



Eich llais chi mewn | Your voice in health
iechyd a gofal | and social care



Volunteer Handbook

Integrity ~ People Centred ~ Working Together

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

This document is also available in Welsh.

If you would like this publication in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us at enquiries@llaiscymru.org.

You can download it from our website or ask for a copy by contacting our office.

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WELCOME



We are delighted that you have chosen to volunteer with Llais. We depend on people like you to make sure people's voices are heard in Wales.

Please take the time to read the handbook and come back to it when needed. It tells you who we are, what we do, and sets out the policies and processes we have in place to support and protect you and others.

We are looking forward to having you join us!



Llais is the **national, independent body** set up by the Welsh Government to give the people of Wales a stronger voice in their health and social care services.

We have three main roles:

01: To engage with and listen to you about your experiences of health and social care. You might see us out in the community, at events, in drop-ins – we try to meet you in the places that matter to give you a chance to have your say.

02: To represent your views to decision makers in health and social care. By law, they now must let us know what they plan to do with your feedback. If they can't act on it, they need to tell us why.

03: To provide a complaints advocacy service in every area of Wales for complaints about health and social care.

*(Children under 18 receiving social care support and people leaving care up to 25 can use advocacy services provided by social care).

All regional Llais offices are linked to a national body called Llais Wales.

You can find out more about Llais Wales at: www.llaiswales.org

What services do we cover?

We cover all NHS-run health services and social care services, including some that are arranged by social care, and will ask the public's views on any of these.



What powers do we have?

We are independent with our own Board and our own legal powers. Our plan of work is based on the concerns shared with us by the people of Wales.

We can:

Enter and see places where health or social care services are provided.

Raise concerns with other organisations, Ministers, or decision-makers when needed.

We also have a duty to provide information to the public about health and social care services.

How do we work?

To reach as many people as possible, we try to find ways to work with existing groups and organisations in Wales.

We aim to:

Build strong links with local voluntary and community groups, especially those working with communities whose voices are not heard as often as they should be.

Join community networks to share information, and to find out what matters to people.

Build a community of trained volunteers who can be the eyes and ears of Llais.

Our Board

Our Board is responsible for the plan of work we do each year, which is based on local public feedback.

Our Staff

As part of your induction, you will meet your regional team and they will help you understand how we all work together.

Our Volunteers

We have volunteers across all regions of Wales. Volunteers get involved for many reasons. Some want to make a positive difference to the lives of others; some want to develop new skills and some simply want to meet new people and have fun.

Every person who volunteers for us is **important to our work**.

Volunteer roles

At Llais we have several volunteer roles. These include:

Online Feedback Collector

Collecting feedback about people's experiences of health and social care services that have been left online.

Visiting Volunteer

You'll meet people online or in person at health and social care settings on pre-arranged visits to understand what they think works and what could be better.

Community Engagement Volunteer

You'll join a local Llais team to meet people online and face-to-face in the community, to capture their views and experiences of health and social care services.

Representation Volunteer

You'll attend meetings and events on behalf of Llais, putting forward our viewpoint, and making notes of the meeting to feedback relevant information.



As a volunteer you may wish to take on several roles, or you may choose areas where you have a special interest. We will discuss and agree this with you.

Our commitment to you

Our Regional Operations Managers will support and guide you in volunteering with Llais.

We will:

Always treat you with respect, thoughtfulness and appreciation.

Make sure you have a clear idea of what you need to do.

Give you a proper introduction to volunteering.

Give you information about the training and support available.

We will never expect you to complete a task you are not comfortable with.

Arrange to meet you regularly to look at ways we can help develop you and your skills.

Offer you fair, honest, and timely feedback.

Update you on how you have made a difference.



How we will support you

01: Induction

Your Regional Operations Manager will introduce you to the local Llais staff and volunteers you will be volunteering with and talk you through the handbook. They will let you know all the policies and processes in place to keep you and others safe.

02: Learning & Development

We want you to feel happy and confident in your role. As a Llais volunteer, your Regional Operations Manager will find training you have agreed will help you in volunteering with us.

03: Support

Please make a note of how each task you carried out went, what you did, what you enjoyed and if there were any issues that came up.



Each volunteer will have a review meeting, either in person, online or by phone, and you can agree how often you meet with your Regional Operations Manager. It is an opportunity for volunteers and staff to update each other, raise issues and keep in touch about your work with Llais.

What we expect from you

Llais expects high standards from all our volunteers. To make sure you get the most out of your role, volunteers will:

Always treat Llais volunteers, staff and others with respect, thoughtfulness, and appreciation.

Act in a professional way whenever you represent Llais.

Act in a way that doesn't treat anyone unfairly or exclude anyone.

Let us know as far in advance as you can if you can't attend an event with Llais, or if you no longer wish to volunteer.

Ask your Regional Operations Manager if you do not fully understand your role, what you are responsible for, or need any other help.

Reliability and Commitment

It is important that you can be reliable and stick to arrangements you have made with us. If things change for you and you cannot volunteer, please tell your Regional Operations Manager as soon as possible. If you're planning to go on holiday, please let them know when you'll be unavailable and when you plan to return.

Behavioural Standards at Meetings

We have a Behavioural Standards Policy which includes the following:

Virtual meeting preparation

- Check your diary and make sure you have the diary invite.
- Dress appropriately and have a workspace where the background behind you is professional. Think about whether there is anything that may cause offence, such as slogan mugs or posters.
- In virtual meetings, if you know beforehand that you want to raise something that is not on the agenda, please discuss this with the Chair/lead ahead of the virtual meeting.
- Remember that the 'chat' facility is available to everyone in the meeting during and after a meeting.

Essential Policies and Procedures

Please take a few minutes to have a read through and familiarise yourself with the following policies and procedures.

Expenses

We want to make sure that volunteers are not out-of-pocket because of volunteering with us. We will pay back out-of-pocket expenses that happen directly because of your Llais role.

Volunteers fill in expenses forms – either electronically or on paper – and these must be sent by the 8th of each month.

Discuss with your Regional Operations Manager what you can claim for public transport, or use of your own car. Please keep receipts and records of where you have been. If volunteering for three hours or more in one session, you may be able to claim for food and drinks.

Expenses will be paid directly into your bank account. Read our Volunteer Expenses Policy for full details.



Travelling by car

If you use your own car for a Llais activity, even travelling to and from a venue, you must tell your own car insurance company.

Most insurance companies agree to cover car journeys for volunteers at no extra charge. We need you to check this with your own insurance company.

Your car insurance will not be covered by Llais.

Code of Conduct

We have a Code of Conduct Policy which includes the following:

Gifts: Giving or receiving gifts may look like we are treating some people differently and could affect what people expect about the level of support you can give them. We ask that volunteers do not give or receive personal gifts to or from staff or anyone receiving support from Llais.

How we talk: When volunteering for Llais, we use a certain style of language. Our 'voice' is important to help people understand who we are and what we do. We need to be consistent, clear, and easy to understand. Whether you are speaking on behalf of Llais, writing an email or a letter, it is important to use the Llais 'tone of voice'. Your Regional Operations Manager will help you with this.

What we wear: As a volunteer for Llais, you represent Llais to visitors, clients, and the community.

Please use your judgement to dress appropriately for the activities you are asked to carry out. We can provide Llais branded clothing for you to wear while carrying out your duties. If you are ever unsure about what to wear, ask your Regional Operations Manager.



Conflicts of Interest

We realise that volunteers may sometimes personally know those connected with Llais – as friends, family, or colleagues.

Because we represent the public, we must be open, honest, and fair. Please read our Conflict-of-Interest policy and complete a Declaration of Interest which you should give to your Regional Operations Manager.

Health and Safety

Llais will look after the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone who works and volunteers for us. Any Llais activities are covered by health and safety insurance. It is important that you understand and accept your personal responsibility to help us to make sure everyone is safe.

It is important that you:

Do not do anything that affects either your own health and safety, or that of other volunteers, Llais staff, the public or others.

Follow instructions and safety procedures and follow our advice.

Let your Regional Operations Manager know of any personal health and safety needs that you have.

Llais will carry out risk assessments on activities you do and venues you visit where needed, and will share these with you so you know what you can do to keep yourself safe whilst volunteering for us. Our Health and Safety policy has the full details.



Working alone

It is unlikely that you will be asked to meet people one-to-one while volunteering, but where this does happen, make sure your Regional Operations Manager has agreed to the meeting. Llais office staff will need to be given the details of the meeting – when, where and who you are meeting.

A risk assessment must be carried out before any one-to-one meeting. This will include the venue, how to deal with a medical emergency or violent behaviour, confidentiality, and keeping information safe.

You must not attend a home visit unless with a Llais staff member. Regular telephone contact between you and your Regional Operations Manager or the Llais office should be arranged beforehand.

You should also leave details with your family of where you are going in case of emergency.



If you are alone when an incident or accident happens, you should let your Regional Operations Manager or the Llais staff team know as soon as possible.

You will be asked to complete an incident or accident reporting form afterwards.

If there is a fire while you are volunteering, you must follow the procedures at the venue you are visiting. The Llais office should be told, and an incident report completed.

Accidents, incidents, and insurance

All accidents and incidents must be reported to your Regional Operations Manager as soon as possible. If you feel that it is a real emergency, please contact the emergency services immediately. Llais has 'Employers Liability Insurance' and 'Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance' for when you are volunteering with Llais.

Personal safety & ID badges

We will need to hold an emergency contact for you, who we will contact in the unlikely event of an emergency. If needed, you will be given a volunteer ID badge which you should always have with you when volunteering for Llais.

Please refuse politely if a service user asks for your personal contact details. Sharing your details puts you at risk of your private life being intruded, and of people relying too much on you. It is natural to want to help someone in need, but we encourage people we meet in our work to be independent. We direct them to services we know can help more.



Confidentiality

Volunteers must keep information confidential during their time with Llais – you will be asked to sign a confidentiality declaration. This means that confidential information about people we support, volunteers, Llais staff and our work is kept private, unless we need to share the information by law.

Also see our Confidentiality Policy.

Safeguarding

All Llais volunteers will be trained in safeguarding as part of their induction. This will help you to take the right action to keep the children and adults you meet safe.

You may need a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as part of our safeguarding policy.



Any worries that an adult or child may be suffering harm should be talked about with Llais staff as soon as possible. They will decide what to do with the information as part of our safeguarding policies.

If someone shares with you that they have been harmed, remember to stay calm, listen carefully, and do not ask questions. Tell the person that you will take what they said seriously, what happened was not their fault and that you must tell a member of staff or manager. You must report what they say to a staff member as soon as possible and write down what was said and who you reported it to. You cannot keep the information to yourself if you think they or someone else is at risk.

Do not put yourself at risk, contact the person they told you about, or tell anyone who does not need to know.

Data Protection

Before we can collect, store, or use information – or ‘data’ – about somebody, the data protection law, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), means that they must agree to this.

You may have access to personal information about the people you are helping. Please make sure you are aware of our policy and procedures, including our data protection policy.

Your contact details will be kept on a database and used only by staff who need them. Your application form, references, and emergency contact details will be kept safely. You have the right to see your record. We may want to use photographs of our volunteers for publicity. You will be asked to agree to this, but you can say no.



Dealing with difficulties

If you find anything difficult, or your experience with us is not working out as hoped, please talk to your Volunteer Manager as soon as possible.

Together, we will try to work things out.

We want you to enjoy volunteering with Llais, but we know that problems can happen. We have a problem-solving process to help deal with any issues as soon as possible.

This process is for dealing with concerns with the volunteer relationship; for other concerns or complaints please see our Complaints Policy.

We will make sure that all volunteers can play a full part in trying to work out problems with us. You may bring a support person or advocate to any meeting as part of the problem-solving process.

Our problem-solving process

01: We will tell you about any problems with your volunteering as soon as possible and we will agree a way together to put things right. This might be extra training, or a change in your volunteering role.

02: If this does not fix the problem, we will offer a meeting with your Lead Officer to talk further.

03: If a meeting is needed, we will talk through the issues with you. We will find out with you if there are any other ways to fix the worries we have and let you know of our decision within 15 working days.



04: If you do not agree with the outcome of the formal meeting, you can raise an appeal with the Llais Board. The Llais Board will let you know they have received the appeal within five working days and offer a meeting.

05: The Board will let you know their response within 10 working days of this meeting. The Board's decision is final.

If we are unable to fix the situation with you, you may be asked to stop volunteering with Llais. If this happens, we will let you know of other opportunities.

Sometimes we will not be able to offer the opportunity for you to change your behaviour. This may include, amongst other issues, threats, abuse or attacks on any staff, volunteer or service users, breaking policies on safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults, breaking confidentiality, and criminal acts such as theft or fraud.

Complaints

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a chance to change the way we do things for the better.

If you wish to make a complaint or you receive a complaint from someone about your service or about Llais, please pass this on to your Regional Operations Manager. Our Complaints policy has more details.



Whistleblowing

It is important that any fraud, or wrong behaviour by staff or others working on behalf of Llais is dealt with properly. You can raise any worries about the behaviour of others at Llais or the way the organisation is run.

Our Whistleblowing Policy tells you how you can raise any concerns and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

We will treat all volunteers and volunteer applicants fairly. We accept volunteers based on how suited they are to the role.

We will not treat anyone unfairly because of their age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

We expect our volunteers to follow our Equality and Diversity Policy which will be part of the Llais volunteer induction.



Moving on and references

You can stop volunteering with Llais at any time. Please let your Regional Operations Manager know. We would like to have a chat with you about your reasons for leaving, although you can choose not to. If you have been a volunteer with us for over six months, we can also give you a reference.

Thank you for helping us to shape the future of health and social care.

Useful Links

1. Volunteer policy
2. Decision making policy
3. Volunteer role descriptions
4. Volunteer expenses policy
5. Code of conduct policy
6. Conflict of interest policy
7. Health and safety policy
8. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults policy
9. Data protection policy
10. Volunteer agreement
11. Confidentiality policy
12. Complaints policy
13. Equality, diversity, and inclusion policy
14. Whistleblowing policy

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