



# **POA Annual Conference 2024**

## **Report Backs**

**CUTS HAVE  
CUTS HAVE  
CONSEQUENCES**

# REPORT BACKS 2023

## RULES AND CONSTITUTION

1 That Rule 8.6 is reworded from.

**Rule 8.6** Retired members are eligible for membership of the retired members section within one month of their final retirement date.

To

**Rule 8.6** Retired members are eligible for membership of the retired members section on their final retirement date.

*The terms of this motion were incorporated into the revised Rules & Constitution for 2023.*

## 3 CHANGE RULE 23 FROM

### RULE 23 NORTHERN IRELAND AREA COMMITTEE

#### Membership

**Rule 23.1** The Union will have a Northern Ireland Area Committee comprising:

- (a) an Area Chair (Northern Ireland);
- (b) an Area Vice-Chair (Northern Ireland);
- (c) an Area Secretary (Northern Ireland); and
- (d) the Branch Secretaries of each penal or secure establishment and Special Hospital (if any) in Northern Ireland.

#### Functions

**Rule 23.2** The Northern Ireland Area Committee will protect and promote the interest of the members in Northern Ireland, including (but not limited to):

- (a) appointing its own Treasurer;
- (b) co-operating in advancing the national policy of the Union;
- (c) maintaining permanent contact with the National Executive Committee through the Area Secretary.
- (d) assisting the National Executive Committee and General Secretary in carrying out the Rules and objects of the Union;

- (e) fulfilling the requirements of Rule 23 and administering and safeguarding all Northern Ireland Area Committee finance;
- (f) keeping written attendance records of the names of the members present at each meeting of the Northern Ireland Area Committee;
- (g) keeping written minutes of all resolutions passed by the Northern Ireland Area Committee;
- (h) sending copies (signed by the Area Chair or Area Secretary) of those attendance records and minutes to the General Secretary on request; and
- (i) furnishing any returns of information required from time to time by the General Secretary or Finance Department.

**Rule 23.3** The Area Committee will deal primarily with the matters of interest to all penal or secure establishments and Special Hospitals (if any) in Northern Ireland. Branches in Northern Ireland may refer local matters which have not been dealt with to their own satisfaction to the Area Committee for further consideration and action if necessary.

**Rule 23.4** The National Executive Committee will allot to the Northern Ireland Area Committee a sum of money to meet its working expenses. The Treasurer of the Northern Ireland Area Committee will be responsible for the administration of this money and will render an account twice yearly to the General Secretary or the Deputy General Secretary.

#### Elections and Appointment

**Rule 23.5** The Area Chair (Northern Ireland) and the Area Vice-Chair (Northern Ireland) will each be elected every 5 years by a secret workplace ballot of the full members in the Union's Branches in Northern Ireland under Rule 25.

**Rule 23.6** If a vacancy occurs for Area Chair (Northern Ireland) or Area Vice-Chair (Northern Ireland) between elections:

- (a) the replacement will be elected by secret workplace ballot under Rule 25; and
- (b) the person elected will serve the balance of the term of the person replaced.

**Rule 23.7** A Northern Ireland Committee member:

- (a) must be a full member of the Union; and
- (b) ceases to be a Northern Ireland Committee member automatically on ceasing to be a full member of the Union.

- Rule 23.8** The Area Secretary (Northern Ireland), will send details of the election results immediately to:
- (a) the General Secretary; and
  - (b) the Northern Ireland Office.

- Rule 23.9** The Area Secretary (Northern Ireland) will be an employee of the Union who shall be:
- (a) appointed by a panel that will include the Chair of Northern Ireland and at least two (2) of the following  
The National  
Chair The  
General  
Secretary  
The Deputy General Secretary
  - (b) Shall have their appointment approved by the National Executive Committee.

### Meetings

- Rule 23.10** The Northern Ireland Area Committee will meet whenever it deems necessary, but not less than twice yearly. A meeting may be called at the request of:
- (a) the Area Chair (Northern Ireland); or in his/her absence
  - (b) the Area Vice-Chair (Northern Ireland); or in their absence
  - (c) the Area Secretary (Northern Ireland); or in their absence
  - (d) a majority of branches that make up the quorum of the Northern Ireland Area Committee.

- Rule 23.11** The Area Chair (Northern Ireland), or if he/she is not available the Area Vice- Chair (Northern Ireland), is responsible for convening the Northern Ireland Area Committee meetings. Except in cases of urgency, at least 48 hours' notice will be given to all members of the Northern Ireland Area Committee by circular or by printed public announcement.

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  - (d) assisting the National Executive Committee and General Secretary in carrying out the Rules and objects of the Union;
  - (e) fulfilling the requirements of Rule 23 and administering and safeguarding all Northern Ireland Area Committee finance;
  - (f) keeping written attendance records of the names of the members present at each meeting of the Northern Ireland Area Committee;
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- Rule 23.9** The Area Chair (Northern Ireland), or if he/she is not available the Area Vice-Chair (Northern Ireland), is responsible for convening the Northern Ireland Area Committee meetings. Except in cases of urgency, at least 48 hours' notice will be given to all members of the Northern Ireland Area Committee by circular or by printed public announcement.

*The terms of this motion were incorporated into the revised Rules & Constitution for 2023.*

### SECURITY AND CUSTODY

- 4** That the NEC enter into negotiations with HMPPS and any other relevant parties to have tinned items removed from canteen lists and the packaging replaced with a less dangerous and environmentally friendly alternative.

*This issue has been raised through the safety group meeting and is ongoing.*

## **AWARDS**

- 5** That Conference award Dave Cook Honorary Life membership of the POA due to his outstanding work at local and National level.

*The terms of this motion were dealt with by the NEC and administration of the Union.*

- 6** That Conference award Willie Carle Honorary Life membership of the POA due to his outstanding work at local and National level.

*The terms of this motion were dealt with by the NEC and administration of the Union.*

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 9** Conference recognises the stressful working environment which our members work and the problems they face in trying to deal with their mental health.

Each workplace has its own individual challenges for our members therefore Conference instructs all POA Branches to enter into negotiations with their Governor/Director/CEO to implement the HSE Stress Management Standards to improve the working environment for our members.

*Branch Secretary Circular 008/23 was promulgated on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023.*

## **EQUALITIES**

- 10** That Conference instructs the NEC to enter into negotiations with HMPPS to establish clear guidance for managers who manage staff undergoing IVF treatment.

*There have been on-going negotiations with HMPPs who have issued interim guidance which is subject to on-going negotiations.*

## **OPERATIONS**

- 11** The NEC enter negotiations with HMPPS to ensure that all operational managers including Governors in the closed estate and other appropriate establishments carry the same PPE, cuffs batons, anti-ligature knives and PAVA spray that uniformed grades have to wear.

*This has been raised with HMPPS and is subject to ongoing consultation.*

- 12** NEC enter into negotiations to review the current Razor policy, including Risk assessments and S.S.O.W. and the manner in which they are issued.

*The NEC has entered into consultation/negotiation on a number of pilot projects and is currently awaiting the results of the latest pilot with a view with replacing razors with electronic devices.*

- 13** That non-effectives for the purposes of profiling be reviewed to increase to a real figure that reflects sickness, (from the monthly HMPPS returns), all training requirements and leave (taking into account 37-39-41 hour weeks and long service additional days).

*The NEC has entered into consultation/negotiation in respect of non-effectives and whilst the principle of increasing non-effectives has been agreed the amount of the increase has not been agreed.*

- 14** That Conference instructs the NEC to utilise whatever means available to get PAVA & SPEAR into those prisons already assessed suitable to use it.

*This has been achieved.*

## **HR**

- 17** Conference authorises the NEC to seek to implement that when a member of staff is dismissed, and this is overturned for whatever reason by the PGD hearing the appeal that the Governing Governor who made this decision is investigated by a director level who will deem suitability for the post.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation.*



**18** Conference authorises the NEC to seek to implement that when a member of staff is dismissed, and this is upheld by the PGD hearing the appeal and is then subsequently overturned for whatever reason by an Employment Tribunal that the Governing Governor who made this decision and PGD who upheld this decision are both investigated by a director level to deem suitability for the post.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation.*

**22** Conference instructs the NEC to negotiate with HMPPS to amend PSI 01/2017 – Attendance Management Policy, to include “work related stress” under section 2.141 – sick leave excusal arrangements as per the document entitled “Sick Leave Excusals” (All HMPPS Staff – Prison/HQ and NPS) on the My Hub under HR. At present it only includes disease, injury and assault whilst on duty, where as the SLE document includes work related stress. There’s no point in having guidance if it’s not in the policy.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiations.*

**27** Conference to mandate the NEC to engage with the employer to recognise over 20 years service by introducing medal clasps.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiations.*

**28** NEC to negotiate with employers for the introduction of the PE CM role This position should be a separate specialist position on the annex G and be included in the gym staffing figures. Being allocated the 10% of the groups effective hours for departmental management tasks the remaining hours will be used for PE delivery.

*A Pilot has taken place without any consultation with the POA and we are awaiting consultation to commence.*

- 30** For the POA NEC to engage with HMPPS to create a new, long-term solution to detached duty requirements. Aiming to stop the over recruitment of staff in areas of the country that are within 10% of their targeted staffing levels.

*There have been on-going discussions with HMPPs regarding detached duty which is on-going. The current operational pressures has meant that this has not been achieved this together with the fact that currently there are surplus volunteers, but discussions are on-going.*

- 31** The NEC clarify jointly with the employer on the maximum number of red hours that can be profiled in each week as a percentage of hours worked. This is to stop Governors profiling excessive red hours in some groups of unified staff.

*This has formed part of the evidence to the Pay Review Body also been consultation/ negotiation with the workforce development team which includes SANE0 the new rostering tool.*

- 32** That Operational Support grades are not considered operational until they have completed their national training. This would protect them from covering their duties that can include ACCT supervision during night shifts, gate duties, searching staff and visitors.

It would also raise the issue that OSGs are entitled to their training as much as Officers, who are not considered operational until they pass their training.

*There has been partial success in that HMPPs have agreed this for certain tasks and that the mandatory training for OSGs should take place and training is being rolled out across the estate. Lessons learned from Wandsworth have been included in the new training. The POA have had an invitation to attend the updated 3- week course.*

- 36** That Conference mandate the NEC, to enter into negotiations with our employer, to have Long Covid recognised as an underlying medical issue.

*The NEC have entered into negotiations to have Long Covid recognised as an underlying medical issue. A new occupational health assessment and support package has been agreed for those who have long-term chronic illnesses which includes Long Covid. There is an ongoing campaign to have Long Covid defined as an industrial injury.*

- 37** That Conference mandate the NEC, to enter talks with our employer to have the 5 days leave which OSGs get after 10 years service, to be given to all OSG's irrespective of length of service, including new starters and operational bands 3 -5.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation.*

- 38** For the NEC to challenge HMPPS on the guidance for the OSP Scheme and remove the guidance that states; members of staff on sick monitoring cannot participate in the scheme.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation.*

- 39** Glasses Vouchers

This Conference instructs NEC to negotiate with the employer for an increased financial package towards eyecare for those who require it.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation.*

- 40** Operational Grades in OMU

There is limited scope for progression and promotional opportunities, for B3 operational grades, along with increased resilience pressures across the estate, therefore this Conference instructs the NEC to negotiate with the employer that via natural wastage and future recruitment all prison offender manager job roles should be advertised and recruited for operational staff only.

*This has been raised regularly at every meeting on OMIC and keywork and is subject to ongoing consultation and negotiation.*

- 41** That Conference mandates the NEC to negotiate with HMPPS a national agreement: that after completing temporary promotion for a period 12 months or over, staff attain substantive promotion without the requirement of assessment or accreditation.

*This has been raised at the HR Whitley and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation.*

- 42** Conference direct the NEC to engage with HMPPS to ensure that utility vests be issued to all operational staff as general issue.

*This has been raised with HMPPS and is subject to ongoing consultation/negotiation at the Health and Safety Whitley.*

## **TDD**

- 44** Alternative Accommodation

This Conference notes as a result of COVID-19 there was an increased use of alternative accommodation that did not match cell certification PSI. This Conference moves that's going forward no further accommodation which does not meet the cell certification PSI should be implemented across the estate.

*This has been raised with HMPPS and is subject to ongoing consultation.*

## **PENSIONS**

- 45** For a pensions forum to be put in place to assist those members coming up to retirement or deciding to go part time. The changes to the pensions, and the complexity of going part time is causing staff excessive amounts of stress and anxiety, at one of the most stressful times of their lives. Prison managers are not trained to assist and complete the forms. The agencies that staff deal with appear incompetent at best. The decision-making process around how to take your pension has been made so complex by changing circumstances, it is almost impossible for staff to make an informed decision. Those approaching retirement or wishing to go part-time at that time of their careers, need the right support and help to ensure that the transition goes smoothly and without a hitch.

*This has been raised not only with the employer through the Whitley process but Ministers as well. This work is ongoing.*

- 47** That Conference mandates the NEC to negotiate with HMPPS a national agreement: Flexible working hours to negate the effect of pension abatement, for staff with Reserved Right Pensions, who have been re-employed on a part-time basis.

*There are ongoing discussions regarding this issue, but the solution will not rest solely with the employer on the issue of abatement as any agreement going forward would need the agreement of Treasury and Government.*

## **MATTERS AFFECTING THE UNION**

- 49** For the NEC to give monthly update on Disputes that a branch has submitted.

*Monthly updates on Disputes are provided at NEC Meetings by the Disputes Committee.*

- 54** The POA NEC fully support all trade unions in their current industrial campaigns within the legal constraints that we are currently restricted by.

*The NEC continue to support other Trade Unions in Industrial Campaigns and legally where we can. This has recently been done through a Judicial Review to stop Agency workers breaking strikes. At present along with other Unions the JR was successful but indications are that Government intend to bring the issue back for further consultation. The POA also provide support to other unions through the TUC and Trade Union Co-ordinating Group and GFTU.*

- 63** That Conference Accept Conference Paper 1 Race Action Plan policy replacing the existing policy.

*The Race Action Plan has been progressed.*

- 64** That Conference Accept Conference Paper 2 Sexual Harassment Policy replacing the existing policy.

*This work is continuing with the TUC Working Group.*

- 65** Conference recognises the benefits presented by our Financial Advisor that it is financially prudent for the National Executive Committee to invest money rather than just holding in a deposit account given the inflationary pressures at present. Conference therefore approve the NEC invest monies as advised by our financial advisor and have autonomy to do so within the parameters of the Rules and Constitution primarily Rule 14. Conference also recognise that investment is not an exact science and that the value of the investment can go up and down, therefore it is in the interest of the POA to have a long-term ethical investment with regular yearly reports to Conference regarding the portfolio.

*The terms of this motion were dealt with by the General Secretary and administration of the Union.*

**66** Welfare Fund

Conference recognises the benefits presented by our Financial Advisor that it is financially prudent for the Welfare Committee/NEC to invest money rather than just holding in a deposit account given the inflationary pressures at present. Conference therefore approves the Welfare Committee/NEC to invest monies as advised by our Financial Advisor and have autonomy to do so within the parameters of the rules and constitution primarily Rule 14. Conference also recognise that investment is not an exact science and that the value of the investment can go up and down, therefore it is in the interest of the POA to have a long-term ethical investment with regular yearly reports to conference regarding the portfolio in respect of the Welfare Fund.

*The terms of this motion were dealt with by the General Secretary and administration of the Union.*

**67** Following the success of the Women's workshop in 2022, Conference supports additional workshops at a frequency determined by the NEC.

*A very successful Women's Workshop was run in 2023 and there are plans subject to NEC determination for future workshops.*

**69** Conference recognises trade unions have long fought for equality and their memberships have become more diverse as the population and society have changed.

The POA Equality Committee needs to be restructured to meet the needs of its members with protected characteristics and ensure their voice is heard not only within this trade union but with employers, Government, and society.

Conference instructs the NEC to set up a working party from within its membership to restructure the equality committee and bring back its recommendations to Conference 2024 for debate and disposal.

*This has been partially achieved in that we have recruited from the field both women and black members and are in the process of looking at Disabled and LGBT members.*

## **70** Future Generation POA Leaders

Conference recognise it is important to plan for the future to ensure existing and potential future trade union leaders of the POA are trained to lead the POA to the highest standards so that the POA membership benefits as a trade union whether those individuals become future NEC Officials or Full Time Officers. Financial investment in education and political leadership courses are critical to ensure we are planning for future generations so that we can have the very best leaders moving into a future generation.

Conference therefore endorses a feasibility study of suitable educational and political training to ensure we are planning for the future of the POA. The feasibility study will look at the costings over the next 10 years and produce a Conference paper that can be considered by delegates at Conference May 2024.

*It was proposed that these be reviewed by the NEC in conjunction with the working-group and that this is reported back to Conference in 2024.*

**71** That Conference agree a review of the criteria for HLM is overdue as we see increases year on year to the highest award that can be given to any individual in the POA. Conference therefore agrees to a review led by the National Chair, Scottish Chair, Area Chair Northern Ireland, General Secretary and one HLM with a policy outcome to be considered by Annual Conference 2024.

*It was proposed that these be reviewed by the NEC in conjunction with the working-group and that this is reported back to Conference in 2024.*

## **PAY**

**72** Conference gave its mandate to the NEC to return to giving evidence to the PSPRB to improve the pay of its members.

Conference instructs the NEC to visit selected workplaces to listen to the opinion of its members prior to putting in its pay submissions to the PSPRB.

*This has been achieved.*

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

- 73** Conference to support the Campaign to abolish the current Pay Review Body and replace with collective bargaining.

Conference believes that the unfit Pay Review Body for Health should be abolished and replaced by collective bargaining between the Government and Agenda for change trade unions. The Conference is invited to support the campaign with others for abolition of the PRB.

Conference is further invited to support action to undermine the Pay Review body and show to publicly how unfit the PRB is.

*The POA in conjunction with other Health Trade Unions have raised the failure of the PRB Process with NHS England and this year there have been no collective submissions to the PRB. Additionally, some health trade unions have passed motions at conference in the same vein.*

- 74** We ask Conference to support the POA Branch at Mersey Care in negotiating equivalent terms and conditions for those members on Bank Contracts (Zero hours) with those on permanent contracts.

*There are currently national negotiations regarding bank staff and their terms and conditions as part of non-pay negotiations. These are in the early stages and are complex in that there are varying reasons for staff choosing to be employed on Bank Contracts.*

- 75** That Conference accept Conference Paper 3 on the changes in respect of Secure Health Care Services to ensure that staff working across mental health services both private and public sector are enabled to become members of the POA.

*The terms of this motion were incorporated into the revised Rules & Constitution for 2023.*

## **PARLIAMENTARY**

- 77** Pension Age

Conference condemns Government for refusing to lower the retirement age and requests an update from the NEC about their continued campaign to reduce the pension age.

*The campaign continues until we get pension justice. Government say all the right things but so far when the NEC are in dialogue with them there has been no progress or agreement reached but we will continue to have that dialogue with whatever political party forms the next Government.*



## **INTERNATIONAL**

**78** At Annual Conference 2022 the NEC sponsored an emergency motion on supporting the Ukrainian people. During the debate delegates brought to the NEC's attention there were other areas of the world which should be supported.

Therefore, Conference instructs the NEC to formulate an international policy which will include contact with international organisations and sister unions abroad to share experiences and work in solidarity. Solidarity means speaking out when fellow trade unionists are under threat – in Colombia, Burma, or Palestine, for instance. Solidarity also means working with sister trade unions to build their organisations on their own terms. Unions are involved in a number of projects which aim to assist trade unions abroad to increase their capacity, to defend their rights and to enable them to promote development by improving the lives of working people and creating a more just society.

Conference believes the POA and its members should be at the centre of these projects.

*The POA NEC continue our International work as directed by Conference around the world. We recognise the importance of interacting with Trade Unions in different countries and campaigning not just on POA matters but workers rights everywhere. Our plan for the future will also be outlined in a Conference Paper in May 2024 for further ratification.*