# **CONFERENCE, DEMOCRACY AND YOU**

Napo is potentially the most democratic trade union in Britain. Its supreme policy-making body is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which takes place at Napo’s autumn conference. The AGM is open to all members to attend, address and vote at on an equal basis, with the exception of pay and conditions of service issues, which can only be voted on by full members.

So how does this democracy work in practice and how does it translate into what Napo does in its members’ name?

The core of the AGM is:

* creating Napo’s policies by debating motions;
* holding Napo’s Officers, Officials and Committees/Networks to account by scrutinising the Annual Report.

A motion is a formal proposal for Napo collectively to do something. They are debated at the AGM and the members attending can vote whether they want them to be accepted as Napo policy or not. If a motion is passed at AGM it goes on to the Committee/Network responsible for the area of work which the motion addresses - National Executive, Negotiating (Probation/Cafcass), Professional & Training, Campaigning, Family Court, Equal Rights, Health & Safety, Trade Union Organisation.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) decides on policy between AGMs and is accountable to the membership, along with all its committees/networks, through an annual report, which is presented to the AGM for approval.

Motions for Napo AGM can be proposed by a branch/section, a national committee/network, or two individual members. These are submitted and published well before the AGM so that all members can see them and can submit amendments to them if they wish. All members, whether they can attend AGM or not, are also asked to vote on and choose a number of motions that they would particularly like to be debated at AGM. The votes from the ballot are then aggregated and used to construct the order of business of the AGM.

The order of business is divided into separate committee/network slots as per the motions’ booklet. The motion relevant to each committee/network, which receives the highest number of votes in the ballot, will be debated in that respective committee/network slot i.e. it goes to the top of the agenda. After all the ‘top voted’ motions in the committee/network slots have been debated at AGM, the remaining motions are then dealt with in the order in which they were balloted i.e. those with the most votes are debated first.

**Members therefore have an extremely important role in the democratic functioning of Napo even if you cannot make it to Napo AGM Conference:**

**It only takes 10 minutes to complete the AGM motions’ ballot. Please play your part, keep Napo democratic and return your vote - it really matters!**