

## **NAWRA Equality and Diversity working group meeting 30 March 2026**

### **Present -**

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

### **Apologies -**

Sangeeta Enright (Cystic Fibrosis Trust)  
Sabrina Dubash (Valleys Advice)  
Alan Markey (Coventry Independent Advice Service)

#### **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. 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.

**Action:** Kelly to appeal for someone with relevant data expertise to help draft the questions and analyse the results in early May.

#### **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](mailto:kelly@nawra.org.uk).

**Action:** Daphne to encourage the hosts of the NAWRA meeting in Dorchester in June 2026 to approach local organisations to encourage them to attend.

#### **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**

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 Dorchester and send to Kelly.

**Action:** Kelly to check accessibility of venues with the hosts of our next in-person conference (Dorchester on 5 June 2026) and emphasise the importance of this.

The NAWRA conference in Newcastle took place on Mon 23 Mar 2023. We agreed to ask the hosts of future conferences to try to avoid Mondays, as leaving home on Sunday can be difficult for those with caring responsibilities.

#### **6. AOB**

Pamela Carysforth (Salford City Council) raised the issue of private companies exploiting claimants by charging for benefits advice. These companies are not eligible for NAWRA membership.

#### **7. Date of next meeting**

The next NAWRA's equality and diversity working group meeting will take place on Teams at 1pm on 8 June. **Action:** Kelly to circulate a Teams link to working group members.