

Membership Policy

Introduction

WAY Widowed and Young (referred to as WAY hereinafter) exists as a peer-to-peer support group, helping one another through bereavement at a young age. Each member's grief is unique to them and all members will be at different stages of grief with their own way of coping. Since WAY was founded, members have shown an amazing capacity to help each other by sharing their own understanding of grief and pain.

1. Joining WAY

1.1. Membership Eligibility

Membership is open to all UK residents with a UK postcode, who have lost their partner before their 51st birthday – married or not, with or without children, inclusive of sexual orientations, gender, race and religion.

1.2. Membership Application and Fee

Membership costs £30 per year and can be purchased at www.widowedandyoung.org.uk. If you are unable to complete the form online, please email our membership team at enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk for assistance. We are aware that, as a result of bereavement and its consequences, many people can struggle financially and therefore we have limited funds available to assist members in payment of their annual membership fees, please see our website for further details. Application is subject to acceptance of WAY's Membership Policy, Privacy Policy and Terms of Use.

1.3. Membership Benefits

One of the things WAY's members appreciate most is being able to talk to others who have been through a similar situation. As WAY relies on peer-to-peer support and the goodwill of members to organise events, there is variation in activities dependent upon locations within the UK. Membership benefits are kept up to date on the website and typically include;

- A secure, members' only website with online forums, the ability to contact other members nearby and all over the country, and an events calendar.
- Ability to arrange local and national meetups through our website.
- Access to a free, confidential telephone support service, offering counselling support, personal legal advice and financial information, as well as health advice across a range of medical and wellbeing issues.
- A member exclusive newsletter and monthly e-newsletter.
- An annual general meeting.
- Information about other organisations and counselling groups.

In addition to the above, members also have access through our website to a list of social activities across the UK, along with short breaks and holidays in the UK and abroad, which may incur additional costs. Please see individual events for details.

1.4. Moving Abroad

Once a member has joined WAY, they are entitled to remain a member for life, upon receipt of the annual membership fee. Therefore, members who choose to move abroad can continue to interact with members and join our International Home Group. Please note that WAY Forward will revert to an electronic version being emailed to international members. If International members would like a printed copy to be sent it should be noted that additional postage costs will apply - please request this service via; enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk

2. Members Code of Conduct

Members generally get on well and form valuable friendships. WAY assumes that most people are well-intended, and WAY is not inclined to tell people what to do.

WAY trustees would like to voice their strong, unequivocal support of appropriate behaviour by all WAY members.

The Code of Conduct outlines simple, common courtesies that we ask members to show each other in order to ensure that WAY continues to provide an inclusive, safe and supportive environment for all members, whether they meet in person or online.

For any breaches of this code please refer to WAY's Complaints Policy. Complaints must be made by the people directly involved. Any complaints made by third parties cannot be considered due to GDPR and member confidentiality which prohibits us from sharing member details.

2.1. Be supportive and respectful of each other

WAY is a peer-to-peer support group and members are expected to be understanding of each other's needs and to recognise that there is no right or wrong way to grieve. In order to maintain a supportive environment, members are expected to behave appropriately and to refrain from abusive, aggressive or threatening behaviour, or from harassing or bullying other members in any way. This is the case in whatever way you are brought together, whether online, at local meetings, at national events or on holidays.

2.2. Respect differences

WAY is about helping each other by sharing experiences and discussing problems. Speak personally and say what you feel but remember that others might use a different approach or deal with things at a different pace. Respect each member's right to deal with their grief however they wish. This respect should extend to cultural, religious, educational and social differences.

2.3. Privacy and Confidentiality

The safety and security of our members, and their information, is very important to us. It is imperative for members to respect confidentiality, and not to talk to anyone about what you hear in group meetings, or to misuse confidential information in any other way.

If a member has given you their personal information, you must not share this with others without their consent.

Please be mindful of tagging other members on social media in posts and in pictures, we recommend that you have their consent prior to doing so.

2.4. Harassment, Bullying, or Intimidation

It is mercifully rare, but occasionally WAY members have behaved in a manner that other members have considered to be harassment, bullying, or intimidation. Where this has been brought to the attention of WAY, we will ask people to stop doing so, even if they do not consider their behaviour to be particularly offensive. These behaviours can be compounded by the vulnerable nature of some members. Members who continue behaving in this way will have their membership suspended and the WAY formal complaints procedure will be invoked. WAY's Complaints Procedure should be followed for reporting this kind of behaviour.

2.5. Hateful and Harmful behaviour

WAY has zero tolerance of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, ableism or other forms of hate-speech or content that could be interpreted as such. This, along with behaviour deemed as threatening, violent, harassing, stalking, coercive or predatory could lead to a permanent ban from WAY, and may be subject to criminal investigations. WAY's Complaints Procedure should be followed for reporting this kind of behaviour.

2.6. Personal safety and security

Thankfully there are very few problems within our group. However, it is important that members remain aware of their own safety and security.

- Please keep your account details private and do not give your login details to anyone else, members are responsible for keeping their passwords confidential.
- Take care when travelling to/from meets.
- RSVP to all meets that you are attending through the website so the organiser knows to expect you.
- Take care as to what you write online.
- Do not respond to messages or emails which cause offence and bear in mind that widowhood strikes all members of society – not just the good or kind ones.
- Only share your personal information if you are happy to do so. Communication that members participate in outside of WAY is the responsibility of those individuals, and not that of WAY. This includes, but is not limited to; SMS, Phone calls, video calls, and private messaging via social media or other Apps.

Any meet ups organised and attended is/are the individual's responsibility and not the responsibility of WAY.

2.7. WAY Online

Members are asked to be respectful when online. Virtual conversation does not lessen the need for consideration of what is being written. Users should show respect for others at all times and should not post anything aggressive, deliberately inflammatory or derogatory, either in posts or as a reply to another member's post, in chat rooms or in private messages.

Users of WAY online must not post material that:

- Is or is likely to be, discriminatory, hateful, false, inaccurate, threatening, defamatory, abusive, obscene, indecent, seditious, offensive, pornographic, harassing, profane, sexually oriented, invasive of a person's privacy, liable to incite racial hatred, menacing, scandalous, inflammatory, blasphemous, in breach of confidence, or which may cause annoyance or inconvenience or otherwise be a breach of the law.
- Is copyrighted material unless the copyright is owned by the user or unless the user has all necessary licences and/or approvals.

- Is considered unlawful, misleading or malicious and would constitute or encourage conduct that would be considered a criminal offence, give rise to civil liability, or otherwise be contrary to the law of or infringe the rights of any third party, in the UK or any other country in the world.
- Constitutes an advertisement, chain letters, pyramid schemes or any other form of solicitation.
- Is requesting other members to provide money, goods or services either directly or through a fundraiser for people, causes and charities other than those approved by WAY Widowed and Young.
- Would be technically harmful (including, without limitation hacking, the introduction of computer viruses, logic bombs, Trojan horses, worms, harmful components, corrupted data or other malicious software or harmful data).
- Constitutes market research; this includes questionnaires, surveys and consultation. This may invade privacy rights of fellow members and takes away from the peer support focus of our site.
- Compromises another person's privacy, confidentiality, safety or security.

Online Forums

Views expressed in WAY online forums are purely the views of the members and as such don't constitute professional recommendations or advice or the opinions of WAY- Widowed and Young.

Whilst we are not obliged to do so, we do try to monitor a proportion of the posts and information posted to ensure that the Membership Policy is being complied with.

We have the ability and the right to remove any post that is in breach of the code within a reasonable time frame, if we determine that removal is necessary. Removal is a manual process so please realise that we may not be able to remove or edit particular messages or information immediately.

The process for Admin removal on Facebook is detailed on the **Member Website** under **Social Media – Facebook**.

Your assistance in this matter does help us so, if you consider that any post breaches our code please do let us know:

- Facebook – By reporting the post/comment to Facebook Admins by clicking on the 3 dots to the right of the post/comment
- Website Forum and Website Direct messages – By emailing the details to enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk
- Public Social Media – By clicking the three dots to the right of the comment/post or messaging directly on the WAY page on the Public Social Media platform.

WAY operates a number of public facing social media pages, including Facebook, X, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram. WAY cannot take responsibility for matters beyond our control posted within these sites and we may be limited as to what action WAY can take, dependent upon the terms and conditions within each individual site.

WAY also runs the main closed Facebook Page with the assistance of volunteer admins, that all members are eligible to join. This group runs in accordance with the Facebook Charter and detailed processes which can be found on the members website under Social Media - Facebook

A number of members develop their own sub-pages/groups on Facebook, these can be found on the Social Media section of our website under Facebook Sub Groups. The creators and admins of these groups are responsible for setting additional group rules as well as adhering to WAY's subgroup requirements which can be found on the Social Media page on our website, under Facebook Subgroups.

Any virtual event that is posted onto the WAY website e.g. Quizzes, Bingo, Chats, are treated as WAY events and therefore must adhere to the guidelines for these including the restrictions for non-members attending.

Please remember that every time you use the WAY Website, WAY closed social media platforms and WAY online events you're agreeing to our Membership Policy, Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions, so you should make sure that you understand these documents fully. WAY does not manage any groups or correspondence that are set up outside of the official WAY channels, or have not signed up to the sub-group registration.

2.8. New Relationships

Whilst it is truly lovely that some of our members form lasting relationships with other members, we do ask that anyone in a new relationship is respectful of other members who may find this situation difficult, and wherever possible refrain from excessive public displays of affection both online and at meetings.

Should a relationship between two members end, WAY would like to remind members of the Code of Conduct above. Everyone's privacy should be respected and, as a support group, WAY should remain a safe space for all of its members.

2.9. Sending and Receiving Gifts and Money

We recommend that members do not personally send gifts or money. We also ask that members not to request gifts or money from other members. WAY cannot be held accountable, if members choose to exchange gifts / money.

We politely remind members that WAY has a helpline that will offer information regarding financial matters. WAY members can access the helpline 24/7, 365 days a year on 0800 107 6147.

3. Visitors / Non-Members

A visitor, is a non-member and may be a relative, partner, friend, colleague or acquaintance. Meetings and events are intended for WAY members, the exception being The Big Picnic, which is a public event where anyone is welcome. On occasion we understand that members may wish to bring along a visitor, we set out terms below.

3.1. Children

WAY welcomes children at designated family holidays/events (detailed on our website). However, we cannot accept responsibility for the supervision or behaviour of members' children. Ultimate responsibility for a child always remains with the parent or guardian.

3.2. Visitors at Local Events

Social events vary greatly from region to region. On occasion, a member may wish to have a visitor to accompany them to a meeting or event. Visitors are welcome where it has been agreed by all attendees of the group at least 24 hours in advance. If it is decided to hold an event including non-members, it must be well publicised to all members.

3.3. Visitors at the AGM

WAY has a duty to consider all delegates, many of whom are attending an AGM for the first time. Therefore, non-members are excluded from the AGM and all activities associated with this event. The only exception to this is; Non-Member Trustees, Staff, Speakers or Facilitators.

3.4. Visitors attending Holidays

There may be WAY holidays arranged as a large event (i.e. PGL) which is also open to the general public. If this is the case, then non-members may be able to attend provided it is by prior arrangement and the organiser ensures that all those attending are aware of this situation.

3.5. Visitors assisting Members at events

If a member requires assistance to attend a WAY event from a carer or family member employed in a caring role, then this person is not viewed as a visitor. In this case, the member must outline their needs to the organiser and the assistance the carer would be required to give, during activities not requiring assistance, the carer is expected to give the group privacy.

Any event involving non-members must also be publicised to all members that there may be some friends of WAY members at these events, so they can choose whether they wish to attend based on this.

Members must be able to choose whether or not they share accommodation with non-members. When arranging smaller WAY holidays, the organiser should consider the nature of the event, and whether or not it is appropriate to include non-WAY members.

3.6. Visitors at Subsidised Events

Where an event is subsidised by WAY or by members' fundraising, the non-member would be expected to pay full price, or give a reasonable contribution/donation.

3.7. Visitor Access to WAY Goods / Services

Non-members are not entitled to the goods and services supplied by WAY.

3.8. Visitor Associate Membership

There is no facility at this time for Associate Membership.

3.9. Visitor Code of Conduct

Members are ultimately responsible for ensuring this policy is adhered to. Any members bringing guests along to an event or holiday are advised to make the non-members aware of the WAY Code of Conduct before attending, and to ensure they act appropriately.

If we happen to receive a complaint about a visitor you brought along to a meeting which is

upheld, this may impact your membership. If someone is a 'frequent visitor' who is actually eligible to be a member, we will request that they join as a member and pay their subscription, or not to come along to any further meetings as this is not fair to the rest of the members who pay.

Changes to this policy

We may change this policy at any time, in which case the amended policy will be posted on our websites and will apply from the date we post them, please check the policy regularly.

The format and content of our website changes constantly. You should refresh your browser each time you visit our sites to ensure that you access the most up to date version.

Our Contact Details

Registered Address:

WAY Widowed and Young, Advantage House, Stowe Court, Stowe Street, Lichfield, WS13 6AQ

Contact Number: 0300 2010051

Or Email us at: enquiries@widowedandyoung.org.uk

Policy Control

This policy replaces previous WAY policies named: Membership Policy, Members Code of Conduct, Age Policy and Non-Members Policy.

Version	8	Issue MM/YY	Date	07/24	Review MM/YY	Due	07/25
Signed (Chair or Trustee) Agreed by WAY Board of Trustees, Meeting Date 13 th July 2024							

****END OF POLICY****