WI Adviser E-Learning:
Frequently Asked Questions

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

1. **Who appoints a WI Adviser?**
   The federation will continue to appoint, manage and renew their WI Advisers. The NFWI will no longer ratify the appointments. Anyone can declare an interest to their federation in becoming a WI Adviser, but the federation will also periodically reach out to their members. The federation will provide opportunities for interested members to shadow experienced WI Advisers and share access to the online training available via the WI Learning Hub https://learninghub.thewi.org.uk/

2. **What does the WI Adviser role involve?**
   The role of the WI Adviser has an entirely constitutional focus i.e. they open, suspend, enlarge, reform and close WIs. The role will also include a small number of key elements that will support these constitutional tasks, such as helping new WIs with initial 'interest meetings' and sourcing venues, and signposting to a portfolio of NFWI resources that WIs can access at any time to support their particular need. Resources can be found on My WI www.thewi.org.uk

3. **Can a WI Adviser be appointed before they complete the training?**
   Yes. To bring the role in-line with the other NFWI training available (Trustee Training, Safeguarding etc), a WI Adviser can be recruited and appointed before she completes the training. However the training will need to be completed within 3 months, to ensure that the new WI Adviser feels fully able to carry out their role. This is because WI Advisers play a significant legal and constitutional role and so it is important that the training is completed and those undertaking the role feel confident in supporting constitutional requirements.

4. **What will the WI Adviser training cover?**
   The training will be modular and cover areas as follows:

   - Module 1: Structure of The WI
   - Module 2: The WI Constitution
   - Module 3: WI Roles
   - Module 4: Opening, Suspending, Enlarging, Reforming & Closing WIs
   - Module 5: WI Meetings
   - Module 6: Policies & Procedures
   - Module 7: Effective Communication

5. **Where can a member access the WI Adviser training and how long will it take to complete it?**
   The WI Adviser training can be accessed via the WI Learning Hub:
   https://learninghub.thewi.org.uk/book-wi-adviser-training/

   The training can be accessed at any time and completed in a member's own time and will take 3.5 hours to complete. However as per Q3, all modules should be completed within 3 months.

There are also supporting documents on My WI available for download. These are called:

- WI Adviser forming a WI additional information.
- WI Adviser suspending a WI additional information.

6. **Is the training free?**
Yes. NFWI cover all costs for the development and delivery of the training.

7. **Will the WI Adviser receive confirmation that she has completed and passed the WI Adviser course?**
Upon successful completion of the course, WI Advisers will receive a certificate of completion via email within 14 days.

8. **How will the NFWI know who the WI Advisers are and why is it important?**
The federations will be asked to keep their MCS up to date so that all WI Advisers are listed. This will ensure that any new NFWI information, updates or events reach all our WI Advisers.

9. **What support will the WI Advisers receive from the NFWI?**
WI Advisers will be supported by the Membership Team. They can be contacted with any queries on membership@nfwi.org.uk and no query is too small. Over time, if themes emerge, the NFWI can share answers and guidance with all WI Advisers or update resources on My WI. The team will also welcome feedback from those undertaking it so we can continue to ensure that the role, training, and support are fit for purpose.

10. **Will WI Advisers have the opportunity to come together to discuss issues of interest and to swap ideas?**
A series of networking or chat sessions will be held on a regular basis, the content of the sessions will vary depending on what the NFWI needs to update the WI Advisers on or if WI Advisers request further information on any particular subject area. There will also be opportunities to have informal discussions to share ideas that may help others. The NFWI will keep WI Advisers informed as to when the sessions will be held. A newly trained WI Adviser will need to attend a session to complete her course.

11. **How often will WI Advisers need to be refreshed?**
As this is a new training package, it might be useful for all WI Advisers to go through the training, so everyone has been trained consistently. Once the training has been completed, a refresher will be required every two years. We also intend to learn from this new level of training and will ask for your feedback, which will help us adapt or introduce modules over time. In addition, the NFWI will provide regular updates to the WI Advisers should anything change in the interim e.g. the constitution, strategic vision. WI Advisers could then be directed to the online modules which will be updated to reflect any changes made to policy/practice etc. The training module will be constantly available so WI Advisers can use it as a reference tool as well as for their initial and refresher training.

12. **How often will the training be reviewed?**
The training will be launched as a beta version and will be continually adapted based on feedback. Therefore, we will be actively encouraging participants to share their feedback on what is useful and what they need to fulfil their role. This will enable the NFWI to remain

flexible and respond to any issues which may arise, but the NFWI will also do a short formal review every two years.

13. **Will WI Advisers have a free ticket to the Annual Meeting**
Yes, they will receive a free ticket to the Annual Meeting. WI Advisers are an integral part of our organisational governance and the invitation to the NFWI Annual Meeting is recognition of this as well as a way for us to say thank you to all those who give their valuable time to support members and WIs.

14. **What are the 'Specialist Volunteer Roles'?**
The WI Adviser role was reviewed in 2023/4 because members told us that the role had grown over time to incorporate so many tasks that it had become too difficult for one role. As part of the review we identified a range of tasks that had been added over time but which could be separate and discrete volunteering opportunities. Therefore, alongside the streamlined WI Adviser role, a range of new volunteer opportunities will be created to build a resource of skilled members that WI Advisers and WIs can call upon to address specific issues. This resource of skilled member volunteers will address the support that WIs need in a range of things, which have until now been passed to the WI Adviser to deal with, such as WI finances, Public Affairs resolutions, WI Officer training, linking into federation events, managing complaints, promotion and marketing and federation governance to name but a few.

These volunteer roles will be held by members who have a good knowledge of the WI and the particular skills for the role. These roles are likely to require ad-hoc support as and when needed, and therefore we hope manageable in terms of time. We also hope to build a bank of these skills so where possible there are a few members with the same skills within the federation that could help. The WI Adviser and the federations would direct requests from WIs to these resources. These additional voluntary roles could sit on a federation board, a federation sub-committee or be members known to the federation for their particular skills. Individuals may of course be WI Advisers and take on these specialist roles, but we hope that by separating them out we will offer more manageable and flexible volunteering opportunities where individuals can decide how much they want to take on based on their available time and skills.

Training is already available for the following roles:

- Federation Resolution Co-ordinators (training available from the NFWI)
- Climate Ambassadors (training and support available from the NFWI)
- Safeguarding (training and support available for the NFWI)
- Conflict Management and resolving complaints (online course available)

Others such as the role of the Digital Champion, PR and Social Media will be developed as will any other areas of need identified by WI Advisers and shared with NFWI over time. Our movement is always evolving and adapting to the needs of our members and so it is inevitable that our needs and these roles will evolve over time.

15. **Will training for WI Officers be available?**
The NFWI will develop an Induction Plan as a form of training for WI Officers which will cover the information they need to undertake their role effectively, and the training will be available

on-line. This will be available in the coming months. It will be similar to the models used to deliver Trustee and Safeguarding training and will be available immediately for any new WI Officers. This will ensure that all training is standardised and consistent and take the pressure off WI Advisers and federations, who have until now, had to deliver this training. The NFWI will also cover the cost of this WI Officer training, however, this will not preclude federations from running WI Officer days within their federations should they wish to.

16. **Where is there guidance on setting up different types of WIs?**
    There is guidance for setting up WIs in workplaces, hospices, or for WIs that meet online on https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/setting-up-a-wi

17. **Where can I find information for communicating with virtual WIs and virtual WI members?**
    There is a lot of information in the guidance for the virtual WIs, as well as the WI Handbook, both can be found on https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi It is important to note that when setting up a WI, the new WI packs can be emailed, and the documents contained can be signed online. Members of a virtual WI should be offered opportunities to engage in federation activities along with all other members in that federation. The federation should ensure provision is made for members of virtual WIs to join in activities, where possible, online and that all documents and processes can be done virtually. We have made the member registration form available digitally to support this. If you get a query from a member about setting up a WI in a particular space, or any further queries about communicating with virtual WIs and/or virtual WI members, please contact the Membership and Engagement Team at membership@nfwi.org.uk.

18. **Does a WI Adviser manage complaints or member disputes?**
    As above, outside of the streamlined WI Adviser role we have identified a number of key volunteering roles and skill sets that will be valuable in supporting the work of a federation and its WIs. It may be that WI Advisers take on some of these specialist roles alongside their WI Adviser role. However, there is one area which from the review feedback we can see should be treated separately due to the specialist and sensitive nature of the support required.

    Conflict management and complaints have never formally been part of the WI Adviser role, but we know this has often become part of the role in practice. Many WI Advisers fed back how challenging this was, due to the specific skills required but also the challenges of remaining objective in situations where a WI Adviser has a close working relationship with a WI or its members. Each federation will have a complaints policy (and NFWI provides a national template for this) and so in the first instance any complaints or significant disputes must be directed to the federation and managed by the federation in line with their policy. It may be that WI Advisers are asked to be involved at times, but this should be on request from the federation. If unsure when facing a situation of this nature, it is best to take advice from the federation or NFWI the Membership Team at the NFWI on membership@nfwi.org.uk

19. **Can WI Advisers work across federations?**
    Yes, if support is requested from another federation than a WI Adviser can assist if they have capacity. We know from experience that cross-federation working has huge benefits in terms of sharing learning and best practice.

20. **Who covers the expenses for WI Advisers when undertaking their work?**
Your federation will cover any out-of-pocket expenses.

21. **Where can a WI Adviser go if they have concerns about a WI or federation?**
A WI Adviser can contact the NFWI via the Membership Team on membership@nfwi.org.uk

22. **How long are WI Advisers appointed for?**
A WI Adviser is appointed for two years.

Useful Links

Website: www.theWI.org.uk
My WI: My WI | Please login to continue (thewi.org.uk)
WI Learning Hub: https://learninghub.thewi.org.uk/