

EQUITY

COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Approved by the Council: 6 December 2022

* References to Rules in these Standing Orders refer to the Rules in the Union's Rulebook

Rules of Debate

1. Rules V1 to V14 shall apply to the Council's meetings.

Matters Arising

2. Matters arising are limited to questions or progress reports on matters in the minutes. They shall not be used to raise a new issue or revisit previous decisions or discussions.

Speaking Time

3. For all motions, a mover of a motion may speak for not more than five minutes. The seconder and subsequent speakers (including the right of reply) may speak for not more than three minutes. Time may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.

Ordinary Motions

4. A Councillor may bring an ordinary motion to the Council on any issue they reasonably believe merits the Council's discussion.
5. A Councillor shall not bring a motion on behalf of any Equity branch or committee.
6. An ordinary motion shall not be more than 250 words.
7. An ordinary motion shall be received by the General Secretary by 9am on the Monday immediately preceding the circulation of the Council meeting agenda on the following Friday.
8. If the Council decides that an ordinary motion requires an urgent decision and the proposer is to be absent from the meeting, the proposer may nominate another Councillor to move the motion. Failing that, an Officer shall move the motion. Non-urgent motions shall be deferred to a meeting when the proposer is in attendance.

Motions from Committees & Branches

9. Motions from Equity's branches and committees received by the General Secretary by the deadline at 7. above shall be placed on the Council meeting agenda for the Council to consider and respond to. The Council shall consider no more than one motion from each branch or committee at each of its meetings.

Emergency Motions

10. At the discretion of the General Secretary, a motion at 4. or 9. above that is not received by the deadline at 7. above, may be put on the Council meeting agenda as an emergency motion. The subject matter shall be a genuine emergency.

Procedural Motions

11. A motion, which if passed, will reverse a Council decision made within the 2 years prior to receipt (a reversing motion), shall be sent to the Council in the first circulation, with a recommendation by the General Secretary on whether to re-open the matter. Councillors shall have until the second circulation to propose and a second a motion that the matter be re-opened (a procedural motion).
12. If the procedural motion is carried, the reversing motion shall be moved (or, in the case of motions from Equity's branches or committees, considered). If the procedural motion is defeated, the Chair shall move to next business, if any.
13. If no procedural motion is received by the second circulation, the reversing motion shall not be moved/discussed and the submitting party notified in writing of the Council's position.

All Motions

14. All motions shall be:
 - (a) in accordance with these Standing Orders, the Rules and the policies of the Union;
 - (b) proposed and seconded by two Councillors.

Confidential Business

15. Councillors shall not disclose the business for a Council meeting in advance of the meeting taking place to any news media, unless expressly authorised to do so by the General Secretary.

16. Council business that concerns the matters listed below are confidential and shall not be disclosed outside of the meeting by any Council member or any other persons present at the meeting, directly or indirectly:
 - (a) members' individual legal claims;
 - (b) members' individual terms of engagement;
 - (c) negotiations currently in progress;
 - (d) legal advice to the Union; and
 - (e) internal disciplinary matters.
17. In addition, the Chair, General Secretary, or a Councillor may recommend that an item, or part of it, shall be treated as confidential. In which case the Chair will ask for a proposer and seconder for a motion "that the item be treated as confidential". If the motion is passed, the item shall not be disclosed directly or indirectly outside of the meeting by any Councillor or any other person present at the meeting,

Papers

18. In advance of the relevant Council meeting, all papers for that meeting, whether marked "confidential" or not, shall not be disclosed to any third party.
19. After the relevant meeting, papers may only be disclosed to a third party with the **prior express agreement** of both the Council and the General Secretary.
20. If a matter is marked as "confidential" in the papers or falls into one or more of the categories at 16. above, Councillors shall not discuss the subject matter with any Equity branch or committee. Other matters in the papers may be discussed with a branch or committee but the papers shall **not** be circulated.
21. A Councillor or former Councillor who breaches the restrictions at 15. to 20. above may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Rule S.
22. No material shall be circulated to the Council in the Council chamber without the prior permission of the President or the General Secretary.

Former Councillors

23. Former Councillors shall remain bound by the restrictions at 15. to 20. above.

Minutes

24. Confidential business shall be recorded as confidential in the general minutes and a separate confidential minute kept of the matter. All confidential minutes shall be held by the General Secretary.
25. Once confirmed as correct, Councillors may retain a copy of the general minutes. General minutes shall not be disclosed or published until confirmed as correct.
26. Copies of corrected confidential minutes may also be retained by Councillors, subject to the Council's agreement.
27. Confidential minutes shall be incorporated into the general minutes if they cease to be confidential. The General Secretary shall monitor the progress of confidential minutes.

Reports to/from Equity Branches and Committees

28. Councillors may report to the relevant branches and committees on the decisions and activities of the Council, in writing and/or verbally.
29. Such reports should distinguish between a report on factual matters (which shall be based on corrected minutes where possible) and Councillors' own personal opinions.
30. The Union's resources may be used to circulate such reports. A copy of the circulated report shall also be sent to:
 - (a) the Chair of the relevant branch or committee; and
 - (b) the General Secretary; and,made available to other Councillors on request.
31. Councillors may submit a written factual report to the Council on the activities of the relevant branch or committee by providing the report to the General Secretary for inclusion on the Council meeting agenda.

Conflict of Interest

32. A conflict of interest is any situation in which a Councillor's personal interests (financial or otherwise) may unduly influence or may appear to unduly influence their participation in Council business.
33. A Councillor who believes that they may have a conflict of interest shall declare that this is the case before the relevant item is discussed. Declarations shall be recorded in the minutes.
34. A Councillor who declares a conflict of interest shall be permitted to remain in the meeting and may speak and vote on the item.
35. In addition to their continuing obligations at 32. above, Councillors shall complete a Declaration of Interest form within three months of being elected to the Council.

Term and Frequency

36. Rules J30 to J34 shall apply.
37. The Council shall normally meet on the second Tuesday of:

February	March	April
June	July	September
October	November	December

38. A further meeting shall take place during the Equity Conference.
39. The meeting in the month preceding the Equity Conference shall be scheduled for one day to for the Council to deal with Conference business.
40. Otherwise, the Council's meetings shall normally start at 1.00pm and close by 5.15pm with a 15-minute break. A meeting may continue beyond 5.15pm for up to one further hour, if agreed by a simple majority and providing there is still a quorum. A meeting may be further extended by up to 30 minutes, subject to a simple majority vote and the meeting remaining quorate.
41. The Council under its own volition, or on request from the General Secretary, may vary the dates at 37. above and/or hold further meetings, if agreed by a simple majority.
42. A Councillor found to have committed a disciplinary offence may be removed before the end of the Council term in accordance with Rule S9(4).

Agenda

43. The agenda for all regular Council meeting shall be as follows:

Section	Item/s
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes;• Approval of New Members;• Legal Cases;• Emergency Items;• Staffing Update
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Live Performance; or• Recorded Media; or• Equalities & Inclusion
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finance; or• Membership; or• Communications
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motions• Policy Development• Policy Update
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Issues

44. The General Secretary shall decide on the matters for inclusion under the agenda.

Minimum Number of Councillors

45. Rule J32 shall apply.

Conduct

46. Councillors and any other attendees at meetings shall:

- (a) abide by the procedures set out in these Standing Orders; and,
- (b) refrain from behaviour that contravenes Rule D14.

47. A failure to do so may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Rule S.

Suspension of these Standing Orders

48. Any part of these Standing Orders, other than a Rule of the Union, may be suspended in full or in part if passed by a two-thirds majority of those voting for and against. The suspension shall apply for not more than 30 minutes.

Interpretation

49. The Council shall interpret these Standing Orders if in dispute. The Council shall decide on any Council meeting matter where the Standing Orders are silent. In both cases, the Council's decision shall be final and binding.

Copies of the Rules and Standing Orders

50. Copies of these Standing Orders and the Union's Rules are available to view and download on the Union's website at <https://www.equity.org.uk/about-us/how-were-run/rules-of-the-union/>