



Drafting motions for LDC Conference: advice to representatives

Any representatives attending Conference are entitled to submit motions, on behalf of the LDC they are representing. Debate of motions lies at the heart of LDC Conference and are essential to help set the direction of GDPC activity and policy making for the year. In addition, the forum of Conference allows LDC representatives to bring their message to the profession in order to debate the issues and vote.

The below information sets out the process of drafting a motion and provides some guidance on how to do so.

1. **Proposing, confirming and agreeing how to present motions to be submitted**
2. **Preparing a first draft (writing a good motion)**
3. **Useful words to use**
4. **Examples of well written and poorly written motions for reference**
5. **Submitting motions**
6. **Selecting motions: the Conference Agenda Committee**
7. **Presenting your motion to Conference: choosing a proposer and summator**
8. **What happens to motions passed at Conference?**

1. **Proposing and confirming motions to be submitted**

LDCs should invite all members that the LDC represents to contact the LDC with any pressing local or national issue they would like to see GDPC address. All LDCs should hold a meeting not less than one month in advance of the motions deadline, to discuss motions for LDC Conference. At this meeting, committee members can discuss all submissions from members and consider whether there are any additional motions that the committee would like to submit. The committee members should also decide how they wish to present each motion, agreeing details of how they wish to present the motion, such as the argument/s that they wish to put forward in the debate.

Having agreed issues that the committee members wish to draft into a motion, the committee should then identify a suitable drafting contact for each motion (this can be one member for all motions or one member for each motion submitted). Once agreed, the drafting contact will have responsibility for drafting the motion and presenting it to the committee for approval, before it is submitted to the Conference Agenda Committee. The drafting contact will be the person responsible for the content of the motion. As such, they will be the point of contact for the Conference Agenda Committee, in agreeing any drafting changes to the motion and will therefore need to let their committee know, should any changes be made.

2. **Preparing a first draft (writing a good motion)**

Conference is reliant on LDCs submitting good motions. It is important to identify a colleague with the skills which enable spoken views to be translated into a motion which has clarity, coherence and style, to act as the drafting contact, who is able to communicate a message as clearly and as persuasively as possible.

It is useful for anyone drafting a motion to bear in mind the 'three Ps':

1. the Problem(s) which need to be solved
2. the Principle(s) which underlie the solution; and
3. the Proposal(s) which must be the central part of the motion

3. Useful words to use

All motions should begin with 'This Conference...'

The problem – the preamble or introduction should describe the problem being addressed by the motion, usually using words such as Conference “welcomes”, “regrets”, “deplores”, “condemns” or “rejects”. The problem is often linked to a perceived failure, usually of the Government or the Department of Health.

The principle – the motion can “affirm”, “believe”, “reaffirm”, “recognise”, “declare” or just list the principles that apply.

The proposal – proposals are usually introduced by “calls for”, “recommends”, “proposes”, “urges”, “demands”, “insists”, or “resolves”.

4. Examples of well written and poorly written motions for reference

An example of a well written motion:

This Conference notes that late lunches leave delegates hungry and distracted. Conference regrets that, for many delegates, the tardiness of the lunch break can fundamentally undermine the Conference by leaving them nutritionally challenged and unable to contribute effectively to Conference business in the late morning.

This Conference recognises the importance of a timely lunch break and the importance of the availability of regular snacks throughout the day, in order to maintain blood sugar levels.

This Conference, therefore, calls for the Conference Agenda Committee to ensure that:

- 1. The programme runs to time and is adjusted to ensure a prompt lunch break where necessary*
- 2. That there are adequate supplies of tea, coffee and biscuits available at all times during the morning*
- 3. That the catering arrangements for the day are sufficient in quality and volume to provide fuel for an afternoon spent debating motions.*

An example of a poorly written motion:

Our LDC believes that late lunches are bad for delegates. The situation must be improved!

5. Submitting motions for Conference

All motions must be submitted before the motions deadline of **Friday 5th April**. After the motions deadline has passed, all motions received will be compiled and presented to the Conference Agenda Committee.

6. How are motions selected?

The Conference will have an opportunity to vote on all motions submitted. The Conference Agenda Committee will select motions for a full debate.

The Chair of Conference and members of the Conference Agenda Committee will review the motions received and select motions for debate, based on a number of criteria. In particular there are several key factors that will be considered:

- relevance at the time of Conference
- likelihood that they will provoke debate from the delegates
- uniqueness of subject area

Where the Conference Agenda Committee receives multiple motions on the same subject or calling for the same action, the Committee may choose to select a motion which best represents the issue. Representatives submitting similar motions may then be called as secondary proposers to prevent duplicating debates.

The Conference Agenda Committee scrutinise all motions for accuracy, spelling, grammar and punctuation. They may make small alterations to the motion, for consistency. However, they will not alter the meaning of the motion.

Submitting LDCs may be contacted in the event that the Agenda Committee wish to make more significant drafting changes to a motion before it is accepted.

7. Presenting your motion to Conference: choosing a 'proposer' and a 'summator'

It is perfectly acceptable for the proposer and summator of a motion to be the same person, although it is important to recognise that they are distinct roles and, therefore, demand distinct approaches. Where they are different people, those individuals will need to confer in advance of Conference, to prepare the presentation of the motion.

Proposer – to explain the motion and present the key arguments in favour of the motion

Summator – to respond to the arguments made against the motion and sum-up before voting

The motion will be presented to Conference by the proposer. They will speak first, explaining the motion and the key arguments supporting it. There will then be arguments made from the floor, both for and against the motion, before the summator closes the debate, summing up the arguments in favour of the motion, and responding to the arguments made against the motion where they are able to.

The proposer and summator both speak in favour of the motion. Any LDC representative attending LDC Conference may speak for or against the motion during the debate, providing they indicate to the Chair their desire to speak and whether they will be speaking *for* or *against* the motion.

Speakers at Conference should try to:

- Consider carefully the key arguments they wish to convey
- Plan how long they intend to speak for and rehearse their speech beforehand (generally 3 minutes)
- Think about their opening and closing lines
- Try to convey their passion for the argument they make in their a speech
- Speak clearly and slowly

8. What happens to motions passed at Conference?

All motions passed at LDC Conference will be presented to GDPC. Formal responses to each motion from the GDPC will be made available at the LDC Officials' Day following Conference.

Motions passed at LDC Conference provide the lobbying direction for GDPC and, as such, are the right way for LDCs from around the country to gain a consensus within the profession around an issue of concern. By passing a motion, the representatives of the profession from LDCs around the country are endorsing the lobbying of the General Dental Practice Committee. It is important for LDCs to agree and provide an agenda for the changes that LDCs wish to see within the profession, so that the GDPC is clear on what LDCs wish to achieve.