

■ Book and pay for accommodation within a certain budget. We will always try to book accommodation that is of a level that provides an appropriate standard of cleanliness and comfort. If you are required to be away from home over-night, we will also pay a subsistence allowance of £40 for each 24-hour period calculated from the time you leave home or work to your return home. If an advance is required for expenses, this can be arranged. Attending a conference should not leave you out of pocket.

■ Write to you to advise your travel arrangements, including maps of the local area and your accommodation details.

■ Ask you to sign a conference agreement. We do expect anyone sent to conference as either a delegate or visitor to attend all conference sessions and to write a written report on the conference. A template can be provided to assist with this.

■ Ask you to share contact details with other branch/regional delegates where possible and meet/speak to each other prior to the start of conference.

If you have any access needs or special requests such as childcare, these can also be made once registered via the online conference system or by asking the branch.

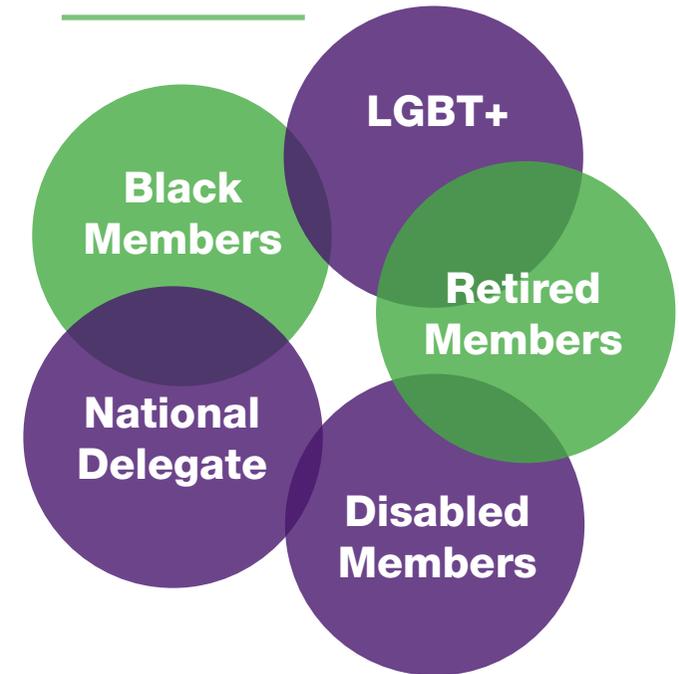
If there is a barrier to you attending conference you would like to go to, it is worth checking if it can be overcome.



If you would like support from a branch officer with regards to understanding the process of conference or speaking on a motion, this can definitely be arranged and is positively encouraged!



A guide to being a conference delegate



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You may have seen emails inviting you to attend conferences as a delegate for UNISON and you may have not paid too much attention because you thought it wasn't something for you, but conferences are open to all members and are a great opportunity to meet with other like-minded members and share information and ideas.

UNISON has several conferences throughout the year which cover self-organised groups (Women, LGBT+, Black Members, Disabled Members, Young Members and Retired Members) and service groups (Community, Local Government, Higher Education and Health). Every year in June, National Delegate Conference takes place, which pulls together all the motions from the other conferences and any additional ones submitted by branches.

Each conference is structured in a similar way. Motions are submitted by branches and self-organised groups to be debated. Motions are explanations of particular issues which the proposer thinks are important and each motion ends with suggestions of actions that UNISON should take in response to the issue.

Each conference delegate is given the opportunity to speak for or against the motion and then to vote on whether to support it or not. The debates can include delegates' personal experience of the issue, so are often very engaging and moving.

Some issues will also be controversial so you should make sure you have read all the motions before you arrive at conference so you should speak to your branch committee members if you are unsure of how to respond to any particular motion.

If there is an issue you have never thought about before, you can speak to officers beforehand to get a better understanding of how the branch would like you to vote. The Branch Committee read the motions and mandate delegates on voting at National Delegate Conference. Self organising groups should do the same.

Members who have attended previous conferences have commented:

- *"This was an incredible experience and from attending, I will take away many thought provoking things."*
- *I particularly enjoyed meeting with other members from all regions."*
- *"It was my first time attending Conference as a delegate and I really enjoyed the experience."*
- *"The Social evening was beautiful and new friends were made, with lots of dancing."*
- *"I found the conference to be very informative and made me think about topics that I normally wouldn't have thought about."*
- *"Overall my first time experience at conference was extremely beneficial and enjoyable, and would be delighted to return to represent branch and members again next year."*



If you are interested in attending a conference, you just need to respond when you receive the email saying that delegates are being sought. If you are selected, you will be registered as a delegate by UNISON Essex Branch who will also:

■ Write to you to request your travel times so you can choose a time that best suits you. We will organise and pay for travel booked via our agent Stewart Travel. Depending on journey times, start times and conference location, we may expect you to travel on the day the conference starts.