

NAWRA Equality and Diversity working group meeting 8 Dec 2025

Present -

Atif Kaudri – chair
Michael Shanks (Norfolk Community Law Service)
Jennifer Cowen (Durham County Council)
Bhavani Sarma (Bedfordshire Council)
Pamela Carysforth (Jigsaw Homes)
Kelly Smith (CPAG & NAWRA Secretary) – minutes
Runa Matin
Daphne Hall (rightsnet)
Riley Bartholomew (Beatson Cancer Charity)
Fatima Begum
Sam Scotcher (Anchor)
Christina Ward (CIPFA)

Apologies -

Sangeeta Enright (Cystic Fibrosis Trust)
Sabrina Dubash (Valleys Advice)
Zoe Kendall (Beyond Housing)
Alan Markey (Coventry Independent Advice Service)
Mohammed Shah (Anchor)

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/>

Action: Kelly to add the EHRC full guidance on the recent Supreme Court gender ruling when it is published.

2. Equality monitoring survey of members

Agreed that the next survey of members will be conducted in Sep 2026 with a deadline in Oct 2026. This will give us time to analyse the findings and present them at the Dec 2026 NAWRA conference.

Agreed that in May 2026 we would appeal for someone with relevant data expertise to help draft the questions and analyse the results.

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

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

Action: Jennifer Cowen (Durham County Council) to send Kelly details of Groundworks, who may be interested in joining NAWRA.

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

Bhavani Sarma (Bedfordshire Council) reported back on Macmillan's new project model.

Action: Bhavani Sarma (Bedfordshire Council) to find out more about Camden Council's data driven advice service.

5. Equality and diversity considerations at NAWRA conferences

NAWRA decided to move the date of the spring conference to Monday 23 March 2026 to avoid the last Friday of Ramadan.

We agreed that the lunch break at future conferences should align with the time for Friday prayers locally. **Action:** Atif Kaudri to find out about local mosque prayer times in Newcastle and send to Kelly.

We agreed to check the dates of all religious holidays when planning future NAWRA conferences.

We agreed to vary the day of the week for NAWRA conferences. Historically, in-person events have taken place on Fridays but a number of members either work part-time or for an organisation with a four-day week and Fridays are the most common non-working day. **Action:** Kelly to refer this matter to the NAWRA committee for consideration.

Action: Kelly to check accessibility of venues with the hosts of our next in-person conference (Newcastle on 23 March 2026) and emphasise the importance of this.

Members were keen on an afternoon break during a NAWRA conference. **Action:** Kelly to request that the hosts provide this on the agenda.

6. AOB

None.

7. Date of next meeting

The next NAWRA's equality and diversity working group meeting will take place on Teams at 1pm on 30 March 2026. **Action:** Kelly to circulate a Teams link to working group members.