

NAWRA Equality and Diversity working group meeting 9 Dec 2024

Present -

Daphne Hall (rightsnet) - chair
Will Hadwen
Michael Shanks (Norfolk Community Law Service)
Pamela Carysforth (Jigsaw Housing)
Dal Warburton (Advice UK)
Kelly Smith (CPAG & NAWRA Secretary) – minutes

Apologies -

Atif Kaudri
Bronwen Banner (National Energy Action)
Sangeeta Enright (Cystic Fibrosis Trust)
Bhavani Sarma (Central Bedfordshire Council)
Riley Bartholomew (Beatson Cancer Charity)
Keith Thompson (Northumberland Council)

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

Keith Thompson (Northumberland Council) and Pamela Carysforth (Jigsaw Housing) have analysed the results of the survey of members carried out in summer 2024. **Action:** Keith and Pamela to write a short analysis of the results and some recommendations of the changes needed for the next version for circulation to members. We agreed to run the survey annually.

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

The job profile for a Welfare Rights Officer on the National Careers Service website is now much improved: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/welfare-rights-officer>

Thanks to Will Hadwen and everyone else who contributed.

There is a proposal to combine Job Centre Plus and National Careers Service so the future of the website is uncertain. **Action:** Will Hadwen to keep an eye on it.

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

Advice UK is focusing on new advisers coming into the sector through advice-giving in food banks and social prescribing. There is an opportunity to help these new advisers get involved in the sector.

At the NAWRA conference on 5 and 6 Dec 2024, Nick Whittingham from Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre and Dan Manville from Greater Manchester Law Centre gave a presentation on how to use the Equality Act to challenge discrimination within the DWP. NAWRA is keen to log cases where members are making equality challenges.

Action: Send anonymised case studies to daphne@nawra.org.uk. **Action:** Kelly to circulate the request to all NAWRA members.

6. Equality and diversity considerations at NAWRA conferences

NAWRA held a conference on Zoom on 5 and 6 Dec 2024. No equality and diversity issues were raised.

7. AOB

NAWRA will be 50 years old in 2025. We are planning to host an Advice Summit in Stockport. **Action:** contact daphne@nawra.org.uk if you would like to be part of the planning group.

AI is being used to summarise conversations and make notes. Wisser is doing some work to address bias.

8. Date of next meeting – 1-2pm on 18 March 2025 on Zoom. **Action:** Kelly to circulate a calendar invitation with link.