

Handbook for setting up a new NWR group

STARTING YOUR NEW GROUP **2**

Who will be responsible for running the group? 2

How do I promote my new group? 3

How will new members get in touch? 3

How should I respond to new member enquiries? 3

What should I tell potential new members about NWR? 3

THE LOCAL ORGANISER (LO) **5**

What tasks does the Local Organiser undertake? 5

THE NWR WEBSITE **5**

RUNNING YOUR GROUP **5**

Where should the meetings be held? 6

How often should meetings be held? 6

Does a group have to meet on the same day every month? 6

Are refreshments served at meetings? 6

PROGRAMME PLANNING **6**

How do I create a programme? 6

Can we invite speakers to the meeting? 7

How do I present a programme? 7

What makes a good programme? 8

How do I run a discussion meeting? 8

What are the most common issues arising from a discussion meeting? 9

STARTING YOUR NEW GROUP

It's great news that you are thinking of starting a new group! This document is here to help you with any questions you may have regarding the start-up and the ongoing running of a new NWR (National Women's Register) group.

As an organisation we will do everything we can to support you. So please don't hesitate to get in touch with the National Office Team (email office@nwr.org.uk) who will be happy to help and will also be able to put you in touch with an Area Organiser (AO) or a group near you who could offer support.

What is NWR?

Our mission is to connect all women, whatever their age or personal circumstances, who are interested in everything and want to talk about anything.

To ensure a valued NWR community, our groups should be welcoming and friendly and our discussions varied, respectful and open minded. We are lively minded women so there will be lots of interesting topics to be discussed.

We are not a fundraising or campaigning charity and we do not affiliate to any religious faiths or political parties, but of course open discussion on any of these subjects can be both interesting and informative.

Hopefully you will decide to go ahead with starting your group. The first step is to complete a New Group Registration Form, which can be found [here](#).

Good luck and please let us know if you have any questions that have not been answered below, and do keep in touch with your progress.

Who will be responsible for running the group?

The Local Organiser (LO) co-ordinates the group's day-to-day activities, but ultimate responsibility for the group lies with NWR as an organisation. If you are starting a new group then it is highly likely that you will be the group's first Local Organiser (LO). NWR provides guidelines, frameworks and support for LOs to assist them with carrying out their role. The LO is also the group's link with the Area Organiser (if there is one), the National Organiser and the office. You can read more about the role of the LO later in this document.

How do I promote my new group?

Download the [NWR Promotion Guide](#), which contains lots of ideas and practical advice on how to promote your group and instructions for ordering publicity material.

How will new members get in touch?

If the office receives an enquiry from a potential new member they will contact the LOs closest to the enquirer's location.



The '*Publicity Toolkit*' will provide guidance on what contact information to include in promotional material so that potential new members have the option of contacting the group directly as well as the office.

How should I respond to new member enquiries?

NWR has set out guidance on how LOs respond to new member enquiries so that there is some consistency across the groups in what information they provide and to ensure that all new members are made to feel welcome. It is advised that the LO should make contact with the potential new member to answer any questions she has, outline the benefits of membership, explain the local group setup and invite her to a meeting. We would always recommend offering to meet any new members for a coffee, or at an alternative informal setting, before their first meeting with one or two members of the group. These members can then act as 'buddies' to the new member and perhaps offer them a lift to the first meeting or arrange for another member nearby to take her.

The NWR office can support you with handling these enquiries if you are finding them challenging to manage.

What should I tell potential new members about NWR?

Members of NWR talk about the friendships they have formed, interesting people they have met and the support network it brings - many stay a member for years. Members tend to share examples of the lively and varied group discussion topics and activities.

NWR Members benefit from:

Local

- Group membership of a locally meeting group or a group which meets virtually, usually fortnightly, during the evening or the daytime for discussions, speakers and visits.
- Opportunities to join sub-groups, examples being book groups, walking groups, lunch groups, theatre groups.
- Instant contacts when you move to a new area - who may become friends for life

Regional

- Option to link up with nearby groups for special events including speakers, outings and quizzes

National

- Day Conferences, workshops, discussion lunches
- Annual National Conference with a full programme of interesting speakers and workshops
- Bi-monthly newsletter containing news from NWR, including the schedule of online talks, activities and puzzles.
- Two editions of the NWR magazine each year
- Opportunities to join a special interest group: postal book group, correspondence magazines
- Access to our annual interactive national quiz event - the Telephone Treasure Trail

Online

- Access to online content and activities, members receive the schedule of quality talks organised by the National Organiser
- Opportunity to become a member of a group meeting virtually, usually meeting once a month: connect with members for discussion and chat.
- Access to additional content on the NWR website – including recordings of talks, past copies of magazines and newsletters, an audio version of the magazine
- Access to many and varied private Facebook forums that provide a safe, online space for discussion, ideas and support

THE LOCAL ORGANISER (LO)

What tasks does the Local Organiser undertake?

The LO co-ordinates the group's activities, responds to new member enquiries, promotes it and is the group's link with the Area Organiser (if there is one), the National Organiser and the NWR Office Team. Some LOs delegate roles out to members of the group, eg. to the publicity officer or programme editor.

All notifications relating to NWR business and activities will be sent to the LO so that she can keep the group informed about NWR business and forthcoming events.

A separate document providing more information about the role of the LO can be found [here](#).

THE NWR WEBSITE

The NWR website, www.nwr.org.uk, is the main suppository for everything NWR. It's a great tool for members wanting to find out about future events, connecting with other groups and promoting your own group to potential new members so it's really important that your group's individual pages are kept updated and interesting.

As LO only your name and group name will appear on the website and all contact from enquirers will go directly to the office as well as being forwarded to you.

RUNNING YOUR GROUP

Groups organise themselves in a variety of ways to suit the needs of the group as a whole.

Where should the meetings be held?

Generally, meetings are held in members' homes on a rotational basis. It's important to remember, though, that not all members are able to host meetings due to house size, seating and accessibility. Some groups hire local halls to have their meetings, the cost being covered by a local charge per member. And actually, groups can be held anywhere that works for the members – so a quiet pub, a private room in a café, over Zoom, in someone's barn – the possibilities are endless.



How often should meetings be held?

This can be decided once the group is established. Meetings should be held at least once a month to maintain continuity and connection. Many groups meet fortnightly with sub groups such as Book Clubs, meeting outside of those dates.

Some groups meet in the evenings and some in the daytime, some a combination of both.

Does a group have to meet on the same day every month?

The group is free to decide whether it wants to meet on the day or rotate days. Rotating the days of the week is recommended for the main discussion meetings so that a member with a regular commitment is not excluded. However, some groups prefer to stick to the same day for simplicity.

Are refreshments served at meetings?

Tea, coffee or soft drinks with biscuits are the usual refreshments at the end of a meeting. These tend to be the signal for the formal meeting to end and informal catch-up chats to start.

PROGRAMME PLANNING

How do I create a programme?

Use one of your first meetings as a 'Programme Planning Meeting' to decide the topics you would like to discuss in each meeting, the time, date and frequency of your meetings, and also the length of the programme.

Before the meeting, check out what other groups are doing by looking at the [NWR website](#) for some inspiration or join the NWR Official - Programme Planning group on Facebook.

Try to involve all members and encourage everyone to contribute to the programme in some way – leading a discussion, suggesting ideas, hosting an evening, bringing along a potential member etc. A good planning meeting with input from lots of members produces a good programme for everyone to enjoy; combining it with nibbles and wine (if you like) can work wonders!



Aim for a balance between the serious and light-hearted for discussions, speakers and social events. It is also a good idea to have one or two people responsible for co-ordinating each topic and leading the discussion. If there is no discussion leader, the Local Organiser should start the ball rolling.

Thereafter, planning meetings can be every 3, 6, 9 or 12 months with topics selected by all members who attend a planning meeting; by a committee who decide which of the group's ideas will be used; or by several planning groups, each of which is responsible for a section of the programme.

Can we invite speakers to the meeting?

Yes, speakers can be invited to the meetings and should be funded (if required) by local member contributions. Alternatively, some groups agree to watch a recording of one of the talks put on by the National Organiser and use that as a basis for discussion.

How do I present a programme?

A clear, well presented programme with a varied content will encourage a good attendance at meetings, so it is always worth giving some thought to the layout.

Don't forget to add any social meetings if you are having them e.g. coffee morning, book club.

Don't forget to include the following information on your programme:

- The name of your group, including the county.
- The name of the Local Organiser and her phone number and email address.
- The time your meetings start.
- The date and venue of each meeting.
- Include any charge you make for tea or coffee.
- A few words about each meeting to arouse interest
- A reminder if a speaker is booked; request members' support and try to include biographical details and a brief outline of the subject the talk will cover.
- National NWR events such as Telephone Treasure Trail, talks, quizzes and conferences
- NWR's charitable status i.e. the words "Registered Charity No. 295198"
- Details of any conferences/discussion lunches in the area

And finally, don't forget to add your meetings to your group's webpage on www.nwr.org.uk. Instructions for doing this can be found in the LO Handbook.

What makes a good programme?

Firstly, make sure the topics are ones the group wants to discuss. Suggestions for topic ideas can be found on the website [here](#) and in the Facebook group 'NWR Official - Programme Planning'.

Discussion meetings allow members to explore different aspects of a topic and provide a real opportunity for the exchange of views. Other meetings might involve members presenting information about different aspects of a topic or recounting experiences. Choose some lighter topics where several people get involved and present part of a topic.

Why not arrange a joint meeting with another local group?

How do I run a discussion meeting?

Successful discussion meetings require a little organisation and need a discussion leader to keep the discussion on topic. The discussion leader presents the topic to be discussed and can either ask for questions or comments to be made at the end of the presentation or she may be happy to answer as she goes along. Always encourage interaction and participation in the discussion, making sure that anyone who has something to say gets the opportunity.

The internet is a great source of research and being a little bit controversial always encourages a good discussion.

It's usually better not to have the host leading a discussion.

What are the most common issues arising from a discussion meeting?

Be aware of the quieter member who may be struggling to be heard, make sure she has the opportunity to make her point.

If your group are not meeting in person, please be aware of the specific challenges of conducting a successful discussion via Zoom. Ensure that all members have the opportunity to talk, particularly those less confident online. Perhaps you could suggest to people they raise their hand if they want to speak?

Don't be afraid to stop the discussion if too many people are talking at once or if several simultaneous discussions are developing. Try and bring the meeting back into a single conversation.

Keep an eye on the time and make sure there is enough time for a discussion after the topic has been presented. Make time for NWR business and coffee.

And finally

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. We hope you don't feel daunted by your role – there are lots of people to help – eg. you can speak to other Local Organisers and your Area Organiser (speak to the office if you don't have one and they will be able to put you in touch with someone). Above, we hope you find the role rewarding and have lots of fun!

