



Lived Experience Advocate Service Diverse Voices Policy

Policy statement

Lived Experience Advocates (LEAs) are vitally important to understanding the experiences of managing the social and economic challenges associated with substance use and utilising treatment services.

Training for new Lived Experience Advocates (LEAs) includes information on the policies and processes that LEAs need to be aware of when carrying out their role. LEAs are encouraged to contact the Lived Experience Advocate Service Coordinator (LEASC) with any questions about these policies or processes and to stay updated on policy and/or process changes.

Further information on lived experience participation can be found in the ATDC's Lived Experience Advocate Induction Pack.

This Policy is aligned with the [Lived Experience and Public Participation Statement of Intent](#) endorsed by the ATDC board, and specifically with the commitment that: "We will periodically seek out new contributors and collaborators, to ensure ongoing diversity of engagement and perspectives".

This Policy provides guidance on how the ATDC's Lived Experience Advocate Service (LEAS) promotes diverse lived experience voices when assigning volunteer LEA roles.

Acronyms

| Acronym | Definition |
|---------|---|
| ABN | Australian Business Number |
| ACNC | Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission |
| ATDC | Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council |
| ATO | Australian Tax Office |
| ATOD | Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drugs |
| EOI | Expression of Interest |
| LEA | Lived Experience Advocate (volunteer) |
| LEAS | Lived Experience Advocate Service (currently managed by the ATDC) |
| LEASC | Lived Experience Advocate Service Coordinator |

What is the LEAS?

The LEAS gives people who have a lived experience of alcohol and other drug use the chance to have a say in how alcohol and other drug services are delivered. It also gives service providers, the media and other community and government groups the chance to draw on the expertise of people with lived experience.



Types of roles

Continuous roles

Continuous roles are roles that are ongoing with no specific end date. These roles tend to be on advisory groups, executive or clinical groups and committees, or other structured feedback and management bodies that meet regularly to discuss contemporary and/or operational issues.

Example

The Clinical Services Group meeting at the Alcohol & Drug Services requests a Lived Experience Advocate to attend this regular, ongoing, monthly senior management meeting.

Single (one-off) engagements

LEAs are often invited to volunteer in a role for a specific event, such as being part of an interview panel, speaking at a conference, or providing feedback on a specific resource or policy. These tend to be one-off roles for events that don't take place on a regular basis.

Example

The Tasmanian Health Services request an LEA to form part of an interview panel for a new drug and alcohol worker.

An LEA is invited by the ATDC to speak about their experiences of treatment and recovery at the International Overdose Awareness Day event.

Project roles

These roles often have a start and end date. Often, requesting services will ask an LEA to provide input by being part of a working group or steering committee that exists to provide a defined output (deliverable) by a specific date. These roles are often linked to a project.

Example

An LEA is asked to sit on the new Naloxone Advisory Group, which is tasked with consulting with the community and delivering advice to the Premier on how to best promote and distribute the use of Naloxone.

How are LEAs selected?

The ATDC is keen to ensure that LEAs have meaningful and appropriate volunteer opportunities and that they are given the training, information and resources they need to carry out these roles. The ATDC is also obligated to make all efforts to meet the goals of the requesting service. There are also practical considerations when assigning a role, such as LEA location and availability. The selection process is managed by the Lived Experience Advocate Service Coordinator (LEASC).



The LEASC will assign roles based on the following key objectives:

1. Sharing roles fairly and ensuring that a diverse range of voices and experience are represented
2. Building individual LEA and LEAS capacity
3. Meeting the needs and objectives of the requesting service
4. Using limited resources efficiently

Factors that influence role selection may also include:

- the needs of the requesting service
- the skills and expertise of the LEA
- the specific lived or living experience relevant to the role
- ensuring fair and equal distribution of roles where possible
- location of the role
- availability of the LEA

Some roles may be assigned by the LEASC directly, whereas others may be assigned through an EOI process.

Time in roles

The LEAS is committed to providing opportunities for the diverse voices of lived experience to be heard. The ATOD experience covers a very wide range of experience, including but not limited to substance type, level of use, current or historic use, recovery and treatment experience, and co-occurring conditions. Therefore, the LEAS must be careful to ensure that the full diversity of experience is represented and to avoid any bias in allocating roles.

To help increase diversity and fairness, a time limit may be placed on how long an LEA can be in a continuous or long-term role. This creates an opportunity for a new LEA to be assigned to the role and to present a different perspective on issues.

The following table provides guidance on the expected time for an LEA to be in a role.

| Frequency of meetings | LEA time in role |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Weekly | 4-months* |
| Fortnightly (or twice per month) | 6-months* |
| Monthly | 12 months |
| Bi-monthly (every two months) | 24 months |
| Quarterly | 24 months |

**Can be negotiated with requesting service based on the length of the project or other impacting factors*

At the conclusion of these timeframes, the LEA leaving the role may assist in bringing a new LEA into the role, with support from the LEASC and the requesting service.

Related policies

The ATDC has established numerous policies to direct its staff and volunteers. For any activities related to LEAS promotion of diverse lived experience voices when assigning volunteer LEA roles, please refer to this policy. However, it's crucial to understand that the LEAS policies do not supersede ATDC operational policies. In case of any discrepancies or ambiguities within the LEAS policy suite, the ATDC operational policies should be the primary reference for guidance. ATDC operational policies can be supplied upon request.



Disclaimer

This document is not to be considered financial advice. All volunteers are encouraged to obtain independent financial advice before volunteering for any activities through the LEAS.

Version

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