



Photo credit: Anne-Marie Bickerton

# **WI Campaigns:**

## **YOUR CHANCE TO CREATE CHANGE**



Photo credit: Louise Haywood-Schiefer

*L-R Lord Bradley, Chair of Care not Custody; The Rt Hon David Gauke, then-Justice Secretary; Lynne Stubbings, NFWI Chair at the 2018 Care not Custody reception.*

# Care not Custody

The Care not Custody campaign was launched in 2009, after a resolution calling for an end to the inappropriate detention of people with mental illnesses was passed at the 2008 Annual Meeting.

The resolution was inspired by the tragic experiences of a WI member whose son ended his life in prison after the criminal justice system failed to spot his mental health problems.

Together with the Prison Reform Trust, the WI launched the Care not Custody coalition to campaign for better support for vulnerable people caught up in the criminal justice system.

The Coalition successfully campaigned for the full rollout of 'liaison and diversion' services. These services support people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism when they come into contact with the criminal justice system. These services now cover all of England.

'People have told us "The last weeks have been living hell - Liaison and Diversion has made me want to live again"'.  
*Kate Davies, NHS England*



# Climate Change

- The WI is a founding member of The Climate Coalition, the UK's largest group of people dedicated to action on climate change.
- Our network of over 300 WI Climate Ambassadors work to raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and mobilise their communities to take environmental action.
- Working with campaign partners like The Climate Coalition, the WI successfully pushed for the Government to commit to a net-zero target for greenhouse gas emissions. In June 2019 the government committed to net-zero by 2050.
- The WI is now working to hold the government to that promise and to make net-zero a reality.
- In June 2019, over 200 WI members came to Westminster for the largest environmental lobby in history, The Time is Now, to speak to their MPs about climate change. In total, 12,000 people joined to lobby 380 MPs. In 2020, WI members again took part in The Time is Now. In total, over 13,000 people took part in what was the world's first virtual mass lobby.



Photo credit: Nicky Amos

*Tea in the Sea – Somerset Federation*



Photo credit: Anne-Marie Bickerton

*WI members at the Time is Now mass lobby in 2019*



# End Plastic Soup

- In 2017 the End Plastic Soup campaign was launched to highlight the huge problem of pollution from tiny plastic fibres shed from clothing when it is washed.
- The campaign calls for more research and for government and industry to work together on solutions.
- Working with Dr Natalie Welden from the University of Glasgow, the WI undertook a member survey and produced a research report looking at the impact of washing clothing in the home. The report revealed that at least 9.4 trillion microplastic fibres are released from the washing process each week in the UK. The report received national media coverage and was referenced by the Environmental Audit Committee in Parliament in its inquiry into the environmental impact of fashion.
- The WI has worked with textiles charity TRAID to raise awareness of the environmental impact of clothing, and developed a toolkit for members to continue the work in their own communities.
- The WI is working with Friends of the Earth to push for stronger action to target plastic waste in the Environment Bill.



Photo credit: Anne-Marie Bickerton

*Fixing Fast Fashion event with TRAID in 2019*



Photo credit: Samantha Cook

*NFWI staff at Bournemouth beach during the 2019 Annual Meeting*

# Food Matters

- Passed at the 2016 Annual Meeting, the campaign stemmed from a resolution calling on supermarkets to take more action to cut food waste and redistribute surplus food to those in need.
- Over 5,000 WI members took part in a research project looking at food waste in the home, and investigated practices at their local supermarkets. In April 2017 the NFWI released the report 'Wasted Opportunities', setting out a range of actions that supermarkets can take to help reduce food waste at all levels.
- Since then there has been positive progress. Many supermarkets have adopted WI recommendations to simplify date labelling, increase shelf life and offer clearer freezing instructions.
- The second stage of the campaign focused on food poverty, with WIs encouraged to organise debates on the topic and consider what needs to change so that everyone has access to affordable, healthy food.
- At a national level the WI worked with End Hunger UK to call for government action, successfully campaigning for government to start measuring food poverty.



Photo credit: Gresford WI

*Beryl Blackmore from Gresford WI donating food to her local foodbank*

*"It was a bitter / sweet experience. While proud to volunteer, it was heart-breaking to realise the need for this charity. As the recipient can remain anonymous, this eliminates the stigma sadly attached to accessing food banks when they have fallen on hard times as they are too proud to publicly seek assistance".*

*WI member*

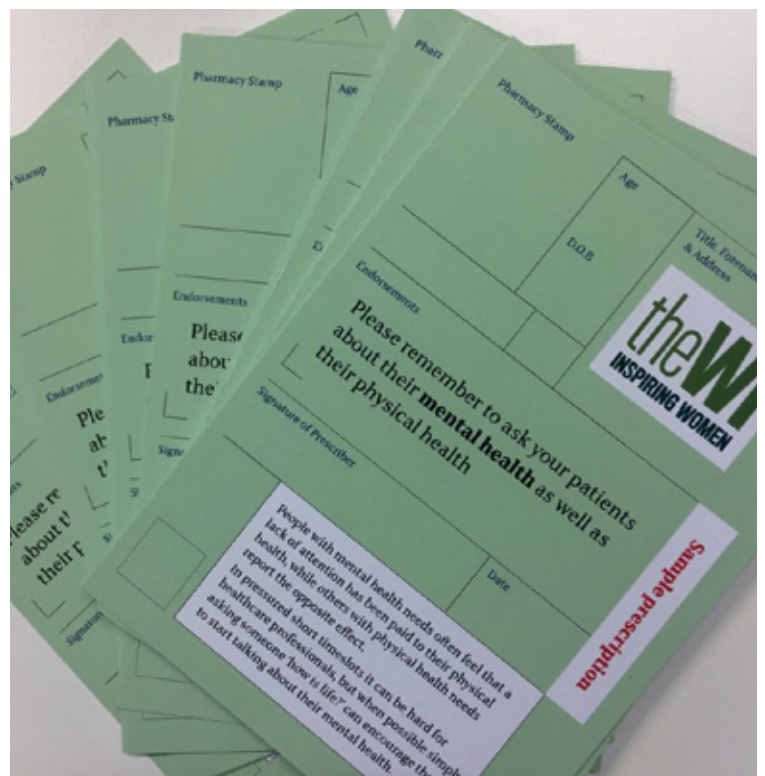


# Make Time for Mental Health

- In 2018 the Make Time for Mental Health campaign was launched to tackle the stigma around mental health, and call for improvements in care. With approximately one in four people experiencing a mental health problem in the UK each year, members were quick to act.
- To ensure mental health and physical health are given equal priority, WIs sent hundreds of 'prescription' postcards to local healthcare professionals, reminding them to ask their patients about both.
- Members also joined forces with local charities to raise awareness of the available support in their local communities.
- In partnership with the charity Rethink Mental Illness, the NFWI produced a series of guides to support WI discussions about mental health. Each guide accompanied a video featuring a WI member with personal or professional experience.
- In 2019 the NFWI launched a survey asking WI members about their experiences of NHS mental health services. More than 900 members took part. The findings will be used to push for positive changes in mental health care.

"People aren't always aware of the support provided by the voluntary sector. Actually, they're not aware of the support, treatment and services available in the NHS or provided by local authorities either. We need to be able to get the information out there. And that's where I see an important role for the WI".

*Eileen Murphy - WI member and former Head of Involvement at Rethink Mental Illness*



*Prescription cards to remind healthcare professionals to ask their patients about mental health*



*Then Chair of the NFWI, Ruth Bond, appeared on BBC Breakfast to talk about the campaign*

## More Midwives

*"The Nursing & Midwifery Council has received more complaints from mothers about their Maternity care experiences than ever before and I feel this is due in part to the increased awareness of over 215,000 WI members up and down the country". Susan Baines, proposer of the resolution*

- In 2012 the More Midwives campaign was launched to tackle the shortage of midwives in the UK.
- In 2013, in partnership with parenting charity NCT, the NFWI published Support Overdue which examined the maternity experiences of over 5,500 women. The findings of this report, which attracted a wide range of national media coverage, helped shape the National Maternity Review and many positive changes in policy and practice.
- In 2017, again working with NCT, the NFWI published its second report into women's experiences of maternity services. Support Overdue (2017) found widespread, clinically unsafe conditions in labour wards across the country.
- The same year, the Welsh Government announced that it had taken up the recommendation of the WI's report to prioritise maternity staff planning and make sure there are enough midwives in training.
- In England there has also been positive progress, with the Government announcing in 2018 that it would create 3,000 new training places for midwives over four years. In addition, starting from September 2020, all nursing students will receive a grant of at least £5,000 a year.

# No More Violence Against Women

- Tackling domestic violence has been a longstanding concern for the WI. The WI campaigned for the funding of refuges in 1975, to ensure domestic violence survivors can access justice through the courts in 1988 and to adequately define domestic violence under the law in 1993.
- In 2011 the WI worked to safeguard access to legal aid in response to concerns about changes proposed in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment Offenders Bill.
- As a result of the campaign, the government committed to widening the definition of domestic abuse and widening the threshold of proof required to access legal aid – a huge victory.
- The WI began working on the issue of violence against women again in 2019, starting by encouraging members to take action locally.



Photo credit: Anne-Marie Bickerton

*WI members at the Million Women Rise march in 2020*

- WI members have been raising funds for local refuges, holding candlelight vigils, writing to parliamentarians about the Domestic Abuse Bill and volunteering at their local refuges.
- In March 2020, WI members attended the Million Women Rise march, showing solidarity and support to survivors of abuse.



Photo credit: xxxxxxxxxxxx

*WI members lobbying for Legal Aid*





Photo credit: Llanstephan WI

*WI members raising awareness of the WI SOS for Honeybees campaign and the plight of the honeybee*

## SOS for Honeybees

The response to the resolution from WI members was overwhelming; some members trained as bee-keepers, and bee-friendly plants were planted in even the smallest window boxes – there was something for everyone to do!”

*Susan Jonas, proposer of the resolution*

- In 2009, delegates at the NFWI Annual Meeting passed a resolution on the decline of honeybees. Since then, WI members have taken bees to their hearts, and made a huge impact for our precious pollinators.
- WI members successfully lobbied their MPs to make sure bees got their fair share of funding for pollinator research. Members also raised awareness in their own communities, by holding Bee Aware action days, pledging to become Bee Ambassadors and creating their own bee friendly gardens.
- The WI teamed up with Friends of the Earth to persuade the government to launch a strong Bee Action Plan to tackle bee decline. In June 2013 at a Bee Summit held by the WI and Friends of the Earth, Bee Minister Lord de Mauley committed to firm action to safeguard bees and other pollinators.
- In the spring 2020, the WI once again returned to the campaign with a new set of resources, as members increasingly focused on their gardens, tiny ones and large ones, in light of the coronavirus (CV-19) crisis. These resources continue to prove popular with members.



*Resolutions being voted on at the NFWI Annual Meeting*

# THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Women's Institute is democratic and member-led, and the resolutions process is unique in putting members at the heart of decisions about our campaign activity. Every issue that we campaign on stems directly from a resolution put forward by members and adopted at the Annual Meeting. WI members have a unique opportunity to turn a concern into a national campaign every year, backed by the whole of the WI.

## HOW A RESOLUTION BECOMES A CAMPAIGN

### Stage I

Between July and September, WIs and federations submit resolutions about current issues they are concerned about, to the NFWI.

### Stage II

In early autumn, the submitted resolutions are discussed and debated by federation and member representatives and reduced to a shortlist.

### Stage III

In late autumn and winter, federations and WIs hold meetings to discuss the shortlisted resolutions, giving every member the chance to have their say on the shortlist. Each member casts their selection for the resolution they support the most.





A resolution is a call for change on a current issue in society. Once a resolution has been adopted at the Annual Meeting, the Public Affairs Department turns it into a campaign. Through national and local campaigning, members play a key role in achieving change on important issues.

Any WI or federation can submit a resolution, as long as it has been voted on and approved.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

You don't need to be an expert on the issue:

- Choose an issue that you are passionate about.
- Carry out some research on why the issue is important.
- Be specific about what you want to change.
- Call on a particular organisation to do something.

If you haven't submitted a resolution before, don't be put off. The Public Affairs department is here to support you!

### ▶ Stage IV

The NFWI Board of Trustees reviews the results of the member selections and agrees on the resolutions to go forward to the Annual Meeting. This is usually one resolution, but sometimes more than one is taken forward.

### ▶ Stage V

At the Annual Meeting, delegates hear from the resolution proposer, seconder and experts on the topics. Votes are then cast on the resolution(s) which, if selected, will go on to form the basis of a WI campaign.





Photo credit: Holborn WI

*Members at Holborn WI debating resolutions*



Photo credit: Rhondell

*Annual Meeting resolution debate 2019*

## GET INVOLVED

The WI is an entirely member led organisation and the resolutions process ensures that every WI member has a unique opportunity to turn a concern into a national campaign every year, backed by the whole of the WI.

If you would like to get involved with our current campaigns or learn more about how to submit a resolution of your own then please visit [www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.thewi.org.uk/campaigns) or contact [pa@nfwi.org.uk](mailto:pa@nfwi.org.uk) or 02073719300 ext. 238.



Photo credit: Rhondell

*Resolutions vote 2019*