**CONSTITUTION**

**NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION**

**AMENDED AS AGREED BY THE BIENNIAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE 26/27 MARCH 2024**

1. NAME

The name shall be THE NATIONAL PENSIONERS CONVENTION, herein after called the NPC or CONVENTION.

1. OBJECTIVE

To promote the welfare and interests of all United Kingdom pensioners and older people in need, by any means deemed by law to be charitable.

In pursuance of this object the NPC will:

* 1. Promote policies beneficial to pensioners, retired and older people.
  2. Encourage the development of educational and other opportunities to enable pensioners, retired and older people to contribute to community activities.
  3. Act as an information resource for pensioners’, retired and older people’s organisations within the United Kingdom.
  4. Provide a platform where matters of concern can be raised and policies and practices developed, paying attention to the particular needs or problems of pensioners, retired and older people.
  5. Make representations to the Government, Members of Parliament, Trade Union Congress, Members of the European Parliament, Health Authorities, Local Authorities and other statutory and voluntary bodies dealing with matters affecting pensioners, retired and older people.
  6. Act at all times without discrimination on grounds of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage or Civil Partnership, Cohabiting partners, Pregnancy & Maternity, Race, Religion & Belief, Sex or Sexual Orientation.

1. MEMBERSHIP
   1. Application for membership of the NPC as a national affiliate shall be open to any national organisation of pensioners, retired and older people, or other organisation which supports the aims and objectives of the Convention with a minimum membership of 5000.
   2. Application for membership of the NPC as a national affiliate shall also be open to any NPC regional group or NPC devolved nation group (representing N Ireland, Scotland or Wales), subject to acceptance by the National Executive Council.
   3. Application as an NPC affiliate shall also be open to any other regional or local organisation of pensioners, retired and older people, or other organisation which supports the aims and objectives of the Convention, subject to acceptance by the National Executive Council.
   4. Application for membership of the NPC shall also be open to individuals who support the aims and objectives of the Convention.
2. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS
   1. There shall be a Biennial Delegate Conference which:
      1. Shall determine NPC policy and constitution.
      2. Shall receive a biennial report on the work of the NPC.
      3. Shall elect NPC officers including the President, four Vice Presidents, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Treasurer.
      4. Shall elect a Standing Orders Committee comprising of 6 members. Honorary officers shall not be permitted to stand for the Standing Orders Committee.
      5. Shall appoint 2 independent examiners (auditors) who shall not be members of the National Executive Council.
      6. May on the recommendation of the National Executive Council appoint Honorary Life Officers who may attend all meetings ex-officio.
   2. The basis of delegate representation and voting rights at the Biennial Delegate Conference and Special Delegate Conference, for those affiliates paying the correct fee, shall be:
      1. National organisations of pensioners, retired and older people as outlined in item 3a:

5000 – 18,000 members – 2 delegates

18,000 – 40,000 members – 3 delegates

40,000 members and over – 4 delegates

* + 1. NPC Regions and NPC devolved nation groups and international pensioner affiliates as outlined in item 3b:

1 delegate per 1000 members up to a maximum of 4 delegates

* + 1. NPC elected officers shall attend the Conference as voting members. Full or part-time NPC employees may attend the Conference as ex-officio, non-voting members.
    2. Any nationally affiliated organisation under items 3a and b not paying the appropriate fee shall only be entitled to 1 delegate.
  1. There shall be a National Executive Council (NEC) which shall:

1. Include the elected Officers (President, four Vice Presidents, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Treasurer).
2. Include two delegates from each affiliated NPC Region and National Organisation of pensioners, retired older people as outlined in 3a and 3b having paid the appropriate fee and in good standing, plus two substitutes for each eligible nominating body. All seats are open to job share managed by the nominating body.
3. Meet 6 times a year (bi-monthly); these meetings may be in person, electronic or a mix of both, with due regard to digital inclusion. Where external circumstances prevent a National Executive Council meeting, or such a meeting is inquorate, the President and two other NPC Officers in consultation with the General Secretary may take decisions on matters of urgency, with such decisions being communicated at the earliest opportunity to the whole National Executive Council.
4. At the discretion of the Chair of the meeting, allow observers to attend and speak, without entitlement to vote.
5. Allow Working Parties to send one observer with speaking rights which shall be confined to their specific Working Party.
6. Delegate day to day responsibility for decisions to the elected Officers.
7. Have the power to appoint Working Parties or Sub-Committees to deal with specific subjects.
8. Receive reports from the General Secretary, Treasurer, Staff and Working Parties on the general activities of the NPC.
9. Approve the Annual Audited Accounts between conferences.
10. Receive motions from National affiliated bodies and NPC Regions and appropriately act on those after due and relevant debate.
11. Determine the number and geographical distribution of the NPC Regional groups.
12. Have the power to co-opt to its meetings, persons to act in an advisory capacity in respect of matters which such persons possess special knowledge. Such persons shall have speaking rights but be without voting rights.
13. Have the power to recommend the level of affiliation fees and subscriptions, subject to the motion to increase fees being circulated to all National affiliates and Regions at least six weeks prior to the meeting of the National Executive Council at which such increases are presented for approval.
14. Allow each National Executive Council member to have only one vote, which may be taken in person or electronically and shall only be exercised at the time a vote is called.
15. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair of the meeting shall call for a second count; if the vote remains tied, the Chair of the meeting shall exercise a casting vote.

d. WORKING PARTIES:

1. Each Working Party shall comprise of no more than ten members, excluding Officers and staff and will be appointed by the first appropriate meeting of the National Executive Council following the Biennial Delegate Conference.
2. Nominations will be sought from National affiliates and NPC Regions, devolved National groups as outlined in items 3a and 3b and NPC Officers, after the Biennial Delegate Conference.
3. National affiliates may nominate up to a maximum of two nominees for each Working Party from within their organisation.
4. NPC Regions may nominate up to a maximum of two nominees for each Working Party from within their Region.
5. No individual, excluding Officers and staff, shall serve on more than two Working Parties.
6. Vacancies arising during the remaining term of office shall be filled by appointment by the National Executive Council. If there is no unsuccessful candidate from the previous election, the General Secretary shall circulate such vacancies to National affiliates and NPC Regions. Subject to the limitations in clauses iii and iv.
7. Each Working Party may, when appropriate present to the National Executive Council the name(s) of an external expert with the relevant knowledge of the subject, for co-option for the remaining term of office of the Working Party, with speaking but not voting rights. Such an external expert may not be a member of the NPC and is not expected to attend every meeting.
8. Each Working Party may, when appropriate, present to the National Executive Council the name(s) of an internal adviser with the relevant knowledge of the subject, for co-option for the remaining term of office of the Working Party, with speaking but not voting rights. Such an internal adviser will be from a nationally affiliated organisation or Region of the NPC and will attend meetings as determined by the Working Party agenda.
9. Each Working Party shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary at their first meeting after the National Executive Council’s approval of nominees. Each role is open to job share as long as it is manageable and is important to the fulfilment of the policy work undertaken.
10. National affiliates and NPC Regions shall strive for a fair representation of gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation in their nominees.
11. The term of office for serving on Working Parties shall be from the end of the first meeting of the National Executive Council following the Biennial Delegate Conference until such time as the National Executive Council appoints members for the next term of office.

e. SUB-COMMITTEES:

From time to time the National Executive Council may convene sub-committees to deal with a given task. Such sub-committees shall:

1. Be appointed by the National Executive Council after seeking nominations from National affiliates and NPC Regions.
2. Contain the number of individuals set by the National Executive Council in order to complete the task.
3. Be subject to the National Executive Council determining whether the process is either one or more updates and/or a final report.
4. Be time-limited and be disbanded at the point at which the National Executive Council considers the task complete.
5. There shall be a National Pensioners' Annual Convention which:
   * 1. Shall take place annually, unless circumstances prevent this, when the event shall be reconvened at the first practicable opportunity.
     2. Shall be open to all pensioners and organisations who have paid a current membership or affiliation fee to NPC.
     3. Shall act as a forum for debate which will inform the NPC on matters of policy and organisation, provide opportunities for education and facilitate the exchange of information.
     4. Shall be held in person or a mix of in-person and online, or if no other option is practicable, wholly online
6. The NPC and its affiliated organisations shall work towards a position where one half of the NPC National Executive Council members are women and that ethnic minorities are represented on such bodies.
7. MOTIONS
   1. Each NPC Region and National pensioners’, retired or older persons’ affiliate shall be entitled to submit to the Biennial Delegate Conference one motion on policy and one amendment to the constitution. All such motions must be received at the National Office at least 15 weeks before the Biennial Delegate Conference and circulated to all delegates at least 13 weeks before the Conference date for amendments. Any amendments have to be received 7 weeks before the conference, with the final agenda being circulated at least 4 weeks before the event.
   2. Subsequently, each NPC Region and National pensioners’, retired or older persons’ affiliate shall be entitled to submit one amendment on motions changing the constitution and three amendments on other motions.
   3. The National Executive Council shall also be entitled to submit motions and amendments to the Biennial Delegate Conference.
   4. Organisations outlined in items 3 a and b shall also be entitled to submit motions to the National Executive Council as appropriate for decision (except those changing the constitution which shall be dealt with by the Biennial Delegate Conference). All such motions shall be received at the National Office at least 28 days before the meeting and circulated to all delegates at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.

6. MEETINGS

* 1. Fourteen days’ notice of all normal meetings of the National Executive Council with appropriate agendas shall be given by the General Secretary, who will receive and process any proposals for debate.
  2. Draft minutes of the Biennial Delegate Conference, National Executive Council shall be taken and retained by the National Office and copies circulated to all officers, co- opted personnel and appropriate delegates, each copy to be signed as correct by the elected Chairperson at the next meeting.
  3. A Special Delegate Conference may be called at the discretion of the National Executive Council; the notice of such together with details of the business to be discussed shall be issued to members not less than 28 days before the date of the meeting.
  4. Quorums:

No meeting shall be held or deliberations exercised in the name of the NPC without a quorum of:

National Executive Council – 20 delegates plus not less than three elected NPC National Officers

7. FINANCE

1. The NPC’s financial year shall run from the 1st January to the 31st December.

b. Annual audited accounts shall be presented to, and approved by a meeting of the National Executive Council no later than the 31st March following the conclusion of the previous Financial Year; except when the Biennial Delegate Conference is held when it should be presented to the Conference.

1. The National Executive Council shall adopt an annual budget on the recommendation of the Finance Working Party and the Treasurer; no later than March in each financial year.
2. The General Secretary and Treasurer shall have delegated authority to incur expenditure that is within the annual budget. No other NPC body shall have authority over any aspect of the annual budget.
3. Where expenditure arises that is not included in the annual budget, the Treasurer shall recommend to the Finance Working Party an Income and Expenditure budget for recommendation to, and ratification by, the National Executive Council.
4. The NPC shall have the power to obtain, collect and receive money and funds by means of contributions, donations, subscriptions, deeds of covenant, legacies, grants or other lawful methods. The income of the NPC shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects as set out in Clause 2 of this Constitution.
5. No portion of funds or income shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of reward to any member or organisation within the NPC unless authorised by the National Executive Council.
6. Payment of reasonable or pre-approved out of pocket expenses may be made to any Officer or approved representative of the National Executive Council.
7. DISSOLUTION

If the National Executive Council, by a two-thirds majority decides at any time notwithstanding the rules applicable to the Biennial Delegate Conference, that on the grounds of expense or otherwise, it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Convention, it shall call a meeting through its elected officers of all associated or affiliated member organisations in good standing who have a right to vote (as set out in rule 4b), giving 21 clear days’ notice and stating the full terms of the dissolution motion which will give instructions for the disposal of assets held by or in the name of the Convention, provided that any assets remain after all debts and liabilities have been cleared. Such assets shall not be paid or distributed among organisations of the Convention but shall be given or gifted to such bodies with similar objects which exist to promote the wellbeing of retired older people.

1. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

No amendment to this Constitution shall be made except by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those delegates attending and entitled to vote at a Biennial or Special Delegate Conference on a motion submitted in accordance with the rules.

**APPENDIX 1:**

**WORKING TOGETHER POLICY:**

**Policy:**

1. The NPC is bound by the Equality Act (2010) and any amendments; and is committed to organising activities at which everyone can participate in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment.
2. The NPC has a zero-tolerance approach to any type of harassment or bullying, (such as but not limited to sexual harassment); aggressive; offensive; disruptive; intimidating and disrespectful behaviour or comments.
3. This policy supports the commitment set out in the NPC rules to promote equality for all and to eliminate prejudice and discrimination. It applies to all forms and aspects of communication at or in connection with an event, in break periods and social settings and includes postings on social media.
4. The structure of the NPC is such that nominations from our national and regional affiliates make up our internal bodies. This policy document covers Officers, NPC National Executive Council, Working Parties, all sub committees, regions and all Conferences, events and meetings organised by the NPC. A copy of this policy will be circulated throughout the NPC.
5. NPC staff members are covered by the ACAS procedure and the Staff Handbook.
6. The NPC values the contribution made by staff, officers, affiliates and regions to the organisation. Our members come from a diverse range of backgrounds, with different opinions. We will respect each other’s points of view and whilst we may not always agree, we will be tolerant of each other and resolve the differences in a positive manner.
7. We must all bear in mind that possible behavioural issues may be caused by cognitive impairment and deal appropriately with the situation
8. To ensure that meetings and events are inclusive and welcoming, we will:

* Indicate to the Chair when we wish to speak by raising our hand either physically or electronically and wait for our invitation to speak.
* Listen to others without interruption.
* Make our own contribution in a polite, clear and concise manner without dominating discussion.
* Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given encouragement and the opportunity to do so.
* Take care to explain what we mean.
* Not use language that offends or hurts others or is abusive or threatening in any way, including jokes or comments which perpetuate discrimination.
* Be aware of the potential for our body language to interrupt or put off speakers.
* Try to join an event on time and stay until the end of proceedings.

**Dealing with unacceptable behaviour:**

1. The NPC has a duty of care to all its members. However, the structure of the NPC requires co-operation between its affiliates and regions who nominate to our internal bodies (National Executive Council, Working Parties, and Sub-Committees). All other Conferences, meetings and events are covered by this policy.
2. All participants will be made aware of this policy at the beginning of each meeting or event alongside any relevant Standing Orders that apply.
3. If anyone acts in a way that is not in keeping with the standards reflected in this Policy document, early intervention is key.
4. The person(s) acting outside of this Policy and any Standing Orders appropriate to the meeting will first be reminded of its importance and asked to cease the unacceptable behaviour. Should the unacceptable behaviour continue, then the following actions will be taken:
5. If the person(s) is/are attending an in-person meeting, an adjournment of say, 10 minutes, will be called to facilitate a conversation with the person(s).
6. If the person(s) is/are attending online, then the Chair will ask the host to mute them. If the offensive behaviour continues an adjournment of say, 10 minutes, will be called and the person(s) will be invited to a private ‘break out room’ to facilitate a conversation.
7. The person(s) will be asked to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and should stop.
8. On re-convening the meeting, should the unacceptable behaviour continue, then participants will be asked if they wished to continue or move business on. This must be by majority vote.
9. Should there be a repeat of the breach of this Policy, a letter will be sent to the nominating body of the person(s) concerned requesting a meeting be held with them, the NPC and the person(s) involved to amicably resolve the issue.

**Staff:**

1. NPC staff are expected to follow the same standards set out in this Policy, but any complaint about their conduct will be dealt with in accordance with the ACAS Codes of Practice. Complaints about the conduct of staff should be made to the General Secretary.
2. NPC staff are entitled to raise complaints under the conditions contained in their Staff Handbook.

**Review Period:**

1. This policy will be reviewed annually. The first review to be undertaken in March 2025.