

NFWI Access of Carers to Members with Disabilities to Meetings and Events

1. Introduction

The WI is a place for all women and meetings should be accessible for members with disabilities where possible. This includes allowing members' carers to attend meetings.

Where appropriate, the WI/federation/NFWI will endeavour to provide the requisite support to members with disabilities 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.

2. The definition of 'disability'

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.

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. Please see the *NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy* for more information about disabilities and making reasonable adjustments.

3. Subscriptions

If a 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 who is disabled free of charge. No visitor's fee should apply to the carer.

4. WI/Federation/NFWI events

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 who is disabled free of charge.

5. NFWI Annual Meeting

Carers of members with disabilities 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.

Carers of members with disabilities 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.

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.

6. Third party events

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.

7. Bursaries

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.

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.

8. Male carers

Where the primary carer of a member with a disability 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.

9. Accessibility

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.

10. Contact us

If you would like to contact us about this policy, please email membership@nfwl.org.uk, call 0207 371 9300 (Ext. 201) or write to us at NFWI, Membership and Engagement Team, 104 New Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY.

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