

NFWI Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Why does the NFWI need a social media policy?

While the NFWI encourages the use of social media, we have certain standards, outlined in this policy, which NFWI requires everyone to observe. Publication and commentary on social media on behalf of (or in conjunction with) NFWI, a federation or WI, carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary in the public domain. Even when using your own personal social media, the difference between a personal and professional opinion can be blurred, particularly if you are discussing issues relating to The WI, so this policy also sets out standards for personal social media use.

This policy is intended for trustees, members, and NFWI employees (including casual workers, agency workers, consultants, external advisers, and self-employed contractors). It applies to content posted on both NFWI social media platforms and personal accounts.

The Membership and Engagement department is responsible for the day-to-day publishing, monitoring and management of our social media channels. If you have specific questions about any aspect of these channels, please contact the membership team via email: membership@nfw.org.uk

1.2 What is social media?

Social media is the term given to web-based tools and applications which enable users to create and share content (words, images and video content), and network with each other through the sharing of information, opinions, knowledge and common interests. Examples of social media include Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn and Instagram.

1.3 Why do we use social media?

Social media is important to the success of communicating NFWI, federations and individual WIs work. It is important for the NFWI to participate in social media to engage with our audience, participate in relevant conversations and raise our organisational profile.

Each social media platform offers different things, so it is for each charity (NFWI, federation and WI) to decide what works best for them in terms of reaching existing members and new audiences, and to best portray the work of the charity.

2. Purpose of NFWI pages:

The NFWI currently operates five main social media pages, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

The NFWI uses social media to:

- Connect with WI members and supporters
- Promote the WI's key aims and values to a wider audience
- Showcase the activities and achievements of WI members and supporters
- Reach new audiences and inspire more women to join the movement
- Share news and updates instantly
- Promote online discussion – get input and ideas directly from members
- Connect with other organisations and stakeholders
- Influence decision makers, such as politicians, through our campaigning and clear call to action

All use of social media on behalf of NFWI should pursue one or more of these objectives.

The NFWI social media pages are all public, and although we can see when WI and federation accounts are interacting with us, we are not able to tell whether personal accounts which engage with us belong to WI members or not. We expect WI members and non-members who interact with our pages to adhere to the same values and conditions of use.

3. The WI values:

The WI was founded on democratic ideals over 100 years ago and this commitment to equality and inclusion is still central to our ethos today. The WI is an inclusive, supportive and progressive organisation for all women.

Our social media pages should be positive spaces for learning, sharing news, raising awareness of important issues and building connections. Although we welcome discussion and debate, we expect participants on the page to support and respect each other, as they would at a WI meeting or event.

4. Use of the NFWI pages

4.1 Discriminatory and offensive comments: We are respectful of the rights of all using the NFWI pages to express their views, however when engaging with posts on the NFWI's social media pages, we ask all members and non-members to be respectful, to avoid personal attacks and profanity in interactions with others, and to adhere to the principles of respectful debate. We will not tolerate any comments showing harassment, criminality, or infringing another's rights under the Equality Act 2010. We maintain a right to remove discriminatory or offensive comments without warning, although we may not be able to apply this consistently across all comments and pages. We also maintain a right to block anyone from the NFWI pages. If a user of our pages believes an offensive or discriminatory comment has been posted and not moderated, they should alert an NFWI employee as soon as possible.

Offensive comments include comments that cause upset because they are rude or insulting. This may include the context in which they are written, or who they are in response to. Flippant comments or jokes also have the potential to cause serious offence or be discriminatory, so please think twice before posting in this manner or engaging with such a post.

We understand that some topics can be very emotionally charged. People will sometimes vent their frustration in ways that others with different viewpoints may not agree with and that discussion also draws in individuals who are not always supportive of the WI or what it stands for. Debates on certain topics are to be expected and free speech and exchanging of views encouraged, as is the nature of online conversation; however, please remember that there is a real person behind the screen, who may be personally affected by hurtful comments, and that all comments leave a lasting virtual legacy and reflection on the organisation.

4.2 Disrespect for WI policies: We welcome any feedback on our policies from WI members via the usual channels of email and telephone, or even as a private message on social media. However, due to the public nature of the social media pages, we maintain the right to remove posts which show disrespect or hostility towards WI policies and procedures.

We also maintain the right to remove posts that show untruths or are misleading about the NFWI, or our policies and procedures.

4.3 Moderating comments: We moderate comments if we believe any of our values have been compromised or conditions of use of our pages have been violated. As above, we are not able to moderate all discussion or remove all offensive posts, as we are a small team and comments are often numerous. If you are concerned about any comments, please contact us via email, phone or a private message on one of our social media channels.

Opinions expressed in comments made by those who participate on the NFWI social media pages are the personal opinions of the authors; not of the NFWI. Opinions expressed by participants are not necessarily endorsed by the NFWI, and it does not mean we automatically agree with something just because we do not delete it.

4.4 Responding to messages: The NFWI will endeavour to reply to all private messages and questions asked in a timely manner. Although we monitor our accounts continually, please note that private messages will be responded to within NFWI working hours.

4.5 Blocking: We reserve the right to block anyone from our social media pages if we believe any of our values have been compromised or conditions of use of our pages have been violated. This applies to both members and non-members. If you believe you have been blocked unfairly, please contact us.

4.6 Advertising: We do not post any advertisements (this includes posts mentioning third party companies and organisations) that do not pertain directly to

the intended use of this page unless we have an agreement in place with the third party. The NFWI reserves the right to remove posts of this nature which are posted on our social media pages by anyone other than NFWI without notice.

4.7 Political content: The NFWI is non-party political, so will not share any content affiliated with a political party. However, we have every right to express views on policy, including the policies of parties, when relevant to our campaigns. Posts referring to individuals' personal party-political views are also discouraged and may be removed by the NFWI without notice, as NFWI's social media posts are not the most appropriate forum for such discussions.

4.8 Relevance: The NFWI will only share content that is deemed to be relevant to the organisation and its audience. This can include (but is not limited to), news and stories sent in about WI activities, upcoming WI events, WI campaign news and news from other organisations which tie in with our campaigns. The NFWI will not share casting flyers from TV production companies, promotions of products or businesses, petitions, fundraising campaigns, or campaign materials on issues with no relevance to our campaigns or areas of work.

Posts signposting to personal sites, pages or groups, especially those without direct relevance to the NFWI, and/or related topics, are also discouraged and may be removed by the NFWI without notice.

4.9 Confidentiality and data protection: Please keep in mind the NFWI's social media pages are public forums, so whatever you share in comments on NFWI posts, or on the NFWI's pages can be viewed by everyone. Therefore, if you are sharing information or photos of another person, you must make sure you have a valid lawful basis (including consent, and a legitimate interest pertaining to the NFWI) for doing so. Never share personal data such as contact details publicly on social media. For members we would also discourage you from using social media to ask questions, seek clarification on aspects of the WI or raise issues or cases you are managing. Direct contact with NFWI via email, phone or letter is the appropriate way to raise membership queries or seek support in addressing issues. See also the Internet and Email Policy for guidance on confidentiality and the web.

4.10 Copyright: When sharing content on social media, please ensure you do not violate someone else's intellectual property rights. Where possible, only share content (such as images or music) that is your own. If you are sharing someone else's work, ensure you have their permission and give them credit when sharing.

Other risks: See section 6 below.

6. Affiliated pages

6.1 Other NFWI pages

This includes the WI Learning Hub Facebook page, and any other future accounts that are operated by the NFWI.

The same principles and values apply to these pages as to the official NFWI accounts.

6.2 WI and Federation accounts

Public WI and federation accounts, although representing the separate charities of federations and WIs, must also follow the same principles as the NFWI pages. Federations and WIs should have at least one dedicated admin for the pages, and if there are more than one admin you should have a rota to ensure continuous coverage. This should include monitoring over the weekend.

If you are the admin for your WI or federation social media account, you should not show any personal opinions or express any views that would not be the view of your WI or federation.

However, those visiting federation and WI pages must remember that each WI and federation is a separate charity, so their pages will not be completely reflective of the national organisation, and no posts or opinions on these pages can be regarded as such or taken as NFWI comments.

6.3 Unofficial WI accounts

Unofficial pages, such as the Unofficial WI Facebook page and WI Wanderers are operated by WI members and are not under the auspices of the NFWI. However, as they use the WI brand and speak largely to WI members, we do expect them to follow the WI values and principles when moderating comments. If you have any concerns or queries about these pages, please contact the page admin directly.

Any WI members wishing to create an unofficial WI page that uses the trademark 'WI', or 'Women's Institute' must first liaise with the NFWI Membership department, who will explain the conditions upon which the WI brand can be used.

6.4 Personal social media pages

This policy isn't intended to inhibit personal use of social media but instead highlight those areas in which conflict might arise.

7. WI members

Personal social media accounts are those operated by individuals in their private lives and outside their official roles within the WI, whether NFWI, federation or WI level. Social media platforms give users the option of making profiles private so the content they share can only be viewed by friends or approved followers. However, if you have a personal social media account and do choose to have more public settings, it is important to be mindful of what you are posting, particularly if you are

affiliated with the NFWI, a federation or WI, such as being a trustee or on a committee. As a starting point, please make clear that your views on that account are your own, particularly if you reference NFWI, a federation or WI (e.g., as your employer or a charity with which you are involved).

If you are a trustee of a federation or WI and have people from the WI as friends on social media, please also think carefully before posting any personal or political views. While you can make it clear your views are your own and not that of the WI, it is important to ensure all women feel welcome in the WI, irrespective of their views or beliefs. If WI members make a complaint to us that references a trustee's comments or conduct on personal social media account, depending on the severity, we may still need to investigate as a potential breach of this policy and the Code of Conduct.

If you are a trustee (NFWI, federation or WI level) you may have an account that you wish to operate in your position, ie. 'Chair of xx Federation'. This is permissible and can be an effective way of engaging with your members. However, please do ensure that you operate the page as you would anything else related to your role, speaking as a trustee rather than personally, in line with sections 2 and 3 this policy. For example, you must never use such an account to post a party-political view.

8. NFWI trustees and employees

NFWI trustees and employees (including casual workers, agency workers, consultants, external advisers, and self-employed contractors) are also expected to adhere to standards of conduct regarding their use of social media. NFWI respects the rights of trustees and employees to use social media in a personal capacity, and some may choose to use their personal accounts to engage with and support the WI on social media. Whilst we encourage trustees and employees to engage with the WI in this way, if employees and trustees choose to do this and therefore link their personal or professional identity to the organisation in a public way, they also need to ensure that the content on their social media is not damaging to the organisation. Trustees and employees are expected to act appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with our values and policies; this extends to their personal use of social media.

- Standards of conduct have to be observed on both professional and personal social media platforms to protect the NFWI's legitimate business interests and reputation. Comments or posts from trustees and employees that conflict with NFWI interests, policies or that have the potential to bring the NFWI into disrepute, will not be tolerated.
- NFWI is not a political organisation and does not hold a view on party politics or have any affiliation with or links to political parties. When representing NFWI, trustees and employees are expected to hold the WI's position of neutrality. Trustees and employees who are politically active in their spare time must be clear in separating their personal political identity from the NFWI

and avoid potential conflicts of interest. Publicly stated political opinions should never make reference or allude to the NFWI or its work.

- Employees or trustees who have, or wish to start, a personal blog or website which references or suggests that they work for NFWI should discuss this with their line manager and the Head of Membership and Engagement regarding and potential conflicts of interest.
- If an employee or trustee is contacted by the press about their social media posts that relate to NFWI, they should talk to the Head of Membership and Engagement immediately and under no circumstances respond directly.
- Employees and trustees must never use The WI's logos or trademarks on personal social media platforms, unless approved to do so.

Employees and trustees must always take steps to protect themselves and the WI on social media. Trustees and employees must be careful with their privacy online and be cautious when sharing personal information. Information published is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully. When using social media sites, it is important that this is done safely.

9. Further Guidelines

These apply to all employees and trustees at all levels – NFWI, federation and WI, as well as all WI members or volunteers who use WI social media pages at any level.

9.1 Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. When posting content on social media as part of their job/role or in a personal capacity, you should not bring NFWI into disrepute by making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups.

9.2 Copyright law

It is critical to abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author/resource citation, where permission has been given to reproduce content, is also considered a breach of copyright.

9.3 Confidentiality

Anyone privy to information about the WI must not breach confidentiality, including sharing communication from NFWI meant for internal use only or information that NFWI is not ready to disclose yet.

9.4 Discrimination and harassment

NFWI does not accept or condone any content that could be considered as discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, on either an official WI social media channel or a personal account of someone affiliated with the WI. For example:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief.
- Using social media to bully another individual.
- Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive or links to such content.

9.5 Protection and intervention

The responsibility for measures of protection and intervention lies first with the social networking site itself. Different social networking sites offer different models of interventions in different areas. For more information, refer to the guidance available on the social networking site itself. However, if anyone considers that a person/people is/are at risk of harm, they should report this to the National Safeguarding Officer immediately.

9.6 Under 18s and vulnerable people

Young and vulnerable people face risks when using social networking sites. They may be at risk of being bullied, publishing sensitive and personal information on their profiles, or from becoming targets for online grooming.

Where known, when communicating with young people under 18-years-old via social media, employees and trustees should ensure the online relationship with NFWI follows the same rules as the offline 'real-life' relationship. Employees should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communicating and sharing information online and given guidance on security/privacy settings as necessary. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy for further information.

9.7 Responsibilities and beach of policy

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Participation in social media on behalf of NFWI is not a right but an opportunity, so it must be treated seriously and with respect. Breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action, depending on the severity of the issue.

10. Relationship to other policies

10.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

This policy works in conjunction with the NFWI Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, as the policy outlines our commitment to being an inclusive, welcoming,

supportive, and progressive organisation for all women this includes both in person and any online activity or involvement on social media platforms associated to the WI.

This includes protecting individuals in accordance with the law and ensuring that everyone who engages with the WI is treated fairly and has equal access to all opportunities, no matter what their background, characteristics, or circumstances.

10.2 Safeguarding

This policy works in partnership with the NFWI Safeguarding Policy to prevent and reduce harm to those who benefit from our charities work (Beneficiaries) and those who represent our charities (Representatives), including young people and adults at risk.

The Online Safety Bill was published in December 2022, this document outlines the new set of laws to protect both children and adults online. These laws are to allow and make social media companies more responsible for their users' safety on their platforms.

If a member, trustee, or employee has a safeguarding concern relating to online and social media they are to follow the same protocol and procedures that are outlined in the safeguarding policy and the safeguarding reporting form which can be found on My WI.

10.3 Code of Conduct

The NFWI's Code of Conduct policy is related outlining the expectations of our trustees, members, and employees to ensure the aims of the organisation are realised and abide by the Code of Conduct which sets out the behaviour expected of WI members, and demonstrating the WI values of truth, tolerance, justice, and fellowship.

The NFWI has a zero-tolerance policy of discrimination of any type, including racism, homophobia and transphobia, and of any behaviour that intends to cause distress to another. Any such behaviour must be reported and will be investigated by NFWI.

11. Resources

NFWI policies/guidance:

- NFWI Safeguarding policy
- NFWI Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- NFWI Code of Conduct

The below organisations and statutes can offer further support and information:

- Charity Commission for England and Wales
- Gov.uk

The below legislation is relevant to this policy:

- The Online Safety Bill

12. Accessibility

This policy has been created with accessibility requirements in mind. If you need any help with accessibility, please let us know using the contact information below.

13. Contact us

For more information, please contact us via email membership@nfwl.org.uk. You can also call 0207 371 9300 or write to us at NFWI, Membership and Engagement Team, 104 New Kings Road, London, SW6 4LY.

14. Updating this policy

This policy is under continuous review and will be updated annually or as required. Any updates will be communicated to federations, who should cascade this information on to WIs.

Version	Date Created	Last review date	Next Review date	Document author
1.	April 2024			Membership and Engagement team