

NAWRA Equality and Diversity working group meeting 24 Sep 2024

Present -

Atif Kaudri – chair
Keith Thompson (Northumberland Council)
Will Hadwen
Bhavani Sarma (Central Bedfordshire Council)
Michael Shanks (Norfolk Community Law Service)
Daphne Hall (rightsnet)
Pamela Carysforth (Jigsaw Housing)
Kelly Smith (CPAG & NAWRA Secretary) – minutes

Apologies -

Bronwen Banner (National Energy Action)
Sangeeta Enright (Cystic Fibrosis Trust)

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

Thanks to everyone who has sent in helpful documents.

Action: Please send Kelly a link to any more useful resources. Kelly will add them to the NAWRA website at <https://www.nawra.org.uk/about-nawra/equality-and-diversity/>

2. Results of equality monitoring survey of members

Kelly circulated the results of the equality and diversity survey sent to all NAWRA members with two reminders in July and Aug 2024. There were 307 respondents (around 24% of mailing list members).

Action: Keith Thompson (Northumberland Council) and Pamela Carysforth (Jigsaw Housing) to analyse the results.

3. Improving the profile for Welfare Rights Adviser on the National Careers Service website

Will Hadwen and others would like to improve the job profile for a Welfare Rights Officer on the National Careers Service website to make it more accurate, within the constraints of the format: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/welfare-rights-officer>

Thanks to everyone who has sent comments to Will. **Action:** Will to collate the comments and send them to his contact person at the National Careers Service.

4. Further updates to allow small organisations with little funding to join NAWRA for free

No free membership applications have been made since our last meeting.

Action: Please send details of any small organisations that might benefit from a free NAWRA membership to kelly@nawra.org.uk.

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

We discussed offering free NAWRA membership for apprentices, or organisations hosting apprentices. While there was no opposition as such to this, it was felt we should be encouraging employing organisations to become NAWRA members. If it becomes an issue that they are not, we could review.

We discussed working with Macmillan trainees. **Action:** Bhavani Sarma (Central Bedfordshire Council) to investigate.

Another route into the sector could be through graduate placements, perhaps in partnership with larger organisations. NAWRA could put together a sample pack that member organisations could adapt for use at careers fairs locally?

Will has spoken with Dan Manville (Greater Manchester Law Centre) and Alan Markey (Coventry Independent Advice Service) about work going on in this area, particularly with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

Bhavani Sarma (Central Bedfordshire Council) contacted course leaders at University of York.

Many advice organisations are struggling with funding and have no money to recruit trainees. Some organisations have found that law graduates tend to leave quickly for higher salaries elsewhere. This is particularly the case in rural areas and small towns.

This agenda item will also be discussed at the NAWRA committee strategy day on 14 Oct 2024.

6. Equality and diversity considerations at NAWRA conferences

NAWRA held a conference in Glasgow on 6 Sep 2024. Attendees also at this meeting thought that equality and diversity was given due consideration. It was noted that the venue had a confusing layout and workshop rooms were difficult to find and that the PA system in the main room had rather distracting disco lights.

7. AOB - none

8. Date of next meeting – 1-2pm on 9 Dec 2024 on Zoom. **Action: Kelly to circulate a calendar invitation with link.**