

Equality and Diversity in the WI

Equality and Diversity is the responsibility of everyone. This document sets out what it is, and gives members and committee members guidelines on how it can be embedded within the WI.

Definitions:

Equality is: the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

Diversity is: understanding that each individual is unique and recognising our individual differences.

The WI is based on the ideals of fellowship, truth, tolerance and justice. Does the WI meet your expectations? Do you feel valued? Do you always treat your fellow members in the way in which you would like to be treated?

It is a legal obligation to protect against discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 encompasses the following protected characteristics:

- **Age**
There can be no discrimination against anyone for reasons of age
- **Disability**
Protection is given to anyone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial impact on their daily life and is long term
- **Gender reassignment**
Protection for someone who feels emotionally and psychologically that they feel they belong to the opposite sex
- **Marriage and civil partnership**
Protection is given to anyone who is discriminated against on account of their marital or civil partnership status
- **Race**
Protection against discrimination regardless of race, colour, ethnic origins or nationality
- **Religion or belief**
Protection for anyone's religious or philosophical beliefs
- **Sex**
Equal opportunities for men and women
- **Sexual orientation**
Protection for someone who thinks they are gay, bisexual or straight
- **Pregnancy and maternity**
Protection is given to a woman for up to 52 weeks after birth or if she is breast feeding

As a member

In your WI you can expect to be valued and be given choices, such as:

- Your WI is an inclusive WI - it is welcoming to every woman who attends regardless of her background. It offers a varied programme of events and meetings suitable for the membership
- There is easy access to your WI
- You should feel welcome when you arrive at your WI
- You feel safe and secure at your WI
- The room is set up so you have a choice to sit where you can see and hear comfortably so that your sight and hearing needs are met
- If the room doesn't have a loop system your WI uses a microphone at all appropriate meetings
- You been asked or given permission to be included in any photographs taken at a WI meeting or event
- You been asked about your dietary choices for refreshments
- Your WI programme meets your expectations of being a WI member
- You receive information from your WI and your federation in a suitable format
- You are aware of the person in your WI who you can approach if you need help or information. This may be a member of the committee or a more long standing member
- There are no barriers to joining in with a cross section of the extra activities your WI runs
- You always feel you are treated with respect
- If you felt you were being singled out or bullied you would know who to speak to confidentially
- If you heard language that was inappropriate or offensive to you, you would know who to turn to

For help and advice on any of these statements, contact either, the officers in your WI (President, Secretary or Treasurer), your federation office or the WI Adviser who assists your WI.

Committee Checklist for a WI

The purpose of this checklist is to help every WI be as inclusive as possible. Please take time to discuss it within your committee to help ensure inclusivity for all members.

Consider the following:

- Familiarise yourself with the NFWI policies on topics such as trans-gender members and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and discuss within your committee how you can ensure these are embedded within your WI. They are found on *My WI* under *Essential Information > Key Documents*
- A microphone is available for use when addressing the members and your speakers are encouraged to use the equipment
- When using PowerPoint presentations or other visual aids the needs of those who might have sight impairments or difficulties such as dyslexia are considered
- Information received from NFWI and your federation is shared with all your members.
- A variety of text communication methods are used such as email, paper, website and social media
- The use of social media within your WI should have clear protocols for managing and monitoring its use
- You know who you can go for help, advice or information in your federation. This would primarily be your WI Adviser, federation secretary or officers on the federation Board of Trustees
- Care is taken to ensure your speakers are appropriate for the WI programme and offer a wide range of topics and activities, based on the WI Objects, to suit all interests
- The NFWI's equality and diversity statement, available on *My WI*, has been read and adopted within your WI
- The seating and room layouts in your venue are appropriate for everyone to be able to see and hear well
- There is appropriate lighting inside and outside the WI venue
- Regular risk assessments of your venue are carried out
- At each WI meeting members are reminded about the health & safety procedure
- Refreshments provided should be suitable for all members taking into account any special dietary requirements
- Your WI committee has a representative on the venue's committee (if appropriate)
- You deal promptly with any concerns that come to your notice

It is suggested that this document is downloaded and used as a discussion document in your WI so that everyone feels the full value of being a member.