



3 June 2023

APPOINTMENTS TO THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S INSTITUTES MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

We are very disappointed to read, in the letter dated 26th May 2023 to Federations, that prominent Women's Institute member and trans-identified male, Petra Wenham, has been appointed to the NFWI Membership Committee.

We appreciate that the current EDI policy allows trans-identified males to join the WI. However, as previously pointed out, this is in conflict with WI's constitutions which only allow women who have reached the age of majority to join. The NFWI has not refuted this.

We firmly believe the appointment undermines the charitable objectives of the Women's Institute and our rich campaigning history.

We feel that this appointment communicates to Women's Institute members that the inclusion of trans-identified males is a settled matter, it is not. Furthermore it says that women who disagree are not welcome to be members.

We feel this appointment blatantly disregards the legitimate concerns of many members and is exclusionary to women who are not able to share their spaces with trans-identified males due to religious beliefs, personal trauma, or the protected philosophical belief that people can not change sex.

We would like to remind you it is legal, under the Equality Act 2010, to restrict the Women's Institute membership to women only and it is the Board of Trustees' choice to include trans-identified men.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to remind the Board of Trustees that the Women's Institute was formed in 1915, 13 years before women were given suffrage on equal terms as men. Early leaders included prominent Suffragettes such as [Lady Denman](#), [Grace Hadow](#), and first female MP [Margaret Wintringham](#). These women were not oppressed due to the role they played in society, that of 'woman', but due to their female biology. Nor could they identify out of their sex to be given the same rights as men.

Women's Institute Declaration Members

If you would like to join the Women's Institute Declaration please email us: hello@wdwi.co.uk