

Suggested Rule Changes for Annual Women's Conference 2022

The following are suggested changes to the rules for the National Labour Women's Organisation which can be submitted by CLPs or affiliates to the Annual Women's Conference (AWC) for discussion and vote – the deadline is 11 February 2022.

Rule Changes need to achieve a two thirds majority at the AWC and will then be put through the NEC for voting at the subsequent Annual Party Conference. Once agreed by Annual Conference, the rule changes take immediate effect.

Rule Change 1

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause VII Labour Party Women's conference

Amend clause 2: Replace 'The NEC' with 'The National Women's Committee'

So it reads: The National Women's Committee will determine the basis for delegations of women to the Labour Party Women's Conference, with positive action to ensure BAME, LGBT, disabled or young members as delegates'

Reason – the Rules were drawn up before the National Women's Committee (NWC) was established, NWC now has oversight of the AWC and it is therefore appropriate that it sets the basis for delegations.

Rule Change 2

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause VII Labour Party Women's conference

Amend Clause 4 point ii. Insert 'women' after 'fully paid up'

So it reads:

ii. CLPs shall cast a vote on the basis of the actual number of fully paid up women members in the CLP at 31 December preceding the conference.

Reason – building a women's organisation which gives voice to women in the Party should translate into how the card votes are calculated, otherwise there is no incentive to actually recruit and organise women, if the CLPs votes are based on their full membership, including all the male members.

Rule Change 3

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause VII Labour Party Women's conference

Amend Clause 6. Add at end 'These motions will stand alone, will not be included in the Priorities Ballot, and be tabled for debate and moved by representatives of the Welsh and Scottish Women's Committee at Annual Women's Conference'

So it reads: 'In addition each or any Scottish or Welsh Women's Conferences may submit one motion. These motions will stand alone, will not be included in the Priorities Ballot, and be tabled for debate and moved by representatives of the Welsh and Scottish Women's Committee at AWC.'

Reason – the intention of this clause was to ensure that the Welsh and Scottish women could prioritise a topic to bring to the AWC. There has to be a mechanism to ensure the motions, representing the priority given of these devolved structures, are heard, and not merged into a composite. The procedure proposed was agreed by the NWC in Sept 2021, and reflects the procedure followed for the AWC motions that are taken to Annual Conference. A devolved nation's democratic women's structures cannot be treated in the same way as a CLP.

Rule Change 4

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause VII Labour Party Women's conference

Add new point 7: '7. All members of the National Women's Committee (NWC) shall be entitled to attend Annual Women's Conference in an ex officio capacity, able to speak in the debates and to participate in Conference in that ex officio capacity. The Party will ensure costs are met for all NWC members to fulfil this role.'

And renumber accordingly.

Reason – there should be parity with the procedure already in place for NEC members' attendance at Annual Conference. NWC members have a role to play as outlined in the Rules and should not face barriers to attend and participate. Ensuring funding promotes equality between CLPs and affiliates and between reps who can afford to self-fund and those who cannot.

Rule Change 5

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause I Aims and values

Add new point 7: '7. To communicate the activities of the National Women's Organisation including its Committee and Conference including through regular reports published to members.'

Reason – To increase awareness and accountability of the work of the National Women's Committee throughout the Party

Rule Change 6

National Labour Party Women's Organisation; Clause IV Amendment to rules

Clause IV. Amendment to point 1, delete all and insert: "1. Labour Party Women's Conference shall have the power to propose changes to the Labour Party rulebook relating to women through the submissions of rule changes by CLPs, affiliates or the National Women's Committee. Any proposal must secure the support of at least a two thirds majority at Labour Party Women's Conference."

Reason – Building an effective women's organisation in the Party may require amendments to various sections of the Labour's Rulebook not just specifically those relating to the Labour Women's Conference or Committee – for example those relating to Women's Representation and Women's Branches. The representative democratic body of women delegates is best placed to discuss and agree what such changes should be. This updated wording better reflects the situation with Labour's Annual Conference where rule changes can come from CLPs, affiliates or the NEC. The important check of any changes being discussed and agreed (or not) by Labour's sovereign Annual Conference remains.

Rule Change 7

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause VII Labour Party Women's conference

Point 5 replace 'or' with 'and one' so it reads:

'5. One motion and one rule change may be submitted to Labour Party Women's Conference by each affiliated organisation and CLP/Women's Branch. Motions from CLPs/Women's Branches shall be submitted on the same principles outlined in Clause VII.3 above.'

Reason – The Women's Organisation is new and branches have been slow in establishing. Women face many more practical barriers to participation in politics than men. Enabling a motion and a rule change to be

passed by each Women's Branch/CLP will enable women to have a fairer chance of influencing the political and organisational direction of the National Labour Women's Organisation.

Rule Change 8

National Labour Party Women's Organisation; Clause III Structure

Add to point 2 'To facilitate communication and organisation of the Women's Branches, Women's Branch Secretaries, or CLP Women's Officers where a Women's Branch does not yet exist, shall have appropriate access to Party systems in order to email women members'.

So it reads:

2. Women's Branches may be established throughout England, Scotland and Wales, which shall usually be co-terminus with Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs). To facilitate communication and organisation of the Women's Branches, Women's Branch Secretaries, or CLP Women's Officers where a Women's Branch does not yet exist, shall have appropriate access to Party systems in order to email women members'.

Reason – this has been one of the most frequently asked questions from Women's Branch Secretaries and Women's Officers (prior to a WB being established) and should be addressed as soon as possible. It provides the same level of access as currently given to Branch Secretaries. It is not appropriate for a Women's Officer or Women's Branch Secretary to be reliant on other volunteers in order to organise women locally.

Rule Change 9

National Labour Party Women's Committee & Conference; Clause VII Labour Party Women's conference

Point 8, Add at end: 'The motions from the AWC should be moved at Annual Conference by members of the National Women's Committee, as nominated by the NWC. All members of the NWC will be supported, with costs met as necessary, to attend and participate in the Annual Conference in an ex officio capacity.'

Reason – once passed by AWC, the motions no longer 'belong' to any one organisation from within a composite. The resolutions become the property of the AWC and are for the NWC to take forward. This was discussed at the first meeting of the NWC and the Rule change addresses this point. It avoids a situation, for example, where a CLP that originally moved a motion at Women's Conference which is then agreed to go forward, is unrepresented or represented only by a man at Annual Conference.

All members of the NWC should be able to attend Party conference, to fully engage with the wider membership, promote the work of the Women's Organisation, attending training sessions and policy sessions etc. It goes against principles of equality, diversity and inclusion for only those who are able to self-fund to be able to fulfil this role.