

NAWRA

Notes from Equality and Diversity working group meeting 13 September 2021

Present:

Atif Kaudri – Mind (Chair)

Michael Shanks – Equal Lives

Stuart Goodman – Rainbow Money Advice

Daphne Hall – Rightsnet

Dan Norris – Child Poverty Action Group

Jan Eberhart – Salford Welfare Rights

Riley Bartholomew – Deafblind Scotland

Ceri Jones – Disability Cambridgeshire

David Raymond Southall – Dial House Chester

Bez Ely – Disability Law Service

Sonia Meikle – Croydon Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Support Group

Anita Miller – Sears Group Trust

Kelly Smith – Child Poverty Action Group / NAWRA Secretary (minutes)

Apologies:

Keith Thompson – Northumberland Council

Will Hadwen

Jacob Cain – Bristol Council

Sangeeta Enright – Cystic Fibrosis Trust

Discussion:

- Ground rules were agreed: to respect, to challenge constructively, to give benefit of the doubt, to have a non-judgemental approach and to be polite.
- The terms of reference were reviewed. We agreed to replace 'gender reassignment' with 'gender identity' and to acknowledge the intersectionality of all the characteristics. Terms of reference adopted. Terms of reference to be flexible and ready to accommodate later suggestions.
- The working group will develop an equality and diversity strategy and action plan and support their implementation to make NAWRA inclusive and accessible to all.
 - Researching and adopting good practice guides written by other organisations.
 - Making a commitment to equality and diversity a condition of joining NAWRA at signup stage.
 - Examining barriers to entry and establishing a scheme to allow small organisations with little funding to join NAWRA for a reduced fee or for free.
 - Contributing to work on equality and diversity in the wider rights and advice sector.
- Making online meetings more inclusive through the use of:
 - Closed captioning

- Adopting a 'Zoom protocol' for deaf or hard of hearing participants (keep your head still, speak clearly, do not cover your mouth, look directly into the camera ensure your face is lit so you can be seen)
- Requesting that participants add their pronouns to their Zoom name field.
- Making in person meetings more inclusive through the use of venues with:
 - good disability access and reserved spaces
 - non-gendered toilets (or make toilets non-gendered with temporary signage about the facilities inside eg. 'urinals and two stalled toilets')
 - a quiet space that can be used for wellness, breakout time or prayer

Next steps:

- Decide on the timings of Equality and Diversity meetings – as part of the main NAWRA conference or as a standalone meeting?
- Send good practice guides written by other organisations to kelly@nawra.org.uk for discussion and adoption.
- Investigate the possibility of setting up a Teams channel to continue the conversation.