

Item: 15

Title: Volunteer update

Gweithredu / Action required	To note
Amseru / Timing	Routine
Argymhelliad / Recommendation	N/A
Risg / Risk	<p>Inability to recruit and retain volunteers will impact our operational reach and limit the levels of engagement we can deliver effectively. This is included in both corporate and regional risk registers.</p> <p>There is a cultural and reputational risk if our current volunteers are not properly invested in, engaged and developed, consistently across Wales, in order to support their involvement.</p>
Cyllid / Finance	There are impacts on finances as the volunteer plan commits Llais to the commissioning and procurement of services and products. This is within budget and accounted for in the forecasts.
Amcan Cynllun Corfforaethol / Corporate Plan Objective	Priority 6 - Develop our people, attract new people and support their involvement in our work
Cydraddoldeb, amrywiaeth a chynhwysiant / Equality, diversity and inclusion	An IIA and DPIA have been completed.
Cyfathrebu / Communications	<p>Please tick one of the following boxes if this activity will have an impact on:</p> <p>Internal: our people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>External: our customers/partners/stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>External: our organisation's reputation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

Cymeradwyaeth / Approval/Clearance	Ben Eaton, Director of Strategic Engagement and Communication
Trafodaethau/ Penderfyniadau Blaenorol / Previous discussions/decisions	Regular discussions with, and agreement sought, from Tîm Arwain.
Awdur/Cyflwyno / Author/presenting	Katie Blackburn, Corporate Lead and Powys Regional Director.
Dyddiad / Date	15/01/2024

Cefndir / Background

From April 2023, the Regional Operations Managers took on regional responsibility for management of volunteers of Llais.

The role change from CHC member to Llais volunteers has been supported by Katie Blackburn, Regional Director Powys, taking on corporate responsibility for volunteers and Regional Operations Managers taking on day-to-day management and communication with regional volunteers.

From May 2023 Regional Operations Managers met on a weekly basis, with Katie, to design and shape processes/ procedures/ priorities/ toolkit. Since August 2023, these meetings have been held fortnightly.

Llais currently has 132 volunteers across Wales:

Region	Volunteers (Oct 2023)	Volunteers (Dec 2023)
Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan	23	19
CTM	13	12
Gwent	39	38
North Wales	30	28
Powys	15	12
Swansea Bay	10	9
West Wales	15	14
	145	132

There are no obvious trends as to why volunteers have left; reasons might include other commitments (e.g. County councillors), some were undecided at the point of transfer and have decided that the volunteer approach is not for them – each region has lost one or two volunteers since April 2023. If a volunteer decides to leave, the relevant regional operations manager usually meets with them to find out more and see if there is anything we can do to support them to stay or to inform our volunteer offer moving forward.

We are currently developing an all-Wales framework for exit arrangements which will provide more consistency in data collection to help shape future developments and priorities.

Manylion / Detail

Progress made to date:

The focus of the work has been to put the core processes and documentation in place that enable us to onboard, train and communicate with volunteers, this has taken longer than we had hoped. We now have the following in place:

- A range of flexible role descriptions
- A clear, defined recruitment process
- A policy and process for Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- A process for identity cards
- Interim induction training programme
- Administrative forms eg. Expenses, next of kin, role(s), time commitment
- An all-Wales database
- Regional communication/ workshops/ development days
- A draft strategy has been prepared in readiness to align with the organisational strategy 2024 onwards.
- Key policies have been reviewed including safeguarding, expenses, behavioural standards
- Volunteers are able to participate across all the identified roles where they indicated a preference
- A volunteer handbook has been designed.

Work in progress:

- Development of a 2 page information guide to further support new and existing volunteers to understand their role is in development. Jan 2024.
- Volunteers online session to engage with the cultural assessment and development work (culture, vision, mission behaviours) to be completed in Jan 2024.
- Several of the listed documents are awaiting translation (Welsh and Easy Read) eg. Handbook, policies (31 January 2023)
- An Artificial Intelligence tool called Synthesia is in the process of being procured, this will provide another platform to deliver innovative learning and informational videos (Feb 2024)

- A volunteer communication plan is being produced alongside the external and internal communications plans to ensure integration and involvement of volunteers with the strategic work of Llais. The plan will take into account regional volunteer communication and engagement plans (Feb 2024)
- Llais will be celebrating it's volunteers during a Volunteer Week in March.
- A promotional video of what it is to volunteer for Llais is being currently being procured. The video will aim to inform potential volunteers what it is like to volunteer with us and celebrate our current volunteers. (March 2024)
- A marketing and recruitment campaign is being developed for delivery in March. This campaign will focus on trying to reach under represented communities and improve the diversity of our volunteers (March 2024)
- Learning modules are currently being developed to include e-learning (completion 31 March 2024)
- The draft volunteer strategy will need to be updated to reflect and align with the Corporate Strategy (completion May 2024)
- The interim induction presentation (currently in slide format) is being developed into a more interactive presentation that volunteers can watch at their convenience.
- Development of a volunteer HUB, accessible by all our volunteers, is being explored. It is hoped that this SharePoint Hub will act as the central point through which volunteers can access information, volunteer for opportunities, access development, and act as the 'village square' for volunteers from across Wales to offer their views and experiences on strategic developments.

We are aware that for some previous CHC members the transition to Llais volunteering has been a big change and adjusting to the new responsibilities has not always been clear and well understood. We are extremely thankful for those volunteers who have remained with us through the uncertainty whilst we put the foundations in place and for the flexible way in which many have taken to their new roles.

We are taking on the feedback from our volunteers and our staff and looking to improve the offer, along with the introduction of the planned developments listed above, we are confident that we can sustainably grow our volunteer base and make it a rewarding offer for our volunteers.

Our Regional Operations Managers have worked hard to engage, support and manage our regional volunteer activities, whilst helping deliver the developments listed above. We have seen some challenges, for example a lack of volunteers for certain opportunities that has led to cancellations of engagement events or visits to health or social care premises as a result. We have explored some of these reasons at Tîm Arwain with the Regional Operations Managers and will continue to reflect and improve where possible.