



National Women's Register

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE (Members)

Policy number	2006-02c	Version	9
Drafted by	Trustee, J Johnson	Approved by Board on	January 2024
Responsible person	Trustee, G Wignall	Scheduled review date	January 2026

All members of NWR should feel safe when participating in NWR activities. NWR takes seriously any complaint that is made. Members of the National Women's Register, its local Groups, holders of voluntary positions such as Local Organiser, Area Supporter etc. are expected to adhere to the principles of the organisation as described in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Code of Conduct and the policies adopted by the Board of Trustees.

However, it is recognised that Local Groups operate in a variety of ways and every effort should be made to resolve informally any problems that arise between members, or between a member and their local group or between members and the NWR staff.

OBJECTIVES OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

- To ensure the fair and consistent treatment of members and groups in matters of discipline
- To ensure the safe and effective operation of NWR
- To ensure that NWR staff are treated respectfully by NWR members

This Disciplinary Procedure applies in cases where an NWR Member or group has been found, after investigation, to have acted in contravention of a principle, code of conduct or policies of NWR or in cases of gross misconduct as itemised below.

At each stage in the procedure NWR staff and volunteers should keep in mind ways in which a grievance could be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is valid in whole or in part.

In addition, it may be appropriate for the parties involved to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;

It would be useful if complainants were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage.

- Attempts should be made to identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Note that if the disciplinary action is taken against a group it is anticipated that it will be a representative of the group who will be attending the meetings and not the whole group.

INFORMAL STAGE

It is most important that every effort should be made to resolve the disciplinary issue through informal resolution. The first step **must** be to try to resolve the issue through an informal route.

- In the first instance a conversation must be had to draw the member or group's attention to the perceived unsatisfactory conduct. This conversation may be between the member/group and the LO or Area Supporter depending on where the perceived misconduct has arisen.
- This should be a discussion about the perceived misconduct and to agree a way forward.
- Informal advice and guidance should be given to address the perceived misconduct. This can be verbally or in writing.
- The investigation may be conducted by the LO, a senior staff member, Area Supporter or a member from a different group or area who has not been involved in any way with the previous stage. This person is deemed to be the Investigating Officer. If the Investigating Officer finds that there is no case to answer then the informal disciplinary process will be terminated and the member/group will be informed in writing within 5 working days. The member/group will be reinstated. If however if it is decided that a disciplinary issue has been found then we must proceed to the formal process.

FORMAL STAGE

- If after the investigation it is decided there is a disciplinary case to answer the member or group will be informed in writing by the Investigating Officer within 5 working days. NWR staff should also be informed in writing.
- If appropriate the member/group may then be suspended for a designated period of time so investigations can take place.
- If required, the Investigating Officer can hold a further meeting with the member/group facing the disciplinary sanction and a friend who is an NWR member may accompany the member/group. This person must not have been involved in the earlier stages.

- Notes of the investigation and meeting must be taken. Data Protection legislation and UK GDPR must be taken into account.

APPEAL STAGE

- If the member/group wishes to appeal the decision made they must aim to prove that the process was defective in some way or that new evidence has come to light.
- The evidence must be presented to the Appeal panel which will be composed of 3 members who may be current or former Trustees who have not been involved in any of the earlier stages of the procedure.
- The member/group may wish to provide further oral evidence to the Appeal Panel and in this case a further meeting can be held to present such evidence.
- The Appeal panel may decide that the decision made by the Investigating Officer was fair and reasonable and that there is no further right of appeal.
- It may be that the panel will uphold the appeal and will overturn the decision of the disciplinary meeting and any formal sanctions made will not be applied.
- The decision of this panel is final and may not be appealed against.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If there is a reasonable belief that a contravention of the policies has occurred then one of the following penalties may be imposed, depending on the seriousness of the matter and the member/ group's previous behaviour:

- Oral warning to the member or group
- Written warning
- Final written warning
- Removal of NWR membership from the member, members or group concerned, either for a period or permanently.

EXAMPLES OF GROSS MISCONDUCT BY MEMBERS or GROUPS

(This is not intended to be an exhaustive list)

- Bringing NWR into disrepute, damaging its reputation including any act which is inconsistent with the aims and objectives of the organisation.
- Theft or fraud or failure to report a fraud relating to NWR's business.
- Flagrant mis-use of NWR's confidential or personal information relating to employees, trustees or members.
- Deliberate damage to NWR's property or that of any other member.
- Acts of incitement or actual acts of harassment or bullying of any other member or group
- Any other act which contravenes NWR's Code of Conduct