



# National Health Action Party

## Rules

**Date: 18/11/17**

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## Abbreviations and Terms

- ‘Company Law Members’ means the members of the company for company law purposes
- ‘Conference’ – the annual meeting of the Party and its Political Membership
- ‘The Party’ – The National Health Action Party, registered company number 08233608
- ‘NEC’ – The National Executive Committee
- ‘NEC Members’ – all members of the NEC (Executive and Non-executive)
- ‘Eligible Party Members’ – Party Members who meet the eligibility criteria set out at Rule 5
- ‘Executive members’ – voting members of the NEC
- ‘Non-executive members’ – non-voting members of the NEC
- ‘Party Members’ – registered political members of the party, with Conference voting rights
- ‘Party Supporters’ – registered political supporters of the party, without Conference voting rights
- ‘Political Member’/‘Political Membership’ - Party Members and Party Supporters
- ‘Special Conference’ – a meeting of the Party and its Political Membership called for special purposes in between the Party’s annual Conference

## 1. Essential principles

- The Party shall:
  - maintain the legal status of an incorporated company, registered with Companies House (company number 08233608),
  - be known as ‘The National Health Action Party’,
  - be governed by a National Executive Committee,
  - have a Political Membership,
  - stand candidates at elections,
  - act as a campaigning organisation,
  - publish its constitutional documents (including these Rules)and policies,
  - be registered with the Electoral Commission,
  - abide by the legislation governing political parties in the UK,
  - operate as a national organisation within the UK.

## 2. Party Aims and Objectives

### 2.1 Core Aims

- To campaign on the social determinants of health, for improved public health and for a healthier society.
- To campaign for a high quality, publicly funded, publicly provided and publicly accountable NHS which will entail:
  - renationalisation in order to regain a universal and comprehensive National Health Service,
  - opposition to privatisation, especially to profit-based companies,
  - adequate funding and staffing for the NHS, so as to achieve optimal cost effective health and social care
- To campaign for our positive vision for the NHS and social care.
- To work towards a fairer, more accountable political system with greater democratic involvement of the people, especially by making evidence-based information easily accessible to all.
- To call for greater investment in public services, and campaign against the privatisation of public services and government austerity policies.

### 2.2 Objectives

- Inform the public narrative using evidence-based and truthful content.
- Influence the decision-making of the government and major political parties.
- Stand candidates at suitable elections, and support independent and/ or progressive alliance candidates as appropriate.
- Invite persons with expert knowledge to advise the party.
- Organise Party meetings, public talks, rallies, events, and canvasses as appropriate.

## 3. Party Structure

### 3.1 Legal status

1. The Party's legal status is a company limited by guarantee. The Executive Members of the National Executive Committee of the Party shall act as the company law directors and company law members of the Party, and shall act in accordance with the Party's Articles of Association, as adopted/amended from time to time, and company law.
2. The NEC shall pass any company law resolutions which are required under company law or as a consequence of a motion or resolution validly passed by the Party Members in accordance with these Rules, unless that motion or resolution is inconsistent with the Party's objects as set out in its Articles of Association or unlawful under any UK law or regulation to which the Party is subject.
3. The Party has a Political Membership, as defined in these Rules.
4. Should a conflict arise between the Articles of Association and these Rules, the Articles of Association shall prevail.

### 3.2 National Executive Committee structure

1. The NEC shall include Executive Members (with voting rights) and Non-executive Members (without voting rights). They shall collectively be known as NEC Members, and shall have the right to talk at all Party meetings, Conferences and Special Conferences. Non-executive Members shall have an advisory role and their views shall be given due weight and consideration by the Executive Members.
2. The NEC shall consist of:
  - a. two Co-leaders (who shall be Executive Members),
  - b. 13 other Executive Members,
  - c. up to 6 Non-executive Members.
3. From the 13 other Executive Members, the NEC shall appoint:
  - a. a nominating officer, who shall not be the same individual as the treasurer,
  - b. a treasurer, who shall not be the same individual as the nominating officer, and
  - c. a secretary.
4. The period of office of the nominating officer, treasurer and secretary shall expire at the same time as that individual's term on the NEC.
5. The nominating officer, treasurer, and one of the Co-leaders shall be the officers of the Party registered with the Electoral Commission and their details shall be maintained and updated with the Electoral Commission. The decision as to which Co-leader is registered with the Electoral Commission shall be made by the NEC.

6. During the absence of a treasurer or acting treasurer, one of the Co-leaders shall adopt this role if required and able to do so in accordance with election law.
7. The NEC is encouraged to exercise its discretion to allocate specific roles to the remaining Executive and Non-executive members, including but not limited to the following roles:
  - a. membership lead,
  - b. campaigns lead,
  - c. IT and communications lead,
  - d. elections lead,
  - e. policy lead,
  - f. governance lead.
8. NEC Members may delegate aspects of their role to suitable persons and may delegate appropriate Party work to named individuals, but they retain overall responsibility for the fulfilment of their specified duties.
9. The NEC may also invite experts and/or knowledgeable individuals to advise at NEC meetings. These persons shall not have voting rights and shall not be NEC Members.

### **3.2. Sub-committees**

1. The NEC shall have the authority to authorise and disband sub-committees.
2. Sub-committees shall each have a defined purpose and time-specific goals. They shall provide a progress report to the NEC prior to each NEC meeting.
3. Members of a sub-committee must be registered party members or party supporters, and shall be selected by the NEC for their particular knowledge, skills or expertise.
4. Each sub-committee shall include at least one NEC member and should generally include the NEC member whose role most closely aligns with the subcommittee's purpose.
5. All recommendations made by a sub-committee shall be passed to the NEC for approval, modification or rejection.

### **3.4 Party membership**

#### **Company Law Members**

1. The Company Law Members of the Party shall be the Executive Members of the NEC.
2. The NEC shall maintain a list of the Company Law Members of the Party, as required by company law.

### **Political Members**

3. The Political Membership of the Party, distinct from the Company Law Membership of the Party, shall consist of the Party Members and Party Supporters who shall enjoy the rights and be subject to the provisions set out within these Rules.
4. The NEC shall maintain a list of the Party's Political Membership.
5. The NEC may impose conditions on Political Membership of the Party to comply with law and regulation, the Party's Rules or Articles of Association as amended from time to time, and to prevent the Party from being brought into disrepute. Any conditions imposed on Political Membership of the Party must not discriminate against any individual on the basis of a protected characteristic (as defined by section 4 of the Equality Act 2010).
6. The NEC may terminate an individual's Political Membership in accordance with Rule 8.
7. The NEC may deny Political Membership to any individual whose membership, in the opinion of the NEC, based on reasonable evidence, is contrary to the interests of the Party (for example by demonstrating conduct that, if they were a Political Member, would breach the Party Code of Conduct or bring the Party into disrepute). Such denial of Political Membership should be reviewed at the next NEC meeting, but the decision of the NEC shall be final under this rule 3.4(7) and not subject to appeal.
8. Party Members, and any Party Supporter who wishes to donate to the Party as with all other Party donors, shall be required to fulfil the criteria required by law for political donors in the UK.
9. Party Supporters:
  - a. shall be required to register with the Party,
  - b. shall not be required to pay any subscription,
  - c. shall not have voting rights at Conferences or Special Conferences,
  - d. are not eligible for election to the NEC.
10. Party Members:
  - a. shall share the Party's aims,
  - b. shall be required to register with the Party,
  - c. shall maintain this registration through a Party Membership subscription,
  - d. shall have speaking and voting rights at Conferences and Special Conferences and shall have the right to propose/amend motions at Conferences and Special Conferences,
  - e. provided that they are an Eligible Party Member shall have the right to vote in, and/or be nominated for, NEC Member elections,
  - f. shall agree to the Party Code of Conduct.
11. Individuals who do not wish to take on full Party Membership may waive their voting rights, the right to be nominated for election as an NEC Member, and the rights to propose/amend

motions at Conferences and Special Conferences, in return for a reduced 'associate' Party Member subscription.

12. Party Membership subscription rates:

- a. may be adjusted by the agreement of the NEC, with at least one month's notice given to Party Members of any alterations,
- b. shall be published in a separate document,
- c. shall include a standard subscription available to all Party Members,
- d. may include optional higher levels of subscription,
- e. may include discounted levels of subscription for those with a limited income,
- f. shall confer the same Party Membership benefits on all full Party Members who remain in good standing with the Party, regardless of their subscription amount, provided that some benefits will only become available when a Party Member becomes an Eligible Party Member.
- g. shall normally be paid in advance on a regular basis according to the chosen subscription level.

### 3.5 Local party organisations

1. The NEC shall have the authority to authorise and disband local Party organisations.
2. Local party organisations shall:
  - a. be led by a Party Member,
  - b. include within their number a minimum of three Party Members,
  - c. ensure their local party organisation members and supporters are registered with the Party as Party Members and Party Supporters,
  - d. provide a list of local party organisation members and supporters to the NEC upon request,
  - e. have a constitution agreed with the NEC which reflects the requirements of this Rule 3.5,
  - f. seek permission from the NEC before publishing any media or using the Party brand/name/logo,
  - g. seek prior written permission from the NEC prior to establishing any financial accounts,
  - h. not be permitted to take out any loans, or make financial commitments, beyond their available financial means,
  - i. have a Party Member as treasurer if dealing with accounts,
  - j. provide the Party's treasurer with reports of any accounts annually and upon request,
  - d. if disbanded, forward to the Party's Treasurer any assets remaining after satisfying outstanding debts and liabilities.



## 4. Party Governance

### 4.1 Executive decision making

1. The Party shall be governed by the Executive Members of the NEC, assisted by the Non-executive Members. This shall include the consideration of any matter not provided for in these Rules or the Articles of Association, making any Party decisions deemed desirable and lawful, and passing any company law resolutions and submitting any forms that may be required on behalf of the Party, which shall be regarded as binding.
2. Subject to Rule 4.1(3) below, where a non-company law power is exercised by the NEC or a decision is made by the NEC in accordance with or under these Rules it shall be by simple majority vote of the Executive Members of the NEC at a quorate meeting, taking due regard of the comments and opinions of the Non-Executive Members, in accordance with such procedures and in such format as the NEC deems appropriate, (provided that all NEC decisions are documented in writing and that records of such decisions are retained by the NEC for an appropriate period).
3. The quorum for NEC meetings may be fixed from time to time by a decision of the NEC, but unless otherwise fixed is a simple majority of the total number of Executive Members.
4. NEC Members participate in an NEC meeting, or part of an NEC meeting, when the meeting has been called in accordance with these Rules or the NEC's procedures from time to time, and when they can each communicate to the others any information or opinions they have on a particular item of the business of the meeting (for example via telephone or video conferencing).
5. The NEC may:
  - a. vote on non-company law matters electronically in between meetings,
  - b. carry non-company law votes by simple majority of the Executive Members in accordance with Rule 4.1(2) above, except on matters where the Rules require a different threshold,
  - c. allow urgent non-company law decisions to be made by consultation of the Co-leaders and two other party officers registered with the Electoral Commission, or if they are not available two other NEC Executive Members, on the basis that such decisions will be reviewed as soon as is reasonable and certainly at the next NEC meeting,
  - d. in emergencies allow one of the Co-leaders, or in their absence the treasurer, to take a non-company law decision on their own, to be reviewed by NEC Members as soon as is reasonable and certainly at the next NEC meeting.
  - e. allow participation in NEC meetings by video conference or other live electronic means.
6. The NEC shall:
  - a. meet in person at least four times a year,
  - b. whenever necessary, communicate electronically as a group in between meetings,
  - c. be notified of any non-company law issue to be voted on electronically at least three days before the vote concludes,

- d. be notified of any urgent or emergency decision that has been taken in accordance with rule 4.1(3) as soon as is reasonable.

## 4.2 Filling elected Executive Member positions

1. The Executive Members:
  - a. shall be appointed from the Party's Eligible Party Members,
  - b. shall be elected at a Conference or Special Conference called for that purpose,
  - c. shall hold their post until the third Conference following their election, unless their post is otherwise terminated in accordance with company law, the Party's Articles of Association, or these Rules,
  - d. shall at the end of their term be added automatically to the ballot for re-election, unless they state a preference otherwise,
  - e. shall be added to Company Law Membership of the Party and as company law directors of the Party following their successful appointment to the NEC.
2. The Co-leaders:
  - a. shall be elected at a Conference or Special Conference called for that purpose,
  - b. shall have been Executive Members prior to their election as Co-leader since the previous Conference. If no candidate fulfilling this criterion comes forward, then persons who have been elected to the position of Executive Member at a Special Conference or otherwise since the previous Conference may be nominated for Co-Leader. In exceptional circumstances the NEC may, by majority vote, allow any Party member (who would be eligible for Executive Member elections) to be nominated for Co-leader,
  - c. shall be considered to have begun a new 3 year term as an Executive Member when first elected as Co-leader,
  - d. shall be permitted to resign the Co-leadership upon giving notice of at least 14 calendar days to the NEC, in which case they may remain an NEC Executive Member until the next Conference or the end of their term, whichever is sooner.
3. A nominating officer, treasurer, and secretary shall be appointed from the pool of NEC Executive Members, by the NEC. Such appointments may be made by the NEC at any time and do not alter an Executive Member's term on the NEC.
4. An Executive Member shall forfeit their position should they:
  - a. fail to attend three consecutive NEC meetings without written dispensation from a Co-leader,
  - b. fail to undertake the duties associated with their position and where at least two-thirds of the Executive Members agree that as a result, that Executive Member should cease to be an NEC Member,
  - c. give written notice of their resignation to the NEC which shall become effective 14 calendar days after receipt by the NEC of such notice. During such notice period the resignation may be withdrawn by written notice to the NEC,
  - d. be removed from the Company Law membership of the Party or have their Party Membership terminated in accordance with these Rules.

5. When an Executive Member leaves their position before their term has expired, or a position remains unfilled following a Conference, a casual vacancy shall arise.

### **4.3 Filling casual Executive Member vacancies**

1. A casual vacancy may be filled temporarily by a Party Member invited to the position by the NEC. Executive Members who fill casual vacancies in this manner shall not be considered elected to a full term on the NEC, and shall hold their position only until a Conference or relevant Special Conference is called. They shall have the same voting rights as elected Executive Members during their tenure, and shall be added to the Company Law Membership and directorship of the Party.
2. A casual vacancy of a Co-leader position may be filled temporarily by an existing, elected Executive Member, provided that a two-thirds majority of the Executive Members of the NEC agree. Executive Members who fill a vacant Co-leader vacancy shall not be considered to have been elected to the role of Co-leader, and their existing term on the NEC shall not be altered. They may hold their position as Co-leader only until a Conference or relevant Special Conference is called.
3. A Conference or relevant Special Conference shall include an election to NEC positions where:
  - a. one or more casual vacancies have occurred since the previous Conference, and/or
  - b. Executive Members have completed their elected term.

### **4.4 Filling Non-executive Member positions**

1. The NEC shall be empowered to invite Party Members and/or Party Supporters to Non-executive Member positions within the Party and remove Party Members and/or Supporters from Non-executive Member positions within the Party, as the NEC deems appropriate.
2. Non-executive Members of the NEC:
  - a. shall hold their posts until the first Conference following their appointment (unless otherwise removed by the NEC in accordance with 4.4(1) above),
  - b. shall at the end of their term be considered for reappointment unless they state a preference otherwise,
  - c. shall be reappointed by default if no specific decision is taken regarding their reappointment by the NEC.

### **4.5 Party finances**

1. The NEC shall:
  - a. Maintain a financial scheme approved by the Electoral Commission in writing, in accordance with electoral law, which sets out the arrangements for regulating the financial affairs of the Party;
  - b. Ensure that the Party finances are managed in accordance with the Party financial scheme,

- c. oversee any fundraising activity and accept any lawful donation, provided that accepting any such lawful donation would not bring the Party into disrepute in the reasonable estimation of the NEC,
- d. bank with a retail bank or building society,
- e. authorise three named individuals to authorise the incurring of day-to-day disbursements of amounts that add up to less than £500 [by staff and NEC Members for the purposes of running the Party]
- f. allow the incurring of day-to-day disbursements of amounts less than £500 on the authority of at least two out of three individuals authorised for that purpose by the NEC,
- g. authorise the employment of Party administrative staff as necessary in accordance with relevant employment laws,
- h. retain full discretion regarding disbursement of any funds vested with the treasurer, provided no individual Party Member(s) benefit personally from any cash distribution (except where they are Party employees being paid salaries and/or their reasonable expenses, or reasonable expenses of those carrying out party work such as candidates and their agents),
- i. adhere to the party's Conflict of Interests Policy when arranging the disbursement of funds,
- j. direct the treasurer to keep accounts in accordance with electoral law and Electoral Commission guidance, which shall be provided to Executive Members at request and presented to Party Members at each Conference.

#### 4.6 Party policies

1. The NEC shall be empowered to create, maintain and publish policy documents including but not limited to:
  - a. the Conflict of Interests Policy,
  - b. the Election Candidates Policy,
  - c. the Membership Policy,
  - d. the Complaints Policy,
  - e. the NEC Regulations,
  - f. the Party Financial Scheme,
  - g. the Membership Subscription Rates,
  - h. the Code of Conduct.
  
2. The NEC shall maintain and update the Party's manifesto of electoral policies, including but not limited to the following policy areas:
  - a. Health and social care
  - b. Public services
  - c. Political reform
  - d. Economy
  - e. Employment and welfare
  - f. Housing
  - g. Education
  - h. Transport

- i. Equality issues
- j. Environmental issues

#### **4.7 Dissolution or significant changes**

1. The dissolution and/or de-registering of the Party, or any significant change such as merger with another party, shall in normal circumstances require the passage of a suitable motion at a Conference or Special Conference. However, in the following circumstances, the NEC shall be empowered to dissolve and/or de-register the Party as appropriate:
  - a. Lack of financial means and/or actual or anticipated insolvency,
  - b. Party Membership of fewer than 100 persons,
  - c. Court order or instruction from the Electoral Commission,
  - d. Resignation of any of the registered Party officers as required by law with no available replacements from within the NEC.
  
2. Should dissolution of the Party occur, all assets remaining after satisfying outstanding debts and liabilities shall be allocated to charities or non-profit campaigning organisations concerned with contemporary health matters, as determined by the outgoing NEC.

## 5. Conferences

### 5.1 Eligibility

1. Provided that they are in good standing with the Party and have held full Party Membership for the 8 weeks preceding the relevant Conference, Party Members may :
  - a. talk at Conferences,
  - b. vote in Co-leader and Executive Member elections,
  - c. be nominated for Executive Member elections,
2. d. propose and second motions and amendments at Conferences Persons meeting these criteria shall be known as '**Eligible Party Members**'
3. Party Members who are in good standing with the Party but have held full Party Membership for less than the 8 weeks preceding the relevant Conference and associate Party Members may still attend and talk at Conferences but may not vote, submit nominations, or propose or second motions or amendments.

### 5.2 Scope of meetings

1. A Conference shall include within its scope, in the following order (if applicable to a given Conference):
  - a. the acceptance of minutes from the preceding Conference,
  - b. the receipt of appropriate reports on Party activity and finance,
  - c. the election of Executive Members,
  - d. motions proposed to modify the constitution,
  - e. other motions proposed,
  - f. other appropriate business as per the agenda.
2. A Special Conference shall be limited in scope to the matter for which the Special Conference was called. No other business shall be conducted. The constitution may only be altered at a Conference, or, alternatively, at a Special Conference called specifically for that purpose.

### 5.3 Ensuring Eligible Party Member engagement

1. Voting by electronic means:
  - a. refers to the use of a secure online voting platform allowing Eligible Party Members to cast votes remotely,
  - b. may be used for the election of Co-leaders and Executive Members during a Conference and/or immediately prior to the Conference,
  - c. may also be used for motions presented to the Conference, provided there is a facility to allow sufficient electronic debate prior to voting,
  - d. shall be used at the discretion of the NEC, on a reliable and reputable third party system chosen by the NEC,
  - e. shall be notified to Eligible Party Members at least 7 calendar days in advance of its use,
  - f. shall remain open for voting for at least 24 hours when used for elections.

2. In exceptional circumstances, the NEC may agree to hold an electronic Conference/Special Conference instead of a physical Conference/Special Conference. In such cases the NEC must provide for the electronic delivery of all aspects of the Conference/Special Conference.
3. Votes by proxy:
  - a. may be used by Eligible Party Members unable to attend a Conference or Special Conference in person, and unable to vote electronically.
  - b. must be notified to the NEC (including the name of the proxy and that proxy is authorised to vote on behalf of the named Eligible Party Member) at least 7 days prior to the Conference or Special Conference, except in cases where there are extenuating circumstances accepted in writing by the NEC,
  - c. must be exercised by a proxy who is an Eligible Party Member. and any given Eligible Party Member may only present a maximum of two proxy votes at a meeting.
4. Quorum for Conferences and Special Conferences:
  - a. If a Conference/Special Conference occurs in a physical venue only, with no electronic voting, then the Conference/Special Conference shall require a quorum of 10% of Eligible Party Members to be present.
  - b. If a physical Conference/Special Conference makes use of electronic voting, any electronic election or vote in which a minimum of 10% of Eligible Party Members participate shall be held to be valid even if the physical Conference/Special Conference is found to be inquorate.
  - c. If a Conference/Special Conference is held exclusively electronically, then the Conference/Special Conference shall require a quorum of 10% of Eligible Party Members to participate.
  - d. Any Eligible Party Member may request a quorum count be undertaken, but a count shall only be permitted to occur once in respect of physical attendance at each Conference/Special Conference and (if physical attendance is inquorate) once in respect of each electronic vote.
  - e. A count shall be undertaken by the Conference/Special Conference chair, and validated by another Executive Member. The count shall include any Executive Members and Eligible Party Members present, but not associate Party Members or Party Supporters.
  - f. A Conference/Special Conference shall not be permitted to elect Executive Members or Co-leaders and vote upon motions/amendments if it is found to be inquorate by means of a quorum count.

#### **5.4 Calling Conferences/Special Conferences**

1. Conferences shall be called by agreement of the NEC once per calendar year and at intervals of no more than 14 months.
2. Special Conferences shall be called, for a specified purpose, either by decision of the NEC or by the NEC upon the signed written instruction of 100 Eligible Party Members or 25% of Eligible Party Members, whichever is fewer, as submitted to the NEC.

3. The time and venue of a Conference/Special Conference:
  - a. shall be arranged by the NEC,
  - b. shall not be altered except by decision of the NEC,
  - c. shall not be altered during the 7 days prior to the meeting, except in extenuating circumstances,
  - d. shall, in the case of a Conference, be communicated to all Party Members as soon as possible, and no later than 30 days prior to the meeting occurring, and in the case of a Special Conference, be communicated to all Party Members as soon as possible and no later than 7 days prior to the meeting occurring.
4. All Party Members shall be notified of any change to the time or venue of a Conference/Special Conference, and the reason for the change provided.

## 5.5 Motions

1. Party Member proposed motions, amendments, and nominations shall be proposed by an Eligible Party Member and supported by two other Eligible Party Members.
2. Motions submitted by Eligible Party Members that alter the Party constitution, affiliate or de-affiliate the Party with an organisation, entail expenditure of more than £500, or influence decisions about electoral activity, shall in addition require an Executive Member to sponsor the motion.
3. These Rules may only be changed by motion at Conference or Special Conference and any motion will only be passed if a two-thirds majority of Eligible Party Members voting on the Motion confirm that the rules should be changed.
4. Submission of motions shall observe the following timeline:
  - a. Eligible Party Members shall be invited, 30 days prior to a Conference, to submit motions to the NEC.
  - b. The deadline for submission of motions by Eligible Party Members shall be 14 days prior to the Conference.
  - c. The agenda and motions proposed shall be circulated 12 days prior to Conference.
  - d. Eligible Party Members shall at that time be invited to submit amendments to any motions circulated, provided that any amendments are received by the NEC at least 7 days prior to the Conference.
  - e. Amended motions will be circulated at least 5 days before the Conference.
  - f. In extraordinary circumstances accepted by resolution by the NEC, emergency motions and amendments may be submitted up until 24 hours prior to the Conference commencing.

## 5.6 Executive Member Nominations

1. Nominations shall be made in writing to the NEC by Eligible Party Members in accordance with these Rules, and seconded by named Eligible Party Members. Nominations for Co-



Leader positions must be in accordance with the Co-leader eligibility criteria set out in these rules.

2. Candidates shall provide the NEC with a candidate statement to be circulated to the Party Membership. The full names of the candidate and person(s) seconding shall be disclosed in the candidate statements.
3. Submission of nominations to Executive and Co-leader positions shall observe the following timeline:
  - a. Eligible Party Members shall be invited, 30 days prior to the Conference, to submit nominations.
  - b. The deadline for submission of nominations shall be 15 days prior to the Conference.
  - c. The nominations and candidate statements shall be circulated 12 days prior to the Conference.

### **5.7 Conference/Special Conference chairperson**

1. A Conference/Special Conference shall be chaired, in order of preference, by:
  - a. one of the Co-leaders,
  - b. the Party secretary,
  - c. another Executive Member, by majority agreement of the Executive Members present.
2. An individual shall not chair a particular part of the Conference/Special Conference if:
  - a. they wish to speak on a motion or amendment,
  - b. they are standing for election or re-election to a position being voted on,
  - c. they are unable to retain neutrality for a given matter,
  - d. they are deemed by the NEC to have a conflict of interest.
3. When necessary, the chair shall delegate to another Executive Member by agreement of the Executive Members present.
4. The chair shall ensure that:
  - a. the meeting is conducted in a constructive, reputable and prompt manner,
  - b. there is at least one break in proceedings that last more than 60 minutes,
  - c. reasonable steps are taken to inform all Party Members and Party Supporters attending of the commencement or recommencement of proceedings,
  - d. reasonable adjustments shall be made to facilitate the participation of Party Members and Party Supporters who consider themselves to have a disability or additional needs,
  - e. debates and votes are conducted in an appropriate manner, with all full Party Members given a fair opportunity to participate in proceedings,
  - f. the meeting is minuted by an appropriate person.

## 5.8 Conducting debate in Conferences/Special Conferences

1. The chair shall introduce each agenda item and invite an appropriate Party Member to speak to that item. If the item is controversial, the chair should consider inviting a Party Member to speak in opposition. The chair shall attempt to give the two opposing views an equal period of time. The floor shall then be opened to further discussion as directed by the chair.
2. If a person is felt to have spoken for a sufficient period of time on an item, the chair reserves the right to ask them to briefly summarise and then finish speaking.
3. Provided that there has been a fair opportunity for all views to be heard, the chair shall move that any necessary votes be taken. The chair shall then ask that any necessary action points be recorded. Once this has occurred, the agenda item shall be considered completed.

## 5.9 Conducting votes on motions in Conferences

1. The chair shall call upon the Eligible Party Members at the Conference to vote, if appropriate, after a matter has been sufficiently debated.
2. Any proposed amendments to a motion shall be debated and voted upon prior to the motion being voted upon.
3. The chair shall reserve the right to call for short speeches for and against any particular vote, prior to that vote occurring.
4. Votes on proposals other than amendments to the constitution shall require a simple majority of full Party Members to pass. In the case of a tie, the chair shall have the casting vote. Amendments to the Rules of the Party shall require a two-thirds majority of full Party Members.

## 5.10 Election of Executive Members

1. The election of Executive Members shall occur, as applicable, in the following order:
  - a. Co-leader(s),
  - b. other Executive Members.
2. Candidates may stand in both the Co-leader election and the ordinary Executive Member election. Candidates who are successfully elected as Co-leader shall be removed from the ordinary Executive Member election candidate list prior to that election being held.
3. Where there are an equal number of candidates and places, or fewer candidates than places, candidates will be elected unopposed.
4. Where there are more candidates than places, voters shall have one vote per place to be filled in the election. Positions will be allocated according to the number of votes each candidate received in descending order from the person with the most votes.

### 5.11 Procedural motions

1. The following procedural motions may be called by Eligible Party Members at a Conference:
  - a. **Hold further debate** – if passed, the chair shall call for short speeches for and against the motion or amendment currently subject to a vote, prior to the vote occurring,
  - b. **Move straight to the vote (“Move that the motion be put”)** – if passed, shall force the chair to move immediately to a vote on the matter being discussed.
  - c. **Chair to be delegated** – if passed, shall force the chair to delegate the chair for that specific matter.
  - d. **Refrain from taking a decision (“Move that the motion lie on the table”)** – if passed, the current item shall not be voted upon, and no decision shall be taken as a result.

### 5.12 Conduct at Conferences/Special Conferences

1. Participants shall be expected to conduct themselves in a way that is respectful of others present and is conducive to the smooth running of the Conference/Special Conference. No person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a Conference/Special Conference or behave offensively or improperly.
2. If the conduct of any individual present appears to be offensive, improper, or obstructive, the chair of the Conference/Special Conference shall request such person(s) to moderate or improve their conduct.
3. If any person(s) disregard the request of the chairperson of the meeting to moderate or improve their conduct, any member or the chair of the meeting may move that the person be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting. The motion, if seconded, shall be put to the vote without discussion.
4. If any person(s) disregard a resolution made that they be no longer heard or excluded from the meeting, the chair of the meeting may take further reasonable steps to restore order or to progress the meeting. This may include temporarily suspending or closing the meeting.

## 6. Public Relations

### 6.1 Ground rules

1. All persons when representing the Party (including all Members of the NEC) should adhere to the following ground rules:
  - a. Refrain from using insulting, foul or abusive language.
  - b. Refrain from making personal attacks or potentially libellous/slandorous comments.
  - c. Do not seek to win debates by bringing your opponent into disrepute.
  - d. Stick to the facts - win arguments with evidence, not aggression.
  - e. Do not respond to abusive individuals or 'trolls' - take advice from colleagues first.
  - f. Take time to consider your responses, especially during heated exchanges, and avoid emotive language.
  - g. Remember that it is impossible to withdraw submissions to social media - even if you delete them immediately, someone may have archived your responses.
  - h. Remember that at all times you are acting as an ambassador of the Party, and should conduct yourself as such.
2. 'National Health Action Party', 'NHA Party', 'NHA', 'NHAP', Action for the Nation's Health and the registered Party emblem shall not be used officially by any group or individual without the authority of the NEC.

### 6.2 Spokespersons

1. The term 'spokesperson' refers to any person acting for or on behalf of the Party to:
  - a. provide an official statement.
  - b. comment on current events.
  - c. announce additions or alterations to Party policy.
  - d. announce general meetings, Party conferences, and press conferences.
2. The NEC shall nominate named individuals to act as spokespersons. Such nomination may be removed at that the NEC's discretion.
3. Any individual appearing on television or radio broadcasts, podcasts, video-sharing sites, social media sites, public meetings or meetings with other political parties or providing official website copy (regardless of the method by which that meeting, appearance or communication takes place), for or on behalf of the Party, shall be considered a 'spokesperson'.
4. Individuals wishing to appear in the scenarios above without spokesperson authorisation shall explicitly state that they are giving a personal opinion, and shall avoid any statement linking them with the Party. Should they wish to speak on behalf of the Party they must seek and obtain permission from the NEC.
5. Nominated spokespersons shall liaise with the Party's press/media lead whenever they receive offers from a third party to act as a spokesperson (e.g. interview offers).
6. Other Party Members or Party Supporters shall notify the Party press/media lead of any offers they receive to act as a spokesperson for the Party. The NEC may be asked to

authorise the individual, or the press/media lead may substitute an existing authorised spokesperson for that particular offer.

### **6.3 Social media**

1. The term 'social media' shall include any and all online platforms in which content may be submitted by users and viewed by other users. This applies regardless of whether a platform is public or restricted.
2. For illustrative purposes, the above statement includes but is not limited to the following sites: Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Reddit, Snapchat, WhatsApp groups, Slack groups, YouTube, Vimeo, Audioboom, instant messaging forums, the Party's website forum, and comment sections on third party sites.
3. These standing orders shall apply to all Party Members and Party Supporters on social media in any of the following circumstances:
  - a. when using any official Party account, including local group accounts;
  - b. when replying to or commenting on any content on an official Party account or page;
  - c. when explicitly or implicitly acting on behalf of, or as a spokesperson for, the Party;
  - d. when using any account, if the Party Member or Party Supporter is an NEC Member or current or former candidate and their actions could reasonably be assumed to affect the Party's reputation.
4. The NEC shall nominate named individuals to make use of official Party social media accounts, including local group accounts. Such nomination may be removed at the NEC's discretion.
5. The creation of any new official Party account, or any account appearing to represent an official account, shall require authorisation from the NEC. This includes any social media account that a reasonable, informed person would consider to be official. Any Party social media account shall belong to the Party.
6. The administrator of any official Party account(s) shall, on request, provide the Party social media lead with access to said account(s).

### **6.4 Non-Party material**

1. Party Members and Party Supporters shall refrain from promoting Non-Party material when acting as a spokesperson or social media representative, except where the NEC has specifically endorsed said material.
2. Party Members and Party Supporters shall refrain from using the current or previous Party logo without permission. This includes the unauthorised production of memes, online leaflets, videos and similar which bear the Party logo or bear the appearance of being official Party material. Party Members and Party Supporters shall not without prior authorisation from the NEC use the Party name or Party logo in a manner that suggests endorsement by the NHAP of the material in question.

3. Party Members and Party Supporters should refrain from self-promotion or canvassing when acting as a spokesperson, except where they are promoting themselves following selection as election candidates for government or local government elections or canvassing for/supporting election candidates (and then in accordance with electoral law).

## 7. Political activity

### 7.1 Election Candidates

1. The Party shall field candidates:
  - a. accepted by the NEC,
  - b. at UK elections deemed appropriate by the NEC.
  
2. Election candidates shall:
  - a. hold Party Membership with the Party,
  - b. be approved by the NEC,
  - c. support the Party's aims and objectives as detailed in this constitution,
  - d. abide by the Party's constitution and other policies,
  - e. avoid bringing the Party into disrepute,
  - f. agree specifically to follow the Election Candidates policy.
  
3. Election candidates:
  - a. shall be free to express personal opinions, provided these are labelled as such and are not detrimental to the Party's aims and objectives,
  - b. shall abide by the policies expressed in the Party's manifesto,
  - c. shall otherwise be free to determine their own policies, provided these are labelled as such.

### 7.2 Election management

1. The nominating officer shall
  - a. undertake any duties required of their role by the Electoral Commission or under electoral law,
  - b. assist candidates in the submission of nomination papers,
  - c. make any returns required of them by the Electoral Commission or under electoral law,
  - d. report to the NEC on their activities, particularly during election periods.

### 7.3 Election expenses

1. Elections candidates shall be responsible for:
  - a. raising funds for their own election expenses and ensuring compliance with electoral law as to their own election expenses,
  - b. limiting campaign expenditure to the limits set out by the Electoral Commission and under electoral law,
  - c. providing weekly updates to the Party treasurer of any substantial donations,
  - d. providing the Party treasurer with full accounts of election income and expenses, at least two weeks prior to the deadline for submission to the Electoral Commission of accounts for that election.
  
2. The disbursement of central funds to support the Party's election candidates shall be at the discretion of the NEC.

3. The Party treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring the correct election financial returns are submitted to the Electoral Commission in compliance with electoral law.

#### **7.4 Party whips**

1. The NEC or delegated individuals may provide the Party's elected representatives with briefings on matters covered by Party policy, but shall in normal circumstances avoid the use of a Party whip.
2. Where an elected representative intends to deviate from the Party's published policies, or from any electoral promise made by the Party or candidate, they shall be expected to explain the reasoning for this to the NEC.
3. If the elected representative wishes to deviate from the Party's manifesto and the NEC (after discussion with the representative) is unable to agree with the representative's proposed course of action, then the NEC may as a final resort withdraw the Party whip from the representative.



## 8. Complaints and Disciplinary

### 8.1 Complaints procedure

1. The Executive Members shall maintain and update a publicly-available complaints policy.
2. The NEC shall:
  - a. deal with formal complaints as promptly as possible,
  - b. investigate the underlying cause of complaints as appropriate,
  - c. aim to inform complainants of the outcome of any investigation,
  - d. avoid disclosing any privileged or confidential information in pursuing the above.
1. The NEC has a responsibility to resolve complaints relating to the conduct of individuals relating to the Party. This particularly includes, but is not limited to, complaints relating to:
  - a. Individuals acting on behalf of the Party as officers, candidates, and any other public-facing or official roles.
  - b. Individuals explicitly or implicitly acting on behalf of, or as a spokesperson for, the Party.
  - c. Individuals who, in specific scenarios, are known for their links to the Party to the extent that their actions would affect the Party's interests.
  - d. Individuals purporting to hold or undertake any of the above roles.
2. Where an individual subject to a complaint is not an NEC Member, Party employee, or Party Member (including but not limited to Party Supporters and individuals without formal connection to the Party), the NEC shall have authority to investigate that complaint and take such action as the NEC deems appropriate, including terminating an individual's status as a Party Supporter.

### 8.2 Scope of disciplinary powers

3. Party Members, NEC Members and volunteers (**Relevant Individuals**) of the Party shall be subject to the Party's disciplinary process.
4. The NEC shall undertake disciplinary action only where a Relevant Individual's conduct is relevant to the Party. Specifically, there must be evidence of either sustained or serious misconduct which, in the opinion of the NEC, is contrary to the interests of the Party. This includes, but is not limited, to the following offences:
  - a. bringing the Party into disrepute
  - b. materially breaching a Rule or Party Policy
  - c. conduct incompatible with the Party's aims and values
  - d. abuse, bullying, harassment or intimidation of any individual

- e. conduct which discriminates against another person on the basis of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
  - f. impersonation of an NEC Member or spokesperson
  - g. persistent and deliberate disruption of Party business
  - h. conduct which causes financial harm to the Party
5. These standing orders do not relate to the employment status of employed individuals, and do not constitute employment regulations.

### **8.3 Proportionate action**

1. Action against any Relevant Individual shall be decided upon by the NEC, and shall occur with the full knowledge of the NEC.
2. Where conduct is judged to have been only mildly reprehensible, efforts shall be made to settle the matter informally. If this is not possible, or there are repeated incidences involving a given individual, then a formal written warning shall be issued.
3. Where a formal written warning has already been given, or a Relevant Individual's conduct is seriously reprehensible, formal disciplinary proceedings shall occur.
4. Where a Relevant Individual has openly and deliberately acted against the Party's interests and refuses, when requested, to desist from these actions, that Relevant Individual shall be suspended immediately pending further action. In such cases the NEC shall consider imposing disciplinary actions without recourse to formal proceedings, provided that this is proportionate to the Relevant Individual's misconduct.
5. Where a Relevant Individual acts in a way that is extremely damaging to the Party's standing or reputation (for example by indulging in conduct that is illegal, defamatory, grossly undermining of the party, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, transphobic), the NEC shall consider imposing disciplinary action without recourse to formal proceedings, provided that this is proportionate to the Relevant Individual's misconduct.
6. In cases where the NEC imposes disciplinary action without recourse to formal proceedings, a two thirds majority vote of Executive Members shall be required.

### **8.4 Formal proceedings**

1. The NEC shall notify, in writing, as soon as is practical, any Relevant Individual who shall be subject to formal disciplinary proceedings (hereafter referred to as 'the Individual').
2. From such point as the Individual is informed of formal proceedings against the Individual, that Individual shall be temporarily suspended from Party Membership (and any NEC role that Individual might hold) pending the outcome of the proceedings and any appeal.

3. The NEC shall inform the Individual of next steps and the Individual's right to provide mitigating evidence and/or representations. The Individual shall be informed of the deadline for receipt of such mitigating evidence.
4. The Party secretary or delegated person shall request and collate evidence relating to the disciplinary proceedings. This shall include any relevant complaints received, written reports from any Party Members with first-hand knowledge of relevant events, and any mitigating evidence or representations from the Individual.
5. A period of two full calendar weeks shall be allowed for submission of the above evidence. Submissions after this time shall only be accepted in extenuating circumstances and at the NEC's discretion. The NEC shall then have a minimum of two full calendar weeks to review the evidence prior to the disciplinary meeting.
6. The Individual shall be informed of the date of the Individual's disciplinary meeting after receipt of the above evidence.
7. The disciplinary meeting shall be a quorate meeting (as per the NEC's procedures from time to time) of the NEC. The evidence shall be discussed, and the Individual shall be given a reasonable period of time to give their account. There will then be an opportunity for all present to ask questions.
8. The Individual shall then leave, and the NEC shall discuss the matter. The NEC shall vote, by simple majority:
  - a. on whether there is evidence of sustained or serious misconduct by the Individual which is against the interests of the Party.
  - b. if the above is passed, on the action to be taken against the Individual.
9. The following actions may be taken as the result of formal disciplinary proceedings:
  - a. a further formal written warning.
  - b. suspension from specific Party duties / the NEC.
  - c. removal of the Party whip from elected representatives.
  - d. suspension from the Party for a period of at least one month.
  - e. permanent expulsion.
10. The NEC shall seek to take action proportionate to the offence committed, bearing in mind the effect on the Individual and the interests of the Party.
11. Minutes of the meeting shall be circulated to the NEC as soon as is as practical, and shall include details of the complainant(s), the complaint(s) made, the Individual subject to

proceedings, the contents and providence of any evidence submitted, an overview of any discussion, and the votes taken within the meeting.

12. The outcome of any disciplinary proceedings shall be notified to the NEC and Individual, but shall otherwise remain confidential pending appeal.

## 8.5. Appeals

1. An Individual subject to formal disciplinary proceedings shall be notified, in writing, of the meeting's outcome and of their right to appeal the decision.
2. Potential grounds for appeal shall be:
  - a. that the disciplinary process was not followed correctly,
  - b. that the sanction was disproportionate.
3. An Individual subject to a disciplinary action shall be notified of the deadline for lodging an appeal, which shall be 30 calendar days from the date of the disciplinary meeting, and of the right to have a companion with them at any appeal hearing (as an observer but not as a participant in the appeal hearing).
4. The NEC shall invite a Party Member of its choosing not on the NEC ('**Appeals Chair**') to arrange an appeal hearing. The Appeals Chair shall invite five other Party Members, none of whom are NEC Members or were NEC Members at the time that the Appellant was sanctioned by the NEC, to form an appeal committee.
5. An appeal hearing shall be conducted at a time mutually agreed between the appeal committee and the Individual lodging the appeal (**Appellant**), but in any event within 90 calendar days of the original disciplinary meeting.
6. Aside from the Appeals Chair, appeal committee, an NEC representative, Appellant, and their companion, no other persons shall be admitted to an appeal hearing. The calling of 'witnesses' is not permitted. The companion shall be present in a supportive role, and shall not make speeches or direct questions to those present.
7. The Party shall not be liable for the cost of any professional representation on behalf of a member appealing a disciplinary action, regardless of the appeal outcome.
7. An appeal hearing shall be conducted as follows:
  - a. At least four of the five appeal panel members, the Appeals Chair, and an NEC representative must be present for the panel to proceed.
  - b. All related evidence should be circulated to appeal panel members a week before the appeal, including a statement from the executive about the reasons for the disciplinary and the sanction they had agreed, a statement from the appellant giving their grounds for appeal, and all other documents and evidence relating to the disciplinary.

- c. The Appeals Chair shall ask everyone present to introduce themselves.
  - d. The Appeals Chair shall circulate physical copies of all related evidence. Documents of excessive length may be provided as electronic copies only provided this is clearly highlighted to the panel.
  - e. An NEC Member who was part of the disciplinary process shall present the evidence for the NEC's decision to discipline the Appellant This will include reading verbatim all internal and third-party complaints relevant to the disciplinary hearing.
  - f. The Appellant shall be asked to explain the reason for their appeal. The Appeals Chair will determine the time given to allow the Appellant to present their case.
  - g. The Appellant shall then leave the hearing whilst deliberation takes place.
  - h. The Appellant may await the outcome of the hearing in person, or choose to be informed in writing only.
8. The Appeals Chair:
- a. shall remain impartial throughout the process,
  - b. shall keep brief minutes or ask one of the appeal panel members to take brief minutes,
  - c. is not permitted to guide the appeal committee to a decision,
  - d. is not permitted to stand in for one of the appeal committee in their absence.
9. An appeal hearing shall be limited to making the following recommendations:
- a. that the disciplinary process was followed correctly and that the NEC's decision should be upheld in full.
  - b. that the disciplinary process was followed correctly but the period of suspension or expulsion should be altered.
  - c. that the disciplinary process was not followed correctly and should be re-run, with the appellant remaining suspended pending the re-run.
10. The appeal committee:
- a. shall make recommendations by unanimous agreement, with the default position otherwise being to recommend that the NEC's decision be upheld,
  - b. may provide a limited narrative explaining their recommendation,
  - c. shall refrain from making any additional recommendations beyond the options stated above,
  - d. shall not authorise any additional hearings, meetings, or expenditures.
11. Written confirmation of the appeal hearing outcome shall be provided by the Appeals Chair in writing to the Appellant and to the NEC Members as soon as is practical, and no later than 7 calendar days following the appeal hearing.
12. Following receipt of an appeal hearing's outcome, the NEC shall discuss the recommendations and take a vote on enacting them. In ordinary circumstances, it is expected that the NEC shall pass this vote and enact the recommendations, following which the appeal panel and Appellant shall be notified of the completion of the process. However, if there is sufficient evidence that an appeal hearing was incorrectly performed then the NEC may consider voting not to enact the recommendations. In this event the NEC shall justify

this decision, in writing, to the appeal panel and Appellant and the appeal would need to be re-run with a new chair and appeal panel