

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY POLICY

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Drafted by	Trustee, J Johnson	Approved by Board on	September 2021
Responsible person	Trustee, Wignall	Scheduled review date	September 2025

STATEMENT OF POLICY

NWR is a female membership organisation firmly committed to Equal Opportunities for all, regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, belief, religion, education, class or age. This policy covers all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. NWR values the diversity in society and strives to be inclusive in all its activities. The Board of Trustees will endeavour to ensure that all the organisation's proceedings, practices and publications adhere to this.

NWR will ensure that as far as it practicable its offices and NWR led/managed events are fully accessible. NWR will encourage local groups and meeting organisers to ensure that meeting places and arrangements are similarly accessible to all. Every effort will be made to ensure an awareness and understanding of the need to overcome physical barriers and ensure access to meetings and services.

Whilst members meet in their own homes we encourage and support the effort to accommodate individual needs to ensure an equal and fair access to all services and aspects of membership.

SCOPE

These principles apply to local groups, individual members, the Board of Trustees, Area Organisers, Local Organisers and employees. NWR will strive to create an environment for debate and dialogue within a culture of anti-discriminatory practices.

PUBLIC IMAGE

NWR will ensure that any publicity or promotional materials that it produces will not play on stereotypes or prejudices and strive to promote positive, anti-discriminatory messages.

MEMBERS

NWR is committed to ensuring that all members are treated equally and given equal opportunities to contribute to the organisation. NWR is also committed to ensuring that it recruits members and encourages membership from all sections of the population including different social and ethnic backgrounds.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISERS

NWR trustees and the National Organiser will endeavour to ensure that all voluntary posts as Local Organisers, Area Supporters, Conference Committee members, Facebook Moderators etc, within the organisation, are open to any member. All such post holders must follow and implement the Equal Opportunities policy. NWR relies on, and values, the immense contributions of its volunteers.

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS – CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff and Board members are bound to uphold this Equal Opportunities policy. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. Unlawful discrimination and victimisation on any grounds will also be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedures. If any person wants to make a complaint about any aspect of discrimination, the procedures for this are set out below.

DISCRIMINATION IN MEMBERSHIP

Any individual, (member, enquirer, or potential member) who feels that they have been unfairly discriminated against in any way should complain to the Local Organiser, Area Supporter, National organiser or Chair of Trustees via the NWR Office. A complaint can be raised in confidence, formally or informally, verbally or in writing.

COMPLAINTS OF BULLYING, HARASSMENT, VICTIMISATION OR WILFUL DISCRIMINATION

All complaints of unlawful discrimination and victimisation, whether related to an employee, member, Local or Area Supporter will be taken seriously and dealt with according to this policy.

WHAT CONSTITUTES HARASSMENT?

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

ACAS advises that Bullying 'may be characterised as: Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient'.

The conduct is also unacceptable if a person's rejection of the conduct or submission to the conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a basis for a decision concerning that person.

WHAT SHOULD A MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE DO IF BULLYING OR HARASSMENT IS SUSPECTED OR HAS ACTUALLY TAKEN PLACE?

Raise the matter in confidence with the Local Organiser, Area Organiser, Line Manager or any other appropriate senior person. This may be done with the assistance of a chosen colleague, supporter (if the complaint is brought by a member not an employee) or Trade Union representative (if appropriate).

HOW WILL THE MATTER BE DEALT WITH?

In minor cases and with agreement it is preferable that the matter is investigated and dealt with informally.

If this is not possible or appropriate, it will be dealt with formally.

The complaint will be investigated and dealt with by the Chair of Trustees or another, appropriate senior person.

- The matter will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially.
- The complainant and the alleged harasser will be told how long the investigation is likely to take and who will be dealing with it.

- The participants will be kept informed of every stage.
- Full records will be kept. NWR should always make a record of complaints and investigations. These should include the names of the people involved, dates, the nature and frequency of incidents, action taken, follow-up and monitoring information. All sensitive information should be treated confidentially and meet the requirements of data protection law.
- Consideration will be given to the opportunities for separating the participants from each other. It should not automatically be the complainant who is expected to move but they should be offered the choice where practical. Where the alleged perpetrator is an employee and is transferred, no breach of contract must occur, or a claim of constructive dismissal could arise.
- In some cases, mediation may be offered.
- The Chair or senior trustee will ensure that the complainant is not victimised by the line manager/Local Organiser or other members for having made a complaint.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE COMPLAINT IS FOUND TO BE UPHeld?

In all cases, the Disciplinary Procedure will be invoked.

POLICY MANAGEMENT

The managerial responsibility for this Equal Opportunities Policy will lie with the Trustee Board of NWR.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

This Equal Opportunities Policy will be comprehensively reviewed and evaluated every two years.

Gender Reassignment

Introduction

NWR's Equal Opportunities Policy covers all the "protected characteristics" in terms of equal treatment of individuals within UK law.

These notes are just to give clarity on the matter of gender reassignment and state the agreed position of the trustees and therefore NWR policy and to help if there are any clarifications issues that may be raised by the membership.

Current Equal Opportunities legislation protects transsexual people. A transsexual is someone who proposes to start, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender.

The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected so a man who decides to live as a woman is welcome to join NWR.

Implications for NWR

In terms of membership of NWR as a women's organisation, this would affect men wishing to live as women.

A woman, who is employed by NWR and seeking to live as a man may continue their employment provided that their job role is not one defined as having a "genuine occupational qualification" for the post (i.e. that the role is justifiably one that only a woman can hold). In cases of employment there would be a requirement for sight of original birth certificates to confirm identity solely for the purposes of establishing a right to work in the UK. Such information would be treated as strictly

confidential. It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo or are undergoing gender reassignment than they would have been treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.

Membership for Transsexual people

Any Group denying membership to a woman on the grounds of her being transgender will be in violation of NWR policy and UK law. The trustees will seek to encourage groups to abide by the law and welcome any prospective member.

Continuing membership of NWR will be denied to any Group who do not uphold NWR Equal Opportunities Policy.