



HELP

The Hafal Expert Leadership Panel

Hafal's Expert Leadership Panel (HELP) is a group of knowledgeable, creative and skilled service users and carers with diverse backgrounds who are ready to use their experience to assist Hafal's campaigning and its development and delivery of services.

Terms of Reference

Context

Hafal is led by its members, most of them service-users and carers, who elect a Board of Trustees to manage the charity. Trustees, most of whom are service users or carers themselves, represent those who use Hafal's services and also a much wider cross-section of users and carers across Wales. Trustees agree the policies of Hafal both in terms of its activities and its positions on wider matters.

Hafal also facilitates user partnership meetings and carer groups for those who make direct use of our services; and Hafal conducts surveys of its members and other service users and carers to ascertain their views.

These arrangements form the basis of Hafal's authority in **representing** service users and carers. The role of HELP is different...

The role of HELP

HELP brings together a small group of expert service users and carers to assist Hafal's work in some or all of the following:

- Advising Hafal on policy matters concerning mental health and wider topics
- Contributing to the development of training materials
- Delivering training sessions internally and externally
- Representing Hafal externally by giving talks and presentations
- Representing Hafal in the media
- Leading and fronting Hafal campaigns
- Reviewing Hafal's services

- Advising on, assisting, and endorsing bids for resources
- Undertaking research
- Assisting with internal initiatives such as Hafal awards
- Providing other support to Hafal as agreed

HELP also offers opportunities to its members to develop their own skills through the Panel's work.

Panel membership

Members of the Panel will be appointed by Hafal but the Panel itself is encouraged to identify potential members.

Panel members need to:

- Be users or carers in the mental health field
- Have sound knowledge and understanding of mental health/illness and mental health services
- Support Hafal's policies in at least general terms and support Hafal's corporate development and progress
- Be able to work as part of a team
- Respect other Panel members
- Maintain confidentiality
- Have basic IT skills and have access to the internet and email

Desirable knowledge and skills include:

- Expertise in specific areas of mental health
- Presentation and media skills
- Experience /expertise in groups with protected characteristics

The intention is to recruit up to 20 members of the Panel, each appointed for a year at a time, renewable.

Hafal will aim to recruit at least one Trustee and at least one member of staff (all users or carers) as members of the Panel to encourage communication and dialogue within the organisation.

Although Panel membership will be restricted to users and carers there will be opportunities to engage others (including Hafal staff and other mental health professionals) in the work of the Panel through attendance at meetings or other means.

Status of Panel members

Panel members are volunteers working for Hafal and have the same rights and responsibilities as other Hafal volunteers in accordance with Hafal's policies. Specifically Panel members are "Informal Volunteers" under the terms of Hafal's Volunteering Policy (unless they have other volunteering or staff roles within Hafal which require another status): this means that Panel members do not have any *formal duty of care* in Hafal's work. Hafal of course has a duty of care to Panel members.

Hafal will pay expenses to Panel members for agreed travel and subsistence in accordance with its policies.

Management and support of the Panel

The Panel is formally an internal Hafal group operating under the direction and authority of Hafal. The Board of Trustees delegates management of the Panel to the Chief Executive who in turn delegates routine management (directly or through another senior manager) to a **HELP Coordinator**. Within this context the Panel is encouraged to raise topics of its choosing and propose its own agenda as well as engaging with Hafal's current priorities.

As with any Hafal group publications and other *external* communications and presentations by the Panel and Panel members (in that capacity) require prior approval by Hafal which will be arranged by the HELP Coordinator.

Hafal will support Panel members collectively and individually so that they can engage successfully with the Panel's work and gain a safe and rewarding experience; Hafal will be mindful that some Panel members will need more support to engage because of their illness or other challenges and will provide such support as far as practicable consistent with the Panel's purpose; however, because the Panel is not a support service for its members, sign-posting or referral to appropriate services will be made where a Panel member seeks additional support.

Panel operation

The Panel brings together volunteers who want to assist Hafal in a variety of ways: some will want to participate in formal discussions and attend meetings; others may prefer to contribute by email; others again may wish to focus on a specific skill or activity such as training or media work. The Panel will operate flexibly to accommodate these different contributions.

As a baseline the Panel will operate as an **email group** for all Panel members: this means that communication, discussion and consultation will take place by means of email under the coordination of the HELP Coordinator. Some Panel members may prefer to operate solely through this means – for example by responding to consultations or assisting in drafting information - and this will be seen as sufficient engagement where a useful contribution is made.

Above this baseline the HELP Coordinator will aim to facilitate a minimum of two dedicated meetings a year at Hafal's Head Office where members of the Panel can progress its agenda; where possible a facility for participation by video-conference will be provided from a location in North Wales.

In addition the HELP Coordinator will aim to facilitate a meeting point for Panel members at events for Hafal members: this might provide two or three further opportunities to meet each year.

These arrangements will underpin operation of the Panel but the aim will be to engage some Panel members more widely in training, events, public speaking, etc as suggested in the role described above.