

## Ethical Policy

### **Policy Statement & Scope**

The Women's Institutes, the Federations of Women's Institutes and the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI), collectively known as "the WI", plays a unique role in providing women with educational opportunities and the chance to build new skills, to take part in a wide variety of activities and to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities.

This policy sets out the ethical standards which the NFWI adheres to when carrying out its charitable objects. This policy will apply to all staff and trustees when carrying out their duties for members, and will underpin the procurement process and/or formal discussions with external partners and suppliers.

Throughout this policy the historical and current campaigns the NFWI has run will be referenced. These campaigns actively demonstrate the NFWI's ethical ethos and can be accessed for more specific information on that topic.

### **Public Benefit**

The NFWI has the responsibility to carry out its charitable objects for the benefit of the public. Please see section 2 of the Articles of Association of the NFWI 2013 for further information on this.

### **Integrity**

The NFWI's staff, trustees and members will at all times act with integrity and treat everyone with honesty and respect. The NFWI ensures this principle is upheld by:

Building relationships and partnerships in a way that reflects the NFWI's aims and ensures individuals are respected.

Putting in place appropriate systems to ensure that all decisions are robust, defensible and free from conflicts of interest.

Managing and budgeting resources efficiently including enforcing policies on anti-bribery, fraud and corruption.

Considering the effect of activities conducted by staff, trustees and members in their private lives on the reputation of the NFWI and of the charity sector in general.

Exercising due diligence when selecting partnerships to ensure that their ethical values are consistent with those of the NFWI.

### **Openness and Transparency**

The NFWI operates a presumption of openness and appropriate transparency with the aim of creating a culture where members, the general public and supporters can see how the NFWI works, deals with problems and spends funds. Subject to complying with existing legal and regulatory requirements, the NFWI openly shares this information.

Annual reports, policies and procedures are available on My WI and on request. Relevant incidents are reported and shared with the appropriate regulatory bodies, law enforcement and other statutory authorities.

### **Right to be Safe**

Every person who comes into contact with the NFWI should be treated with dignity and respect and feel that they are in a safe and supportive environment.

The NFWI fosters a culture that does not tolerate inappropriate, harmful, offensive or discriminatory behaviour towards any person who volunteers with, works for or comes into contact with the NFWI including through social media. The NFWI supports the reporting of allegations, suspicions or concerns about abuse or inappropriate behaviour of any kind. Any such allegations, suspicions or concerns will be duly investigated and resolved.

It is ensured that those who are working or volunteering for the NFWI understand the expectation placed on them, and that they receive the relevant training and support needed to enable them to meet their responsibilities.

The NFWI values and promotes the general wellbeing and mental health of staff, trustees and members. Any person who comes into contact with the NFWI is encouraged to invest in their own health and wellbeing.

Relevant campaigns:

- [Make Time for Mental Health](#)
- [Link Together](#)
- Maternal Health (1947)
- Equal Pay for Equal Work (1943)

### **Anti-Slavery**

In accordance with the right to be safe, the NFWI is committed to protecting and preserving the rights of its employees, those involved in our supply chain and those who are affected by our work. The NFWI believes that all employment should be freely chosen and no forced labour should take place. Further, the NFWI only engages suppliers who share this belief, actively demonstrate their commitment and adopt this approach in their direct and indirect activities.

### **Fundraising**

The NFWI follows the Charities Acts and guidance from the [Fundraising Regulator](#) which holds the [Code of Fundraising Practice](#) for the UK and ensures all fundraising is legal, open, honest and accountable.

All fundraising is carried out in accordance with the NFWI's [Fundraising Guidelines](#) which provides guidance on:

- ways in which a WI can respond to appeals for funds;
- what kind of projects / appeals the WI can and cannot support;
- the public benefit requirement;
- acting as an individual to raise funds;

- information to be provided to the general public; and
- the use of trademarks.

## **Investments**

The NFWI invests in a common ethical investment fund. WIs and federations are advised to seek independent financial advice before investing and to actively explore ethical options.

## **Investment Objectives**

- 1) The assets of the charity must be invested in accordance with the Trustee Act 2000 and the governing instrument of NFWI and Denman College. Investments have been, and continue to be, held in a broad range of property, equities and fixed interest securities, which are quoted on a recognised investment exchange.
- 2) The portfolio should be invested so as to achieve a balance between income and capital growth over the long term.
- 3) Risk in the portfolio should be managed so as to preserve and increase the value of capital and income net of inflation; unnecessary risk and volatility should be avoided.
- 4) There should be no investment in derivatives.
- 5) The investment portfolio should have an ethical slant; it should contain minimal exposure to companies whose primary business is, or majority of profits are derived from, manufacture or supply of armaments, tobacco, the production of pornography or fossil fuel extraction and other ethical considerations specified by the NFWI.

## **Environment**

In accordance with its charitable objects, the NFWI aims to promote sustainable development for the public benefit. This means development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Commitment to this aim is demonstrated by the historical and current campaigns for climate change awareness and the need to look after our environment. Such campaigns are still at the forefront of the WI resolutions.

The NFWI complies with applicable environmental legislation and is constantly striving to better our environmental practices. Environmental awareness and responsibility is actively encouraged amongst our staff, trustees and members.

The NFWI is sensitive to the impact of its activities on both the natural and the human environment. Therefore, the NFWI makes responsible use of its resources, adopts sustainable working practices and undertakes initiatives to promote environmental responsibility.

When developing partnerships with external organisations, the environmental commitment, policy and record of an organisation will be taken into account (see below for detail on purchasing).

Relevant campaigns:

- [End Plastic Soup \(2018\)](#)
- [Food Matters \(2017\)](#)
- [Climate Change](#)
- [SOS for Honey Bees \(2009\)](#)
- Care of Our Environment (2005)
- Antarctica (1990)
- Plastic Pollution (1971)
- Keep Britain Tidy (1954)

## **Purchasing**

Purchasing works, assets, goods and services enables the organisation to operate in a profitable and ethical manner. The NFWI works with suppliers who operate in line with the NFWI mandates and campaigning priorities, including issues relating to environmental impact, gender issues and their contractual and management practices.

All purchasing is carried out in accordance with the [Procurement and Tender Policy](#). This policy illustrates the ethical responsibilities the NFWI has when inviting, considering and finalising purchases.

### **External Sources:**

- NCVO Charity Ethical Principles
- NCVO Charity Code of Ethics
- The Charity Commission: Trust in Charities 2018
- The Code of Fundraising Practice
- The United Nations Sustainable Goals

### **Internal Sources:**

- The NFWI Equality and Diversity Policy
- The NFWI Procurement and Tendering Policy
- The WI Constitution
- The NFWI Fundraising Guidelines

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