

Home Office Group Conference 2018

Standing Orders Committee (SOC) Report No.2

This report includes:

1. Amendments to SOC Report No.1
2. Timetable amendments
3. Emergency motions and the SOC's recommendations on their acceptability
4. References back received by the SOC and the recommendation where made

- 1. Amendments to SOC report 1**
No amendments have been made.

- 2. Timetable amendments**
Please see amended timetable below:

Monday 21 May 2018

- 13:00 – 14:00 Opening of Conference
Chair's Opening Remarks
Appointment of Scrutineers and Tellers
Adoption of 2017 Conference Record of Decisions
Adoption of SOC Reports
Presentation of Annual Report 2017
Presentation of Finance Report
Call for Nominations (Block Vote Elections)
- 14:00 – 15:15 Departmental Structure and Staffing (Motions A1 – A7)
- 15:15 – 15:35 Guest Speaker – Mark Serwotka, PCS General Secretary
- 15:35 – 15:50 Distinguished Life Membership Awards
- 15:50 – 16:10 Break (*Conference ballot boxes open subject to an election being required*)
- 16:10 – 16:30 Health & Safety (Motions A8 – A10)
- 16:30 – 16:45 Guest Speaker – Janice Godrich, PCS National President
- 16:45 – 17:30 Distinguished Life Memberships (Motion A11)
- (*17:30 Conference ballot boxes close subject to an election being required*)

Tuesday 22 May 2018

- 09:00 – 09:05 Block Vote Election Results (subject to an election being required)
- 09:05 – 09:50 Personnel (Motions EM1 A12 – A17)
- 09:50 – 10:40 Guest Speaker – Ramona McCartney, People’s Assembly
- 10:40 – 10:55 Break
- 10:55 – 11:10 Pay (Motions A18 – A19)
- 11:10 – 11:20 Equality (Motion A20 – A21)
- 11:20 – 11:30 Organisation (Motion A22)
- 11:30 – 11:40 Industrial Relations (Motions A23)
- 11:40 – 11:50 Paul McGoay Award
- 11:50 – 11:55 Guillotine Section
- 11:55 – 12:00 Vote of Thanks
- 12:00 – 12:05 Close of Conference

3. Emergency motions

EM1 Accepted to be taken before A12

This conference concludes that the recent indication from HMPO management to remove rest breaks, following the conclusion of a sham consultation period, is an attack on our members’ conditions and wellbeing and is completely unjustified. Conference agrees that members work in a stressful, target driven environment delivering the aims of HMPO, and assisting it to a situation where it is able to report profit in the Home Office annual report. In this context members value access to formalised breaks which provide an oasis of calm, and opportunity to rest. Conference believes provision of such breaks is the hallmark of a decent employer and, as a government department, the Home Office should provide an example for others to follow; conference supports the extension of contractual, paid safe working breaks to all Home Office employees.

Conference notes the strength of feeling amongst ordinary members on this issue and recognises the organising opportunity presented by this unnecessary attack on members terms and conditions; conference congratulates HMPO representatives for the work done so far in this regard which forced the employer to open formal (albeit tokenistic) consultation and has so far delayed implementation of the cut by two months.

Conference applauds the Group Executive Committee (GEC) decision to run a consultative ballot across HMPO, with a view to rejecting the changes and taking action in their defence; conference also commends the GEC for conducting the ballot in such a way that the results can be used to determine relative organisational strength between HMPO branches, and potentially allow a statutory ballot to be targeted to branches where the greatest pressure

can be applied to the employer. Conference further notes that the ballot result will be known, and debated by the GEC, during conference week.

Conference instructs the GEC to:

- 1) Seek to use the timing of the consultative ballot result to progress the campaign with delegates from HMPO branches, and the wider department as appropriate;
- 2) Ensure the incoming GEC lead for HMPO works with the Group Organiser to develop a strategy to support HMPO branches where the ballot result indicates this is required;
- 3) Use the result of the ballot as leverage to re-open talks with the department;
- 4) Run a consultation exercise with all HMPO branches, including by direct contact between the GEC team and ordinary members, to determine the most effective nature of any action;
- 5) In the absence of agreement consider a statutory ballot of members for industrial action, including action targeted at one or more branches where the ballot result indicates this will result in successful action;
- 6) Ensure that any statutory ballot and subsequent action is timed appropriately, such that maximum disruption can be exerted on the employer, and initiate a political and media campaign to build upon this disruption;
- 7) Make the retention and extension of breaks to all members of HMPO branches central to the campaign and consider extending the campaign to all Home Office employees, including those in private sector employers conducting work for the Home Office, with agreement of these branches.

HMPO Northern (026121)

EM2 Not accepted as an Emergency Motion

Conference notes that the Windrush Scandal and the discrimination faced by former commonwealth residents and their descendants has brought renewed attention to how the Home Office interacts with minority communities. Conference further notes there exists within the department policies and practices that similarly discriminate against staff with origins and familial ties in the British commonwealth as well as other third countries.

The Home Office policy in relation to overseas postings is one such practise. The policy states that they would be unwilling to send an officer to an overseas posting where they have close or extensive family connections on general security grounds. The policy does not apply to the remaining five eyes nations (USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia) or EU member states due to different security considerations. The current approach operates as an addition to national security vetting filtering out people so they cannot be formally vetted adding another barrier to appointment and scope for discrimination. If staff are truthful and declare a close family member aboard or multiple family members than those staff are filtered out whereas a refusal to declare or selective honesty ensures the vetting process is completed and the officer is posted. Such a policy is intrinsically liable to discriminate against

staff that are BAME or those staff with BAME spouses that have familial origins in Africa, Asia, The Caribbean, The Middle East and South America.

Conference considers that an individual's family connections are indivisible from their race or national origins and have no bearing on the integrity of the officer or an officer's ability to perform a role which they have been offered on merit following an interview.

Conference instructs the incoming GEC:

- To campaign for the reform or removal of this practise which is not an officially defined Home Office policy.
- To push for the introduction of a system of overseas appointments which is not disingenuous by claiming that all staff are eligible for all posts to comply with the equalities duty but then effectively disbar groups of staff from taking up postings in certain countries due to their background.
- GEC to investigate with PCS legal possible options for taking forward challenges to this policy on the grounds of discrimination, and to look for test cases with branches.

Home Office Midlands (026109)

4. Reference backs

None received by the deadline.

If you wish to reference back SOC2 please contact the Secretary on
07541235787

Home Office SOC

Jon Morgan - Chair

Helen Cawkwell

Andrew Leng

Caroline Turner - Secretary