

NAWRA

Notes from Equality and Diversity working group meeting 9 May 2023

Present:

Atif Kaudri – Mind (Chair)
Riley Bartholomew – Deafblind Scotland
Daphne Hall – Rightsnet
Keith Thompson – Northumberland Council
Rita Chadha – Advice Services Alliance
Bronwen – National Energy Action
Will Hadwen
Sonia Meikle – London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Kelly Smith – Child Poverty Action Group / NAWRA Secretary (minutes)

Apologies:

Juan Ramirez – Derbyshire County Council
Jacob Cain – Bristol Council
Lindsey Poole – Advice Services Alliance
Sangeeta Enright – Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Bhavani Sarma – Central Bedfordshire Council

1. Notes from the last meeting(s)

These can be found on the [Equality and Diversity page](#) of the NAWRA website. Notes agreed.

2. Researching and adopting good practice guides written by other organisations

Thanks to working group members who shared good practice guides and resources. They have been adopted and are now on the [NAWRA website](#).

Action: All members to send good practice guides on protected characteristics to Kelly at kelly@nawra.org.uk for discussion and adoption.

3. Promote the discounted/free membership scheme widely to allow small organisations with little funding to join NAWRA and ensuring a seamless service from nomination to joining for such organisations

So far, six organisations have been invited to join NAWRA for free and have accepted this offer. The most recent new member is an organisation in Manchester offering advice to Ukrainians.

Action: all members to consider nominating any organisation that they feel meets the criteria for free membership by emailing Atif Kaudri (Mind) at a.kaudri@mind.org.uk with the details.

4. Contributing to work on equality and diversity in the wider rights and advice sector

a. Careers fairs

Will Hadwen attended a careers evening in south London recently to talk with young people aged 14-21 about advice work as a profession. Many were from migrant families with experience of helping their parents with benefits, debt and housing problems. The next event is in September 2023. **Action:** Kelly to speak with NAWRA committee about making it a NAWRA-sponsored event.

Action: Contact Will if you are aware of similar events elsewhere.

Action: Bronwen to speak with a lecturer at Bangor University who is doing some work on this.

Action: Rita to talk to London Legal Support Trust as they are also looking at routes into the profession.

b. National Careers Service website

[by email] Keith Thompson (Northumberland County Council) would like the opportunity to improve the profile of a [Welfare Rights Officer](#) on the National Careers Service website. **Action:** Keith to speak to the careers team locally.

5. Measuring the diversity of the NAWRA membership

Action: Rita Chadha (Advice Services Alliance) to draft questions for a diversity monitoring form to be sent to members. The [standard questions](#) can be used with ethnicity options listed alphabetically.

6. Equality and diversity considerations at NAWRA conferences

All agreed that we should consider equality and diversity when organising conferences and make it a fundamental part of everything we do, including specifically asking speakers to think about how the topic they are presenting on impacts upon different groups.

Action: Kelly to check the accessibility of the venue in Nottingham where the next NAWRA conference will take place. Please send any feedback to kelly@nawra.org.uk

Online meetings are more accessible for many people but in-person meetings are valued too.

Rita Chadha (Advice Services Alliance) has offered to talk about a new project on racialised communities in London at a future NAWRA conference. **Action:** Kelly to contact Rita to arrange a date for this.

7. AOB

None.

8. Next meeting

The next meeting of the equality and diversity working group will take place at 1pm on Tuesday 17 October 2023. **Action:** Kelly to circulate the invitation and Zoom link to the working group and the full NAWRA membership.