

Motion: Welfare Rep and workshops on trauma

This motion was agreed at the national members' meeting on 6 February 2021

1. Our current [guidelines](#) on sexual violence and domestic abuse (SV/DA) enable survivors and others to choose any group of trusted comrades to apply the guidelines to respond to SV/DA and bring any decisions on membership required to the Steering Group. It is not proposed to change this.
2. However, for some survivors having to initiate a process against an abuser can be re-traumatising and have a significant mental health impact. Others may not have relationships within the organisation or know who they trust to respond. If something goes wrong (e.g. a perpetrator refuses to meet with a survivor's supporters or the process stalls) it is currently unclear where the survivor can turn for support.
3. A new position in the organisation (a "Welfare Rep") will be established. The role will be elected for a one-year term of office, and have a specific focus on issues to do with members' welfare, safety, accessibility and ability to participate in rs21.
4. They will be a member of the Steering Group (SG), with the right to attend meetings and vote but will not be expected to attend every meeting or take on other SG responsibilities. The aim is to create *new capacity* to work on issues including Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse (SV/DA), accessibility and broader welfare, safety and participation concerns.
5. Contact details for the Welfare Rep will be shared with the whole organisation, so that members have a named contact to raise issues and concerns with. The Welfare Rep might, for example, provide emotional support throughout a SV/DA process, support a survivor to choose comrades to apply the guidelines or help arrange meetings if a process stalls. Members can go to anyone else if they feel that is more appropriate. This does not mean the Welfare Rep is responsible for resolving all issues raised with them.
6. The Welfare Rep will maintain a list of organisations to signpost to (e.g. rape crisis centres, community mental health services or similar) and share relevant information with survivors and their supporters.
7. Being elected as an SG member gives the Welfare Rep authority within the organisation and ability to influence plans and decisions where appropriate. In any situation where a SV/DA survivor or their comrades thought there was a potential conflict of interest due to the Welfare Rep's role on SG or who they are, they are free to involve any other members they feel are more appropriate instead.
8. We will invite members who are interested in becoming the Welfare Rep or working closely with them to come forward. The temporary SV/DA working group will identify suitable training on trauma-informed approaches and how to support survivors for these comrades, after which the first election will be held.
9. rs21 also commits to review the position of the welfare rep in 6 months after one is elected and who does the review is at the discretion of the SVDA group.

10. The Rep will lead on creating a series of workshops to be held with rs21 branches and groups.

These workshops will have two components:

a) Skill-sharing for all rs21 members (based on training undertaken) on responding to survivors and supporting people with trauma. This may include, for example, understanding the impact of trauma; grounding-techniques when supporting people in distress; the importance of providing survivors with choices about how it will be dealt with; how to avoid re-traumatisation.

b) Supporting comrades across the organisation to develop our political understanding of SV/DA and gendered violence and how it relates to our politics and theory.

The aims of the workshops are:

- To raise the political understanding of rs21 members of gendered violence, SV/DA and the relationship to oppression and our politics
- To improve the overall level of knowledge about trauma and its' impact, as well as the confidence and skill of all members in supporting comrades with experiences of trauma
- To set a clear expectation of all members when it comes to SV/DA and trauma, both politically and practically