



# Special Conference Report

October 2020





National Education Union

Special Conference  
3 October 2020  
Online

President: Robin Bevan

# **REPORT OF THE ONLINE SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION UNION HELD ON 3 OCTOBER 2020**

## **Adoption of Standing Orders**

Jerry Glazier (for the Executive) moved,  
Phillipa Kearns (for the Executive) seconded:

1. The order of the business on the Agenda will be decided by the Conference Committee.
2. The report of the Conference Committee (CC) on the order of business will be made available to members of the Conference before the commencement of Conference.
3. The mover of an Executive Motion shall be allowed four minutes for his/her speech and the seconder shall be allowed three minutes.
4. The movers of an amendment shall be allowed four minutes for their speech and any subsequent speakers shall be allowed three minutes.
5. No amendment shall be considered which has not been submitted by a District and placed on the Agenda in accordance with the timetable previously circulated.
6. Whenever an amendment is under consideration, no second amendment shall be considered until the vote on the first amendment is declared. Once the decision on the first amendment has been declared, subject to the provisions of Standing Order 5, then a further amendment may be moved but only one amendment shall be submitted for discussion at any one time.
7. Any debate on an amendment, may be closed by a motion “that Conference now votes” being proposed, seconded and carried, although no speech shall be interrupted for the purpose of proposing such a motion. This motion will be put to the meeting without debate. It may not be proposed unless and until the amendment being debated has been proposed and seconded and until at least one speech has been taken against the amendment providing there are delegates who have indicated an intention to speak against it.
8. Where an amendment is under discussion, the motion “Conference now votes” will apply only to that amendment. After Conference has voted on the amendment, debate will continue. Subsequently a proposal “that Conference now returns to the substantive motion” may be proposed, seconded and put to the meeting without debate.
9. Any debate on the substantive motion may be terminated by a motion “that Conference now votes.” This motion will be put to the meeting without debate
10. A List of Speakers who have submitted cards through Survey Monkey, in accordance with the previously circulated timetable, will be circulated on 2 October.

- a) Cards received on the day of the Conference will be put in a random and female/non-female speaking order at the end of the speakers list in order of receipt in female/non-female order.
  - b) Members of Conference that have spoken twice or more during Conference will be added to the speaking order after cards handed in under Standing Order 10 and 10 a). This shall not apply to movers and seconders of motions and amendments or members exercising the right of reply.
11. The mover of the Executive Motion shall have the right of reply, on the original motion or one amendment.
  12. The mover of the Executive Motion who has accepted an amendment shall have the right of reply on the amended motion or one subsequent amendment.
  13. The right of reply shall be exercised only after the closure has been applied and subsequently no further debate shall be allowed on the question.
  14. No member shall speak more than once on the same motion nor on the same amendment except in the exercise of the right of reply and no new matter shall be introduced by the mover in reply.
  15. The Chairperson, in the interest of orderly debate, shall have the power to seek the approval of Conference to vary the order of discussion and amendments to the Motion.
  16. No motion or amendment may be withdrawn, nor mover or seconder replaced, without the consent of the Conference.
  17. The decision of the Chairperson on any point shall be final. If any decision is challenged, it shall be done at the next session of Conference as first business.

The following procedure shall be adopted in dealing with any challenge to the decision of the Chairperson:

- a) The Chairperson shall vacate the Chair in favour of the Vice-Chairperson.
  - b) The Vice-Chairperson shall read out to Conference the decision of the Chairperson which is the subject of the challenge.
  - c) The member of Conference making the challenge shall then have five minutes to speak to the challenge.
  - d) The Chairperson whose decision is being challenged shall be allocated five minutes to answer the challenge.
  - e) The motion which will be the Chairperson's ruling will then be put to Conference without further debate.
18. Every motion shall be put to the vote with a digital show of hands using the \*online facility agreed by the Executive. The Chairperson will declare the result. If the Chairperson decides, a full weighted digital vote will be completed through the \*online facility. Accredited members who logged in at the start, but are temporarily absent from the Conference session, may authorise other members of Conference to digitally vote on their behalf. A full digital vote shall not be used for procedural

motions, except and unless the declaration of the Chairperson is challenged. The result of a digital vote cannot be challenged.

19. The proposer of an amendment which has been carried shall have the right of reply on the amended motion or one subsequent amendment as they are then in effect the “owner” of the motion.
20. Delegates who wish to raise a point of order must quote the relevant standing order via the online conference chat facility (which is reserved exclusively for this purpose).

\*digital voting system (*Changelab*) - shall be used for delegate voting and full instructions on how to vote will be sent to delegates in advance of the Conference.

### **Report of the Conference Committee**

Gerald Clark, CC (moved)

Merike Williams, CC (seconded)

The Report of the Conference Committee was received

### **Adoption of the Report of Conference 2019**

Amanda Martin, Executive (moved)

Daniel Kebede, Executive (seconded)

The Report of Conference 2019 was adopted

### **Adoption of Financial Statement & Auditors Report**

Hazel Danson, National Treasurer (moved)

The Financial Statements & Auditors Report were adopted

### **Adoption of the Report of the Executive – Section A**

Daniel Kebede, Executive (moved)

Louise Atkinson, Executive (seconded)

Section A of the Report of the Executive was adopted

### **Adoption of the Report of the Executive – Section B**

Jerry Glazier, Executive (moved)

Louise Regan, Executive (seconded)

Amendments to National Rules as follows:

Group	Paragraph	Amendment	Decision
1	5.3 8.2.2(vii)(c)	Line 2 amend January to September.	Carried
2	5.5	Line 6 amend December to August.	Carried
3	6.2	Lines 3 and 4, delete 'a newly qualified member during a period when no subscription is required' (no longer accurate with the subs academic year).	Carried
4	6.3*	Delete first sentence 'If... form'. Retain last sentence only 'the union will not assist applicants with pre-existing issues.' (contradictory/unclear).	Carried
5	8.1.7* 13.18  8.1.8	Line 2, first sentence, add 'national' before 'elections'.  Line 2 delete 'an' and replace with 'a national' before 'election'.	Carried
6	8.2.1(i)	Delete 'normally'.	Carried
7	9	Insert new paragraph in line with 8.1.2:  Regional and Wales Councils  In accordance with rule 8.1.2 the Executive shall establish Councils in each of the English regions and Wales to engage and mobilise members across the regions and Wales. The Executive will agree a constitution for these bodies which will include the provision for a levy on all local districts to fund their activities.	Carried
8	12	insert new rule:  Equalities Sections (Black, LGBT+ and Disabled)  As detailed in Executive Report. Omitted from original Rule Book – parallel Rule for Independent schools, Post-16 Establishments and Support Staff Sections	Carried

9	13.8.1* 13.16.1* 15.4* 15.9* 15.11* 15.11(ii)* 15.12 15.19* 16.2.1*	Insert 'the elected' before Deputy and delete '(Policy)'.	Carried
10	13.8.2*	Lines 4 and 5, delete: 'and shall be made in accordance with the nomination guidelines which have been approved by the independent scrutineer'. (the Executive and Conference agree the election nomination processes).	Carried
11	13.8.9	Line 5, (and all similar) add: 'factual' before 'statement of biographical details'.	Carried
12	15.13	Line 2 add: 'who will be the President' after 'Returning Officer'.	Carried
13	15.21	Insert new paragraph as follows:  When the Joint General Secretaries or the General Secretary declare their intention to retire at the end of their term of office, they can continue in office beyond their five-year term as allowed for by legislation.	Withdrawn
14	16.1.3	Line 3, amend: reference to 'Annual Report' to 'Executive Report'.	Carried
15	16.4.	Delete paragraph on the basis that Conference does not appoint scrutineers under digi-voting system.	Carried
16	13.8.10	Add 'The role-sharing of an Executive seat (geographical, sector or section) will be accepted when requested if one or both of the proposed role-share	Carried

	<p>13.13.1 (d)</p> <p>13.14 (f)</p> <p>13.15 (g)</p>	<p>partners is a disabled member and meets the requirements under the Equality Act to request a reasonable adjustment for the role and whose name appears on the register at the date of notification of the timetable for the election under Rule 11.14. Potential role-share partners will stand as joint candidates and nomination by districts/workplaces will be for both partners. Two women standing as role-share partners in geographical seats will be treated as women candidates for the purposes of the 'guarded' seat arrangements. If one partner in a role-share resigns, there will be a by-election.'</p> <p>Add 'Role-share candidates shall submit a joint election statement up to the limit by Rule and individual biographies up to the 100-word limit.'</p>	
17	New Rule 13.9.3	'The Senior Vice-President would be the first candidate to reach the quota in the Union's Vice-Presidents' election. If the two elected candidates reach the quota at the same stage of the count, the Senior Vice-President will be the candidate with the most votes at the end of that stage of the count.'	Carried
18	Rule 22.3 is amended by the new material added which is underlined	If a member (including a member who is in membership under a Joint Partnership Scheme) is convicted of a criminal offence or consents to a caution, or <u>the Teaching Regulation Authority prohibits the member from teaching or makes a finding of unacceptable professional conduct or is barred from working with children and/or vulnerable adults by the Disclosure and Barring Service, except where there is no material relevance to her/his fitness to be a member of the Union, her or his right to Union membership and all claims and entitlements to Union benefits shall be</u>	Carried



	New Rule 22.4 and present Rule 22.4 is renumbered as Rule 22.5.	<p>reviewed by the Professional Conduct (Criminal Convictions) Committee and the Executive, and if so decided the member shall forfeit such rights, claims and entitlements.</p> <p>If the Teaching Regulation Authority imposes an Interim Prohibition Order on a member the Professional Conduct (Criminal Convictions) Committee and the Executive may suspend the member from membership pending the outcome of the Teaching Regulation Authority proceedings.</p>	
19	7.2.1 13.1  13.12.2 Appendix D	<p>Delete 70 and Replace with 55</p> <p>Delete 70 in line 1;</p> <p>in line 7 Delete 70 and replace with 55 and</p> <p>Delete 'In both years' and Replace with 'From 2021'</p> <p>In line 1 Delete 'four and'</p> <p>Amend heading to 'three members per English district'.</p>	Lost

## **Motion 1**

### **Covid-19 and Safe Return**

Niamh Sweeney, Executive (moved)

Robin Head, Executive (seconded)

Conference congratulates our community of workplace reps and officers for their tremendous work ensuring schools and colleges remained open for key worker and vulnerable children throughout lockdown and putting safety at the heart of phased wider opening during the summer term and full re-opening in September.

Conference notes that the focus on health and safety during lockdown has increased the number of reps and strengthened the union by giving us bargaining leverage at many more workplaces.

The Union wants schools and colleges to be open for as many pupils as possible but achieving this safely depends on how effectively wider public health measures keep virus infection and reproduction (R) rates low.

Conference calls on the government and public health authorities to:

1. Very carefully consider the closure of, or restrictions on, other activities and services before closing schools;
2. Boost the effectiveness of local Test, Track and Isolate (TTI), including comprehensive sample testing in schools/colleges to ascertain how re-opening impacts on the safety of parents, grandparents and staff, with all findings made public;
3. Prepare more detailed contingency plans for possible local or wider school closures by being clear about the infection/R rate thresholds at which schools/colleges in an area should close or move to smaller class sizes, including detailed guidance and resources for blended learning provision.

**Conference instructs the Executive to:**

- a. **Establish a members' working group to look at strategies to develop blended learning.**
- b. **Call on workplace reps and officers to regularly review the safety of full opening in their schools and colleges and proactively respond to local outbreaks by:**
  - I. **Discussing safety concerns with members at every opportunity, utilizing digital tools to maximise member engagement**
  - II. **Collectively raising safety concerns with school/college leadership, establishing formal JCNC arrangements wherever possible**
  - III. **Negotiating appropriate control measures that maintain the safety of staff, students, their families, and the wider community**
  - IV. **Sharing experiences and best practice, digitally when necessary, to spread wins and identify a bargaining calendar of wider concerns that can be addressed collectively across the academic year.**

**The Motion was carried as amended**

### **Amendment 1**

Jenny Cooper, Brent (moved)

Paul Horsewood, Brent (seconded)

*After "Conference calls on the government and public health authorities to" add:.*

- 4. Give detailed guidance to special schools on how to use individual risk assessments to protect pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and underlying health conditions with access to blended learning or remote learning where this is the only safe option for schools. Give detailed guidance to special schools on how to safely run provision for students who access their teaching only through a 1:1 or 2:1 staffing ratio and where these staff are unable to keep the student safe without physical intervention strategies.*

*After "Establish a members' working group" add: "which includes at least one special school representative"*

**The Amendment was carried**

### **Amendment 2**

Deirdre Murphy, Bedford (moved)

Paul McGarr, Tower Hamlets & City (seconded)

*Add new fourth paragraph:*

*Conference condemns the government's systematic failure to deliver the resources needed to open schools in a safe and sustainable manner.*

*Add to Conference calls on the government and public health authorities to:*

- 4. Ensure measures are taken to allow schools to remain open safely and sustainably, including:
  - a) investment in additional school buildings and 'Nightingale' schools to create more schools and smaller classes*
  - b) investment to increase teacher numbers, including incentives to re-recruit ex teachers and a major expansion of teacher training*
  - c) Fund local authorities to recruit, and train support staff to support schools and ensure wraparound pre and post school hours, which many families depend on, are available.*
  - d) Ensure all children have computers and internet access to support their learning in the event of the need to move to 'blended learning' or any future lockdowns.*
  - e) Much wider mass and regular testing, with results in minutes not days, and weekly testing of school staff.**

*Note: That if accepted, the lettering in "conference instructs the Executive to:" would need to be capital A and B.*

**Add new paragraph at end:**

***Conference further instructs the Executive to put significant union resources into publicising these demands as widely as possible among members, parents, students and the wider public and put building this campaign at the heart of the union's work in the coming weeks and months.***

The Amendment was carried

## **Motion 2**

### **Winning in the Workplace after Covid-19**

Heather McKenzie, Executive (moved)

Phil Clarke, Executive (seconded)

Conference affirms that the COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the importance and commitment of education staff. It has also highlighted problems caused by fragmentation of local strategic oversight, privatisation of services and supply staffing, imposition of PRP and a recruitment and retention crisis fuelled by unsustainable workload and poor pay.

Conference believes that the legacy of the COVID-19 crisis must be that conditions in schools and colleges become better not worse for all our members, from NQTs, classroom teachers, support staff and supply staff to school and college leaders.

Conference notes the huge success of Districts in recruiting workplace reps throughout the crisis. Conference reaffirms its desire for 'a rep in every school' and encourages all Districts and Regions to develop plans to maximise rep recruitment.

Conference reaffirms that winning at the workplace is fundamental to the Union's strategy, endorses the work to embed a bargaining calendar and reaffirms its commitment to developing means of supporting workplace reps, members and local officers to win victories at school and college level on matters of pay, workload and working conditions.

Conference further notes the success in achieving new advisory pay scales for schoolteachers as a step towards mandatory national pay scales without PRP and agrees work must continue in pursuit of our policies on pay, workload, privatisation and education funding.

#### **Conference instructs the Executive to:**

- 1. Build on recent success to help secure implementation of national pay increases and pay scales in all workplaces, ensuring all school teachers are paid at least on the new national advisory scales, secure pay progression for all eligible staff this year, and continue to work to remove PRP including through agreements with MATs and a new non-PRP progression system in Wales;**
- 2. Campaign to secure reviews of workload by all employers ensuring that already excessive workload does not increase;**

**3. Analyse successes in rep recruitment and develop, collate, and publicise strategies to support Districts in prioritising rep recruitment and building union strength.**

These key priorities, including developing greater professional unity, should be incorporated into an overall strategic plan, reviewed annually.

**The Motion was carried as amended**

**Amendment 1**

Kiri Tunks, Tower Hamlets & City (moved)  
Mehreen Begg, Croydon (seconded)

*Insert at end of first paragraph:*

*“Covid-19 has had a particularly devastating impact on women’s lives, and this is likely to worsen. Black and disabled women are disproportionately affected.”*

*Add new paragraph 2*

*“Conference notes women were already more likely to be in precarious and low paid work within education and therefore are at risk of job loss and less able to access statutory sick pay and viable pensions. Women have also been subject to pregnancy and maternity discrimination and have lost out on pay and promotion.”*

*After, “Conference instructs the Executive to”: Add new points and renumber accordingly.*

- 2. Campaign for gender impact assessments on all staffing restructures;**
- 3. Complete an audit of those leaving the profession and membership to analyse the impact of lockdown on specific groups of members;**
- 4. Support the Pregnancy & Maternity (Redundancy Protection) Bill;**
- 5. Develop and share good practice on strategies to address gender inequalities at work.**

**The Amendment was carried**

**Amendment 2**

Ann Seuret, West Sussex (moved)  
Gawain Little, Norfolk (seconded)

*Insert new paragraph 4:*

*Conference notes the growth in the number of NEU reps alongside the impact they had in the workplace. In organising an assertive collective voice, positive gains were negotiated for members. This workplace strength was greatly facilitated by clear, coherent national campaigning that let members feel a vital part of a confident national union.*

*In 3 after ‘Districts in’ insert:*

***developing a rep recruitment plan focusing on no rep schools with the largest memberships,***

Add new points at end:

- 4. Support Districts to facilitate active rep networks that seek to develop coordinated activity across all employers as a key component of our aspiration for common national conditions.***
- 5. Review how digital meeting tools could be used in large rural areas to counter travel time and geography being a challenge when organising.***
- 6. Campaign for a fairer deal for supply teachers by appraising and updating all supply members of their rights under the Agency Workers Regulations and to provide training to Regions, Branches, Districts and Advice on assessing and handling AWR claims.***
- 7. Build on recent success to help secure implementation of national pay increases and pay scales in all workplaces, ensuring all school teachers, including supply staff, are paid at least on the new national advisory scales, secure pay progression for all eligible staff this year, and continue to work to remove PRP including through agreements with MATs and a new non-PRP progression system in Wales;”***
- 8. Campaign and negotiate at national and local level for alternatives to agencies to bring supply teaching back in house and aim to achieve pay parity with directly employed staff and have access to TPS.***
- 9. Recognise the ongoing commitment of support staff, particularly evident during the COVID crisis, and campaign to end term-time only contracts for support staff.”***

**The Amendment was carried**

### **Amendment 3**

Anne Swift, North Yorkshire (moved)

Alyson Dermody-Palmer, Camden (seconded)

Add new point 3.

- 3. Provide support and specific advice to school and college leaders to reduce their own workload which has grown during the COVID -19 crisis to unsustainable levels. Use this bespoke support as a means of retaining members as they move into leadership posts.***

*And renumber accordingly*

**The Amendment was carried**

## Motion 3

### Building a Fair Education System After Covid-19

Alex Kenny, Executive (moved)

Jess Edwards, Executive (seconded)

Conference notes:

1. The effects of Covid-19 on education, public health, employment and social well-being are profound and uneven;
2. The impact of the pandemic is most strongly felt in working-class and black communities.

Conference congratulates school and college staff across the UK, for their work to support families, and young people's education, during the pandemic.

Conference believes that:

- i. The crisis exposed weaknesses in our systems of assessment and accountability;
- ii. The government's response demonstrated that policy-making is based on data not pupil need, and highlighted its distrust of teachers and leaders.
- iii. The exams grading fiasco exposed the fragility of a qualifications system assessed solely through timed exams and revealed systemic faults in the awarding process;
- iv. The government's intention of restoring SATs and a largely unmodified examination system in 2021 will:
  - a. Prevent schools from meeting students' needs, following the long period of closure;
  - b. Further disadvantage social groups whose access to educational resources means that they will be less well prepared for statutory tests and examinations.

Conference welcomes the Union's campaigning alongside More Than A Score (MTAS) against Baseline, SATs and the phonics and times tables tests.

Conference instructs the Executive to:

- I. Continue working with MTAS in its campaign on primary assessment;**
- II. Campaign for:**
  - A. The replacement of SATs in 2021 by a system of moderated teacher assessment;**
  - B. A mixed model for GCSE and A levels for 2021 including reduced content and moderated teacher assessment;**
- III. Call on headteachers and governors to refuse to require preparation for SATs, instead concentrating all resources on recovery;**
- IV. Call for a suspension of Ofsted inspections and performance tables for 2020/21 and develop a long-term alternative;**
- V. Establish a high-level commission into exams drawing on research and international evidence to make proposals for a fairer, more inclusive,**

**national process which validates pupil achievement, supports teacher professionalism and raises education standards;**

**VI. Seek to work with other education unions;**

**VII. Seek the support of opposition parties for these demands;**

**VIII. Develop further campaigning steps with members.**

**The Motion was carried as amended**

### **Amendment 1**

Deirdre Murphy, Bedford (moved)

Jennifer Osodo, Wandsworth (seconded)

*Add to Conference believes that:*

- v) there are demographic groups of children, including Black, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and other groups who sometimes attain less than their white and/or middle-class peers from Teacher Assessment.*
- vi) the government was right to take Centre-Assessed Grades (CAG) for GCSE and A-level Grades, but that they should carry out an analysis of how different demographics of students benefitted or were disadvantaged by this.*
- vii) the temporary changes made to EHC plans for SEND children to make them more 'flexible' during the Covid-19 crisis have had a huge impact on these children and on the rights of disabled people and that there should not be any extension of this.*

**Add new Instruction V and re-number:**

**V. Call on Ofqual to carry out and publish research on the difference between CAG and the scaled GCSE and A-level grades for Black children, Girls vs Boys and Disabled children.**

**The Amendment was carried**

### **Amendment 2**

Nalini Amichund, Croydon (moved)

Lucy Coleman, Oxfordshire (seconded)

*Add after sentence beginning, "Conference welcomes the Union's campaigning..."*

*Conference believes it would be wrong to reintroduce these tests and commits the union to seeking to prevent this happening.*

*After, "Conference instructs the Executive to"*

*Delete VIII and replace with*

*VIII Develop our campaign to stop SATS along the following lines:*

- a) Producing materials including postcards, posters, pamphlets and videos to build the campaign, among members, parents and the wider public.*



- b) *Declaring our ambition to ballot primary members, if necessary, on a SATS boycott if government seeks to impose them next year.*
- c) *Investigating industrial action ballots around workload and other impacts of SATS preparation on members to reinforce this campaign.*
- d) *Seeking others' experience on winning ballots despite government-imposed thresholds.*
- e) *Building the basis for successful ballots by:*
  - (i) *Organising to build primary school organisation following the success in these areas during lockdown*
  - (ii) *Urging districts to call members meetings and parent facing public meetings to build the campaign (virtually if needed)*
  - (iii) *Calling a series of national meetings along these lines*
  - (iv) *reviewing progress early in 2021 and deciding if we can call a successful ballot to stop SATs - including calling a virtual special conference if needed*

**The Amendment was carried**

### **Amendment 3**

Emma Mort, Warwick (moved)

Christopher Denson, Coventry (seconded)

*Add to Conference believes that:*

- (v) *GCSEs, A Levels and BTECs are clearly unfit for purpose in assessing in any meaningful and fair way student learning and that an alternative urgently needs to be developed and established*

*Add to Conference instructs the Executive to:*

- (vii) *commission and produce a series of articles, pamphlets and other materials putting the case for an end to norm referenced GCSEs and their replacement by criteria-based assessment and an alternative to A Levels and BTECs and to organise meetings*

**The Amendment was carried**

