



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Confirmation of reading:

Platform for Life requires you to confirm you have read and understood the charity's Safeguarding Policy and will act in accordance with it. Please complete the online form available

[Safeguarding policy confirmation](#)

Version Control	Comments	Approval
V0.1draft	Initial proposal	
V1.0	1st approval	8.7.20
V2.0	Review date Reviewed and Approved by Board	8.7.21 12.10.21
V2.1	Safeguarding lead updated and approved by Professional Standards Committee	08.06.22
V3.0	Review date Reviewed and Approved by Board	4/10/2022
V4.0	Review date Reviewed and approved by Board	18/10/2023

SECTION 1: POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Platform for Life makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. We seek to serve the needs of children and vulnerable adults, promoting holistic development.
- 1.2 Platform for Life comes into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the delivery of its counselling services and general contact. In doing so the charity takes seriously the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults who come onto its premises or who are involved in its activities.
- 1.3 This policy seeks to ensure that Platform for Life undertakes its responsibilities regarding the protection of children and / or vulnerable adults and to respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies Platform for Life's expectations.

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Shelagh Hatton	07387 660143 Shelagh.hatton@platformforlife.org.uk
Nominated Trustees for Safeguarding	Lead Safeguarding Trustee: Carol Jones	07970 516376 carol_jones20@sky.com
Chair of Trustees	Sue Taylor	Suetaylor1@me.com
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Susie Sheasby	0151 356 6843

Local Authority Safeguarding Children in Education Officer	Susie Sheasby	0151 356 6843
Local Authority Legal Services Helpline	No name given.	0151 356 6843
Children's Social Care Integrated Access and Referral Team	8.30-5pm Mon-Thurs 8.30-4.30 Fri	Telephone: I-Art 0300 123 7047 Email: ART@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk Contact Name: Emergency Duty Team Telephone: (out of hours) on 01244 977277 4.30pm – 8.30am (Monday – Thursday) From 4pm (Friday) 24 hours weekends and bank holidays
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	No name given	www.cheshirewestlsb.org.uk 0151 356 6494
Police	Cheshire Police In an emergency For non-emergency but possible crime	0845 458 0000 999 101

There is no direct telephone number for the LADO as CWAC operate a duty LADO rota. Please the link to the Allegations Management (LADO) page of the SCP website.

[Allegations Management \(LADO\) - Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Partnership \(cheshirewestscp.co.uk\)](http://cheshirewestscp.co.uk)

Please find link to the SCP website where you will find the SCiE Team contact details, there are different contact depending on the area of CWaC.

[Contact SCiE - Cheshire West and Chester Safeguarding Children Partnership \(cheshirewestscp.co.uk\)](http://cheshirewestscp.co.uk)

2. Definitions

- 2.1 Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout Platform for Life to ensure the protection of children and / or vulnerable adults wherever possible. In contrast, child and adult protection is about responding to circumstances that arise.
- 2.2 Abuse is a selfish act of oppression and injustice, exploitation and manipulation of power by those in a position of authority. This can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender or culture.

2.3 It can take a number of forms, including the following:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or Emotional abuse
- Neglect or Omission to act
- Financial or material abuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Modern Slavery

Female Genital Mutilation

- Self Neglect
- Domestic Abuse
- Institutional Abuse
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Harassment
- Radicalisation
- Honour based violence

2.4 Definition of a child

A child is under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of a Child).

2.5 Definition of a vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may include a person who: Is elderly and frail; has a mental illness including dementia; Has a physical or sensory disability; Has a learning disability; Has a severe physical illness; Is a substance misuser; Is homeless.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 We all have a responsibility to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and to promote their welfare.
- 3.2 We all have a responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.
- 3.3 We all have a responsibility to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.
- 3.4 We should all:
 - be alert to potential indicators of abuse or neglect;
 - be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to children;
 - share and help to analyse information so that an assessment can be made of the individual's needs and circumstances;
 - contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the individual's welfare;
 - take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the individual against specific plans; and
 - work co-operatively with parents unless this is inconsistent with ensuring the individual's safety.

4. Additional Specific Responsibilities

- 4.1 Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Shelagh Hatton. The Designated Safeguarding Lead responsibilities are:
 - Promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
 - Ensuring we all have access to appropriate training and information.
 - Receiving concerns raised about safeguarding and responding to all seriously, swiftly and appropriately.
 - Keeping up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.
 - Developing and maintaining effective links with local agencies.

4.2 Our Lead Safeguarding Trustee is Carol Jones. The Safeguarding Trustees' responsibilities are:

- Supporting and liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in his/her responsibilities
- Ensure this policy is monitored and reviewed.
- Ensuring that this policy can be effectively implemented and that there are available resources to do so.

5. Implementation Stages

5.1 Safe Recruitment

Platform for Life ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:

- Providing a safeguarding statement in recruitment adverts or application details to the effect that "recruitment is done in line with safe recruitment practices".
- Job descriptions for all roles involving contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will contain reference to safeguarding responsibilities.
- Shortlisting is based on formal application processes.
- interviews are conducted in accordance with equal opportunity principles and interview questions are based on the relevant job description and person specification.
- DBS checks will be conducted for all staff (paid or unpaid). If an individual has an acceptable DBS check in place on recruitment, which is dated within three years of the recruitment date, that DBS check will be deemed acceptable.
- No formal job offers are made until after checks for suitability are completed (including DBS and 2 references).

5.3 Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

We commit resources to providing DBS checks on staff (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and/or vulnerable adults; this includes our management and administrative staff.

- We provide DBS checks on all our Trustees.
- Employed staff are required to register onto the online DBS renewal system following receipt of a DBS check. We request that our sessional staff do the same.
- Where staff are not yet enrolled on the online DBS renewal system, we commit to a three-year rolling programme of re-checking DBS for all staff (paid or unpaid).

6. Communications, Training and Support

6.1 Platform for Life commits resources for induction, training counsellors (paid or unpaid), effective communications and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding.

6.2 Induction will include:

- Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy and confirmation of understanding
- Discussion of other relevant policies
- Ensuring familiarity with reporting processes, the roles of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and who acts in their absence.
- Initial safeguarding training to level 2 or above as deemed appropriate (to include safe working practices, safe recruitment, alert guide for adult safeguarding and understanding child protection). If an individual has the appropriate level of safeguarding training in place on recruitment, there will be no need for further safeguarding training to be provided.

6.3 Training will ensure that everyone will:

- have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level;
- be kept informed of relevant changes in legislation as and when they arise; and
- will be provided with the Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis as a refresher.

6.4 Commitment to the following communication methods will ensure effective communication of safeguarding issues and practice:

- Provision of clear and effective reporting procedure which encourages reporting concerns.
- Team meetings – including an annual review of all safeguarding as a priority agenda item with lessons learned formally recorded
- Board meetings
- One to one meetings (formal or informal)
- Encouraging open discussion to identify barriers to reporting so that they can be addressed.
- Inclusion of safeguarding as a discussion prompt during supervision meetings/appraisals to encourage reflection.
- Regular reminders to staff about policies and procedures.

6.5 We recognise that involvement in situations where there is risk or actual harm can be stressful for staff concerned. The mechanisms in place to support staff include:

- Debriefing support for staff (paid or unpaid) so that we can reflect on the issues that they have dealt with;
- Formal paid internal supervision;
- External supervision, the cost of which Platform for Life contributes;
- Seeking further support where appropriate (eg access to counselling).

7. Professional Boundaries

7.1 Professional boundaries are what define the limits of a relationship between a support worker and a client. They are a set of standards we agree to uphold that allows this

necessary and often close relationship to exist while ensuring the correct detachment is kept in place.

7.2 Platform for Life expects staff to protect the professional integrity of themselves and the charity.

7.3 Platform for Life expects counsellors to be members of the BACP or equivalent.

7.4 The following professional boundaries must be adhered to:

Platform for Life does not allow paid or unpaid staff to:

- Give gifts to or receive gifts from clients. However, gifts may be provided by the charity as part of a planned activity. Where a **small** gift of gratitude is offered by a client to their therapist, such as flowers or chocolates, the gift can be received if refusal would cause rejection or hurt to the client and consequently harm the therapeutic relationship. In any event these gifts must be declared to the Clinical Lead or CEO.
- Use abusive language towards service users
- Provide personal details to service users
- Take family members to a service user's home
- Sell or buy items to/from a service user
- Accept responsibility for any valuables on behalf of a service user.
- Accept money as a gift/ borrow money from a service user or lend money to a service user.
- Have a personal relationship with a third party related to or known to service users
- Have a personal relationship with a service user who is a current service user. This includes relationships through social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram. It is also prohibited to enter into a personal relationship with a person who has been a service user over the past 12 months.

7.5 If the professional boundaries and/or policies are breached this could result in disciplinary procedures or enactment of the allegation management procedures

8. Managing Information

8.1 Information will be gathered, recorded and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

8.2 We must all be aware that we have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The public interest in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

8.3 We must all be aware that we cannot promise service users or their families/ carers that we will keep secrets.

9. Reviewing and Monitoring of the Policy

9.1 This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually and when there are changes to any relevant legislation. This will include:

- checking telephone numbers, accuracy of personnel details;
- any updates required by a change in local or national policy/legislation;
- Reviewing the reporting procedure.

9.2 This policy will be monitored annually to include:

- Checking DBS checks are in place and up to date;
- Recording safeguarding training;
- Checking the Safe Recruitment policy is in place;
- Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned;
- Checking all relevant policies are up to date;
- Checking the presence and action of a Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible for safeguarding is in post.

SECTION 2: PROCEDURE

10. Procedures – what to do if you have a concern about a child/ vulnerable adult

10.1 You may have concerns about a child/ vulnerable adult because of something you have seen or heard, or a child may choose to disclose something to you. If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Do not promise confidentiality, you have a duty to share this information and refer to Children’s Social Care Services.
- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said.
- Reassure the individual, but only as far as is honest, don’t make promises you may not be able to keep eg: ‘Everything will be alright now’, ‘You’ll never have to see that person again’.
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the individual refers to it. For example, you could say, ‘You’re not to blame’.
- Do not interrogate the individual; it is not your responsibility to investigate.
- Do not ask leading questions (eg: Did he touch your private parts?), ask open questions such as ‘Anything else to tell me?’
- Do not ask the individual to repeat the information for another member of staff.

- Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to.
- Take notes if possible or write up your conversation as soon as possible afterwards.
- Record the date, time, place any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the individual (do not paraphrase).
- Record statements and observable things rather than interpretations or assumptions.

10.2 If you are working within a school during term time you should immediately, or as soon as reasonably practicable, report your concern to the school's designated safeguarding officer who will take concerns forward with your assistance as required. Details of this need to be immediately reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, logged and retained.

10.3 If you are working within a medical center you should immediately, or as soon as reasonably practicable, report your concern to the Practice Manager who will take concerns forward with your assistance as required. Details of this need to be immediately reported to our Designated Safeguarding Lead, logged and retained.

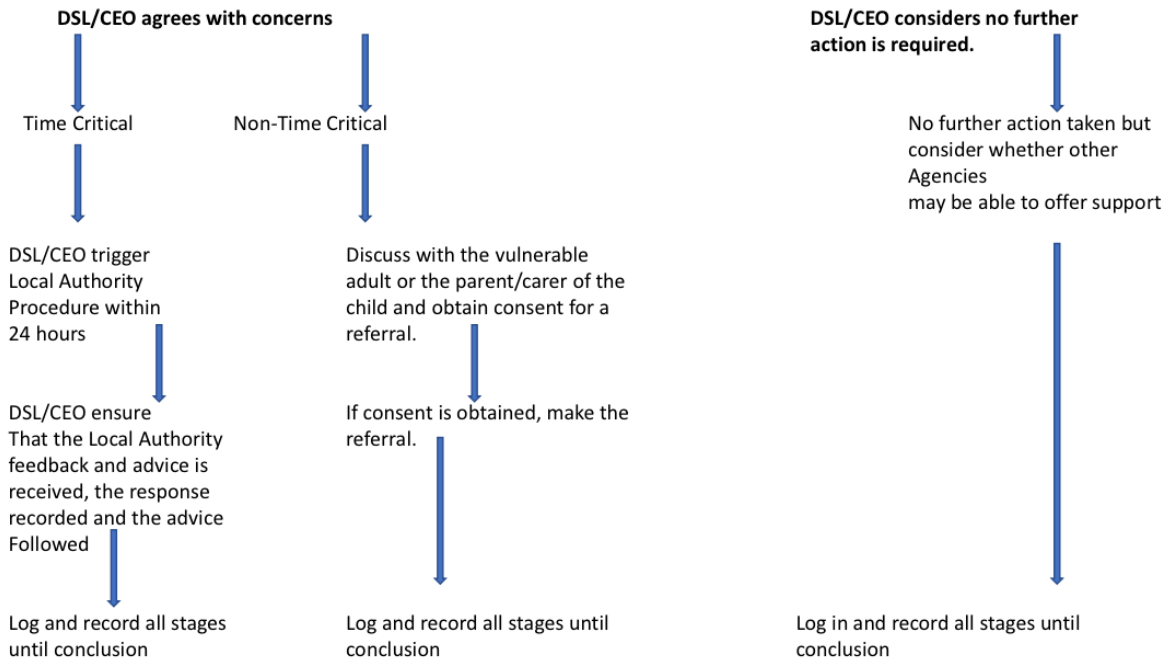
10.4 Subject to clauses 10.2 and 10.3 above, whatever the nature of your concerns, the process outlined below details stages involved in raising and reporting safeguarding concerns at Platform for Life:

If you have concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult's welfare:

Communicate concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if he/she is unavailable, to the CEO. If the DSL and CEO are both unavailable, contact the Lead Safeguarding trustee.

Communication should be made verbally where possible. Where email is used only client initials and numerical identification should be used.

Safeguarding Procedure flowchart



11. Allegations Management

11.1 We recognise our duty to report concerns or allegations against its staff (paid or unpaid) within the charity or by a professional from another organisation.

11.2 The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:

- Any member of staff (paid or unpaid) from Platform for Life is required to report any concerns in the first instance and within one working day to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. A written record of the concern will be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Contact the Local Authority for Advice.
- Follow the advice provided by the Local Authority.