motions Documentation

For all documentation referred to in these guidelines, including Motions, Special Debates and Amendments Proposal Forms, Sample Motions and Amendments, please visit https://www.womensequality.org.uk/conference_2020_motions_timeline.

Motions

Please read these guidelines with the following:

2020 Motions proposal form
2020 Sample Motion

What is a motion?
A motion is a proposal to change or add to Party policy or the way the Party does business, or a provocation to enable further examination.

It is split into two parts - the motion wording which calls for a specific change, and the rationale, which makes the case to conference delegates for why they should vote for the policy. If passed by conference, it is the motion wording that is adopted as Party policy, or inserted into the constitution.

Motions can only be accepted if they meet the requirements of these guidelines and the party's constitution. Proposal of a motion does not guarantee acceptance, and the number of motions that can be debated is limited by the time available at conference.

There are three kinds of motions: policy motions, proposals for special debates, and business motions. A policy motion can reaffirm the policy of the party, amend an existing policy and/ or adopt a new policy. A motion for a special debate is much like a policy motion, but allows time for conference delegates to explore ideas without moving to a vote. A business motion is a

proposal that concerns the internal work of the party, such as the rules in the constitution and the party structure.

How to compose a motion
First decide on the subject of your motion. A policy motion should be:

- directly relevant to WE's seven objectives and mission
- a subject you're enthusiastic about - if it catches your interest, it's likely to be of interest to other members
- an original policy i.e. not a repeat of an existing policy, and
- not in breach of the party's constitution.

A motion for a special debate should be:

- a provocation of an issue or topic that is directly relevant to WE's seven objectives and mission
- a subject you're enthusiastic about - if it catches your interest, it's likely to be of interest to other members
- an original policy i.e. not a repeat of an existing policy, and
- not in breach of the party's constitution.

A business motion should be:

- a functional change or addition to the way the party runs its business
- not in breach of the party's constitution, though it may add to it or amend it
- substantive ie making a material change or addition to the existing constitution, not an editorial change

Formulate your approach, write your motion out and discuss it with other members, until you have a final form of words. Please also see the 2020 Sample Motion form sent with this guidance, which you may find helpful.

Then find backers. Either a WE branch or 20 individual WE members must support the motion. A good way of finding support is to invite your branch team and local members to send in motions for your branch to consider backing, and hold a meeting or conference call where you decide what to send in for consideration.

If submitting a motion or motions as a branch, it is the branch's responsibility to reach agreement over how they will do this, e.g. holding meetings, circulating motions to the local membership, asking for feedback, voting etc.

Your motion must be proposed by using the motion proposal form, which must be filled in, paying attention to the guidelines on the form itself, as follows:

Things to include

Title: A brief title that sums up the intent of the motion (approximately ten words).

Proposers: Please give the names and email addresses of all 20 signatories to the motion, or your Branch name and email address, as appropriate, and state who will be the proposer and

seconder of the motion if it is accepted for debate at Conference, with their email addresses. All motions must have a named individual as proposer. A seconder is optional.

If the motion is debated at Conference, the proposer will have five minutes to make the case for the motion to conference delegates. A seconder may have the opportunity to speak as well, for three minutes, depending on the time available. The seconder of a motion should be prepared to make different points to the proposer.

Policy motion text: The actual language of the motion, not exceeding 300 words, which states that some action should be taken and by whom it should be taken.

This should be precise and concise. Please state:

- A brief sentence outlining the issue and/or problem that is the subject of the motion, what steps should be taken to address it,
- which government/s or official body/ies* should carry out those steps, and
- the desired outcome

Please keep in mind that the wording of the motion text, if passed by conference, will be adopted into WE policy exactly as it is. Any preamble or explanation should be in the rationale, not the motion wording.

The Policy Document can be found here. Resolutions passed at our last conference can be found here.

* If accepted, your motion will become WE party policy. Because of this, you should word the motion as if you are speaking as the Women's Equality Party, rather than asking the Women's Equality Party to change something (for example, "The Women's Equality Party calls on government to…").

Please note: policy motions are passed by a simple majority of delegates voting at conference.

Special debate proposal text: The general intent of the proposal, not exceeding 300 words, which suggests some action that could be taken and calls on conference to explore and debate those actions.

This should be concise. Please state:

- a brief sentence outlining the issue and/or problem that is the subject of the motion,
- what steps could be taken to address it, and
- the desired outcome.

Any preamble or explanation should be in the rationale, not the motion wording.

The Policy Document can be found here. Resolutions passed at our last conference can be found here.

Please note:
- special debates will NOT be subject to a vote, and will NOT become WE party policy.
- special debates may not be amended.

Business motion text: The actual language of the motion, not exceeding 300 words, which states that some action should be taken by the Party regarding its internal business.

This should be precise and concise. Please state:

- a brief sentence outlining the issue and/ or problem that is the subject of the motion,
- what steps should be taken to address it,
- which party body should carry out those steps e.g. the Steering Committee, Policy Committee etc.
- where those steps amend the constitution, the article numbers being amended, where in the sentence the wording comes and what wording, if any, needs to be deleted.

Please keep in mind the wording of a constitutional amendment motion text, if passed by conference, will be adopted into the constitution exactly as it is. Any preamble or explanation should be in the rationale, not the motion wording. Please make sure that changes to any part of the constitution take into account the impact on any other articles.

Please note: motions that amend the constitution require a two thirds majority of delegates voting at conference to pass.

Rationale (for all motions):

Please include:

- a concise explanation of the rationale behind the motion, including such facts as are necessary to explain what you propose to change or add;
- citations to relevant law etc. if they will clarify your intent.* Parliamentary research briefings may be useful for background information and citations;
- an explanation of what you want the result of the motion to be, and why;
- no more than 500 words.

*Any cited material should be brought by the proposer to conference, if the motion is accepted. Please note, citations are included in the word count.

Submission of proposal

Your motion should be proposed using the motion form via email by 12 noon on 14 August 2020, with the subject line 'Motion for proposal to WE Conference 2020' to agenda@womensequality.org.uk. Motions received after this time will not be accepted.

After submitting your proposal

Your motion will be acknowledged on receipt. Please allow two working days for acknowledgement.

In accordance with the constitution, the Steering Committee will establish an Agenda Committee, which is responsible for setting the content of the conference agenda. The Agenda Committee has the discretion to accept, amend or refuse a motion and/or amendment as follows:

- refuse a motion that contravenes the seven Core Objectives of the Party, the constitution or the WE Code,
- redraft a motion or amendment proposed in order to clarify its wording,
- decide to treat any removable part of a motion or amendment as a separate motion or amendment,
- create a composite of similar motions or amendments, and
- refuse a motion in order to maintain the conference timeframe.

The Agenda Committee will check your motion to make sure it meets the proposals requirements. You may be contacted if the wording of your motion is unclear, to see if rewording is possible (which will not change the intent of the motion) or, if e.g. another motion has been proposed on the same subject, to see whether you would prefer to merge the two motions in consultation with the author of the other motion. Any changes will happen in consultation with you.

The Policy Committee will review motions' coherence and consistency with our mission and seven objectives, and the accuracy of the policy content. In the event of a dispute between the Agenda Committee and the Policy Committee over whether a motion meets the requirements set out in these guidelines, the Steering Committee will make a final decision.

You will be contacted within two weeks of the submission deadline about whether your motion has been accepted.

Once all the accepted motions are finalised, they will be sent out to all members. Please read them and decide whether you would like to propose an amendment to any of them.

Amendments to policy and business motions

Please read these guidelines with the following:

2020 Amendments form
2020 Sample Amendment to Motion

What is an amendment?

An amendment to a motion proposes changes to the original motion that add to it or change it but don't alter its intent. If accepted and scheduled for debate by the Agenda Committee, amendments are debated and voted on by conference before voting on the substantive motion as amended, or not.

Amendments to published motions may be proposed by the Steering Committee, the Executive Committee, the Policy Committee, any Branch or not less than five Members working together.

Proposal of an amendment does not guarantee acceptance, and the number of amendments that can be debated is limited by the time available.

Your amendment should be proposed by using the amendment form, which should be filled in, paying attention to the guidelines on the form itself, as follows:

Your amendment:

- must be relevant to the motion it intends to amend,
- may not change the motion's intent, or oppose or nullify it,
- must be relevant to the party's seven objectives,
- can change some (but not most) of a motion's text,
- must be a substantive change and not an editorial one,
- can change the motion from a policy proposal to a special debate,
- must not make the text of the motion, as amended, exceed 300 words, and
- the amendment rationale may not exceed 250 words.

Things to include

Title: A brief title that sums up the intent of the amendment.

Proposers: Please give the names and email addresses of all five signatories to the amendment, or your Branch name and email address, as appropriate, and state who will be the Proposer of the amendment if it is accepted for debate at Conference.

Amendment text:
The actual language of the amendment, which changes the wording of the motion. This should be precise and concise. Please state:

- the subject of the motion,
- the subject of the amendment,
- its focus and how that changes the focus of the motion,
- the new wording you propose, and
- how it amends the motion, e.g. "Amend the motion, lines ___ to ___, by deleting [its relevant current wording], and adding [your new wording] to read [revised wording]", etc. Or, "Amend the motion, lines ___ to ___, by adding the following wording between the existing words ___ and___: [wording of new section]."

Rationale:

Please include:
- a concise explanation of the rationale behind the amendment, including such facts as are necessary to explain what you propose to change or add,
- citations to relevant law etc. if they will clarify your intent.* Parliamentary research briefings may be useful for background information and citations,
- an explanation of what you want the result of the amendment to be, and
- why you think the original motion needs to be changed.

* Any cited material should be brought by the Proposer of the amendment to Conference, if the amendment is accepted.

It would be helpful if you could notify the Agenda Committee of your intention to submit an amendment before the deadline for amendments, to help the committee plan capacity for review. Please email agenda@womensequality.org.uk by Monday 3 September, with the subject line 'Notification of intention to amend'.

Your amendment should be proposed by using the amendment form by email by 12 noon on 11 September to agenda@womensequality.org.uk, with the subject line 'Amendment for proposal to WE Conference 2020'. Amendments received after this time will not be accepted.

After submitting your proposal to amend

Your amendment will be acknowledged on receipt. Please allow two working days for acknowledgement.

It will be checked to make sure it meets the proposals requirements by the Agenda Committee.

You may be contacted if the wording of your amendment is unclear, to see if rewording is possible (which will not change the intent of the amendment or motion) or if e.g. another amendment has been proposed on the same part of the same motion, to see whether you would prefer to merge the two amendments in consultation with the author of the other amendment. Any changes will always happen in consultation with you.

You will be contacted within two weeks about whether your amendment has been accepted for debate.

Emergency Motions

Please read these guidelines with the following:

2020 Motions proposal form
2020 Sample Motion

What is an Emergency Motion?
Emergency motions are the same as policy motions, but can be used for issues or circumstances that have changed since the deadline for standard motions (from 15 August). Emergency motions require the same number of supporters as standard policy motions, and the process of proposal is the same as that for ordinary motions, with the exception that they cannot be amended. You should follow all guidance as set out above for non-emergency policy motions.

Emergency motions will only be considered if they relate to a situation that has arisen since the deadline for standard motions ie since 15 August 2020.

Your emergency motion should be proposed by using the motions proposal form, also paying attention to the guidelines on the form itself, via email by 12 noon on 24 September to agenda@womensequality.org.uk, with the subject line 'Emergency Motion for proposal to WE Conference 2020'.

You will be contacted within 10 days about whether your emergency motion has been accepted for debate.

The Agenda Committee will have the sole discretion to decide whether proposed emergency motions will be added to the conference agenda.

Emergency motions may also be proposed during party conference. In this case, the conference chair will have the sole discretion to refuse, allow or propose emergency motions which are not on the conference agenda.

Conclusion

Once all the motions and amendments for debate have been finalised, the motions, with the proposed amendments, will be published as the programme for debate at conference.

The proposers of a motion or emergency motion may challenge a decision to refuse a motion at party conference at their discretion, providing that they believe such a motion or emergency motion needs the immediate attention of the party and that a majority of party conference would support it. In such a case, the conference chair will allow a vote in which the decision to refuse the motion can be reversed by a simple majority vote.