

These notes are designed to guide you through completing the resolution submission form, please ensure you read them before you start working on your resolution.

The power of the WI

With approximately 215,000 informed and active members, the WI is widely recognised as a powerful force for positive change. Since the first mandate was passed in 1918, the WI has been campaigning and raising awareness on issues of local, national and international concern. The WI has campaigned on important issues such as equal pay, the plight of the honeybee, and climate change. These issues reveal WI members' concern for social and environmental justice, combined with their willingness to take action to achieve it.



The WI is democratic and member-led

Members are right at the centre of policy and campaign development with every issue that the WI campaigns on stemming directly from resolutions put forward by WI members and adopted at the NFWI Annual Meeting (Annual General Meeting, AGM in the past) each year.

Sometimes the big issues we face can't be tackled on our own. The WI exists to give women the opportunity of working together, and of putting into practice those ideals for which it stands.

Guidance notes

These guidance notes follow the format of the resolution submission form. Please read them in conjunction with the form which is available to complete online or for download at www.TheWI.org.uk/resolutions. Copies can also be requested from the NFWI public affairs team.

Details of WI or federation submitting the resolution

All WIs and federations may submit resolutions. If you are submitting on behalf of a WI please add the name of your WI and your federation. If you are submitting on behalf of a federation please just add the name of your federation, leaving the WI space blank.

Any member can propose a resolution within their WI. A vote will then be held within that WI on whether to submit this resolution. Federations can also submit a resolution to the NFWI and need to hold a vote of the Board of Trustees to approve it. You need to record the date on which this vote was held.

Once you have submitted the resolution the NFWI may need to get in touch with you about the submission. Please use this space to put down the contact details of the best person to get in touch with. For submissions from a WI this is likely to be your secretary and for submissions from a federation this is likely to be your resolutions adviser.

If your resolution makes it to the NFWI Annual Meeting it will need to be proposed before it is voted on. Please add the name here of the member who will propose the resolution. This is usually the member who initially proposed the resolution within your WI or federation and the member who is most passionate about the issue.

“What an amazing feeling – seeing ‘my’ resolution in WI life as one of the 4 shortlisted resolutions. It was stimulating to do the research and then write about a cause in which I am interested, also rewarding to find that I can still write coherently! Hopefully, I have raised awareness of an important issue”

Liz Barker, Brundall Evening WI and Norfolk Resolutions Adviser

Title of resolution

The title of the resolution is used to identify it throughout the resolutions process. This is the title that will appear in WI Life when members select the resolutions that they support, and it is the title that will identify the resolution as it is voted on at the NFWI Annual Meeting. It is important that the title is clear and that it accurately represents the aims of the resolution.

Wording of resolution

The wording of the resolution is the most important aspect of a resolution. The WI's future campaigning work on the issue will be based on what is mentioned in the wording of the resolution. It is therefore important that you make this as strong and as accurate as possible. The NFWI public affairs team will check the wording of all submitted resolutions and will contact any proposers who they believe have submitted resolutions with unclear or ambiguous wording or wording that does not reflect the issue.

When looking at the specific wording of the resolution there are two key rules that you need to follow, so that your resolution is accepted:

- It should not be a statement or comment, but should instead require action by a specified body – “We believe that GM crops should not be grown in the UK until they have been proven safe” is not appropriate wording for a resolution.
- It should address a single issue, though it can focus on several dimensions of the issue.

How to structure the wording of your resolution

Even if your resolution is accepted, it is unlikely to progress very far if the wording is unclear. To give your resolution the best chance of success, please follow this structure for the wording:

- a. Outline the problem you want to address
- b. Call on a particular organisation to do something – This could be a national or international body, like the UK government or the United Nations, a private corporation, or all WI members.
- c. Explain what you want that group to do – Do you want them to take action, to pass a law, to increase investment? This could be anything that will achieve the aims of the resolution.
- d. State what you would like this to achieve – It is good to ensure that this is stated in the wording so that members know what the end goal of the campaign would be.

A well worded resolution that followed this format.

“There are chronic shortages of midwives. The NFWI calls on the Government to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of midwives in England and Wales to ensure services are adequately resourced and are able to deliver a high standard of care”

- a. *There are chronic shortages of midwives.*
- b. *The NFWI calls on the Government*
- c. *to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of midwives in England and Wales*
- d. *to ensure services are adequately resourced and are able to deliver a high standard of care*

A poorly worded resolution that didn't follow this format.

“This meeting believes that the UK should do more to tackle the issue of incursion into green spaces”

- a. *The resolution states that incursion into green spaces is the problem, but its not clear what this actually refers to, or why this is a problem.*
- b. *This calls on the UK to do more, but does not state which specific body has the power to carry out the resolution, or who the WI need to influence.*
- c. *“Tackle the issue” is very vague, and gives no indication as to what the WI wants to see happen, and what the WI wants the UK to do.*
- d. *This resolution does not mention what the WI would like to achieve with this resolution.*



Approval from federation representative

All resolutions, prior to submission to the NFWI, need to be checked by your federation, either by a Resolutions Adviser, or Federation Representative (Federation Chairman or Treasurer) – please check with your federation who was nominated to the sign off resolution submissions. She is only required to check that the wording of the resolution is clear, that the resolution is not repeating an issue on which the WI already has a mandate, and that the resolution does not go against the charitable objects of the NFWI. She cannot refuse to approve a resolution because she disagrees with the content or the aims of the resolution.

Please ask the nominated representative to sign your submission form to approve it. If they cannot sign it before the deadline please ask them to get in touch with the NFWI public affairs team to confirm that they have seen the resolution and that they approve the format.

Shortlisting Criteria – What makes a good resolution?

To support the submission of your resolution, please consider the shortlisting criteria and complete the additional questions on the submission form. You do not need to provide lots of information for these (250 words on each is plenty); it is more important that you have considered the points in each section and have answered the questions clearly.

This additional information is vital for the NFWI public affairs team and members representing federations at the selection meeting to fully understand the intention of your resolution and what it is that you would like to achieve. It is also important for you to think through each of these points to ensure that your submission is as strong as it could be.

These are the criteria used by federation representatives to draw up the shortlist of resolutions. A good resolution combines some, or ideally all, of the following elements.



Further information

For more information to support your resolution, please visit www.thewi.org.uk/resolutions where you will be able to access:

- An online submission form that can be used instead of the paper form.
- A list of all WI resolutions passed since 1915 – also available in your copy of Speaking Out.
- A leaflet on the resolutions process, with tips, advice and information to support you.
- A timeline of the resolutions process.
- “The WI at 100” – The NFWI’s centenary report looking at 100 years of WI campaigns.
- “The WI as a force for change” – A leaflet looking into resolutions that have successfully delivered change over the past 100 years.

If you have any further questions or would like some further support in submitting a resolution then please do get in touch with the NFWI public affairs team on pa@nfwl.org.uk or 020 7371 9300 ext. 238

Topical – it fits with current areas of public and members’ interest.

Timely – it is not ‘yesterday’s news’.

Targeted – the resolution has a clear and realistic objective.

Achievable – the resolution is calling for something meaningful and sensible that can be achieved.

Partnership Potential – the WI’s work will add value to the work of other organisations.

Accurate – it reflects the current situation and does not use outdated or obsolete information as its basis.

PR Potential – there is a potential to gain positive media coverage for the WI that could lead to an increase in membership, perhaps by challenging rather than reinforcing media and public stereotypes about the organisation.

Appropriate – it fits with the WI’s charitable objects, history and ethos.