**Left Unity National Conference**

**Saturday 21st and Sunday 22nd November 2015**

**Standing Orders Committee report**

1. **Code of conduct for Lefty Unity National Conference**

Refer to Standing Orders Committee:

1. for advice on standing orders including procedural motions and in case of complaints
2. for questions relating to order of debate

Furthermore, SOC recommends that conference attendees:

1. should respect authority of the chair during session
2. should ensure that debate and discussion should be respectful (for further information on this see Standing Order no. 7, Appendix 1 herein)
3. should refer to Conference Arrangements Committee for logistics and access issues
4. in the event that due to access and time restrictions motions need to be referred to other bodies SOC will advise.
5. **Conference Standing Orders**

Article 20 (d) of the Party Constitution requires the SOC to maintain a set of Procedures and Standing Orders for conducting the business of National Conference that may be amended from time to time by National Conference. These are attached as Appendix 1.

**In approving this report, Conference is invited to adopt the revised Standing Orders.**

1. **The current Standing Orders Committee (SOC) members are :**

Mark Holland
Richard von Abendorff

Phil Pope

Roland Rance

1. **Report of work of the Standing Orders Committee (SOC)**

We considered all motions that were received by 6pm Friday 18th September and all amendments that were received by 6pm Friday 30th October..

A preliminary motions booklet was published on the Party website on 5th October. A final motions and amendments booklet was published on the Party website at <http://leftunity.org/motions-for-left-unity-conference/> on 13th November. Printed copies of the latter will be available at Conference.

A small number of motions and amendments were disallowed by the SOC. These are listed in Appendix 1 of the final motions and amendments booklet. This means that the SOC is recommending to Conference that these items not be admitted to the agenda. Brief reasons for dis-allowance are recorded in the final motions and amendments booklet and are elaborated upon in the **disallowed motions and amendments** section below. Proposers of disallowed items may want to challenge the SOC’s decisions. If any such challenge is upheld by Conference, the SOC will advise on which items should be dropped from the agenda to accommodate this.

The SOC invited the co-operation of proposers and seconders of motions and amendments in compositing where this was feasible (Standing order 5.2.4.3 refers). Our appeal received a mixed response. In a small number of cases where motions were almost identical, the SOC converted some motions into amendments in order that repetitious debate is avoided. Some agreements to composite or to accept amendments have been reached after the date of publication of the final motions and amendments booklet. These are detailed in the **compositing** section below.

After compositing, motions and amendments were grouped by subject and subject to the **errata** section below, they were listed within the final motions and amendments booklet in the order in which they should be considered (Standing order 5.2.4.2 refers). Other criteria for ordering were : priority for branches over individual propositions; priority for earlier submission to the SOC (where compositing took place, the chronology marker was set by the earliest submitted element of the composite). Conference of course controls its own agenda and may, when it receives the SOC report at the beginning of Conference, amend the ordering that has been devised by the SOC.

Where the SOC has decided that grouped debate on a number of agenda items should take place (Standing order 17 refers), this is indicated in the **agenda plan.**.

**In approving this report, Conference is invited to approve the work done by the SOC in dealing with the agenda items. In order to enable the greatest possible time for the important issues on Saturday, SOC makes a strong request that matters not related to Saturday’s agenda be raised at the beginning of business on Sunday.**

1. **Errata NONE**
2. **Disallowed motions and amendments**

SOC has disallowed a small number of motions and amendments; the text of these is included in the motions booklet.

A motion from Alan Theasby on the Labour Party was disallowed because, although submitted within time, the motion had no text, and no seconder. The proposer did not respond to messages from SOC attempting to clarify this.

A motion from Southwark branch on LU policy towards Scotland was disallowed because it was submitted two weeks after the closing date.

A motion from Lambeth on migration was disallowed because it was submitted late.

Three motions from Felicity Dowling on Safe Spaces were disallowed as they were submitted late, to the wrong address, and without a seconder. SOC was only notified of these motions ten days after the closing date.

Five amendments from Cambridge branch to motions on the EU referendum were disallowed because they were contradictory to the sense of the original motions.

1. **Composites**

No composites had been submitted to SOC by the time this report was completed. Any subsequent composites will be reported to conference.

1. **Withdrawals**

Motion 56 from Sheffield branch on the European Union

Motion 70 from Lambeth branch on Left Unity and the Labour Party

Motion 78 from Camden & Islington branch on Left Unity and the Labour Party

1. **Emergency motions**

SOC has received three Emergency resolutions: on the Junior Doctors’ strike, from Liverpool LU; on Trident and the CND demo, from Southwark LU; and on Russian bombing in Syria, from Dave Kellaway and Fred Leplat. These motions have been included as Appendix 3 below.

Having considered these, SOC has ruled that they are validly submitted motions regarding matters which have arisen subsequent to the closing date for submission of motions. However, SOC has been unable to allocate any time in the conference agenda for these motions to be discussed.

Any further emergency motions should be submitted to SOC, who will rule on their validity.

1. **Agenda Plan**
2. **Overall structure of conference**

SOC has considered the several requests - in motions, in correspondence and informally – for the whole of the first day of conference to be devoted to discussion of the party’s future. Although this was not in the original notice for conference sent to all members, SOC accepts this request, and has accordingly attempted to schedule all other discussions on the second day.

SOC has not, however, accepted proposals to split the discussion of LU’s future over two days, or to vote on the proposals on the second day.

1. **Prioritisation of motions**

In structuring the debate on the future of LU, we noted that four motions, reflecting different approaches to the issue, had attracted significant votes in the branch priorities ballot. We therefore propose that these motions are introduced first in the debate, and that the proposers receive an extended time to move their motions.

On the second day of Conference, we have timetabled debates on the constitutional motions and other policy motions which were prioritised in the ballot. Other motions have been grouped together, and will be debated if time permits.

1. **Time limits on speeches**

The SOC recommends: 10 minutes for movers of prioritised motions on the future of LU (provided that the proposed agenda is accepted and adhered to); 5 minutes for movers of other motions; 3 minutes for amendments and other speeches; 3 minutes for mover’s right of reply (Standing Order 14 refers).

Movers are urged to move uncontroversial motions or amendments formally (ie without speaking) and to use less than the time limit for short motions and amendments.

1. **Grouped debates**

Are contained within brackets. Where single exclusive voting is recommended, this is indicated in the agenda plan.

1. **Motions not reached when sessions run out of time**

All motions and amendments that are not reached when sessions run out of time and are not taken in later sessions, shall stand referred to the National Council, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 19. An exception is for motions proposing amendments to the constitution. These cannot be referred to the National Council, as Conference only can amend the Constitution. Any motions proposing amendments to the constitution that are not reached when Conference ends shall fall.

1. **The recommended agenda is included on a separate sheet, which should be regarded as part of this report.**

Note : Times allocated for guest speakers are indicative – the Chairs will advise.

**11) Priority Ballot**

 Twenty branches participated in the ballot, submitting 98 valid votes.

Submission 48:

Southend Oxford Stockport Birmingham Southwark Leeds N & E Crouch End South Wales Wigan Brighton & Hove Cambridge West London

Submission 75:

Southend Oxford Birmingham Southwark York Waltham Forest South Wales Cambridge Camden & Islington West London

 Submission 33:

Southend Oxford Southwark Waltham Forest Brighton & Hove Camden & Islington Coventry

Submission 61:

Birmingham South Wales Brighton & Hove Cambridge West London Croydon

Submission 19:

Cambridge Coventry Croydon South Wales

Submissions receiving three votes:

2,8,1,32,35,13,24,23

Submissions receiving two votes:

3,12,16,25,15,27,31,9,5

Submissions receiving one vote:

14,37,76,10,26,49,74,4,52,81,83,46,62,63,64,77,17

**Appendix 1**

**Standing Orders for Left Unity National Conference**

**1. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

1.1 The Standing Orders Committee shall be present at the Conference but shall take no part in its proceedings and shall comprise

1.2 Ten members as elected as set out in the constitution

1.3 The functions of the Standing Orders Committee shall be as contained in these Rules

**2. CONFERENCE TIMETABLE**

2.1 Before a National Conference, the National Council shall adopt and publish a detailed timetable enabling the following steps to be taken not later than the time stated:

2.2 Procedure: Weeks before the first day of Conference

2.2.1 Submission of motions: x weeks

2.2.2 Publication of preliminary agenda: x weeks

2.2.3 Submission of amendments: x weeks

2.2.4 Publication of final agenda: x weeks

**3. CONFERENCE QUORUM AND PROCEDURE**

3.1 The quorum of the National Conference shall be one-third of the members registered to attend and vote.

3.2 Motions may be submitted as set out in section 9 of the Constitution of Left Unity

**4. APPLICATION OF STANDING ORDERS**

4.1 These Standing Orders shall apply to all meetings of the National Conference and Special Conferences

**5. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

5.1 At its first meeting after it takes office, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson and a Deputy Chairperson from amongst its members.

5.2 The functions of the Committee shall, subject to these Standing Orders, be to:

5.2.1 ensure that Left Unity’s Rules and Standing Orders relating to the business of Conferences are observed, and notify the National Council of any violation that may be brought to the Committee’s notice.

5.2.2 draw up the preliminary agenda and final agenda of Conference business, and the proposed hours of business, to be circulated in accordance with the timetable stated in the Constitution.

5.2.3 determine the order in which the business of Conference shall be conducted, subject to the approval of Conference

5.2.4 consider all motions and amendments submitted for consideration by Conference and, for the purpose of enabling Conference to transact its business effectively the Committee shall:

5.2.4.1 decide whether such motions and amendments have been submitted in accordance with the Constitution

5.2.4.2 group together motions and amendments relating to the same subject, decide the order in which they should be considered and whether they should be debated and voted on separately or debated together and voted on sequentially

5.2.4.3 Facilitate the compositing of motions and amendments by enabling discussion between the movers of motions and amendments; refer to another representative body within Left Unity a motion or amendment which in the opinion of the Committee should properly be considered there; the mover shall be informed of the reason for so doing

5.2.4.4 have power to do all such other things as may be necessary to give effect to these Standing Orders.

5.3 Any decisions of the Committee which are to be reported to Conference shall be announced by the Chairperson of the Committee and shall be subject to ratification by Conference.

**6. MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS-PRE-CONFERENCE PROCEDURE**

6.1 Motions, amendments and other appropriate business may be proposed for the Conference by the bodies set out in the constitution.

6.2 Motions and amendments shall be sent to the Standing Orders Committee in order that the Standing Orders Committee may consider them for inclusion in the preliminary agenda.

6.3 The date and time by which motions and amendments to be considered for the Conference shall be received by the Standing Orders Committee shall be stated in the timetable to be published in advance of the conference.

**7 CONDUCT OF CONFERENCES**

7.1 The National Conference shall meet in public session, except that by direction of the National Council or by resolution of the Conference the whole or any part of a Conference may be held in private. The only persons permitted to attend a private session of a Conference shall be paid-up members of Left Unity who are registered to attend the conference.

7.2 The agenda for the National Conference shall be arranged so that the first session of the Conference shall be in public, subject to Rule 7.1 above.

7.3 Apart from the members of Left Unity who are registered for the Conference, no other person shall speak except by permission of the Conference.

7.4 Any questions of procedure or order raised during a Conference shall be decided by the Chair of that session of the conference subject only to the right of challenge as described in 16.1.

7.5 Upon the Chair rising during a Conference session, any person then addressing Conference shall resume her/his seat and no other person shall rise to speak until the Chair authorises proceedings to continue.

7.6 The Chair may call attention to continued irrelevance, tedious repetition, unbecoming language, or any breach of order on the part of a member and may direct such a member to discontinue his or her speech.

7.7 The Chair shall have power to call any person to order who is causing a disturbance in any session of Conference and if that person refuses to obey the Chair, she/he shall be named by the Chair, shall forthwith leave the Conference Hall, and shall take no further part in the proceedings of that Conference.

**8 VOTING**

8.1 The method of voting shall be by a show of hands of the registered members of Left Unity present.

**9 TELLERS**

9.1 Conference shall appoint members to act as tellers for the duration of the Conference.

**10 WITHDRAWALS OF MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS**

10.1 A motion or amendment which is shown on the final agenda may not be withdrawn without the consent of the Standing Orders Committee, whose decision shall be reported to Conference.

**11 MOTIONS AND AMENDMENTS NOT ON AGENDA**

11.1 A motion or amendment which is not shown on the final agenda may not be considered by Conference without the prior approval of Conference, which shall be governed by the following rules:

11.2 Such motion or amendment shall be in writing, signed by the body or person on whose behalf it is submitted and shall be sent to the Standing Orders Committee at least five working days before the commencement of Conference, except if it relates to events which take place thereafter.

11.3 If the Standing Orders Committee gives its approval to the motion or amendment being considered, copies of the motion or amendment shall be made available for delegates at least one hour before Conference is asked to decide whether to consent to the matter being considered.

11.4 An emergency motion will not be given priority over other motions and amendments on the agenda except where the Standing Orders Committee decide that the purpose of the motion in question would be frustrated if it were not dealt with at an earlier session of the Conference.

**12 PROCEDURAL MOTIONS**

The following procedural motions may be moved at any time without previous notice on the agenda:

12.1 that the question be now put, provided that:

12.1.1 the Chair may advise Conference not to accept this motion if in her/his opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed

12.1.2 if the motion is carried, it shall take effect at once subject only to any right of reply under these Standing Orders.

12.2 that the question be remitted or referred back to the National Council, or in the case of a report of a Policy Commission, be referred back to that Policy Commission, provided that:

12.2.1 the Chair may advise Conference not to accept this motion at this stage in the debate if in her/his opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed

12.2.2 if the motion is carried, it shall take effect at once subject only to any right of reply under these Standing Orders.

12.3 that the Conference proceed to the next business

12.4 that the debate be adjourned

12.5 that the Conference (or any part thereof) be held in private session provided that:

12.6 a motion under Rules 12.1, 12. 2, 12.3 and 12.4 shall be immediately put to the vote without discussion and no amendment shall be allowed

12.7 the Chair may at her/his discretion permit a motion under Rule 12.5 to be discussed and amendments moved.

12.8 no motion under Rules 12.2, 12.3 or 12.4 shall be moved by a person who has spoken on the motion or amendment in question.

**13 AMENDMENTS TO A MOTION**

13.1 When an amendment to a motion is moved, no further amendment may be moved until the first one is disposed of, subject to Rule 17.

13.2 When an amendment is defeated, a further amendment may be moved to the original motion.

13.3 When an amendment to a motion is carried, the motion, as so amended, shall become the substantive motion, to which a further amendment may be moved.

13.4 A member registered for the conference shall not move more than one amendment to any one motion, nor shall the mover of a motion move any amendment to such motion.

**14 LIMIT OF SPEECHES**

14.1 The mover of a motion or an amendment shall not be allowed to speak for more than five minutes and each succeeding speaker for not more than three minutes, except where the Standing Orders Committee have decided otherwise.

14.2 No person shall speak more than once on a question, except that the mover of the original motion may exercise a right of reply for not more than three minutes, introducing no new material.

**15 POINTS OF ORDER**

15.1 A member registered for the conference may at any stage in a Conference raise a point of order if she/he considers that the business is not being conducted in accordance with Left Unity’s Constitution and Standing Orders.

15.2 Such a point of order must be raised as soon as the alleged breach occurs or at the earliest practicable moment thereafter.

15.3 The Chair’s ruling on the point of order is final subject only to the right of challenge as described in 16.1.

**16 CHALLENGES TO CHAIR’S RULINGS**

16.1 The Chair’s ruling on any point referred to in 7.4 or 15.3 may be challenged by not less than three members. Such a challenge shall be explained to the meeting by a challenger and the Chair shall have a right to reply thereto. Speeches explaining challenges and Chair’s replies thereto shall be limited to no longer than 2 minutes. The challenge shall then be put to the meeting and shall be carried with the support of a simple majority of the members present and voting.

**17 GROUPED DEBATES AND SEQUENTIAL VOTING**

17.1 Where, in the view of the Standing Orders Committee, separate debates on specified motions and/or amendments dealing with the same subject matter would lead to undue repetition in the debates, or to unfair advantage for a motion over other motions, a grouped debate and/or sequential voting may be adopted by Conference.

17.2 Counterposed motions.

This method is to be used if motions have been grouped together for debate AND they directly contradict each other.

17.2.1. Each motion shall be voted on in the order they were moved with amendments being dealt with in the normal way. Any motion failing to get more votes 'for' than 'against' will fall at this first stage. If only one motion passes continue to step 4.

17.2.2. Should more than two motions be in contradiction at this stage, SOC will have to make a ruling on how to proceed with the voting. Otherwise continue to step 3.

17.2.3. When the remaining motions contradict they will be voted on again and that with the fewest votes 'for' will be deemed to fall. Continue this process until only one motion remains.

17.2.4. When one motion remains, there will be a final endorsement vote to ensure this has the majority of conference.

**18 REPORTS BY NATIONAL COUNCIL**

18.1 After the opening of Conference the National Council shall present its report for the past year. The items of the report shall be discussed on a subject basis and in conjunction with any motion on the agenda which bears directly upon any part of the report.

18.2 If the National Council presents a report to Conference which contains proposals or recommendations requiring approval and adoption by Conference, it shall submit it under a motion seeking such approval and adoption.

**19 REFERENCE OF OUTSTANDING ITEMS TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL**

19.1 If at the end of the National Conference, the business of the Conference has not been concluded, all motions and amendments then outstanding shall stand referred to the National Council. The National Council in turn shall then report back to the appropriate local group or platform its decision on these matters. All such motions and amendments shall be responded to at least one month before the deadline for submission of motions and amendments to the next National Conference.

**20 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

20.1 Any one or more of these Standing Orders may be suspended by a resolution of Conference in relation to a specific item of business properly before that Conference and to the proceedings thereon at that Conference, provided that at least two-thirds of the members registered for the conference present and voting shall vote for the resolution.

**Appendix 2**

**Text of emergency motions (section 8 of this report refers)**

**1 Junior Doctors Strike and the Future of the NHS, Liverpool**

This Conference applauds the stand taken by the Junior Doctors in their dispute with the Government. Other NHS workers will be very badly hit if 24/7 pay is introduced. There is a crisis in staffing in the NHS and a permeating fear of speaking up against the problems

Conference notes with alarm the extent of the threat to the NHS posed by Devo Manc and similar city region proposals across the North.

Conference deplores the appalling cuts in CAMHS and cuts in adult mental health such as the cuts in Manchester Health and Social Care trust

Left Unity commits itself to organise nationally and locally to defend the NHS, to defend hospitals affected by the funding crisis, to respond to the local and national campaigns

Left Unity resolves to campaign for the NHS Reinstatement Bill, proposed by Caroline Lucas MP

The winter crisis will hit the NHS very hard this year. Its problems will be used a propaganda against the public service model, one  paid for by taxation and free at the point of need, the best available service and a universal service

The problems caused by the internal market, by privatisation and commissioning must be clearly shown to the public

Left Unity will fight alongside any organisations committed to defending the founding principles of the NHS and prepared to campaign in the communities.

The founding principles of the NHS are

Services were provided free at the point of use;

Services were financed from central taxation;

Everyone was eligible for care (even people temporarily resident or visiting the country).

It was the best available service

It was a universal service

**2 CND Demo, Southwark**

Left Unity welcomes, and gives support to, the national demonstration against Trident in London on February 20th. We congratulate CND on taking this initiative and we congratulate Jeremy Corbyn on the stand that he is making on the issue.

**3 Russian intervention in Syria, Dave Kellaway & Fred Leplat**

This Left Unity conference condemns the Russian cruise missile attack of the 7 October on Syria, which we believe is a dangerous escalation in the war. We deplore the four-year long war, in which 250,000 have been killed and half the population has fled their homes.

We call for an end to all foreign intervention in Syria so that the people of Syria are able to determine the future of their country in peace and democracy, respecting the rights of Kurds and other national, ethnic and religious minorities. The continuing presence of Assad and his regime are an insurmountable obstacle to a political solution – they must go.

We oppose any British military intervention in Syria, and therefore call MPs to vote against such proposals in Parliament. We also call upon the British government to open the borders to allow Syrians fleeing the war to obtain refuge.