



## Background information about the Women's Resource Centre

The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) is a membership based charity which supports women's organisations to be more effective and sustainable. We provide training, information, resources and one-to-one support on a range of organisational development issues. We also lobby decision makers on behalf of the women's not-for-profit sector for improved representation and funding.

Our 300+ members work in a wide range of fields including health, violence against women, employment, education, rights and equality, the criminal justice system and the environment. They deliver services to, and campaign on behalf of, some of the most marginalised communities of women. There are over ten thousand people working or volunteering for our members who support almost half a million individuals each year.

WRC was established in 1984, originally as a network of teaching professionals concerned with including gender in educational curriculum and eventually evolved into a women's centre. In response to consultation with organisations in the women's voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the late 1990s, WRC took on its current role as an umbrella body providing capacity building and infrastructure support for women's organisations, and registered as a charity in 1998.

The work of the WRC is made possible by grants from London Councils, Big Lottery Fund, Office of the Third Sector, Capacitybuilders and sliding-scale subscriptions from our members.

Our achievements over the last five years include:

- Over 200 women took part in the 'Elevate' project (higher level management and leadership training). The project received outstanding feedback from participants and the independent evaluator.
- Launching the **why women?** campaign to raise the profile of the women's sector and the funding challenges it faces, both throughout the UK and internationally.
- Undertaking and publishing research on the women's VCS, women-only services, funding to women's refuges in London, the economic impact of the women's VCS, and the state of the Rape Crisis sector.
- Over 2,000 people have attended our conferences, trainings and other events.
- Successfully influencing decision makers on a range of third sector issues.
- Developing and disseminating over 100 briefings and responses on policy issues affecting women's equality and the women's third sector.
- Starting social enterprises to generate independent income.

## About the women's voluntary and community sector

Women's voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) are a cornerstone for sustainable and stable communities, and are crucial to the advancement of equality and women's rights. Despite the advances made, there is ample evidence that women in the UK continue to experience widespread discrimination, inequality and social exclusion. Issues of importance to women are often absent in social, economic or political agendas at local, regional and national levels. As a result, women's VCOs are often excluded from decision making and find it difficult to access charitable, statutory and corporate sources of funding, fuelling a worsening funding crisis across the sector as a whole. This highlights the importance of the WRC's role in supporting women's organisations through:

- Ensuring women's VCOs have the necessary skills and information to sustain and develop their organisations and services
- Enabling partnership working between women's organisations
- Gathering evidence to make a robust case for the sustainability of the women's VCS
- Engaging with decision-makers at all levels to ensure issues relevant to the women's VCS and their service users are taken into account
- Lobbying funders and decision makers to ensure that women's VCOs have fair access to sustainable funding.

## Values

WRC is committed to ensuring that our values are embedded throughout our organisation and are reflected in all of our work. Our six core values are:

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| <b>Feminism</b>                     | WRC firmly believes that strengthening the women's sector helps challenge discrimination against women and improves women's lives. WRC will actively challenge any discrimination against women within our own organisation and others.   |
| <b>Equality</b>                     | WRC will proactively work with, learn from and support other equalities organisations and will ensure our work is based on an equalities framework.   |
| <b>Professionalism</b>              | WRC will constantly strive to provide a high quality service, be an effective communicator and ensure continuous organisational learning and development.   |
| <b>Collaboration</b>                | WRC acknowledges the expertise of women's and other organisations and will work collaboratively to address gender inequality. We will ensure that our activities and information are accessible to all.   |
| <b>Integrity</b>                    | WRC will work in an open, honest, accountable and transparent way with staff, volunteers, members and other stakeholders.   |
| <b>Environmental Sustainability</b> | WRC will strive to reduce our waste and carbon emissions through consuming less, recycling, using non-toxic and biodegradable products and purchasing from local suppliers. Where possible, we will purchase services from women's organisations/businesses and use sustainable, locally sourced, fair-trade and organic goods. |

## **Equal opportunities statement of intent**

WRC is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity in employment, governance and service delivery and seeks to maintain high quality standards in all activities and services.

We are actively opposed to all forms of discrimination on the grounds of: age; appearance; caring responsibilities; caste; class; gender; HIV status; marital status; nationality; political beliefs; religion; immigration status; race/ethnicity; sexuality; long-term illness; criminal conviction; physical or mental ability; or trade union involvement.

WRC will actively challenge all direct or indirect discrimination in service delivery, activities, employment practice, volunteering and management.

We are committed to continuous improvement of accessibility to services, activities employment and volunteering opportunities and management opportunities.

WRC will take active steps to encourage representation from all sections of the diverse women's community in London in its management, staff, volunteer team, membership and amongst service users.

WRC will ensure adequate funding is available for costs incurred in implementing the Equal Opportunities Policy and will actively seek additional funds to enable further improvements in accessibility of its services and activities.

If a staff member, volunteer or management committee member within the organisation feels that WRC has failed to maintain the standards set out in this statement, they will be actively encouraged to pursue a grievance with the organisation through use of the WRC Grievance Procedure and Grievance Form.

If a member of WRC, service-user or any other individual outside the organisation feels that WRC has failed to maintain the standards set out in this statement, they will be actively encouraged to pursue a complaint against the organisation through the use of the WRC Complaints Procedure and form.

*For a full copy of WRC's Equal Opportunities Policy, visit [www.wrc.org.uk](http://www.wrc.org.uk) or email [recruitment@wrc.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@wrc.org.uk)*

## **Mission and strategic aims**

WRC's mission is: *Supporting and standing up for a diverse and thriving women's sector.*

The strategic aims of WRC are to:

- Promote solidarity in a competitive world
- Achieve financial stability and independence for WRC
- Demonstrate leadership with grassroots integrity
- Improve our national reach
- Advocate for the women's sector
- Build the capacity of the women's sector

## Our team

The WRC is governed by a Board of Trustees (also referred to as the Management Committee). Our Board members are women with a wide range of skills and experience in issues relevant to the women's third sector, gender equality and/or organisational development issues.

Service delivery, day-to-day strategic development, operations and fundraising are managed by the Chief Executive and a senior management team made up of the heads of each of the WRC teams.

### Core & Communications

Responsible for membership, internal operations including finance, ICT, human resources, the volunteering programme, health and safety, premises and equipment, as well as all our communications activities.

### Policy

Leads on the **why women?** campaign, conducts research, lobbies funders and decision makers on behalf of the women's third sector, disseminates policy information to members, holds consultations and makes responses on policy issues of importance to women and women's organisations and builds the capacity of women's organisations to influence policy.

### Sustainability & Development

Delivers training, events and one-to-one support to members on a range of issues to improve their capacity and sustainability. The team has a focus on funding and fundraising including supporting members to generate income and diversify their funding mix.

### National Equality Partnership

Funded by Capacitybuilders, the NEP team focuses specifically on supporting infrastructure organisations across England to better understand and promote equality and diversity in the third sector and equalities groups. The NEP is a joint project between several national organisations and is led by WRC.

### Research

This function is a new addition to WRC. The unit will undertake research and evaluation contracts, and will be instrumental in the future development of WRC.

WRC seeks to promote the personal and professional development of all women involved with the WRC, whether as employees, volunteers or members. All staff are actively encouraged to attend conferences, participate in training, mentoring and shadowing and gain practical experience through other activities which will contribute to their professional and personal development. For these purposes, WRC sets aside a dedicated budget for both paid staff and volunteers.

Staff are encouraged to join a union and WRC's recognised union is Unison. WRC's Joint Negotiating Committee, made up of union members and Board of Trustee members, negotiates on issues that affect the workplace and staff.

# WRC structure (February 2010)

