

# EQUITY



EQUITY CONFERENCE 2024  
BIRMINGHAM, 18-20 MAY  
AGENDA/GUIDE

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Paul W Fleming

## General Secretary's Address

There are few things I'm more proud of than being a Brummy, so it's a special pleasure to welcome you to Equity Conference 2024. This year, our Midlands region plays host - and what a region it is. This cradle of the industrial revolution is a crucible of creativity: the home of Shakespeare and Peaky Blinders; of bhangra and Lord of the Rings; of Pebble Mill and Skegvegas.

Equity's presence here is deep rooted; we may have just opened our new Birmingham office, but the Midlands has the largest number of Equity members after London and the South East. Over 50 years ago, Equity's boycott of Working Men's Clubs who operated a colour bar began in the Midlands in Wolverhampton in 1968 - and it was won in Coventry in 1976 when the draymen's union the TGWU extended their solidarity, refused to cross our pickets and ran racist clubs dry.

The Heart of England is at the heart of Equity, and this conference it plays host to the world. We welcome comrades from Colombia, the Middle East, the USA, across Europe and from our International Federation at a special reception. Our fringe is expanded even further with a packed programme which is hard to choose from.

The serious business of conference is policy: and this year the agenda is packed with motions focussed on building our power and winning for members at work. With 100% cuts to culture budgets from Birmingham to Nottingham, the ending of Doctors, and variety venues under threat, Equity's modern conference is here to challenge and inspire us to be the union that our members need.

Welcome to the conference of the best union in the best city in the best region in the world.

**Paul W Fleming**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**



Lynda Rooke

## President's Address

Welcome to this Equity Conference in Birmingham.

Conference continues to change, you'll find there are more fringe events with more varied topics, in fact hopefully you will be spoilt for choice! The aim is to give more opportunities to engage in debate with other members and learn about the issues facing those in different sectors of the industry. I hope that you find it both stimulating and supportive.

In all my years as an actor and Equity activist I cannot remember a more difficult time for both live performance and recorded media. Arts funding cuts, the repercussions of the pandemic, a cost of living crisis, cuts to arts education and training and the impact of AI (Artificial Intelligence) on jobs.

All the more reason for us to stand strong together, to be united and to offer solid resistant against these threats to our jobs and to our own personal survival in this industry.

For those of you who are old hands at Conference, can I remind you of your first time, please offer our new attendees

a warm welcome and be supportive should they be unsure of procedure.

To those new attendees, if you are unsure about terminology or procedure do please ask. We want you to enjoy the experience of being with fellow members from whatever sector of our industry.

We hope you will feel enthused and emboldened by your time at conference, we want you to return to future conferences because your first experience was an enjoyable and positive one, but most importantly of all, for you to consider standing for a committee or council in the future.

It's your union, make it work for you.

I look forward to catching up with you over the next few days.

**Lynda Rooke**  
**PRESIDENT**

# Timetable and Agenda

## SATURDAY 18 MAY

13:00	Doors open and registration begins for Councillors and CBC only
13:15	Registration begins for all other attendees
13:30	Council meeting convenes (Councillors only), Council Room
14:00	Chair formally convenes conference, Town Hall
14:05	Report from the Conference Business Committee
14:10	Obituaries
14:30	President's address (Lynda Rooke)
14:50	Thangam Debbonaire MP (Shadow DCMS Secretary)
15:10	Comfort break
15:25	General Secretary's speech introducing 2023 annual report (Paul W Fleming)
15:45	Motions on Equality and Inclusion
17:00	Motions on Internal Union Business
17:30	Conference adjourns
19:30	International Reception, Town Hall

## SUNDAY 19 MAY

09:30	Conference resumes, Town Hall
09:35	Zarah Sultana MP (Coventry South)
09:45	Marie Kelly (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists)
09:55	Report from Assistant General Secretary, Live Performance (Adam Adnyana)
10:10	Motions on Live Performance
11:00	Comfort break
11:15	Motions on Live Performance (continued)
11:55	Motions on Variety
12:10	Equity motion to TUC
12:25	Honorary Treasurer's submission of 2023 accounts (David John)
	Report from Assistant General Secretary, Finance and Operations (Beccy Reese)
12:50	Appeal from the International Committee for Artists' Freedom
13:00	Conference adjourns
13:15-15:30	Lunch, The Rep
13:45-17:35	Fringe events, The Rep
19:30	Dinner, Birmingham Library

## MONDAY 20 MAY

10:00	Conference resumes, Town Hall
10:05	Report from Assistant General Secretary, Recorded Media (John Barclay)
10:20	Motions on Recorded Media
10:50	Report from Deputy General Secretary (Louise McMullan)
11:05	Motions on Policy
11:30	Comfort break
11:45	Motions on Policy (continued)
12:55	Formal motions to adopt the 2023 annual report and accounts
13:00	Conference closes

## Conference Business Committee

Julia Carson Sims (Chair), Ian Barritt (Vice-Chair), Laurence Bouvard, Dan Edge, Su Gilroy, Isabella Jarrett, Nana St Bartholomew-Brown, Sam Swann, Paul Valentine.  
Secretary: Sam Winter.

Representatives with questions on this agenda or on conference procedure can visit the Conference Business Committee (CBC) at any time during Conference. The CBC will be in formal session and available for advice in the CBC room (basement level of the Town Hall) at the following times:

**Saturday 18 May**  
17:30-17:45

**Sunday 19 May**  
13:00-13:15

**Monday 20 May**  
09:30-09:45  
13:15-13:30

The CBC will also be available to answer questions at The Rep on Sunday 19 May, 15:00-16:30.

All motions submitted for inclusion in the agenda have been vetted and (where required) amended by the CBC for punctuation, grammar and style in accordance with CBC protocols.

Issues relating to whether a motion is in or out of order were considered by the March CBC and Council meetings, following discussion with the union body submitting the motion.



# Motions

## Equality and Inclusion

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### MOTION 1: Race Equality Committee

In November 2023, Equity's Race Equality Committee submitted an emergency motion to Council around censorship, smear and cancellation of political voices in the arts, particularly in relation to the situation in Gaza. The motion was approved. Since then, Arts Council England has updated its policies, warning that 'political statements' made by individuals linked to an organisation can cause 'reputational risk', breaching funding agreements.

Our cultural institutions are now being actively threatened to 'self-censor' by publicly subsidised funders in a way that is extremely detrimental to artists from global majority backgrounds who also face the fear of individual blacklisting in their careers.

Conference requests that Council calls upon the national arts funding bodies, and the Charity Commission, to make it conditional that funded arts institutions, and individuals working within them, are allowed full range of political expression and that all arts and charities bodies must properly account for any decisions they make in terms of funding, programming, commissioning and employment and illustrate exactly what they define as 'political'.

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### MOTION 2: LGBT+ Committee

Conference is increasingly concerned by the growing influence and endorsement of right-wing extremism, facilitated by an increased acceptance of hate narratives in public discourse and the increase in far-right legislative power, facilitated through lobby groups directing public policy.

If members are to be truly safe at work, it is crucial that Equity engages seriously in the wider union movement's efforts to understand and counter this political shift.

While the LGBT+ Committee will persist in countering specific instances of harassment at work, such as the menacing actions aimed at Drag Queen Story Hour UK, we call upon Council to make a clear commitment to addressing the underlying causes of these incidents.

Therefore, Conference calls on Council to –

- 1) develop political education resources for Equity members and to consider how Equity can contribute to the wider anti-far-right movement;
- 2) work with the TUC's existing anti-far-right programme to support research and understanding of how trade unions can mitigate the threat posed by right-wing extremism, ensuring the specific risks faced by our members are taken into account when developing cross union strategy; and
- 3) commit one element of the work plan for the new joint meeting of committee chairs to focus on the far-right threat, in consultation and collaboration with Equity's equalities committees.

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### **MOTION 3: Deaf and Disabled Members Committee**

Conference believes that the Equity Policy on Casting (last reviewed 2018) needs updating and that the policy needs to ensure all Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent Equity members have equal opportunities of employment.

We believe that the position needs to be made clear that casting non-disabled people in disabled roles is not acceptable and that if engagers can't cast someone with the exact disability within the given role, they then cast someone who has a condition or disability similar to that of the character wherever possible.

Conference calls on Council to resolve to –

- 1) update the wording and attitudes within the policy and to acknowledge within the policy autonomy for DDN artists in line with the social model;
- 2) include in the policy the principle that as a union we seek to see an end to the acceptability of less than transparent processes when casting any role;
- 3) provide more weight in the policy to outlining the responsibilities and accountabilities incumbent on engagers and organisations when casting roles either specific or incidental to artists from the DDN community to ensure that companies have accountability for ensuring any storyline involving DDN performers is given to those with that lived experience; and
- 4) ensure that the policy is rewritten in consultation with a member or members of the DDMC.

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### **MOTION 4: Women's Committee**

As an industry that is based on telling the truth in the moment, we must also tell the truth about the potential for abuse of power, bullying and harassment that can happen. This industry relies on authenticity to be always at the forefront. This means that we, the collective and our Union, must take responsibility to inform and guide those who are just starting out in their careers. Everyone should know and understand how to deal with bullying and harassment, on set, on stage, whether you are in front of an audience or behind the scenes. After #MeToo and Time's Up, there are still too many young women unaware of the key reporting processes and support Equity can offer.

Conference calls on Council to support the Women's Committee in ensuring that they are involved in visiting places of training and potential workshop days in order to -

- 1) empower women and people of all genders to know their rights working in the industry;
- 2) highlight key reporting processes of abuses;
- 3) advise how the Union can support these members in work, thereby increasing recruitment and a future with Equity; and
- 4) promote the Women's Toolkit resources.

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### **MOTION 5: Kent Branch (selected at the East and South East Regional Meeting)**

Conference believes there is a dearth of parts being written for women between 45 and 65 and that they are being underrepresented in film, television and theatre. An interesting age group, having so much wisdom, in reality they juggle and negotiate companies, families and marriages. The roles depicted are mainly cameo roles, still making women the butt of comedy and boxing them in as mums or professionals. Women in this category are less likely to be shy, with greater self-esteem, so surely writers should be inspired to produce interesting stories if engaged with and listening to women of this age group. Conference seeks to address the fact that the varied life experience of this demographic is missing in many films and some TV programmes. Why are stories with women aged 40+ not being told? Conference calls upon Council to survey all members to explore how widespread this practice is and use the results to campaign for a more accurate reflection of society within TV and film.



## Internal Union Business

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### **MOTION 6: Birmingham and West Midlands Branch (selected at the Midlands Regional Meeting)**

Conference is keen to help ensure that supporting artists are both aware of the full range of services available to them as members and, following the recent membership review exercise, encouraged to join the Union.

Conference calls upon Council to support the costs of an event to be hosted by a branch in each nation and region across the UK over 2024-25 that would seek to organise supporting artists. Each event would seek to draw supporting artists into an active role within the branches (thus strengthening the branch networks) and to map the number of existing members and potential members and invite them to attend a (further) dedicated event.

The overall effect of this proposal would be to make supporting artists feel directly involved in the work of the Union, have their profiles raised, and be better situated to utilise the full range of services available to them as members.

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### **MOTION 7: London North Branch (selected at the London Regional Meeting)**

Conference asks that Council conduct a survey of senior artists (definition to be decided by Council) to investigate, among other things, how far they are impacted by the limited professional opportunities available, ensure that their experience and abilities are given the same due attention as other groups in Equity – notwithstanding the health and mobility concerns that come with ageing – and look into how insurance implications can impede the use of older performers.

Further, Conference asks that Council investigates the possibility of setting up a Senior Artists Committee to look after the interests of said artists.

## Live Performance

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### MOTION 8: Opera Deputies Committee

Conference notes that cuts to public arts funding across decades and successive governments have resulted in significant funding challenges for publicly subsidised companies, and that too often company managements respond by seeking to pass these cuts on to their creative and technical workforces.

Contrary to the stated aims of funders and government, the consequences of funding cuts and subsequent attacks on workers' terms and conditions are to make it harder for those with limited means to experience opera, and harder for those without independent sources of wealth to enter and remain in a career in opera.

Conference calls on Council to –

- 1) campaign for increased public funding of the arts at local, regional and national level, including funding for opera specifically;
- 2) develop and campaign for a strategy for opera, which includes a clear and proactive workforce plan;
- 3) lobby major funding bodies to make it a condition of funding that work is produced on an appropriate Equity-negotiated agreement and adheres to employment law; and
- 4) negotiate and campaign to resist management attempts to pass cuts on to Equity members.

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### MOTION 9: Singers Committee

Conference notes the number of commercial opera festivals which now run each year.

Equity's recent survey on this part of the sector showed members had experienced widespread poor practice from some employers in this area, including regular breaches of their basic rights as workers in employment law.

Conference also notes widespread misunderstanding about these rights from employers and members, with many members unaware of the rights they have as workers in law.

We call on Council to support and prioritise an organising campaign to –

- 1) educate singers, stage management and opera performers about their rights as workers in law;
- 2) build membership density in this area, giving us more power to act where employment rights are breached;
- 3) encourage members to report and take action on bad practice where it occurs; and
- 4) establish new Equity agreements with producers in this area of the industry.

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## MOTION 10: Directors and Designers Committee

Conference notes that, like performers and stage management members, directors and designers working for producers or venues who are members of the Society of London Theatre or UK Theatre are engaged on contracts that are underpinned by the collectively bargained agreements Equity negotiates with the industry management associations.

Conference believes that there is greater awareness among Equity's performer and stage management members that they are working on terms and conditions underpinned by an agreement their union has negotiated, because SOLT/UK Theatre issue producers with a contract template that adheres to these terms, includes the Equity logo, and makes reference to the union agreements.

Conference further notes that these contract templates do not exist for creative team contracts, and that it is therefore possible for a director or designer to work extensively across British theatre without ever seeing a direct link between the work of their trade union and their own terms and conditions – and that in consequence, awareness of the rights and entitlements these agreements enshrine and the role of Equity in delivering them is lower amongst the creative team than it is among their performer and stage management counterparts.

Conference therefore requests that Council resolves to –

- 1) audit the contracts issued to directors and designers by SOLT/UK Theatre member engagers annually to ensure compliance with the collectively bargained agreements and address any deficits this process may uncover; and
- 2) work with theatrical management associations on the establishment of a template contract generator for director and designer contracts.

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## MOTION 11: Dance Committee

Dance artists work across distinctly different sectors: subsidised, commercial and corporate. Each demands different working agreements and conditions to ensure fair work is being pursued.

Conference recognises that confusion can be a significant barrier to dance artists joining Equity; members being active in the union; and members asserting their rights in the workplace.

Equity-negotiated agreements reflect negotiations with specific employers or trade associations, a point which is often misunderstood by workers and misunderstood/misused by engagers.

Conference calls on Council to develop clear communications via all available channels, laying out what agreements are, how they are negotiated and what situations they apply to in order to empower members with knowledge.

Communications would include but not be limited to –

- 1) clearly defining the applications of each agreement on the website;
- 2) working with the Dance Committee to create a social media campaign that clarifies the use of existing and new agreements;
- 3) sharing clear examples of where agreements are being misused; and
- 4) emphasising that agreements are based on minimum terms and should be used as a floor, not a ceiling.

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## MOTION 12: Bristol and West of England Branch (selected at the South West Regional Meeting)

Conference notes:

- there is no legal duty for employers in the UK to advertise job vacancies though there is a broad obligation for employers not to discriminate against potential employees;
- it is standard practice in the public sector and wherever public money is involved, to be entirely open and accountable about recruitment practices and for jobs to be advertised widely; and
- most theatres in the UK in receipt of public funding have websites with a jobs and recruitment page – advertising roles from catering staff to marketing managers, to community engagement producers. Very few include casting breakdowns on their websites.

Conference believes that casting in subsidised theatres does not always happen in an open and accountable way.

Conference asks Council –

- 1) to campaign for publicly subsidised theatres to advertise all of their casting information on their website jobs and recruitment page, and/or provide an opportunity for performers to sign up to receive information about castings and to ensure fully inclusive representation and access for all practitioners;
- 2) to discuss the principles of the ‘Cast it Here’ campaign with subsidised theatres and companies; and
- 3) to lobby arts councils, local authorities and other funding bodies to make local casting commitments a condition of funding.

### **AMENDMENT: Council**

Delete: “advertise all of their casting information on their website jobs and recruitment page, and/or” from point 1).

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## MOTION 13: Stage Actors Committee

The development of employment charters for projects, events and festivals covering a range of topics including treatment of workers and fair pay are encouraging examples of parties working together to raise awareness of important issues.

However, these employment charters are not acceptable substitutes for comprehensive, negotiated trade union agreements, which provide a deeper coverage of workplace realities and stronger, enforceable protections for our members, including provisions such as overtime, holiday pay, pensions, and proper working breaks.

We are concerned that an increase in the use of employment charters across the sector will erode the position of recognised trade unions and lead to a weakening in real terms of workers’ rights and workplace influence.

In the interests of fair work and effective representation for our members, Conference calls on Council to lobby the arts councils to recognise the significant difference between an employment charter and a trade union agreement, and to ensure that the existence of a relevant Equity agreement is a requirement in any assessment of applications seeking to benefit from public funds.

## Variety

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### MOTION 14: Variety, Circus and Entertainers Committee

While Conference notes that open call auditions can be beneficial in widening opportunities for performers seeking work, they can put up barriers for some performers if they're not organised in a fair way. Large cruise companies tend to hold auditions in London and other major cities on a first come first served basis. Often there can be over 300 performers turning up and the company will only see a limited number of those at each audition. This works against those travelling from outside of the area. This is compounded by the fact that often there is no crowd control for the queue so even when performers do arrive very early, they may end up not being seen due to others joining the queue in front of them. This can result in performers wasting a lot of time and expense travelling and queuing without being auditioned.

Conference calls on Council to approach the major cruise employers and ask that they put in place measures for these auditions so that suitably qualified performers who would have to travel long distances can register in advance to get seen. This would make the process more inclusive for those with limited resources, particularly in these difficult times.

## Equity Motion to TUC

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### MOTION 15: Council

Conference supports Council in its proposal to send the following motion to TUC 2024:

Congress –

- notes that, while the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 prohibits charging upfront fees to work-seekers in most industries, the performing arts and entertainment industries are exempt from this ban;
- recognises that performers and creative workers – and not engagers, casting directors or agents – pay significant fees, often in excess of £180 per year, for their inclusion in a casting directory, regardless of whether or not they obtain work; and
- notes that, during a cost-of-living crisis, this cost places a significant burden on workers in an industry already characterised by insecure work and unpredictable income.

Congress calls, therefore, on the TUC to –

- 1) support the repeal of this unfair exemption for the performing arts and entertainment industries and call for such casting directory fees to be borne by producers, not workers; and
- 2) lobby the government to bring forward legislation to remove the exemption.

## Recorded Media

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### MOTION 16: Screen and New Media Actors Committee

UK independent film production brings important cultural, social and economic benefits. Independent film reflects life across the nations and regions through culturally specific stories and local talent and provides a thriving, highly skilled and globally recognised workforce.

The British Film Institute recognised that UK independent films are an integral part of the wider screen ecosystem, as incubators of talent on and behind the camera. The BFI's review says this sector is under considerable threat and calls for 0% VAT on exhibition of these films and investment from streaming companies. In 2022, spending on UK independent films fell 31% from 2021, to £174m. BBC Film and Film 4 budgets have declined in real terms since 2016. Poor film funding and fewer domestic UK films means fewer jobs for Equity members, and makes it harder to unionise UK film employers. The Department for Culture, Media & Sport is now taking evidence from the film industry.

Conference therefore calls for Council to campaign for its existing policies (adopted in 2019):

- 1) A publicly-owned and financed, UK-wide, film producing sector, and for domestic film production to be raised to at least the level achieved in France;
- 2) more public funding for BBC Film, Film 4, S4C and the BFI;

and for

- 3) more public funding for Screen Scotland, Northern Ireland Screen and Ffilm Cymru;
- 4) enhanced Film Tax relief for UK independent film budgets between £1m and £15 million; and
- 5) support for the BFI's response to its review of UK Independent Film.

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### MOTION 17: Essex and Hertfordshire Branch (selected at the East and South East Regional Meeting)

Conference is concerned as to the discrepancies in the various rates of pay for stunt performers and is pleased to note the progress that has been made in North America.

Conference calls on Council to seek to negotiate an increase in the Equity UK stunt rates in line with SAG-AFTRA, the US market and the Canadian market rates, including, but not limited to, daily rates, usage fees, stunt adjustments, per diems, short turn arounds, accommodation, travel pay, travel requirements and residuals.

## Policy

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### MOTION 18: Student Deputies Committee

According to the Office for National Statistics, almost 60% of students in higher education get student finance support that doesn't cover their living costs. This leaves many students in a difficult financial situation, with 65% saying they've had to reduce spending on necessities like food.

Students in the performance industries have intense training schedules and little time to work, making accessing education even more difficult for those whose families cannot support them. This is fundamentally unfair, as everyone should have an equal opportunity to pursue their creative talents regardless of their social or financial background.

It also isn't unusual for drama school fees to reach upwards of £16k a year, resulting in one of these institutions suggesting that students could set up a GoFundMe page to fund their studies.

Our industry and society benefit from diverse voices and experiences, and we should support this by removing any barriers to training. The current models of student funding perpetuate inequality, and it is time to put an end to it.

Conference calls on Council to –

- 1) actively campaign and lobby for the abolition of tuition fees, return of maintenance grants and more funding opportunities for lifelong learning;
- 2) commission research on how tuition fees and lack of government or institutional support pose barriers to people who wish to undertake training and enter the industry, especially those from oppressed and marginalised backgrounds; and
- 3) support Student Deputies with resources to campaign in their institutions on issues related to the cost of entering the industry.

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### MOTION 19: West End Deputies Committee

Across the UK, those who work six days a week face unfair treatment as they accrue no extra annual leave compared to their colleagues working five days a week. Equity represents a significant number of such workers. The reality of this government policy means that six day workers in fact get less time off than their five day counterparts as they must use more days of their leave to take a week off, but accrue no extra days to reflect this. The disjoint between how leave is accrued and how it is spent is unjust.

Conference calls on Council to campaign for a change in the law so that those who work six days accrue extra leave for that sixth day, pro rata. A change in this government policy would benefit workers not only across the theatre industry but across the UK, bringing these vital workers in line with their colleagues and furthering the cause of a just work-life balance for all.

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## **MOTION 20: Northern Ireland National Committee (selected at the NI National Meeting)**

In Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the self-employed do not share the same rights as employees to Statutory Shared Parental Leave and Statutory Shared Parental Pay.

Under current legislation, only employee partners are entitled to share up to 52 weeks of SSPL between them. They can then share ShPP for 39 weeks of this, in at least three separate blocks of leave each.

Self-employed mothers do not have a right to SSPL or ShPP. They can claim Maternity Allowance, paid for 39 weeks at the same rate as ShPP. It can only be shared with a partner if the partner is an employee.

There is currently no mechanism by which self-employed partners (unless they are the sole carer) can claim financial support for looking after their child. As such, self-employed mothers are penalised by an inflexible system that automatically looks to place all of the responsibility of childcare on the mother.

In this election year, Conference asks Council to support the work of Parental Pay Equality by relaunching and reinvigorating Equity's campaigning for this change, highlighting their petition and campaign for SSPL and ShPP to be available to self-employed parents in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

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## **MOTION 21: London North Branch (selected at the London Regional Meeting)**

One fifth of local councils, including Stoke, Bradford and Somerset, face bankruptcy primarily due to central government cuts of 40% to revenue support grants between 2010-2020. Since 2013, 40% of local authorities have cut their arts departments, and many LAs, like Bristol and Nottingham, are now making substantial or 100% cuts to arts spending. Central government in this period has cut arts spending by over 30%. Recently we have seen huge arts cuts in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We are on the frontline of attack. The Labour Party, for its part, has not committed to defend and restore public spending, let alone the arts.

Conference calls on Council to promote our arts policy vigorously with MPs, local authorities, and especially the Labour Party, before the coming election so they –

- 1) commit to raising UK arts spending across the nations and regions to 0.5% of GDP in line with the European average;
- 2) commit to raising local arts spending at least in line with inflation and restoring lost arts departments and spending; and
- 3) restore the 50% cuts to arts student funding in higher education, and promote arts education and access to the arts in schools.

Also, we urge Council to support other unions' calls for councils to campaign with trade unions and local communities for no-cuts needs budgets, drawing on their reserves if necessary, to sustain and expand public services and regain lost funding and reserves from central government.



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### **MOTION 22: Greater Manchester Branch (selected at the North West Regional Meeting)**

Factory International in Manchester was built at a cost of over £210m, including unprecedented levels of public funding mainly from the government, Arts Council England and Manchester City Council. They also run Manchester International Festival which gets just under £1m of nonprofit organisation funding per year despite it being a biennial event.

Factory International acknowledges that taxpayer funding plays a huge part in supporting its work and their website says 'we are committed to following and developing best practice for freelance workers.' They are staunchly refusing to commit to using union contracts, however, leaving our members and workers across the industry without union-agreed workplace protections.

Conference applauds the fact that one of Council's key objectives for 2024 is to lobby employers to recognise union contracts with the safety and security that they bring. However, the lack of engagement with the Union from such a new and high profile company shows a lack of respect for the people who primarily fund it, i.e. the taxpayer.

Conference urges Council to lobby for recipients of significant amounts of public funding to meaningfully engage with the Union on the use of collective agreements.

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### **MOTION 23: Scotland National Committee (selected at the Scotland National Meeting)**

The employment and career prospects for performers and creative team members in Scotland, and indeed in all nations and regions, are under threat.

A combination of inadequate funding, a lack of long-term strategic thinking and the devaluing of the arts has led to less regional touring, reductions in the number of productions overall and barriers to the development of fair work in the sector.

More scrutiny is required of all organisations in receipt of public funding, from national performing companies to funded theatre, film, dance, and variety producers, to ensure that the priority is the employment of performers and creatives and not a seemingly ever-expanding administration and management workforce.

Conference calls on Council to support in every way possible the Scotland National Committee's 'Day of Solidarity'; a fight back against the serious issues plaguing our sector in Scotland and in other nations and regions. This will be an opportunity for Equity members to gather and join with our partner Scottish Trades Union Congress, creative trade unions, and other concerned parties to highlight these critical threats to our culture sector and take action.

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### **MOTION 24: Welsh National Committee (selected at the Wales National Meeting)**

The inconsistency surrounding the use of the Disclosure and Barring Service system in England and Wales is posing numerous problems for freelancers across our industry, whilst acknowledging that systems used are different in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

As a result, some individuals are asked to make repeated applications for a DBS, sometimes possessing up to five separate certificates. The online system was introduced to allow a one stop shop for checks on individuals. However, numerous employers and local authorities do not recognize the validity of the existing certificate and request that a fresh application is made.

Amongst reasons cited for this is 'that the DBS is not fully applicable to the environment of the new engagement, and therefore invalid.'

The initial application for a DBS costs £38, with a yearly update cost of £13, another instance (like Spotlight) where Equity members are being asked to pay simply for the opportunity to gain work with an employer. Some organisations cover these costs; many do not. Freelancers therefore risk losing work if unwilling or unable to engage with the DBS system.

Conference calls for a review and reform of the system, with a unified approach to its application; for governments and local authorities across the UK to adopt an approach which offers fairness and transparency to freelancers working across all sectors of our industry, at no additional cost to them as individuals; and for this new, reformed system to be clearly signposted for all employers to fully understand and engage with.

# Standing Orders

A summary is included below. For the full Standing Orders, please go to:

<https://www.equity.org.uk/about-us/how-were-run/rules-of-the-union/standing-orders/>

## TELLERS AND STEWARDS

The tellers and stewards are union staff. They examine the credentials of those attending and count the votes.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDINGS

Only the union's designated official photographer/s may take photographs or videos or any form of audio recording in the conference hall.

## FLYERS

No Councillor, Representative, other member or guest shall place any flyer on the tables in the conference hall.

## AGENDA

**Compositing motions** The movers of motions and amendments shall be asked to co-operate with the Conference Business Committee to composite (join together) motions where possible.

**Remitting motions** Remitting a motion means asking Council to decide it instead of Conference. A motion which has been moved and seconded may not be remitted by the mover without the consent of Conference.

**Withdrawal of motions** or amendments A motion or amendment which has been moved and seconded may not be withdrawn by the mover without the consent of Conference.

**Unfinished business** All matters on the agenda not reached at the conclusion of the last day of Conference shall be remitted to Council.

## ORDER OF DEBATE

**Limitation of speeches** The mover of a motion can speak for up to five minutes. The seconder and subsequent speakers, including the right of reply, can speak for up to three minutes. One minute before the end of each speaker's time a warning shall be given, and again at the end of the speaker's time.

**Amendments** No amendments will be accepted at Conference. Requests to withdraw a motion, to composite (join) motions, or any other request that may alter the timetable must be made to the Conference Business Committee in its committee room and not from the floor of the meeting.

**Rules of debate** See Rule V in the Union's Rulebook: [Rules of the Union | Equity](#)

## ADDRESSING CONFERENCE

- Representatives and Councillors shall indicate they wish to speak by holding up a voting card.
- Representatives and Councillors shall speak to motions only when called by the Chair. They shall address the Chair and give their name and the part of the union they represent. All speakers may remain in their seat in the body of the hall, rather than speak from the rostrum, if they wish. All speakers are encouraged to speak from the rostrum, if possible, so that they can be seen by those in the hall and on the screen transmissions. Speakers who remain in their seats must wait for a roving microphone to be provided before they start speaking.
- For points of procedure, questions and formal moving/seconding of motions, Representatives and Councillors shall stay in their place when speaking and not come to the rostrum (unless invited by the Chair). They must wait for a roving microphone to be provided before they start speaking.
- No Representative or Councillor shall interrupt a speaker except on a point of procedure. In particular, there shall be no heckling of speeches.
- If the Chair stands during a debate, the Representative or Councillor speaking shall immediately give way and shall wait for the Chair's permission to continue.
- No speaker shall ask those present in the conference hall to identify themselves by means of a show of hands as a member of any group or category.

## VOTING

- Only elected Representatives and members of Council shall be allowed to vote.
- All voting shall be by a show of voting cards.

## What is Equity Conference?

Conference takes place each year, usually in May. Until recently, it was known as the Annual Representative Conference or ARC, but now it's simply called "Equity Conference".

It used to be held in London two out of every three years, but it now moves around the nine Equity nations and regions every year.

As set out in the union's Rules, the conference is for members to discuss and decide matters of general policy and/or any rule changes. The agenda and timetable for conference can be found in this guide.

Each type of member attending the conference plays a different role:

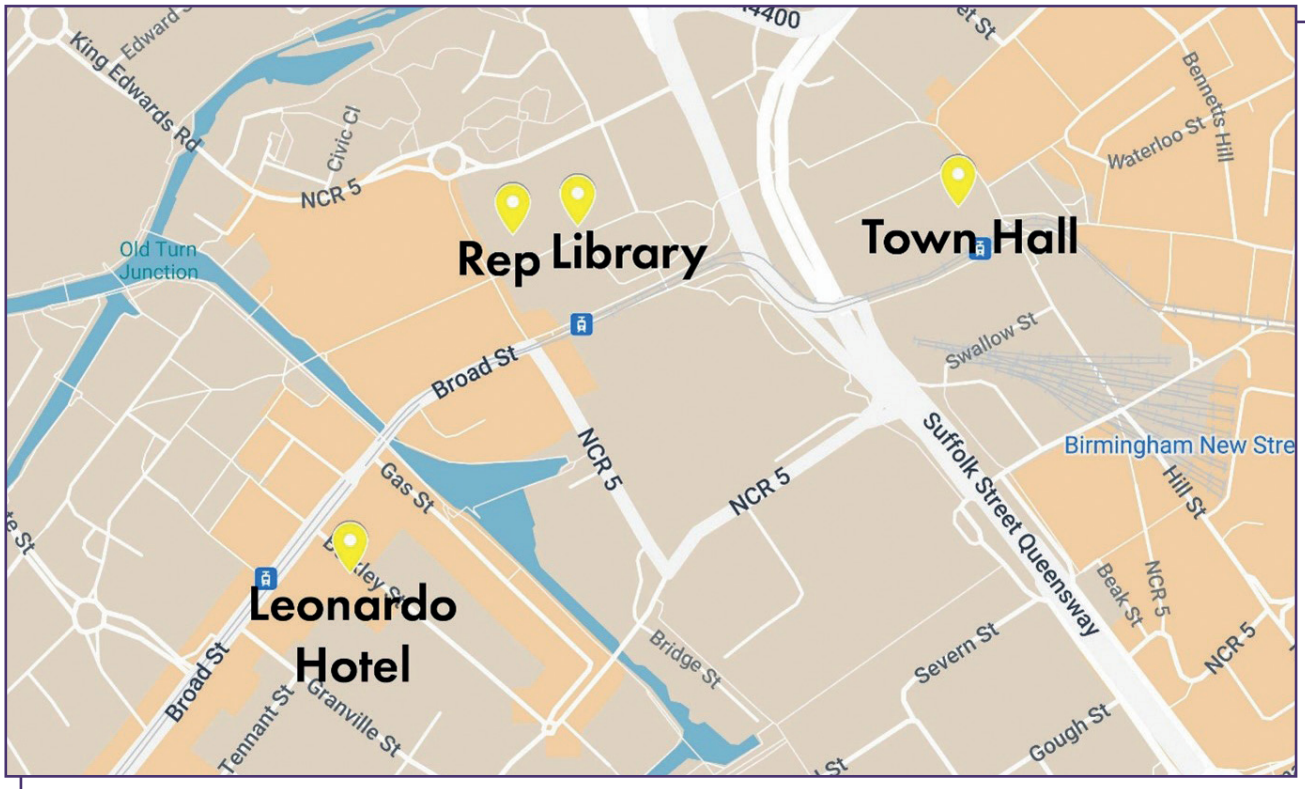
- **REPRESENTATIVES** are elected by branches and committees, and attend on their behalf (though they cannot be mandated to vote in any particular way by their branch or committee). They can vote and speak on the conference floor.
- **COUNCILLORS** (including the Officers) can all attend, vote and speak.
- **CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE (CBC) MEMBERS** are responsible for managing the business of the conference. They support aspects of the conference and give procedural advice. They cannot vote, and they can only speak to the conference about procedure.
- **TRUSTEES** are invited to attend. They can speak but not vote.
- **OBSERVERS** are members who have applied to attend the conference, to experience the event and see what goes on. They cannot vote or speak.

Some members will be at the conference in multiple roles. For example, some CBC members are also Councillors. They carry all the rights of each role with them.

Each member attending plays a vital role in the running of the conference, and more importantly in strengthening the union. We thank every one of you!



# Arriving at Conference



## Conference venue

Main venue: Birmingham Town Hall, Victoria Square, Birmingham B3 3DQ  
 Fringe: Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 6 Centenary Sq, Birmingham B1 2EP

## Hotel

Leonardo Royal Hotel, 245 Broad St, Birmingham B1 2HQ

## Travel to Birmingham

Members travelling from across the UK can claim reasonable expenses in line with our expenses policy. The easiest way for most members to travel will be 2nd class train to Birmingham New Street. Alternative forms of travel must be cleared in advance: [swinter@equity.org.uk](mailto:swinter@equity.org.uk)

## Getting to the hotel/venue

Members arriving on the Saturday morning should come to the Town Hall first for the start of conference, as check-in at the hotel is not available until 15:00. We would recommend checking in to the hotel between the end of the afternoon session (17:30) and the international reception later that evening (19:30). Luggage storage is available at the Town Hall.

From Birmingham New Street, the venue is a five-minute walk and the hotel is a 15-minute walk. The hotel is three stops on the tram from Birmingham New Street, taking eight minutes in total.

Please see "The Local Area" below for more on travel. If you are unable to make the walk and need to take a taxi, please get this cleared in advance: [swinter@equity.org.uk](mailto:swinter@equity.org.uk)

## Parking

There are numerous car parks within the vicinity of the hotel and the Town Hall, including at Brindley Place (four minutes' walk from the hotel). There is on-site car parking at both the hotel and the Town Hall, both open for 24 hours. Please note that parking cannot be booked in advance.

## The Local Area

The hotel and venue are in the centre of Birmingham, with a wide array of cafes, shops, and amenities nearby.

### Travel connections

Birmingham New Street train station is five minutes' walk from the venue and 15 minutes' walk from the hotel. The venue is also close to Snow Hill station.

Conveniently, the tram will shuttle you directly between the main locations for Conference – with stops at Birmingham New Street, the Town Hall, the Library, and Brindley Place (one minute's walk from the hotel).

### Pharmacy

The nearest pharmacy (that's open on the weekend) is Boots at the Bull Ring Shopping Centre, B5 4BE. It is nine minutes' walk from the venue and 20 minutes walk from the hotel. Hours are 9am-8pm (Mon-Sat), 11 am-5pm (Sun).

### Hospital/Accident & Emergency

In case of any emergency, please call 999.

Birmingham City Hospital is a 20-minute drive from the venue (half an hour by public transport) and a 12-minute drive from the hotel (half an hour by public transport). The entrance to the A&E department is on Dudley Road, B18 7QH.

### Emergency dentist

The Night & Day Emergency Dentist is open 24 hours at 51-53 Spring Hill, B18 7BH. It is a 22-minute walk from the venue and a 19-minute walk from the hotel.

### Coffee shops

There are a variety of coffee shops and cafes close to the hotel and to the Town Hall.

Odissi Coffee is a few yards from the hotel at 10, Eleven Brindley Place, Broad Street. Hours are 7.30am-4pm Mon-Sat (closed on Sundays). The Ikon Gallery at 1 Oozells St B1 2HS has the Yorks Café, open Wed-Sat 9am-5pm, Sunday 10am-5pm (closed Mon-Tues). A Costa Coffee and Café Nero are located on the Central Square on Brindley Place, nearby.

Near the Town Hall, the Medicine Bakery at 69a New Street, B2 4DU, is open 8.30am-5pm daily. The Second Coffee Cup company is next door and is open 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sunday. Birmingham New Street station also has various coffee chains available.

### Dinner

The conference dinner on Sunday will be at the Library of Birmingham, Centenary Sq, B1 2ND, a short walk from the hotel. Turn right on to Broad Street as you leave the hotel. Go straight, cross the canal, and continue up Broad Street. When you reach Centenary Square, turn left into the square. The Birmingham Rep will be ahead of you, and the Library is the adjacent building on the right. You can also take the tram to the Library from the Brindley Place stop outside the hotel.

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## Hotel Information

Accommodation has been arranged in line with the form you returned. For most members living outside of Birmingham, this means a room has been booked on the evenings of Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May (unless alternative arrangements have been confirmed for you).

The rooms are booked as bed and breakfast, with breakfast served in the restaurant within the hotel, 07:00-11:00 on Sunday, 06:30-10:00 on Monday. This has been paid for, but if you incur any other charges during your stay, please settle these at the hotel desk before you depart.

Check-in on the day of arrival is from 15:00, and you must have vacated your room by 11:00 on the day of departure.

Luggage storage is available at the Town Hall (the main conference venue) on the Saturday and Monday.

A buffet lunch will be provided at the Rep to everyone attending on the Sunday, and a packed lunch will be available on the Monday as you leave the Town Hall.

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## Accessibility

Everyone attending has been asked for their full requirements in order to attend and participate in the conference. If you have access requirements which you have not informed Equity of through the Conference Attendee Form, please contact [swinter@equity.org.uk](mailto:swinter@equity.org.uk) as soon as you can.

- The main stage is wheelchair accessible via a ramp.
- The main conference business will have BSL interpretation and will be subtitled.
- A hearing loop is installed in the main conference hall.
- Copies of papers on coloured paper (required by some with dyslexia) and large print copies can be provided if requested in advance.
- We produce an audio version of the agenda/guide.
- There will be a quiet room available at the Town Hall.
- For more information on accessibility at the Town Hall, go to: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/birmingham-city-council/access-guides/town-hall>
- For more information on accessibility at the Library, go to: [https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50132/visiting\\_the\\_library\\_of\\_birmingham/1410/library\\_of\\_birmingham\\_access\\_for\\_all](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50132/visiting_the_library_of_birmingham/1410/library_of_birmingham_access_for_all)
- For more information on accessibility at the Rep, go to: <https://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/your-visit/accessibility/>

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## Expenses

Expenses will be reimbursed by bank transfer, after the conference. Every member will be sent a digital expenses form in advance, or you can collect a paper form from the information desk. Please remember to include copies of receipts.

Claims will be processed within seven days of receipt of forms. If you cannot wait until after the conference, you may submit your travel expenses in advance, providing they are properly receipted.

You can send them digitally to:  
[financeoffice@equity.org.uk](mailto:financeoffice@equity.org.uk)

or by post to:  
Finance Office, Equity,  
FREEPOST RTKS-BRUB-LYJR, Guild House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H 9EG (no stamp required).

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## Annual Accounts 2023

A copy of the 2023 Annual Accounts has been provided to every member attending the conference. Each member has the right to submit a written question to the Honorary Treasurer regarding the accounts. These questions will be then be dealt with as part of his speech at the conference. In order to submit a question, please write to:

David John, Honorary Treasurer  
[cllrjohn@equitycouncillors.org.uk](mailto:cllrjohn@equitycouncillors.org.uk)

By the deadline of 12 noon on Tuesday 14 May

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## Safe Spaces

We are committed to making the conference a safe space for everyone. We therefore ask everyone taking part or working at the conference to abide by our safe spaces statement:

“Every single one of us [attending this conference] is entitled to work in a safe space: a space free of fear, a space free of bullying and harassment of any kind. We will work together honouring our differences and celebrating the gifts we each bring to the table.

“We will treat one another with politeness and respect at all times and, if we are subjected to or witness bullying and harassment, we will speak out knowing that our voices will be heard and we will be taken seriously. Together we can create a safe space.”

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## Key Contacts

Sam Winter  
Conference Organiser  
[swinter@equity.org.uk](mailto:swinter@equity.org.uk)  
07850 539 031

Sam Foster  
Assistant Conference Organiser  
[sfoster@equity.org.uk](mailto:sfoster@equity.org.uk)  
07522 185 022

Conference Business Committee

If you have any queries around conference business/procedure, you can visit the Conference Business Committee in the CBC room, on the lower ground floor of the Town Hall. Or you can contact the Secretary to the CBC: [swinter@equity.org.uk](mailto:swinter@equity.org.uk)

In an emergency, please call 999

## Fringe Events



Fringe events are organised by different parts of the union, independently of the main conference – for example, by a committee, branch or campaign group. They're a great way to discover new ways to get involved with the union and hear about the work of other members.

There are 14 fringe events taking place at conference 2024, our largest ever programme. All events will be subject to capacity and we would strongly encourage everyone attending conference to attend as many events as you can.

They will all be taking place on the Sunday afternoon at a separate venue - The Rep. A buffet lunch will also be served at this venue from 13:15-15:30.

## SUNDAY 19 MAY

### Being Creative in our Campaigning

13:45- 14:35, Room 1 (The Rep)

We are creative workers and practitioners - let's have an informal chat about our campaign experiences and how we can bring our creative talents to our campaign work. Tracey Briggs will share her experiences of campaigning with you and she wants to hear your campaign stories, so we as Equity members can continue to work towards effective winning campaigns.

### Being a Young Performer and a Young Trade Unionist: A Global Conversation

13:45- 14:35, Room 2 (The Rep)

Don't miss out on "Being a Young Performer and a Young Trade Unionist: A Global Conversation" presented by FIA Future Now, the young members' committee of the International Federation of Actors, the global federation of performers' unions of which Equity is a member. This event will feature a diverse panel of young members from performers' unions around the world, shedding light on the challenges they face when working in the industry and the role they play in their respective unions and as members of FIA Future Now. Join us for insights into the experiences, obstacles, and prospects of the next generation of performers and union advocates.

### Star Crossed: Representations of Classed Life Stories around British Film and TV Stars, with Professor Michael Wayne and Dr Deirdre O'Neill

13:45- 14:35, Room 3 (The Rep)

In this session the directors of the film *The Acting Class* will present their plans for a new research project called: 'Star Crossed: Representations of Classed Life Stories around British Film and TV Stars'. Professor Michael Wayne and Dr Deirdre O'Neill have



applied to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding and if successful they would like to work with the class network on some aspects of the research. The project picks up on a story that has been in the British media a lot, often driven by working class origin actors complaining about the narrowing opportunities of access for people from their background. However, Wayne and O'Neill want to explore how these voices are really drowned out by the promotional activities of the industry and the media in favour of a tale of meritocracy, the idea that just rewards are distributed according to talent and hard work. We want to look at how 50 privately educated British film and TV stars are discussed in media interviews, with a special focus on how their life stories are presented in ways that downplay their privileged starting position. While we recognise that these are difficult conversations to have, especially within the industry, Wayne and O'Neill will argue that we cannot make any progress within the industry and more broadly in society as a whole, unless we wean ourselves away from these myths of meritocracy.

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### **Both Not Half: How My Mixed Heritage Made Me a Trade Unionist**

14:45-15:35, Room 1 (*The Rep*)

For over twenty-five years, actor Jassa Ahluwalia described himself as 'half Indian, half English'. But he looks white. His fluent Punjabi always prompted bewilderment and the world of casting taught him he wasn't 'the right kind of mixed-race'. Feeling caught between two worlds, Jassa embarked on a call to action, a journey that led him to becoming a vocal trade unionist and an Equity Councillor. Join Jassa in conversation for the launch of his debut book, *Both Not Half: A Radical New Approach to Mixed Heritage Identity*, followed by a signing.

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### **From Allyship to Action: Ensuring the Future of LGBT+ Rights**

14:45-15:35, Room 2 (*The Rep*)

As a General Election approaches, many issues which directly impact LGBT+ Equity members as individuals and arts workers are at stake. From fair work to healthcare, issues often treated by political leaders as questions of 'culture' and not of justice and dignity, are under threat. This session will provide members with space to better understand what is at risk, whilst exploring a range of campaigning tools that can be utilised to ensure hard-won LGBT+ rights and current campaigns for equality are not undermined during campaigning season and beyond.

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### **How Artists, Activists and Trade Unionists are Fighting for Justice in Colombia**

14:45-15:35, Room 3 (*The Rep*)

The victory of Gustavo Petro's Historic Pact coalition at elections in Colombia in 2022 marked a vital progressive turn for a country that has suffered for decades under the neoliberal erosion of the state, global drug policy, and foreign intervention. This historic moment has provided a boost to those artists and trade unionists seeking to organise collectively in Colombian film, theatre and television. We are fortunate to have two Colombian trade unionists join this panel to share their experiences of building our Colombian sister union ACA. We will also hear from Justice for Colombia, who have been working with human rights activists and trade unionists in the country to secure a peaceful and equitable future.

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### **Student Workshop: Building Union and Student Power in Education and Training Institutions**

14:45-15:35, Shakespeare Memorial Room (*The Library*)

*Please note: the Shakespeare Memorial Room is on the far side of the building. Exit The Rep, cross through the wide foyer at the front of the building, and go up into the Library to the 9th floor.*

A fringe event for students in the performing arts and those wishing to build student power within the trade union movement. We'll be exploring how we can further union presence in performance and practitioner training environments and how we can ensure student voices are heard in arts education settings and beyond. You'll hear from student and youth activists on what Equity is doing to build student power in these spaces. An event for students and trade unionists in the entertainment industry to meet, share and organise. Open to all conference attendees.

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### **Why We Need Intimacy Coordinators**

15:45-16:35, Room 1 (*The Rep*)

The use of an intimacy coordinator should now be a fundamental requirement to oversee any content involving nudity or intimate scenes on the stage or screen. Equity has worked closely with experts at Intimacy for Stage and Screen (ISS) and BECTU to contribute to guidance on using and working with intimacy coordinators from a performer perspective. This panel discussion will bring together representatives from our equalities committees, who contributed to the guidance, and the Actors'

Equity Association in the US. We will discuss the origins and importance of intimacy coordination, the challenges of intimacy in performance, performers' rights in this area, and how we can continue to promote the wider use of intimacy coordination.

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### **Boundaries, Bargaining Tools and Basic Advice that Can Help all Creative Workers Move from Resilience to Resistance**

15:45-16:35, Room 2 (*The Rep*)

In an industry full of regular contract negotiations, how do we make sure each of us gets the best deal? It often isn't as simple as more money = better job/quality of life, but what (and how) can we ask producers and engagers to do to make sure our worth is fairly reflected? Once in post, how do you maintain a firm position when unforeseen pressures arise? How do you stand up for yourself and your team when you can see your value being underestimated? Join members of the stage management committee to discuss the boundaries, bargaining tools and basic advice that can help all creative workers move from resilience to resistance.

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### **Public Arts Funding: Resisting Cuts and Influencing Policy**

15:45-16:35, Room 3 (*The Rep*)

Public funding cuts at local and national level threaten Equity members' work. Hear from members who are fighting back against these policies in their communities and their workplaces and discuss Equity's plans to influence arts policies before the general election.

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### **Equity – A Radical History**

15:45-16:35, Shakespeare Memorial Room (*The Library*)

*Please note: the Shakespeare Memorial Room is on the far side of the building. Exit The Rep, cross through the wide foyer at the front of the building, and go up into the Library to the 9th floor.*

Equity has always had a radical streak. From the militant Marie Lloyd in the Variety Artistes Federation, and our first communist General Secretary, through to our fight against apartheid, organising Europe-wide industrial action, and closing down Working Men's Clubs with racist membership policies. We stood with the miners through thick and thin, and shaped the creation of the Arts Councils. Members have also paid the ultimate price - executed by far right paramilitaries, and working on the front line against fascism in the Second World War. Defeat, struggle, victory, and joy have all shaped who Equity is today. Join the General Secretary for a romp through Equity's radical history, featuring pictures and artefacts from the archives.

---

### **Reducing the Potential of Art Worker on Art Worker Exploitation**

16:45-17:35, Room 1 (*The Rep*)

Dance artists and other Equity members frequently undertake the role of both engager and worker. This fringe event intends to introduce the responsibilities that members have when contracting their peers for short periods, the rights of those they engage, and encourage discussion about how to avoid inadvertent exploitation of their peers when engaging members for short periods.

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### **Let's Make Commercials AD Up Campaign**

16:45-17:35, Room 2 (*The Rep*)

As Equity's Commercials Campaign gathers pace, this is an opportunity to hear from the union's officials about the background to the campaign and details of the campaign. We will also talk about the future launch of the Commercials Network. It will be a great honour to hear from the National Executive Director of ACTRA, Marie Kelly. Our sister union in Canada is currently in dispute with the engagers in commercials.

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### **Fighting the 'Tax on Hope': Using Union Power to End Casting Guide Exploitation**

16:45-17:35, Room 3 (*The Rep*)

Following the introduction (and subsequent withdrawal) of Spotlight Premiere in 2023, members are challenging the high fees charged by casting services to be listed in guides. Speakers at this panel event will outline how the collective power of the union is being brought to bear on these exploitative practices, why we are fighting to win on this important issue, and how you can get involved in the next steps of this vital campaign.

# CONFERENCE DINNER

DRINKS RECEPTION AND DINNER WITH A CASH BAR

19:30

SUNDAY 19 MAY

Birmingham Library  
Broad St,  
Birmingham  
B1 2ND

 **Pattinson Brewer**

With thanks to  
Pattinson & Brewer  
for their kind support



# Equity Journal

Incorporating the Variety Artists Federation

# WORKING IN

# SOUTH



ALSO INSIDE: New

ES UNION CO



## International Committee for Artists' Freedom

The International Committee for Artists' Freedom (ICAF) is a voluntary committee of Equity which has supported artists facing persecution throughout the globe for over 50 years. In the last year, ICAF has:

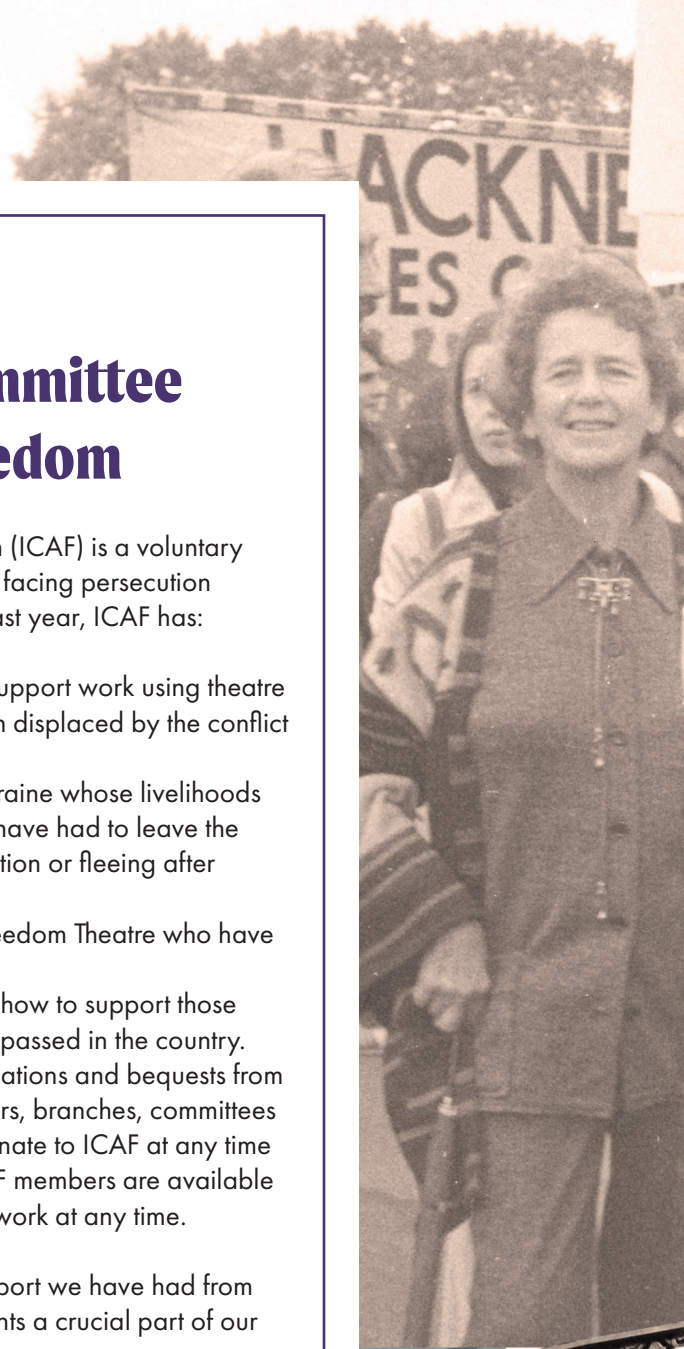
- distributed £5,000 of its solidarity fund to support work using theatre to provide psychosocial support for children displaced by the conflict in Palestine.
- distributed £10,000 to support artists in Ukraine whose livelihoods have been affected by the conflict, or who have had to leave the country, and artists in Russia facing persecution or fleeing after speaking out against the war.
- continued to support artists from Belarus Freedom Theatre who have left Belarus due to political oppression.
- approached Ugandan artists for advice on how to support those affected by the draconian anti-LGBT+ laws passed in the country.
- ICAF's work is partially funded through donations and bequests from Equity members and branches. Any members, branches, committees and other networks within the union can donate to ICAF at any time (bank details are included below) and ICAF members are available to come and speak about the Committee's work at any time.

We are incredibly grateful for the generous support we have had from Equity conference over the years which represents a crucial part of our income.

Account name: EQUITY - I.C.A.F. ACCOUNT

Account number: 70582639

Sort code: 089061





## International Reception

Whether supporting Spanish republicanism, aiding Chilean artist refugees, or protesting apartheid South Africa, our union has a proud history of international solidarity work stretching all the way back to its inception.

In this spirit, we'll be marking the first night of conference by hosting an International Reception, where artists and trade unionists from all over the world have been invited to address attendees on the situation for performers and creatives in their home countries.

Food and drinks will be served. Come along and hear from your comrades in Canada, Colombia, Palestine, United States and more...

**SATURDAY 18 MAY, 19:30**  
**BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL**



# Guide to Conference Procedure and Jargon

These notes have been prepared by the Conference Business Committee as guidance only. They are based on Equity's Rulebook, the Equity Conference Standing Orders and Walter Citrine's ABC of Chairmanship. The Rules governing the Conference are Rule T: Equity Conference, Rule V: Rules of Debate and Rule X: Conference Business Committee.

Equity Conference brings together members of the Council and elected Representatives of the union's committees and branches to make decisions about Equity policy.

The formal purpose of the Conference is to debate and vote on motions and amendments submitted by the Council, branches and committees, and to receive reports from the Officers, staff and guest speakers.

*Rules T2-3*

Each industrial and equalities committee is entitled to submit one motion to be included on the agenda. Each branch and national committee is entitled to submit one motion (or two in the case of the London branches) to their national/regional meeting. Each national/regional meeting may then select one motion (or two in the case of the East & South East and London regions) to be submitted to the Conference on behalf of their nation/region. The Council may submit more than one motion.

*Rules T17-20 and T23*

If a motion is passed at the Conference by two-thirds of those voting for and against, it is binding on the Council. This means that the Council must either carry out the motion or put the motion to a referendum of the entire membership. If a motion is passed by a simple majority but not by two-thirds, it will be passed to the Council for their decision at a later date.

*Rules T14-16*

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## Making a speech at the conference

All Representatives and Councillors are encouraged to contribute to the debates at Conference. The more different viewpoints that are heard, the better. This is, after all, your Conference.

Making a speech for the first time can be a potentially intimidating experience. However, you will find that if you announce that you are giving your first speech at a Conference, your listeners will be particularly receptive to hear what you have to say.

On the other hand, if you overuse the privilege of making speeches, your listeners will gradually become less receptive and the Chair may cease calling you to speak. Before volunteering to speak, always ask yourself first if what you have to say adds a new perspective or idea to the debate.

*Standing Orders*

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## Agendas

Motions which have been sent in by the closing date set by the Council and which are not in breach of the rules will be included in the Agenda. The Agenda will be sent to all Representatives.

*T21-22 and T24*

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## Conference Business Committee

The Conference Business Committee (CBC, previously called the Standing Orders Committee or SOC) is made up of five members elected by the membership and four members elected by the Council. Its role is to arrange the business of the Conference. The CBC decides in what order the motions and amendments will be debated and at what time the reports from officers and staff will be taken. The CBC is responsible for changes to the business or timetable for the Conference.

*Rules T27-30 and X*

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## Motions

The purpose of a motion to the Conference is to get the union to do something. Motions should therefore propose some action. While motions may outline the reason for proposing the action, the arguments in favour should not be included, but should be saved for the proposing speech.

Equity's Rules state that motions must be about matters of general policy or rule changes. The Council decides which motions do not deal with matters of general policy and therefore are not allowed on to the agenda. The Council's guidance on what constitutes general policy gives two examples: motions can properly set broad aims for negotiations but should not include specific levels of fees

to be achieved; motions should not make proposals on detailed matters of the staffing of the union.

Rule T22: The term “general policy” means the Union’s policies that concern the Union as a whole. It encompasses those policies that provide for its political and industrial aims, its governance and democratic structures, and its services to members. It excludes day-to-day operational, financial and administrative functions and decisions.

*Rule T22*

Motions must be moved and seconded before they can be debated. The mover of the motion, who will normally (but not necessarily) be a member of the body in whose name the motion stands, is allowed up to five minutes to move the motion. The seconder and each subsequent speaker are allowed three minutes.

*Standing Orders*

## Amendments

An amendment seeks to change some part of a motion. An amendment usually adds some words to a motion, takes some words away from a motion or takes some words away and substitutes some new words. A direct negative to a motion is not an amendment and will not be allowed. Under the new Rules, only the Council can submit an amendment.

*Citrine*

## Late motions

A committee, branch or the Council may submit a late motion (previously called an emergency motion) after the closing date set by the Council. Late motions shall not be accepted unless the Council decides that the motion concerns an urgent matter that arose after, or could not reasonably have been known about prior to, the deadline. If the Council decides that a late motion qualifies, the CBC will decide where it should be placed on the agenda.

*Rule T25*

## Composite motions

If two or more motions deal with similar subject matter, the CBC may ask the committees or branches concerned to agree to them being composited into a single motion. If this is agreed by all the branches/committees involved, the motions will be composited by the CBC. The resulting composite motion can exceed 250 words in length.

*Rule T26*

## Remitting a motion

A committee or branch may choose to remit their motion to the Council at any time before the motion has been moved at the Conference. “Remitting” means that the motion will be decided by the Council at a later date, instead of being debated at the Conference. It is allowable for the Representative chosen to propose the motion to use the time allotted to their speech to argue for the merits of the motion but (at the conclusion of their speech) to announce to the Conference that the motion is being remitted to the Council – provided that the Representative has not used the words “I move” (or any variation of those words) in the speech. In such an instance, the motion will be remitted to the Council, there will be no further debate on the motion and the Chair will immediately move on to the next business on the Conference Agenda.

Once a motion has been moved at the Conference, it cannot be remitted by the mover. All that the mover can do is to make a request to the Conference that the motion be remitted (which they can do up to and including their right of reply). If the request is made, the Chair shall immediately proceed to a vote as to whether the motion shall be remitted or not. If there is a simple majority in favour of remittance, the motion will be remitted to the Council, there will be no further debate on the motion and the Chair will immediately move on to the next item on the Agenda. If the Conference votes against remittance, the debate and subsequent vote on the motion shall proceed.

*Standing Orders*

## Withdrawing a motion or amendment

A motion or an amendment may be withdrawn at any time before it has been both moved and seconded at the Conference or has been composited with another motion or amendment.

*Standing Orders*

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## Debate

Speakers must address the Chair and no member shall interrupt a speaker except on a point of procedure or a question.

*Rule V3*

Once a motion has been moved and seconded, the Chair will open the matter for debate and invite contributions. The order in which speakers are taken is at the discretion of the Chair.

*Standing Orders*

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## Right of reply

Movers of motions are allowed three minutes at the end of the debate and before the vote has been taken to reply to issues raised during the debate. No further contributions to the debate will be taken after the right of reply. Movers of motions may not use the right of reply to introduce new material into the debate. Movers of amendments do not get a right of reply.

*Standing Orders and Rule V9*

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## Point of procedure

If a Representative believes that the procedures of the Conference have been breached, they may raise a point of procedure at any time.

*Standing Orders and Rule V3*

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## Question

If a Representative wants to ask a question (also known as a point of information), they may ask the Chair if they can do so. A question may not be used to make a contribution to the debate.

*Standing Orders and Rule V3*

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## Curtailing debate

If a Representative believes that the matter under discussion has been sufficiently debated, they may (if they have not previously spoken in that debate) move "that the question now be put" or "next business". If and only if the Chair accepts a motion "that the question now be put" or for "next business", it will be immediately put to a vote without discussion. The Chair's ruling on this cannot be challenged. If a motion "that the question now be put" is carried, the mover of the original motion has a right of reply before the vote. If a motion for "next business" is carried, the matter under discussion is dropped and the meeting proceeds to the next item of business.

*Standing Orders and Rule V12*

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## Motions debated together but voted on separately

In some instances, the CBC timetables two or more motions for debate together since they are on a common subject and this will save members from having to make the same points more than once in debate. When motions are timetabled in this way, the mover and seconder of the first motion speak first, followed by the mover(s) and seconder(s) of any amendment(s) to that motion. Then the mover(s) and seconder(s) of the subsequent motion(s) shall be invited by the Chair to speak in the same order with the motion preceding any amendment(s) to it. Only after they have all had the opportunity to speak shall the Chair invite contributions to the debate from others.

After the Chair has declared the end of the debate, the mover of the first motion shall be offered the right to reply. After the right of reply on the first motion, the Chair shall proceed to take the vote on that motion immediately. Only after that vote is taken will the mover(s) of the subsequent motion(s) be asked to exercise their right of reply with the vote on the motion(s) being taken immediately after each right of reply.

*Standing Orders*

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## Voting

Representatives and members of the Council vote by holding up their lanyard passes.

*Standing Orders*



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## Chair's ruling

A ruling by the Chair on any matter is binding unless it is challenged by at least ten members who are entitled to vote, in which case the motion "that the Chair's ruling be upheld" is immediately put to the vote by the General Secretary without discussion.  
*Standing Orders and Rule V4*

## CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

April 2023

# Speakers' Guide

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## Key things to remember

- Your contribution is important. We are stronger as a collective if all voices are heard.
- Please remain respectful at all times, in line with our Safe Spaces policy (included in this guide).
- Anyone can speak on any issue, but the Chair does not have to call you every time. If you've spoken already or it's time to move on, you might miss out.
- If you do want to speak, please consider whether your point has already been made by someone else.
- Before every speech (except for a Right of Reply), always start by giving your full Equity name and who you're representing (e.g. your branch/committee).
- Proposing speeches are a maximum of five minutes and all other speeches are a maximum of three minutes.
- If you know you're going to give a speech, please prepare in advance.
- If we run ahead of time, your speech could come sooner in the timetable (including the day before!)

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## Who can speak?

Everyone attending as a Representative or Councillor can speak and vote at Conference. It doesn't matter how long you've been active within the union or what status you may hold – if you've been elected to attend, you have the same rights as everyone else to take part in the debate and make your voice heard on any issue.

We would really encourage those who are attending for the first time to speak. This is your conference, and you have as much right to the space as anyone else. You have been elected to attend on behalf of your branch/committee for a reason and we would encourage you to feel able to use your voice.

If you've attended before, please think about how you could encourage those who may be newer to a conference environment to speak.

For everyone attending, we would ask you to think carefully about the number of contributions you make. We are stronger as a collective if everyone's voice is heard, and it is important that we all think about how we can make space for others and ensure that Conference hears from a diverse range of members in every sense. It is up to the Chair to manage this and decide who to take contributions from. If they feel that you have already made a number of contributions and the Conference might benefit from hearing from others, they have the right not to take you again.

If you are attending as an observer, then you cannot speak or vote at Conference. Conference Business Committee (CBC) members can speak, but only on procedural matters, and they cannot vote. Trustees can speak, but they cannot vote.

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## How do the debates work?

Branches, committees and the Council submit motions and the Council may also submit amendments. These are reviewed by the Conference Business Committee (CBC) and put together to form the agenda for Conference.

At Conference, we will then move through the agenda in order. When we get to a motion, the Chair will ask the proposer to come up to the lectern and make the case for the motion (up to five minutes). The proposer will usually be from the part of the union that submitted the motion, but they don't have to be if those who submitted it agree this in advance.

The seconder will then be invited to come up. Their role is to give additional support to the motion (up to three minutes). Sometimes, a member will formally second, which means they're recorded as the seconder but don't want to make a speech.

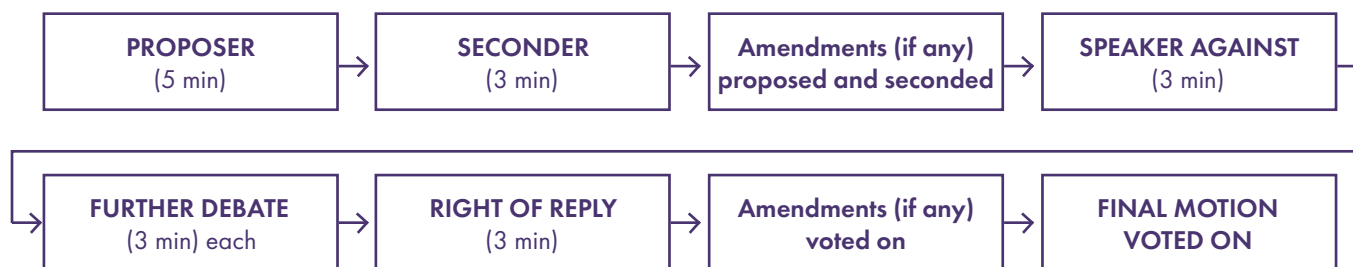
This process will then be repeated for any amendments to the motion. Proposers and seconders will be invited to come up (up to three minutes each) and make the case for the amendment.

Once that's all done, the Chair will ask if anyone would like to come up and speak in opposition to the motion (up to three minutes).

After that, the Chair will open it up to debate. If you want to speak, please raise your voting card (your red name badge). If the Chair acknowledges you, please move to the front so you're ready to speak when it's your turn (unless you'd rather speak from your place). The Chair can take as many or as few contributions as they decide but will attempt to balance the debate as they consider appropriate. (Each contribution can be up to three minutes.)

The debate is over when the Chair decides that both sides have been given a fair hearing. This may mean that some who want to speak on a particular item will not get the chance. Once the Chair has decided the debate is over, they will offer the proposer a Right of Reply (up to three minutes). This is their chance to respond to some of the points raised and make the final case for their motion.

Next, the Chair will call for the vote to be taken. Any amendments will be voted on first, to determine the final content of the motion. That final motion (which is now called a substantive motion if it has been amended) is then voted on. All votes take place by showing your voting card (your red name badge). The Chair will call the result of the vote and we will then move on to the next motion.




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### Should I prepare anything?

If you know you'll be proposing or seconding a motion, then we would recommend preparing a speech in advance.

We would also recommend preparing if there are any items on the agenda on which you know you would like to speak.

You are absolutely free to speak without preparing anything, and we would encourage you to do so if you feel you have a meaningful contribution to make which adds a new perspective or idea to the debate.

If you need any help preparing a speech, we would recommend speaking to other activists (perhaps within your branch/committee) for support and feedback.

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### Do I have to go up to the lectern if I want to speak?

The Chair will invite members proposing, seconding or contributing to the debate to come up to the lectern. However, if you would rather not, you're very welcome to ask for one of the roving mics to come to you instead.

If you're making a point of procedure or asking a question, please stay where you are and a roving mic will come to you.

If you're using a roving mic, please wait for it to arrive before you start to speak so that everyone can hear you.

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### Representatives, not delegates

Conference uses a representative structure, as opposed to a delegate structure. This means you cannot be bound to speak or vote in a particular way by your branch/committee.

In the past, some members have said they are speaking "in a personal capacity." Please note that this is not strictly possible – members are always speaking as a Representative of the part of the union that sent them. You are there because some part of the union elected you to be there, and not as an individual in your own right. Councillors may sometimes want to clarify when they are speaking on behalf of the Council as a whole.

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### Further information and questions

If you're interested in some of the finer details, the Equity Conference Standing Orders for the Conference are available online: [Standing orders | Equity](#). These are the formal rules for how the Conference will be conducted. The CBC also provide a helpful [Guide to Conference Procedure](#), which is included in your pack.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to write to the Conference Organiser (Sam Winter: [swinter@equity.org.uk](mailto:swinter@equity.org.uk)), your Branch Official or Committee Secretary. Once we're at the Conference, you can also approach the CBC to ask for advice.

Thank you for contributing to this year's Conference!

## Council's attitude to motions/amendments

It is the Council's policy to publish its attitude to motions and amendments submitted for consideration at the conference. Where it is suggested that a motion/amendment should be opposed, remitted, etc., the reason is included underneath.

Attitude

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### EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

MOTION 1: Race Equality Committee Support

MOTION 2: LGBT+ Committee Support

Council will look to establish a time limited working party to examine the union's work on the far-right and combatting fascism to develop this work in a unified way across the UK, and all disproportionately affected groups.

MOTION 3: Deaf and Disabled Members Committee Support

MOTION 4: Women's Committee Support

MOTION 5: Kent Branch Support

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### INTERNAL UNION BUSINESS

MOTION 6: Birmingham and West Midlands Branch Support

MOTION 7: London North Branch Support

*If successful Council shall commission a survey of older members regarding their interest of the union, and examine the appetite for establishing a Senior Artists Network which is self-organised by members. This has been the precursor to other successful committees. Further, we shall analyse the demographics of members engaged in branches and other democratic structures to assess the proportionate weight given to older members' voices within the union itself.*

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### LIVE PERFORMANCE

MOTION 8: Opera Deputies Support

MOTION 9: Singers Committee Support

MOTION 10: Directors and Designers Committee Support

MOTION 11: Dance Committee Support

MOTION 12: Bristol and West of England Branch Support

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**LIVE PERFORMANCE (continued)**

AMENDMENT: Council	Support
MOTION 13: Stage Actors Committee	Support

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**VARIETY**

MOTION 14: Variety, Circus and Entertainers Committee	Support
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**EQUITY MOTION TO TUC**

MOTION 15: Council	Support
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**RECORDED MEDIA**

MOTION 16: Screen and New Media Actors Committee	Support
MOTION 17: Essex and Hertfordshire Branch	Support

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**POLICY**

MOTION 18: Student Deputies	Support
MOTION 19: West End Deputies	Support
MOTION 20: Northern Ireland National Committee	Support
MOTION 21: London North Branch	Support
MOTION 22: Greater Manchester Branch	Support
MOTION 23: Scotland National Committee	Support
MOTION 24: Welsh National Committee	Support

**Sam Winter****SECRETARY TO THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

## Motions Glossary

This glossary provides definitions for words or phrases in this year's Equity Conference motions.

<b>Word or Phrase</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Arts Council England (ACE)	The arts council for England since 1994 when the Arts Council of Great Britain was divided into three separate national bodies.
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	The arts council for Northern Ireland since 1964 when it replaced the Committee for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA).
Arts Council Wales	The arts council for Wales since 1994 when the Arts Council of Great Britain was divided into three separate national bodies.
Arts councils	National public funding bodies for arts organisations and individuals.
BBC Film	The BBC's feature-film producing arm.
British Film Institute (BFI)	The British Film Institute is a film and television charitable organisation which promotes and preserves film-making and television in the United Kingdom.
Cast It Here campaign	An Equity campaign to pressure those making casting decisions to provide opportunities for local talent to be seen as a standard part of their casting process.
Commercial Sector	Organisations operating for profit (ie most of the West End, and many touring theatre companies).
Corporate Sector	Companies hiring our members for in-house trainings etc, usually involving role play.
Creative Scotland	The arts council for Scotland since 1994 when the Arts Council of Great Britain was divided into three separate national bodies.
D/deaf	Those who refer to themselves as Deaf with a capital D generally see themselves as culturally deaf, generally sign language will be their first language. People who have experienced a loss of hearing throughout their life may refer to themselves as deaf with a lower case d, or deafened or "hard of hearing", generally indicating that they are less likely to share this cultural identity.
DBS checks	Assessments by the Disclosure and Barring Service (a non-departmental public body of the Home Office) as to whether a person is unsuitable for certain work, particularly involving children or vulnerable adults.
DCMS (The Department for Culture, Media & Sport)	A department of government.
Drag Queen Story Hour	Children's events promoting reading and diversity hosted by drag queens. The events and our members have been the target of abuse by the far-right for the past few years.
Emergency Motion	(See Equity Council's Standing Orders point 10) A motion sent to Equity Council (our union's governing body) that could not have been sent before the deadline for the first circulation of council papers. The subject matter shall be a genuine emergency.
Employment charters	Employment charters set standards of "what good work should look like in local areas or sectors, above the legal requirements" (TUC website). They may but do not necessarily have input from trade unions.

Equity agreements	Collective agreements negotiated between the union and the employer.
Ffilm Cymru	The development agency for Welsh film.
Film4	Channel Four's film production arm.
Industry management associations	A group of producers that negotiate with Equity as one body - like SOLT or UK Theatre.
#MeToo	A social movement and awareness campaign against sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The hashtag spread online giving a clearer idea of the magnitude of the problem.
Minimums	The minimum rates of pay negotiated between an employer and our union. Often misconstrued as Equity minimum as opposed to the employer's minimum.
Needs Budgets	Budgets for services that the council needs to provide (roads, schools, bins, etc)
Northern Ireland Screen	The development agency for Northern Ireland's film and TV industry.
Office for National Statistics (ONS)	The executive office of the UK Statistics Authority, a non-ministerial department which reports to the UK Parliament.
Out of Order	Not following the formal rules of the meeting, motions, etc.
Point of Order	A query in a formal debate or meeting as to whether correct procedure is being followed.
S4C (Sianel Pedwar Cymru / Channel 4 Wales)	S4C is a Welsh language free-to-air public broadcast television channel.
SAG-AFTRA	Screen Actors Guild - American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, our sister union that went on strike last year over residual payments and assurances over AI usage.
Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC)	A federation of trades unions in Scotland, representing most unionised workers in the country.
Screen Scotland	The development agency for Scotland's film and TV industry.
Society of London Theatre (SOLT)	The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) is the Membership Organisation for London Theatre Producers, Managers, Owners and Operators. They work in partnership with their sister organisation, UK Theatre.
Standing Orders	Procedure rules that regulate the conduct of a meeting.
Statutory Shared Parental Leave	50 weeks of leave from work shared between parents/ adopted parents/foster carers in the first year after the child is born/placed with your family.
Statutory Shared Parental Pay	37 weeks of pay shared between partners taken with parental leave in blocks separated by periods of work, or taken all in one go. Parents, adopted parents and foster carers can also choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay.
Subsidised Sector	Organisations that received funding from public bodies.
The Charity Commission	A non-ministerial department of government that regulates registered charities in England and Wales. In Scotland they are regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, and in Northern Ireland it is the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.
The Social Model (of Disability)	As Graeae put it, "Under the Social Model of disability, people are disabled by barriers within society, rather than being 'victims' of their impairments or conditions." The Social Model of Disability is adopted by Equity.

Time's Up	A non-profit organisation that raises money to support victims of sexual harrassment.
TUC (Trades Union Congress)	A federation of trades unions in England and Wales, representing most unionised workers in the countries.
UK Theatre	UK Theatre is another membership organisation for theatre producers, managers, owners and operators. They work in partnership with their sister organisation, Society of London Theatre (SOLT).



**To all artists: good work**

**To all workers: good art**

**To all people: Equity**

