

**Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) Member**

**Role Description**

**Background to the Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network**

The [Violence, Abuse and Mental Health Network](http://www.vamhn.co.uk) (VAMHN) is a research network funded by UK Research and Innovation. VAMHN is led by researchers from King’s College London and involves a wide range of people from many disciplines and settings. VAMHN aims to improve the mental health of children and adults of all ages by addressing the violence and abuse that can cause mental health problems.

The network brings together experts (including people with lived experience of violence and abuse) who share different ways of thinking about violence, abuse and mental health, and gives small amounts of funding for new research. VAMHN will run until at least March 2024, (and hopefully beyond!)

**About the VAMHN Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG)**

The LEAG contributes to developing the overall work of VAMHN, as well as leading its own activities. The group is a working group, based on co-production principles. Example of work group members have taken part in, include scoring grant applications, developing research, writing commentaries for peer-reviewed journals, writing articles for our website, and acting as advisors to the academics involved in the VAMHN. A Lived Experience Involvement Coordinator (Lisa Ward) with relevant lived experience facilitates the LEAG. Additional administrative support is provided by the VAMHN Co-ordinator.

**Involvement of people with lived experience**

The work of the VAMHN is informed by the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), which is made up of people with lived experience of violence and/or abuse. Though their experiences differ, all group members identify have personal lived experience of any form of violence, abuse or trauma in child or adulthood, and an interest in research.

LEAG members draw on their personal experiences, without being expected to share or provide any detail of those experiences if they don’t want to.

VAMHN needs members who bring a variety of perspectives and voices, we are looking for group members from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Group members will only be asked to give their personal opinions as individuals. VAMHN will also consult lived experience groups and organisations locally and nationally.

For the next 12 months, the VAMHN will have a focus on [coercive control](https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/coercive-control/), and we are particularly keen to recruit people with this experience.

Meetings are usually online via Zoom or if in-person then at King’s College London premises.

**Membership and activities of LEAG**

The LEAG is a group of individuals, who all bring different lived experience perspectives. Examples of the types of work that the LEAG engages with includes and future opportunities we hope to explore:

* Ensuring that lived experience priorities for research inform any research that we fund
* Reading through applications for research funding in any funding competitions that we run
* Ensuring that the LEAG, and wider Network, work to the principles of the Charter for Engaging Survivors (<https://survivorsvoices.org/charter/>) and NSUN’s 4Pi (<https://www.nsun.org.uk/faqs/4pi-national-involvement-standards>).
* Monitoring and advising on lived experience participation for our network activities and events, including how these are designed and delivered
* Giving lived experience-centred advice on specific issues that may arise in VAMHN activities and events
* Providing commentaries on VAMHN activities and events
* Contributing lived experience perspectives to VAMHN reports, papers and blogs
* Providing a link between VAMHN and external mental health and lived experience-led organisations, with a clear understanding of the limits to confidentiality
* Becoming involved in research applications arising from our network, including as co-applicants and advisory group leads/members
* Leading activities, such as a webinars and network meeting

**Responsibilities of Group members**

Participants will be asked to:

* Attend LEAG meetings (approx once every 2-3 months, normally online for 2 hours)
* Review documents relating to VAMHN work by email between meetings
* Attend group meetings and contribute to the discussions which guide the group’s decisions and recommendations
* Sign up and work to a set of negotiated and agreed group principles and Terms of Reference
* Read relevant paperwork in preparation for meetings
* Comment on and exchange ideas informally
* Attend in-house training or meetings to prepare for involvement in other tasks.

**Support to Group members**

Group members will be supported to feel confident in their role. The VAMHN team will:

* Keep jargon to a minimum throughout VAMHN work (and provide explanations or a glossary of technical terms in advance where necessary for group meetings)
* Provide administrative support, and send out VAMHN papers and documents by email or as paper copies, or in a form LEAG members prefer
* Circulate documents in advance of meetings, and build in time for members to read them and prepare for meetings
* Invite LEAG members to submit items for the agenda in advance of meetings
* Enable members to raise any concerns about their involvement in the group in a way which feels right for them
* Provide in-house training to members as required for specific group activities

VAMHN’s Lived Experience Involvement Coordinator will play an active role in supporting group members. Specific support needs may be discussed with the Lived Experience Involvement Coordinator.

**Payment and expenses**

LEAG membership is not an employed role, but we do offer payment for your time. Payment for involvement as a member of the group will be offered at the rate of £25 per hour - you do not have to accept this if you don’t wish to. Additional preparation time will be included in payments for attendance at meetings. If meetings begin in person, reasonable travel and any other expenses will be reimbursed in addition to payments, subject to submission of relevant receipts. Please contact us at vamhn@kcl.ac.uk for further information.

The exact amount of involvement offered to members cannot be guaranteed.

**Attendance and termination**

LEAG members may withdraw from the role at any time.

We understand that you may be unable to attend all meetings, but regular attendance is encouraged. Members are asked to let us know if they cannot attend a meeting.

**Other information**

If you require support to complete your application or have access needs to consider regarding being able to attend LEAG meetings, please contact the Lived Experience Involvement Coordinator to discuss your requirements or ask for further information. This will not affect your application.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| --- |
| We are looking for people who… E = essential D = desirable |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| * Have personal experience of violence/abuse and mental distress - especially an experience of coercive control
 | E |
| * Have knowledge and experience of mental health services
 | E |
| * Are able to listen to others and to express views constructively
 | E |
| * Are able to work respectfully and effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences
 | E |
| * Have systems in place to support their own wellbeing
 | E |
| * Have good organisational and time-management skills
 | E |
| * Are good communicators
 | E |
| * Are willing to work within the group principles
 | E |
| * Are able to communicate by email
 | D |
| * Have experience of involvement in a research or policy advisory group
 | D |

**HOW TO APPLY**

The process to join the LEAG is a short application form (which can be written, video, or voice responses) and an informal chat with the LEAG Coordinator and an existing LEAG member. These conversations can be via telephone or Zoom, depending on your preference, and will be held in early June**.**

The application form is available here: <https://www.vamhn.co.uk/leag-recruitment.html>

Please send your completed application form to: lisa.1.ward@kcl.ac.uk

The application period **closes** **at 23:59 on Sunday 24th May 2023**. We will then draw up a shortlist and invite selected applicants for an informal telephone discussion, which would be scheduled in early June 2023.

For any questions, discussions about access requirements, a chat about the role or more information about applying, please contact the VAMHN Lived Experience Coordinator (Lisa Ward) onlisa.1.ward@kcl.ac.uk. If you want to speak to an existing group member ahead of applying, we are happy to facilitate this.