

Your volunteering, your way

HOPE (Helping other participate and engage) is a partnership project between Age Cymru, Age Cymru local partners and Age Connects Wales partners throughout Wales. HOPE delivers independent advocacy support to older people (50+) and their carers. HOPE volunteers also help guide the project to make sure the service we provide is right for the people we support.

You'll all have different reasons and motivations for joining our volunteering team. These are some of the benefits of being an Independent Volunteer Advocate and what the value-added extras look like, so you get the most from volunteering with us.



Training

HOPE volunteer training is designed specifically for and with volunteers to develop your advocacy knowledge and skills to utilise your professional and personal experiences. It explores all aspects of the Independent Volunteer Advocate role and provides you with the knowledge you'll need to succeed.

You'll learn about what advocacy is, the skills and tools you need to deliver it, setting boundaries, having positive advocacy conversations, what safeguarding is and what to do if you have concerns.

The training isn't just a one-off. There are ongoing opportunities to attend awareness sessions helping you develop, enhance your skills, and provide the best support to your clients.



Support

The HOPE team will support you as you embark on your advocacy role and help you with any questions or concerns you have.

We can pair you with an experienced volunteer advocate who'll support you at the start of your advocacy journey providing you with invaluable experience and support.

We hold regular get togethers for HOPE volunteers so you can share your experiences and find mutual support with other volunteers across Wales.

Rewards are available for volunteers to say thank you for the incredible support being provided. You'll get time credits for volunteering which unlock rewards like access to tourist attractions and shopping vouchers.



Skills

You'll develop advocacy relationships using active listening and questioning skills to understand the desired outcomes and ambitions of the person you're supporting.

You'll help older people and carers to fully explore their rights and options such as

- exploring what local services are available if they need them
- looking at how to overcome the challenges they are experiencing
- helping clients understand their rights, exploring these so that they can make the right choice for them.

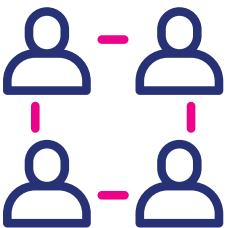
You'll support people from diverse communities with different aspirations, needs and experiences. You may speak on behalf of the older person or carer with other professionals. You'll use different communication styles to deal with a range of situations effectively as they arise.



Experience

If you're looking to become a paid professional advocate, change career to supporting or representing people, or wanting to give something back to your local community, being an Independent Volunteer Advocate will help you.

You can utilise the experiences you've gained to demonstrate your advocacy skills, your communication skills, and how you work in partnership to prospective employers. Whether you're evidencing juggling multiple priorities, building relationships, showcasing active listening skills or time management, this role provides you with a solid foundation of experience.



Community

Age Cymru values the contributions all volunteers make to the lives of older people across Wales. Volunteers contribute thousands of hours making older people's lives better every year.

You'll make connections with similar people volunteering to make a difference in someone's life. We hold volunteer events throughout the year enabling you to meet other volunteers and make new friends and contacts.

You'll feel more connected to your local community by supporting local older people, reconnecting and strengthening community ties, broadening support networks and being in contact with other like-minded people.



Feel-good factor

You'll see the difference you make to someone's life. Volunteers feel immense pride and satisfaction helping someone create an action plan and achieve their goals.

Advocacy builds confidence and empowers older people. Joining HOPE and utilising your skills in your spare time, you'll improve the lives of older people and carers you support in your communities.

The advocacy support you provide will be engaging, interesting and sometimes challenging as you help older people with a wide variety of issues and concerns to achieve their advocacy goals.

"It's a good way to ease yourself into delivering advocacy"

Sioned Thomas, Independent Volunteer Advocate

"This opportunity has enabled me to build my confidence and develop my skills. I would also say that this opportunity has enhanced my CV. Therefore, it has been a wonderful experience as a whole"

Ella Turner, Independent Volunteer Advocate

If you like what you've read and want to volunteer with us, please email advocacy@agecymru.org.uk or visit www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy to find out more about HOPE.

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