

NFWI Access of Carers Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The WI is a place for all women and meetings should be accessible for members who require a carer where possible. This includes allowing members' carers to attend meetings.
- 1.2 Where appropriate, the WI/federation/NFWI will endeavour to provide the requisite support to members who usually require carers so that the presence of a carer is not required. However, there will be instances when the presence of a carer is required and, in those instances, this policy must be followed.
- 1.3 The WI also recognises that members may have caring responsibilities. WIs must be flexible and inclusive where possible to ensure these members can continue attending meetings and events. Where a member is a carer, this policy must be followed if applicable.

2. The definition of 'carer'

- 2.1 The NHS defines a carer as "anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid."

3. The definition of 'disability'

- 3.1 Under section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 3.2 The Act protects people with disabilities from discrimination and requires organisations to make reasonable adjustments, where possible, to ensure that people with disabilities can access services as easily as people without disabilities can.
- 3.3 Please see the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for more information about disabilities and making reasonable adjustments.

4. Subscriptions

- 4.1 If a member's carer is also a member who would in any case be attending the WI meeting, they must pay the usual subscription fee. If a carer is not a member and would not usually attend the WI meeting, they should be given access to attend the meeting with the member free of charge. No visitor's fee should apply to the carer.

5. WI/Federation/NFWI events

5.1 If a carer is also a member, who would in any case be attending the WI/federation/NFWI event, they must pay the applicable fee for the event. If the carer is not a member and would not usually attend the event, they should be given access to the event with the member free of charge.

6. NFWI Annual Meeting

6.1 Carers of members who attend the Annual Meeting as delegates are able to attend free of charge, with their travel expenses covered from the Pooling of Fares fund.

6.2 Carers of members who attend the Annual Meeting as observers are able to attend with a free entry ticket. Travel to the event is the responsibility of the observers and in many cases they travel on the federation coaches. It is recommended the carer is not charged for their travel.

6.3 If the federation has organised an overnight stay for delegates and observers, carers should be included in this arrangement and the hotel notified of this.

7. Third party events

7.1 Where the WI/federation/NFWI is facilitating an event assisted by a third party (for example a theatre outing), the position in relation to the carer will depend on the policy of that service provider. The WI/federation/NFWI should take steps to ensure that appropriate concessions are obtained from the venue where possible.

8. Bursaries

8.1 Bursaries that are awarded for a set sum of money may not cover the expenses of carers. The purpose of the bursary is to facilitate the course attendance and not to cover all costs. Therefore, there is no obligation to cover carers' costs.

8.2 Bursaries that are awarded to meet the full cost of a course may give rise to the expectation that carers' costs will also be covered. If this is not possible because there is a limit on the bursary amount, the wording and scope of the bursary should be clarified by adding in the maximum financial value of the bursary.

9. Male carers

9.1 Where the primary carer of a member is a man, it is the WI's decision whether they wish to allow him to attend WI meetings/events. It is possible that members may not wish for him to attend as WI membership is only open to women. In these circumstances, the WI should assist the member with alternative arrangements as far as is reasonably possible to do so. For example, it is recommended that the WI explore whether the member's needs can be met by her carer accompanying her

in and out of the meeting/event and being on-hand nearby in case he is needed, but not being present in the meeting/event.

10. Members who are carers

- 10.1 As a place for all women, the WI understands the difficulties carers can experience and is committed to ensuring WI meetings and events are accommodating to members needs as far as is possible to do so. Members should at all times feel able to ask the committee questions or share their needs, such as caring responsibilities and how these impact their access to WI meetings and events.
- 10.2 Where a member wishes to bring the person they care for to WI meetings or events, the following guidance applies:
- 10.2.1 Situations such as these should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, considering the individual circumstances and arising needs.
 - 10.2.2 The member should put their query to the WI committee. The WI committee can ask for more information/clarification as needed.
 - 10.2.3 Any decisions on permitting a person who the member cares for to attend a WI meeting/event should be made by the committee after consulting with members when appropriate.
 - 10.2.4 If the person the member cares for is also a member who would in any case be attending the WI meeting, they must pay the usual subscription/event fees. If the person being cared for is not a member, the WI committee must consider whether they would need to pay a visitor's fee to attend WI meeting or an event fee.
 - 10.2.5 The WI committee should always try to be as inclusive and flexible as possible, but balance this with the need to ensure the WI can continue to meet its charitable objects and carry out its activities.
 - 10.2.6 Where a query concerns caring for a young person (those under 18) or an adult at risk, the WI should consider safeguarding. Please see the NFWI Safeguarding Policy for more information.
 - 10.2.7 Where the person cared for is a man, it is the WI's decision whether they wish to allow him to attend WI meetings/events.
 - 10.2.8 The WI committee should signpost members to external support where appropriate and possible.
 - 10.2.9 Think about whether there are meetings or events where members would like the space to be strictly members only. This may be for a topic on a certain subject.
 - 10.2.10 Any agreements to allow a member to bring the person they care for to WI meetings/events will need to be monitored.

11. Confidentiality and data protection

11.1 When a member shares information about them needing a carer or being a carer, this must be treated confidentiality and in accordance with data protection practices. For more information about data protection, see the NFWI Privacy Policy: <https://www.thewi.org.uk/privacy-policy> or email dataprotection@nfw.org.uk

12. Accessibility

12.1 This policy has been created with accessibility requirements in mind. However, if you need any help with accessibility, please let us know using the contact information below.

13. Updating this policy

13.1 We are committed to reviewing our policies and good practice regularly. This policy will be regularly monitored as part of the governance of the charity.

13.2 This policy will be reviewed by the NFWI Board of Trustees at least annually, when there is a change in UK law or policy, a change in best practice or when a serious incident occurs that highlights a need for change – whichever occurs first.

13.3 Any updates will be communicated to federations, who must cascade this information on to WIs.

14. Resources

The following NFWI policies can offer further support and information:

- NFWI Complaints Policy
- NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- NFWI Safeguarding Policy

The following organisations can offer further information:

- Carers Trust
- Carers UK

15. Contact us

15.1 If you would like to contact us about this policy, please email membership@nfw.org.uk, call 0207 371 9300 or write to us at NFWI, Membership and Engagement Team, 104 New Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY.

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