

LDC Conference 2017 submitting a Conference motion

LDC Conference 2017 Chair, Alisdair McKendrick, offers his advice on how to craft a motion for Conference 2017.

First steps

Creating a conference motion for the first time can be challenging and then having to stand up and present it at conference – well that is a daunting experience!

Usually it will derive from your LDC with the secretary or chair asking for topics that might make for a good motion subject.

The process starts early in the year – in January/February I will be writing to all LDCs inviting them to submit motions.

What makes a good motion?

It is worth considering what would make a good motion from particular topics the LDC had discussed at previous meetings.

A burning issue?

They could be local issues affecting constituents from your LDC alone or alternatively concerns of a national nature. In the past these areas have included our beloved GDC, contract reform, commissioning guides and stress in dentistry.

When a topic has been identified then the wording has to be created. This is the difficult bit. You can spend many happy hours editing the wording, passing it around the LDC for final approval, only for it to be amended during debate at Conference due to an unfortunate omission or error.

To the point

The motion should identify the sentiment you want to convey and it needs to be short and to the point. There is only limited space on the paper or the attention span of those reading the list of motions! The Conference Agenda Committee can help with the wording if you are unsure.

If you have an argument supporting your motion, then that is good and you can use it when you present it at Conference, but we do not need to see it at this point.

What we'll do with it

Often, we receive several motions on a similar topic, and it is our role on the Conference Agenda Committee to identify similar motions and to put them together. This makes the message stronger and gives more weight when we present it to the General Dental Practice Committee.

Debate of motions can be a vibrant part of Conference but it is fair to say that after multiple motions on the same subject the enthusiasm for debate wanes!

So if you get a call from one of the Agenda Committee to amend or amalgamate your motion with another on a similar topic, then please be understanding. We are simply trying to give your motions the greatest impact at conference.

Deadline

Motions need to be submitted by Monday 3 April 2017.

What happens at Conference?

When your LDC sends in the motion wording, you need to say who will be presenting it to Conference.

If you've not presented before, I advise writing down your arguments and practicing them – you only have four minutes to say your piece and this is not negotiable.

Other delegates may then stand and support or oppose your motion, and when the Chair feels that all the debate has ceased, then someone from your LDC gets the opportunity to summarise and draw the debate together.

It can be the motion presenter that does this, but occasionally it is another member of that LDC who chooses to do this task.

Finally conference votes and your motion may be passed or defeated – either way it is democracy in action.

I look forward to receiving your motions.

Alisdair McKendrick, LDC Conference Chair 2017