

## Annex C

### Request For A Moratorium On Trans Women's Membership Of Women's Institutes Dated

#### **Interaction of the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and its Glossary of Terms with WI Constitutions and Membership Criteria.**

1. In Annexes A and B, I have argued that women are a biological sex category and the Women's Institute can lawfully restrict membership to women only. In this annex I will show that due to the interaction between the NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, its glossary and the Constitution(s) of individual Women's Institutes have been de facto changed to allow men to join, and at best it is an unworkable muddle.

#### **The NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

2. The policy states: "contravention of this policy would affect the ability of WIs and federations to operate as part of the NFWI...there is a signature page for WIs and federations to use to demonstrate their commitment to the policy".<sup>[1]</sup> I have not interpreted this, as I did not interpret the Equality Act 2010 in the previous annex.

3. The glossary defines transphobia as:

"The fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are transgender, including *denying* their *gender identity* or *refusing* to accept it...A person can have transphobic thoughts, say something transphobic, or behave in a transphobic way without consciously subscribing to the idea that they are transphobic. These actions can be due to unconscious bias."<sup>[2]</sup>  
My italics.

4. Gender identity is not a protected characteristic<sup>[3] [4]</sup>, yet the NFWI has made questioning it something that "would affect the ability of WIs and federations to operate as part of the NFWI"<sup>[1]</sup>. My response to this is to feel that the NFWI is seeking to police the thoughts of its members, who are not allowed to question an individual's intentions, and if they think that a man is a bad actor this is transphobic. This strikes me as Orwellian, debate should always be allowed.

5. I have other issues with the policy and its glossary, including the various gender identities listed, 'BAME', 'cisgender', 'assigned at birth', 'gender expression' and the use of 'intersex', to name some. But this letter is not the place to address them, although they are worthy of note.

#### **Women's Institutes' Constitutions**

6. Individual Women's Institutes have their own constitutions which have been written centrally by NFWI to comply with Charity's Law and other relevant guidelines and legal frameworks. They all come under the umbrella organisation, the NFWI, they operate in a devolved manner. This is the same for other policies that are legally necessary, but pose a practical problem to volunteer run groups, who may lack the necessary in depth knowledge.

As individual WIs are run by enthusiastic volunteers this is not unreasonable, given time demands on most people.

7. What is unreasonable is to fail to define what a woman is, and then make it transphobic that anyone tries to, see my points above.

8. Membership of the WI is open to women who have reached the Age of Majority. <sup>[5]</sup> There is no definition in the glossary of what a woman is. There is a definition of a trans woman as anyone who “identifies and lives as a woman”, and transitioning as “involve(s) different things. For some this involves medical intervention... but not all people want or are able to have this”.<sup>[2]</sup>

9. The complete lack of precise language means a woman is a nebulous, unknown thing and as such is an open category. What does identifying and living as a woman mean? In its very worst interpretation it is merely a performance of a patronising and regressive trope that women have fought, and still fight hard, to overcome. This lack of clarity means that men can join in all but name, a de facto change to Women’s Institute’s Constitutions.

## **Conclusion**

10. By failing to define what a woman is, by having a wide description for a trans woman and by not allowing respectful debate, or debate of any kind, the NFWI has de facto forced individual Women’s Institutes to accept men. This has been achieved by poor drafting of policies, poor advice from advisors and is harmful to women as a whole.

## **References:**

1. NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (2021)
2. NFWI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Glossary of Terms (2021): Unconscious Bias
3. Chapter 1 of the Equality Act 2010.
4. <https://www.sexnotgender.info/gender-is-not-a-protected-characteristic-admits-ehrc/>
5. Constitution and Rules for Women’s Institutes June 2013