

Update from the Membership and Engagement Team

New subscription year starting April 2021

The subscription year will now start in April each year. This acknowledges the feedback many of you shared with us during the recent Strategic Vision consultation about the challenges of the January payment date and how you wished to see this changed in the future.

We have created the enclosed subscription poster to ensure members understand how the subscription fee is split. This is an overview of what the subscription fee can cover at WI, federation, and NFWI level, and as WIs and federations set their own budget each year, this may differ depending on your WI and federation.

Pro rata rate rule has been changed

We are delighted to announce a change to the former pro-rata subscription rate ineligibility period of 10 years. Following feedback from members and very careful consideration by the Board of Trustees, this ineligibility period has been reduced to 1 year.

The aim is to maintain the function of having an ineligibility period for former members so WIs are not disrupted by individuals switching their membership on and off, while bringing in the most welcoming and encouraging approach possible for our former WI members who wish to re-join. This will also support WIs wishing to reach out to their former members and invite them back – helping to retain as many members as possible.

This will come into action from **1st April 2021** so it can be active and applied throughout the next pro rata year.

There are so many life events that can lead to women feeling they have to give up their WI membership, such as moving house, new career, becoming a mother, periods of debilitating illness, increased demands on time due to caring etc. We know that many of these members would like to re-join as soon as they feel able to and their WIs want to be as accommodating as possible to help them do so. Reducing the pro rata ineligibility period to 1 year we hope will be a very practical and impactful way of enabling WIs to offer this understanding and support.

There are a few elements we want to clarify that you may get questions about:

- This only applies from April 2021 going forward (no retrospective refunds or arrangements can be made for former members who re-joined before this date).
- The rules on dual membership remain the same. Dual members only pay the WI portion to their second WI so there is no pro rata rate for this.

All levels of the WI (NFWI, federations and WIs) will obviously need to review their literature / websites / Facebook etc. to make sure all the wording on joining the WI reflects this change from April 2021.

This will also be communicated to members via *WI Life*, My WI and social media.

Resources on My WI

We have been adding lots of great resources to My WI that members can enjoy individually, share with other members, or use as inspiration for WI projects, virtual meetings and meetings in a bag. These resources include:

- The opportunity to create a card for the Queen's birthday
- How to enter the Elizabeth Bell Challenge 2021/22 and the Huxley Cup competition 2021
- Get involved in walking netball sessions including pre-recorded sessions
- Inspirational cookery, craft, gardening, cultural and science, and wellbeing projects
- How to set up a WI Welcoming Team within your WI
- Campaign action packs
- Events calendar
- Black lives matter: anti-racism resources

If you would like help accessing My WI, please let us know using the contact information below.

Has your WI been meeting virtually?

Many WIs have taken their meetings online and these have been a brilliant success! These meetings have included activities, speakers, quizzes, and events for members to get involved in. Many WIs have opened up their meetings to all members via the WI Wanderers Facebook page and this is a great opportunity for members to visit other WIs, meet members, and get meeting inspiration.

If your WI is meeting online, please let your federation know so that they can keep a list and point potential members to your WI. Please also share your pictures and stories with us via social media or by emailing us. We love seeing the wonderful things WIs are doing!

If you are interested in meeting online please see our guide on hosting a virtual meeting on My WI. You can also contact us for a copy of this guide.

What about members and WIs who are not online?

We are aware that not all members have internet access, a smartphone, laptop, computer, or tablet, and can therefore not meet online or access My WI. We have the following ideas for how these members and WIs can remain connected and how WIs can continue offering a membership experience:

- Ask speakers to produce their talk by writing it down including any pictures and related activities. This can then be posted to members.
- Create meetings in a bag and send these to members. Ideas for this include:
 - Seeds for bee-friendly flowers
 - A craft / cookery/ gardening challenge
 - Tips on how to reduce food waste with recipe ideas that use up leftovers
 - A craft kit e.g. to make a calming lavender-scented sachet to take to a cervical screening appointment for the 5 Minutes that Matter campaign or to make green hearts for the Show the Love campaign

Get in touch with us if you would like a printed copy* of our guidance on creating and sending meetings in a bag (also available on My WI).

- Get involved in a WI campaign at a local level using the action packs that are created by the Public Affairs Team.
- If a member's WI are meeting online but they do not have the means to join with video, they can dial in to the meeting use their mobile or house phone.
- Members who are online can print and share resources with members who are not online e.g. articles, recipes, craft projects, the Keep Connected leaflet, and quizzes.

NHS, Social Care, and Frontline Workers Day – 5th July 2021

The WI has been invited to play a major role in the first ever NHS, Social Care, and Frontline Workers Day next year. This is taking place on 5th July 2021 to mark the birthday of the NHS.

The day is all about celebrating the NHS and the incredible efforts of NHS, Social Care, and Frontline Workers during the pandemic.

As a central part of this day, groups from all over the country are encouraged to bring their communities together (whether in person or otherwise, depending on restrictions) to organise Afternoon Tea events at 4pm at individual locations of their choice. The WI has been asked to design the official cake of the day, and the recipe will be available on My WI, along with more details about the day. We will also be adding resources to My WI to help your WI celebrate in person or remotely.

Please save the date and start to think about how your WI can mark this occasion within your community, or just with your family.

Please do share your plans and events on social media or by emailing us at pr@nfwi.org.uk

Have you signed up to the National WI Newsletter?

The National WI Newsletter, which launched in August 2020, brings together news and stories from around the WI. Everyone is welcome to subscribe to this newsletter, whether you're a member or not, so please spread the word and encourage others to subscribe! You can sign up to receive the newsletter directly to your inbox each month by visiting: www.thewi.org.uk/media-centre

Stay in touch with us

Keep an eye out for the latest membership updates in *WI Life*, on My WI and on our social media channels.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the team at membership@nfwl.org.uk or call us on 020 7371 9300 (ext. 201).

From the Membership and Engagement Team

*NB. Please be aware the office is closed due to Covid restrictions and printing capacity is limited. Thank you.