

EQUITY

BEING A REPRESENTATIVE AT EQUITY CONFERENCE

Equity Conference usually takes place in May. It moves around all the nations and regions of the UK and will be hosted by a different city every year. It starts on a Saturday lunchtime and runs through to Monday lunchtime and representatives (reps) are elected to attend the entire conference. Conference is a vital part of the union's year, bringing together members from around the UK to discuss and vote on policy, with a vibrant fringe to educate, engage and empower members in our industrial and campaigning work.

The union's branches and committees elect reps to attend the conference along with all members of the Council (the union's governing body). The process is laid out in the union's Rules (Rule T).

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES

The number of reps varies depending on the type of committee or the size of the branch:

- Industrial Committees: three reps;
- Equalities Committees: three reps;
- National Committees: two reps;
- Branches:
 - two reps from each branch with fewer than 1,000 members;
 - one further rep per 1,000 members from each branch with more than 1,000 members.

SELECTION

Every rep is elected to attend on behalf of their branch or committee. Your branch or committee will run an election in the lead up to conference, usually in March or April. Every committee member and every member of a branch is welcome to stand to be a rep.

You should only put yourself forward to be a rep if you believe you'll be able to attend the whole thing. However, if circumstances change and you can no longer make part or all of it, it may be possible for the role to be shared or passed on to the next person. If this happens, contact your Branch or Committee Secretary as soon as possible. (Please note, this will only be possible if there were unsuccessful candidates when the reps were elected).

You can only be elected as a rep from one part of the union – i.e. if you're elected to attend by your branch, then you can't also be elected as a rep by a committee.

Councillors are not eligible for election as reps as they are entitled to attend conference already.

BEFORE AND AFTER CONFERENCE

Before conference, discuss the agenda with your committee or branch at a meeting. You cannot be told how to vote by your committee or branch on any issue – they are welcome to share their views with you in advance but, as the rep, it's your decision how to vote at conference.

After conference, report back to your committee or branch at a meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting you need to send a written report.

YOUR ROLE AT CONFERENCE

We would encourage you to get involved in all aspects of the conference. The debates and the votes on the conference floor are incredibly important, but you're also there to engage with the union's industrial and campaigning work and to meet other members. Please make the most of all the opportunities available to you.

The conference is split between formal business, a broad range of fringe events and social activities, including a dinner on the Sunday evening. There is often an event on the Saturday evening as well.

During the formal business, there will be reports on the union's work and debates on the motions submitted by branches and committees. Every rep and every Councillor can ask to speak during the debates and when the motions come to a vote, every rep has one vote. Listen to what your fellow members have to say and if you have something to say, please offer to contribute.

Closer to the time, we will provide a full pack with information on everything from the timings of the event to preparing to speak at conference, and the technical side of how it all works. Your fellow reps from your branch/committee will be able to support you to prepare as well.

EXPENSES

Equity provides accommodation and either provides or pays for meals. Equity reimburses travel costs within the UK (second class rail and public transport as standard – if you need to travel by another method, please contact the union to discuss).

Expenses forms are provided to all reps with their conference papers. Reimbursement is by bank transfer as soon after the event as possible.

ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS?

If you have further questions about standing as a rep, you can either contact your branch official/committee secretary or the conference organiser, Sam Winter: swinter@equity.org.uk