Guide to Neon membership

This guide sets out how Neon’s membership works; what Neon membership means; and how the membership element of Neon interacts with the programmes Neon runs.

What is Neon for?

Neon builds the power of movements for social and economic justice.

Who is Neon for?

We have three criteria that members need to share with us to be admitted:

● Shared purpose:
  ○ From climate change to poverty, from migrant rights to the housing crisis, we believe the issues we campaign on stem from the same structural problems in our economy and politics. Instead of a neoliberal system designed to enrich the 1% we want an economy that puts human need before profit, ends all forms of oppression, redistributes wealth and power across society, and looks after the planet we and future generations depend on. By supporting each other’s struggles and learning new ways to act together, we aim to build powerful movements that can win.

● Shared values:
  ○ Our network values are solidarity, respect and generosity. These underpin how we expect members to treat each other. We have zero tolerance for oppressive behaviours.
  ○ We have developed standards for member behaviour, based on our values - please see [here](#), where we also set out our zero-tolerance for oppressive behaviours in detail.

● Shared practice:
  ○ Our shared practice is that embodied by the movement ecology model which advocates that we need lots of people working to tackle a shared problem with different theories of change - either focused on changing a dominant institution; building alternatives or transforming and empowering people

You can only be a member of Neon if you are aged 18 or over and active in social movements in Britain.

We will apply this criteria fairly and rigorously to ensure only those who should be in Neon are admitted. For others who apply unsuccessfully we will be proactive in explaining our reasons and suggesting alternative activities and spaces.
Neon could be a home for many people who meet the criteria but who for a number of reasons aren’t likely to find Neon on their own. Our social movement and civil society organisations too often replicate the predominance of white university-educated men found in the rest of society. Neon opposes patriarchy and other discriminations in all their forms and we are actively working for a much greater diversity of leadership in our social movements. To do this we have an intentional recruitment approach which identifies the organisers we want to join and proactively encourages them to do so.

What does membership of Neon mean?

People become Neon members by applying directly through the website. This may be because applicants are:
- encouraged to join through engagement with a Neon member of staff or member
- invited to join following successful application to some of our programmes that are open to the public (this does not automatically entail membership)
- find out about Neon in another way and request to join

We commit to make a decision on an application to join Neon within ten working days.

Neon members:
- get first access to a range of Neon training and organising programmes.
- have access to our online membership community - hosted on Mobilize
- from time to time, are consulted on big strategic decisions regarding Neon and the programmes we run

Neon’s mailing list is for discussion of different issues, tactics and experiences, and a place where we strive to overcome our differences to work together. Neon is a place for people of all political parties and none. It’s not for furthering the aims of any political party and members are asked not to post content which does this to our mailing lists, or use our spaces for these purposes.

We will publicise what membership means regularly to help broaden understanding of Neon and what it offers.

Membership of Neon remains free.
How do we enforce the rules of our membership?

Sometimes, members will act in ways that contravene our values, which they sign up to respect when they join.

When any member of Neon feels another member has contravened Neon’s values, they can bring it to the attention of the staff team. The easiest way to do that is to email hello@neweconomyorganisers.org. Mobilize posts are also monitored, and staff may raise any posts which contravene our values.

When the staff team receive a complaint about a member the following process will be invoked:

1. A member of the Directors Team will assess the complaint within one working day.
   a. They will then communicate their recommendation to the full Neon staff team, to ensure a greater degree of objectivity
   b. If the staff team agree, a member of the Directors Team will get in contact with the member to explain the issue and give a first warning, within two working days of the complaint first being made
   c. The Neon member(s) who made the complaint will be notified of this action within one working day

2. If a second such incident occurs within one year, the same process is followed
   a. The second warning means that the member’s ability to post to Neon’s mailing list will be suspended for one month and their ability to participate in Neon programmes will be suspended for three months

3. On the third instance within a year, the same process is followed with the addition of a vote taken by the staff team to decide whether to remove the member from the Neon community. A majority of Neon staff are required to vote in favour for the member to be removed from the community. The vote will be taken by at least 7 staff members who are working on the days that fall within the timescale of the two working days after the complaint being made.

4. If the member in question wishes to appeal their removal from Neon, they may write a letter of appeal of no more than 500 words to the Neon board Chair within two weeks of their removal, setting out their case for reinstatement. A board member who is independent of the case will consider the appeal. They will decide to uphold or reverse the removal from the community, and after the Board as a whole has ratified the position, they will communicate their decision to the removed member and any complainant(s) within one month.

We also have a process for skipping the three strikes rule and fast-tracking a complaint.

If at stage 1 of this process the complaint concerns the following, Neon team staff can propose to the rest of the team (and must receive majority approval) to move to stage 3 immediately:
Based on the specific nature of the complaint, it may be considered appropriate to ‘call in’ rather than move straight to expulsion in these cases. This entails a member of Neon staff opening up communication with the person in question, explaining how their actions have been interpreted by others and offering an opportunity to understand why the offending action was not appropriate. A public apology may be a suitable demonstration that the person has learnt from the experience. This approach will not be suitable in every case but where it is Neon supports intervention over immediate expulsion.

A Neon member removed under this process still has the right to appeal to the board as per stage 4. They will be informed of this right and the process in the email they receive from us informing them of our decision to remove them from Neon.

Following removal, a person will not be readmitted to Neon or accepted onto a Neon programme.

We will ensure that there are always members of the staff team available to meet our commitments under this policy.

**Giving Neon feedback**

We want members to feel they can easily give Neon constructive feedback. This is important to us both to learn and improve our practices but also remain accountable and bring instances where Neon’s staff, board members or volunteers have acted in ways that fall short of our values.

Any member can email feedback@neweconomyorganisers.org and can expect a response from a senior member of the staff team within ten working days of its receipt. It may take more time to resolve the issue, depending on its complexity. Only members of Neon can use this process.
Leaving Neon

Any member of Neon can leave at any time by emailing hello@neweconomyorganisers.org

This guide

This guide is based on the Neon Membership Policy, an internal document Neon has to help run the community. The Neon staff team first agreed it in March 2017 and have reviewed and changed it since then, most recently in April 2021. If you have comments or suggestions for us about it please email hello@neweconomyorganisers.org