

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

England & Wales · Charity number 1176429

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	10729008
Registered	2017-12-21
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre 14 The Parade Blacon Chester CH1 5HN
Phone	07752 219806
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Website	www.platformforlife.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO ENABLE THE TREATMENT AND CARE OF PARENTS, PARENTS-TO-BE AND CARERS WHO EXPERIENCE INDIVIDUAL, SOCIETAL, ECONOMIC OR RELATIONSHIP PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS BY THE PROVISION OF COUNSELLING TO ENABLE THEM TO PROVIDE SAFE, SECURE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN. TO ENABLE THE TREATMENT AND CARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE IN FAMILIES WHERE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESSES COULD BE IMPAIRING THEIR NORMAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT BY THE PROVISION OF PLAY THERAPY AND COUNSELLING.

Activities: We specialise in counselling (psychotherapy) and other support to adults and children who are experiencing multiple challenges in their lives and who have difficulty accessing other counselling services. We work with a) parents, parents-to-be and carers, families and parent-child relationships, couples and children. We work from the heart of deprived neighbourhoods in the Chester area.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Cheshire West & Chester

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£376,606	£456,381	-	-
2024-03-31	£386,218	£372,046	-	-
2023-03-31	£314,930	£316,687	-	-
2022-03-31	£215,326	£246,351	-	-
2021-03-31	£240,039	£176,135	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Alan Sieber		2022-10-04
Andrew Kerr		2021-01-20
Ann Gill		2020-11-04
Carol Jones		2021-10-12
Ceri George		2025-05-20
Emma Price		2020-11-04
Ian Minshall		2024-07-10
Jeannie France - Hayhurst		2025-11-11
Josephine Hinnigan		2022-05-18
Katherine Ferdenzi		2024-07-10
Susan Taylor		2021-05-19
susan Vonleduber		2025-11-11

Accounts

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025



PLATFORM FOR LIFE

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mr G Hartley Ms EL Price Ms C Jones Mrs S Taylor Ms AV Gill Mr A Kerr Mrs JM Hinnigan Mr A Sieber Mr I Minshall Mrs K Ferdenzi Ms CL George	(Appointed 10 July 2024) (Appointed 10 July 2024) (Appointed 20 May 2025)
Patron	David Briggs MBR KStJ	
Senior management	Shelagh Hatton Debbie Thomas	Clinical Director Operations Director
Charity number	1176429	
Company number	10729008	
Registered office	Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre The Parade Blacon Chester CH1 5HN	
Independent examiner	Mr R Smith FCA c/o UHY Hacker Young 4th Floor Merchants House Crook Street Chester CH1 2BE	

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PLATFORM FOR LIFE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

The charitable objectives of Platform for Life agreed with the Charity Commission are:

1. To enable the treatment and care of parents, parents-to-be and carers who experience individual, societal, economic or relationship psychological stress by the provision of counselling to enable them to provide safe, secure and nurturing environments for their children.
2. To enable the treatment and care of children and young people who are in families where psychological stress could be impairing their normal emotional development by the provision of play therapy and counselling.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the strategy for the year.

Working in communities with high levels of deprivation the charity provides therapy, including counselling and family support, that is:

- Local and community-based - working where clients live so there are no transport problems for them to address or children to pull out of school.
- Flexible - working around clients and not restricting the number of sessions they can access or penalising them if they do not attend every session. The charity understands the challenges clients face and tries to be as flexible as possible to their needs and situation at any given time.
- Accessible - our charity is local, quick to respond and easy to access. We work with local schools so that children have direct access without relying on others to take them to their appointments. Equally we offer adults appointments in various venues across our localities which are within walking distance for easy access.
- Tailored to the needs of each client - providing support for as long as they require it rather than a fixed number of sessions as offered by mainstream mental health services.
- Preventative - with an aim of breaking the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next.
- Family focused - recognising that parental trauma can have a profound effect on children. This means the charity may sometimes work with a parent(s), child or both to make a difference for the family.
- Free of charge to clients.

There's an inextricable link between poverty and poor mental health. Those living in poverty are at significantly higher risk of experiencing mental health issues and much less likely to be able to access suitable support to address those issues. Many of the adults, children and young people we support have suffered significant traumas, abuse and/or other adversities, often in childhood, which shape their life choices and have a detrimental effect on their mental wellbeing. Without support this can leave people feeling trapped and disadvantaged throughout their life. All too often it becomes a negative cycle that's repeated through the next generation, sentencing their children to a life of difficulties and lost opportunities.

We work in areas of Chester that fall within the bottom 10% of the government produced Index of Multiple Deprivation. The current global cost of living crisis has heaped further pressure on families and intensified matters for those already living in poverty and struggling with their mental health.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Those who are most in need of help often find themselves unable to access suitable and timely support due to there being too many barriers put in their way. These include restricted referral routes, high thresholds for access, extremely long wait times to be seen, inflexible session times, lack of childcare, costs of transport and an overall lack of trust in statutory services. The clients Platform for Life works with often feel invisible and forgotten in society and the difficulties they have accessing help to address mental health issues only serves to reinforce this.

Platform for Life exists to fill this gap. We work to remove the barriers and improve access to mental health support for those who would otherwise go un-helped. We support those who cannot afford to pay for private therapy when mainstream services are unavailable or difficult to access. We also offer practical support alongside our counselling services. In addition, we offer longer-term support to help clients to achieve long term healing rather than just short-term symptom reduction. Our vision is to stop the cycle of poor mental health prevalent in disadvantaged communities, preventing it being passed from one generation to the next.

Demand for the charity's service continues to be strong. From April 2019 – March 2020 we received 169 referrals and provided 1,375 sessions. Five years later, from April 2024 – March 2025, we received 244 referrals and provided 4,411 sessions, representing an increase in referrals of 44% and an increase in sessions of 220%. In recent years, our referrals have become increasingly complex. There are a variety of reasons for the increase in referrals which include higher thresholds for other services, and increased pressures on NHS Mental Health Services resulting in longer waiting times or being discharged after fewer sessions. The impact of this is that we are seeing more complex cases, which would historically have gone to NHS Mental Health Services. Increasingly our referrals may include neurodiversity, those with undiagnosed ADHD/ASD, an increase in SEND needs and domestic abuse further exacerbated by cost of living pressures. These complexities are reflected in the increase of sessions required and provided. There is an acute shortage of suitable mental health services available to people, particularly those on low incomes who cannot afford to pay for private therapy and a recognised "mental health crisis" within our schools.

Without Platform for Life many in the highest need areas of Chester would go without much needed support. Platform for Life doesn't restrict the number of sessions a client can access (many services restrict access to 6-8 sessions) and, due to the increased levels of complexity that clients are presenting with, many require a much longer therapeutic intervention to feel well again. Despite the charity increasing the number of counselling sessions it offered over the year by 28% to 4,096 (excluding family support sessions), the level of client complexity has undoubtedly impacted on wait times, which rose to an average of 15 weeks.

39% of all referrals received in the financial year were self-referrals for adults and young people and parent referrals for a child and young person. Other key referral routes included schools (29%), primary care (13%) and local authority (including Social Services) (8%).

A key tenet of Platform for Life's service is accessibility, and the growth of self and parent referrals is a testament to this approach. At a time when NHS services are under severe strain and getting a GP appointment can be challenging, providing alternate referral routes including via self-referral, helps to ensure clients can access the help they need when they need it.

Being based in the heart of the communities we serve has helped us forge a relationship of trust with clients. We work hard to ensure every client who accesses our service feels visible, valued and cared for and we always look for additional ways in which we can meet their individual needs.

***"Absolutely would recommend this service to anybody. Feeling so much more confident and mentally healthier and happier."* Adult client**

***"This helped me be a better version of myself & to see myself in a better way."* Young Person**

***"I have enjoyed coming here and all my worries have been solved"* Child**

Our Team

We have a team of highly qualified counsellors, art and play therapists with experience of working successfully with clients with multiple challenges. Most of our clients have suffered significant traumas, abuse and other adversities, so we believe it is important that therapists have the appropriate level of qualifications and experience to work with this level of complexity. Our team is managed by a Clinical Director with over 25 years' experience and a deep understanding of our client needs.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

We provide placement opportunities for a small number (usually 2) of students at any one time. Students are closely supervised by either the Clinical Director or Counselling Lead, and their client load is assessed as appropriate to their level of experience. This is critical for both client and student. We follow British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) guidelines on managing placements to ensure our students have an excellent training experience which is safe, conducted ethically and focuses on sound practice without using students as an additional resource that replaces established professional roles.

As well as offering clients access to therapeutic services, we also provide practical support through our Family Support Worker. Their role is to help reduce some of the other stressors our clients face and ensure they can effectively engage with therapy. They work with clients on a 1-2-1 basis to help them access support to address practical needs and, where necessary, act as an advocate on their behalf. They also facilitate warm introductions for clients who sometimes lack the confidence to contact local agencies independently.

In the last year, our Family Support Worker has helped 47 clients and offered 315 support sessions. Their support has included introducing clients to local domestic abuse support groups and recovery programmes, helping clients attend social groups for the first time, making referrals to other local services, helping clients make hospital appointments and advocating for them in meetings with school and in team around family discussions. Many clients have received help to negotiate their finances and benefit applications, which causes much distress and confusion.

Whilst striving to provide an excellent level of support for all clients, we aim to do the same as an employer. We are an accredited Living Wage Employer and believe in paying our staff fairly for the work they do. We offer our team flexible working options and foster a compassionate approach to leadership with the whole team receiving trauma informed training.

Connections with groups working locally

Our clients often have multiple needs, and we have well established links with several other local charities and agencies that provide complementary services designed to support clients in the local communities where we work. These include local food banks and food community stores, KidsBank which provides clothes, toys and equipment for babies and children, Koala Northwest offering practical family support, Penny Smart debt advice service and Citizen's Advice Community Connectors. More recently we have formed links with Rage Fitness, a local community gym, offering all round health and wellbeing support in our local community. We have developed reciprocal signposting and referral processes, and this ensures clients can receive more holistic support.

We are active members of the Cheshire West Mental Health Alliance and the Children and Young People's Alliance supporting their recent conference and networking events. Both Alliances are facilitated by Cheshire West Voluntary Action. Now with over 120 members, the Alliance provides a forum for networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration amongst members. Through membership of this Alliance, we were awarded a small grant to undertake group work with a small number of clients who met weekly to establish goals for change using art therapy as a medium of expression. We ran three weekly groups for women across Blacon and Lache, each lasting for a period of eight weeks. The creative aspect used art therapy, not an art lesson, so no skill or knowledge of art was needed, just a willingness to have a go. Each week had a theme that helped participants to gain a greater understanding of self, gain confidence and identify goals for the future.

"I would tell anyone to do this group. I didn't really know what to expect, but thinking differently about things, my life, has helped me want to make changes." Adult client

"I have loved all the sessions and felt it was something for me. I've started looking at my home and thinking I want to make this mine, my bedroom, my house. I haven't thought like this in years." Adult client

This year our Family Support Worker has established a weekly drop-in Wellbeing Group which has a healthy membership and means that clients are never more than one week away from accessing mental health support. The drop-in encourages peer to peer support and serves as a valuable resource for people on our counselling waiting list and those who have completed counselling and want to make meaningful connections to reduce social isolation.

"I like having somewhere to socialise every week, have a natter and a brew. I really enjoy the arts and crafts too." Adult client

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

"I find it helpful to have the drop-in as a consistent part of my routine. It helps me to engage with other people, I feel connected and accepted. It is somewhere I can be myself with people I can trust, as well as seek support and advice if I need it." Adult client

We also have relationships with specific Local Authority departments such as Social Services, Education Access and Domestic Violence support teams and receive referrals from these, alongside the other well established referral routes from schools, GPs, health visitors, local charities etc. We also engage with specific roles within the Local Authority such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) as approximately 44% of clients who accessed our service in 2024 experienced domestic violence.

As well as formal referring relationships to and from local agencies, we have also developed relationships with Sanctuary Housing (local social housing provider), ward councillors, community forums and local groups. They know that they can signpost clients or make referrals on their behalf into our service and alongside direct client input, help inform our understanding of local issues and how we develop our service.

Achievements and performance

Key achievements 2024-25

The following provides a summary of key achievements over the past financial year:

- 318 clients actively engaged with Platform for Life's service. Whilst the number of clients seen did not significantly increase over the previous year, the average number of sessions each client accessed grew to 13 as more clients required a longer intervention because of complexities they presented with.
- Offered 4,096 therapy sessions, an increase of 28% on the previous year.
- Maintained a high client attendance rate of 76%. Given the challenges many clients face, this level of engagement in therapy is extremely positive.
- 47 clients actively worked with Platform for Life's Family Support Worker, who offered 315 Family Support sessions throughout the year.
- Launched a new website that is more user friendly and easy to navigate. Our referral system went online and is accessible via the website so that anyone can easily refer themselves. We will continue to develop the website over the next year to include more resources and to promote our fundraising efforts.
- Strengthened our social media strategy and have an increased presence on several platforms with good local interaction. A local business has responded to our social media appeals for support and has adopted us as their charity of the year. We also were approached by several individuals who went on to run at marathons/similar events or made other offers of fundraising support having seen our appeals.
- Strengthened our Cheshire wide profile by being active members of the local mental health alliance, and the children and young people's mental health alliance.
- Fostered strong relationships with local statutory services through the Starting Well teams (NHS), the Domestic Abuse prevention service (Local Authority), local social work teams and GP/Social Prescribing teams.
- Raised our profile in Chester by being selected to be the Sheriff of Chester's Charity, and we were invited to the Lord Mayor's breakfast for International Women's Day, and the High Sheriff's dinner, both events celebrating our contribution to the work of the city.
- Received a Highly Commended Award from Cheshire Community Foundation for our work with the Reframe project, supporting families surviving domestic abuse.
- Provided a weekly well-being drop in group in Blacon and introduced a second group in Lache which have developed as a popular and valuable community-based resource, consistently well attended and lots of positive engagement.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

- Collaborated with a project called 'Don't tell me to calm down' - Partnership with The Agency – a project giving young people in Lache agency to make a mark on their community, with support and financial investment to create lasting positive change and develop skills. We helped support a Lache Community Project for adult women to explore their anger freely. Over three weekends a pop-up rage room became the focus of anger, expression and learning, followed by a workshop to turn destroyed material from the 'rage' into a mosaic.
- Secured funding to develop a program of work to support teachers and pastoral staff with bereavement, grief and loss. Alongside support for bereaved children, we ran workshops for staff and provided resources and guidance for learning mentors. Individual support for parents and caregivers, who are managing grief within the family, was also made available.
- Collaborated with Koala North West, Capa First Response & Power 2 to form the Thriving Families project, combining expertise and resources to deliver targeted holistic support to families; prioritising families who have a child in the 11-16 age bracket and focusing on child to parent aggression. By fostering early intervention and tailored support our collective goal is to build family resilience, reduce the need for statutory intervention, and empower families to overcome challenges and thrive independently within their communities.
- Organised a variety of events for a Christmas Fundraising Marathon which successfully raised over £8,100.

Impact of the Charity's work

We capture a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of our service on clients at an individual, family and sometimes community level. Changes are individual to each client and, however big or small, we celebrate them all.

We know that positive changes to a person's mental health can have significant benefit for the rest of their family, meaning the impact of our service on people's lives can be further amplified 3-4 times.

Outcomes

We use an online system, Lamplight, to collect and report client outcome data in terms of number of referrals, number of sessions offered, attendance rate, client location etc.

Impacts

We currently use CORE Standardised Assessment Tool to measure risk and wellbeing of adult and young person clients at the beginning, middle and end of therapy. Data suggests that 100% of adults and 93% of young people recorded positive changes in their life by the end of their work with Platform for Life. At the beginning of the year we used the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) for children. This was completed by either a parent/carer or teacher and assesses before, middle and after therapy emotional health needs. We have found this more challenging to capture data from, as parents sometimes fail to return completed forms and pressures in school mean teachers don't have the time to complete their part of the assessment.

To address this issue from September 2024 we introduced a new evidence-based assessment tool, developed by Triangle Consulting Ltd, called 'Outcome Star'. This is a more holistic measurement tool which can empower the client in making changes or adapting to factors in their life. Children complete their 'My Star' themselves which strengthens the child voice in our evaluation process. It is our intention to introduce the 'Outcome Star' tool to adults and young people from mid-2025 and use one assessment tool for all client groups.

In addition, through our end of counselling feedback form, Platform for Life also asks adult and young person clients to rank how they feel and capture changes they have noticed since having therapy. A simplified version of this form which is more pictorial is used with children. The following table provides a selection of feedback received from adults, young people and primary school aged children over the past year:

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Adults	Young People	Children
93% said <i>"I am more positive about my future"</i>	86% said <i>"it was easy to contact Platform for Life"</i>	93% said <i>"the counsellor helped me to understand my situation"</i>
87% recognised some of their relationships had improved since having therapy	100% reported they were able to talk about their thoughts and feelings in the sessions	85% feel more able to cope
97% said <i>"the sessions gave me a greater understanding of myself and my situation"</i>	93% said <i>"the sessions gave me a greater understanding of myself and my situation"</i>	96% noted they feel happier since having counselling
83% noted their health had improved since having therapy	100% said <i>"I am more positive about my future"</i>	86% said <i>"I feel more positive about myself"</i>
97% said <i>"I am more positive about myself"</i>	93% noticed positive changes in their life since having counselling/ play or art therapy	89% said <i>"counselling helped me understand my thoughts and feelings"</i>
100% reported they were able to talk about their thoughts and feelings in the sessions	93% felt more able to cope	93% said <i>"I would tell my friends about counselling if they needed help"</i>

Capturing individual changes

We also share individual client testimonials, feedback and stories which capture their journey, including any changes to how they feel about themselves and what they are now able to do which might previously have been difficult or impossible.

Examples of client feedback

"I believe X has really helped me find myself. Ever since I came here day by day has got better. Thank you, X." Child

"I've noticed myself more outgoing and more fun and talking" Young Person

"When I started coming for therapy I was in a dark place & felt really mentally unwell. Leaving here today, I feel so different. Counselling has really helped me with my feelings around grief. My counsellor helped me work out what I was feeling & how to move forward with my feelings. I feel hopeful about the future." Adult client

Adam's Story

Adam (not his real name), a young parent, was struggling to cope working long hours trying to provide for his family. He felt his family life was falling apart and worried constantly about the volatile relationship with his partner and the impact this was having on their two children. Adam's partner was seeing a Platform for Life counsellor, and his son, who had recently been diagnosed with autism, was seeing one of our creative therapists. Adam felt he had nothing to lose and decided to self-refer for counselling.

Adam was anxious about being able to commit due to his work. We were able to be flexible and work around his rotas and this helped build trust. Adam spoke about the difficulties in his current relationship and lack of certainty in his approach to parenting. As the work progressed Adam shared how he had suffered abuse in his childhood and never had a positive role model to learn from. The only certainty was that he knew what type of parent he didn't want to be.

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Adam was a teenager when his son was born twelve years ago. He began to realise he'd not been able to acknowledge and grieve the loss of his childhood or the loss of a 'good parent.' Adam's traumatic childhood had both an emotional and physical effect on him. By working through his feelings and bodily responses, he could understand his nervous system and make links to his 'angry responses' and need to disengage at times. The awareness and understanding of how his past related to his present had a calming effect on Adam and consequently a positive effect on his relationship. Adam was able to separate his sense of self from his own abusive parents and with growing confidence began to accept he was a kind, loving and compassionate parent.

"Thank you, you saved my life." Feedback from Adam

Longer term impacts

The way in which Platform for Life works gives clients the time and space they need to process and heal from their traumas and experiences. We know from client feedback that for some, therapy is quite literally lifesaving. It also leads many clients to feel more empowered and able to make specific changes in their life. These include:-

- Strengthening or re-building relationships with family, friends and peers.
- Applying for work for the first time or after an absence.
- Pursuing opportunities to volunteer.
- Having the confidence to seek increased responsibility or promotion at work
- Making lifestyle changes, including taking up exercise and eating more healthily.
- Accessing school or college when this has previously been difficult or not possible at all.
- Making successful transitions from the nurturing environment of primary school to high school where more independence is required.
- Breaking free from abusive and negative relationships.
- Stopping destructive and risky behaviours, including self-harm.
- Pursuing new hobbies and interests.

Our commissioned research project, being undertaken by Dr Emma Price at the University of Chester, is aimed at identifying the wider social impacts of Platform for Life's work, evidencing that the benefits extend beyond the individual service user. The literature review has been completed this year and referrers to Platform for Life contacted to take part in interviews. Some interviews have already been conducted, and we will have a detailed analysis of the research for inclusion in next year's Trustees' Report.

Progress on priorities identified in last year's report

To reflect the speed of change and increased levels of uncertainty, the charity believes it needs to be agile and able to respond quickly to outside events. Rather than set long-term objectives, it was agreed that the charity should identify a series of projects that would enable it to move forward. The projects the charity agreed to focus on in the last financial year were as follows:-

- Growing and diversifying funding sources
- Trauma informed leadership
- Support more pockets of deprivation within our locality
- Sustainably broaden our mental health support
- Raise our profile and be recognised as a centre of excellence for the provision of mental health and wellbeing services
- Work collaboratively with like-minded organisations and individuals
- Increase our volunteering opportunities.

Growing and diversifying funding sources

In line with many other charities, we found the fundraising environment increasingly challenging over the course of the year. Given this background, we believe it represents a solid outcome for the charity to raise a broadly similar level of income (£376,606) compared to the previous year (£386,218). Of particular note, we have been successful over the past year in securing several multi-year funding arrangements (for example, the National Lottery and the Henry Smith Foundation) which provide the charity with much-needed core funding for a number of years in the future.

We had more limited success in terms of diversifying our funding sources. Notable progress in this area included the Christmas fundraising marathon, improving the ability of our website to take donations and continuing to build our relationships with local schools and businesses.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Trauma informed leadership

Progress has continued in this area with all staff adopting a trauma informed approach with clients and the therapy team has received more specialist training in trauma informed work through their Continuing Professional Development training. Leadership within the charity continues to promote self-care and resilience and this is regularly included in the team agenda.

Support more pockets of deprivation within our locality

We expanded our service into Kingsway and are slowly building our presence within that community. We hold regular individual counselling sessions in a room provided by Kingsway chapel in the centre of this community and in a local High School which serves pupils from the Kingsway catchment area, as well as maintaining an active presence in a local primary school.

We have worked in positive partnership with Bridge Foyer, a service offering accommodation to young people who would otherwise be homeless. This hostel is in a neighbouring ward of Chester and just on the outskirts of Blacon. We were successful in securing funding to provide counselling services at the hostel, which improves access to mental health support for extremely vulnerable young people aged 16 –25 years old.

Sustainably broaden our mental health support

As reported above, the Family Support Worker role has strengthened the range of services we can offer to clients. This year has seen increasing financial challenges for our clients, with the rising cost of living and energy expenses being a dominant source of worry. We have made referrals to foodbanks and KidsBank charity and helped people navigate the benefits system. Helping people manage debt and become financially stable has been an important part of the family support role this year.

A key part of our work has been helping clients who feel isolated and disconnected from their community to connect with others, focusing on empowerment and building self-esteem. This involved referring them to local community groups and our own well-being group. Whilst signposting can be effective, the Family Support Worker understands that supporting people 'through the front door' makes a huge difference as to whether they engage with the support on offer. Many have said, ***'I never would've come without your support,'*** and it's heartwarming to witness first-hand people overcoming barriers that have hindered their wellbeing for years.

Raise our profile and be recognised as a centre of excellence for the provision of mental health and wellbeing services.

Our Theory of Change model demonstrated its effectiveness in identifying that family support was a gap in our provision which we successfully addressed. Applying the model, we identified further aims this year that included developments around group work (specifically targeting women who have low confidence and to support goal setting) and to target adult men's health issues. Our creative well-being groups and the weekly drop-in extended our reach and allowed us to become even more embedded in our local communities. Our model is always evolving through continuous improvement and learning to ensure we adapt to new demands and remain focused on addressing the core problem we have identified and want to solve.

Work collaboratively with like-minded organisations and individuals

The Theory of Change model identified that men's health was an area of challenge for us and we also recognised that there has been a growth of support groups specifically for men moving into our locality. In the last 12 months we have therefore continued to offer individual sessions to our male clients, but also worked alongside other partnerships to support attendance at groups designed specifically for men. In Chester both Mentell and Andy's Man Shed have introduced weekly support groups, and a local Blacon organisation, Rage Fitness, has introduced sessions aimed at supporting physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Rather than introduce our own competing group, we have worked to promote these services with our male clients who would benefit from group support, whilst at the same time continuing to offer individual sessions for as long as needed. We hope to pursue active partnerships with Rage Fitness, and we are considering joint applications for funding to extend our reach further to young people and men in our community.

We continued to provide support for those experiencing or recovering from domestic abuse. This included connecting clients with organisations such as Tomorrow's Women, the Open Access Support Group facilitated by the Domestic Abuse Intervention and Prevention Service and referrals to the Gateway Programme run by Tools4Change CIC.

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Our Thriving Families collaboration with Koala North West, Capa First Response and Power 2 has also strengthened relationships between these like-minded organisations and expanded our work into another neighbouring locality with demonstratable pockets of deprivation, which was another aim outlined above.

Increase our volunteering opportunities

Unlike many counselling charities, Platform for Life does not make extensive use of volunteer therapists as a matter of policy. This is because the client needs are often complex and therapy is demanding and it's important that our therapists have relevant qualifications and experience to manage this.

However, we recognise the importance and value of volunteers across our work force and have successfully recruited and retained four volunteers who work regularly in support of our administrative roles and Family Support work. In addition, we have volunteers who step in to help at fundraising events such as bucket collections in supermarkets and football games as and when needed. We have also been encouraged by several community volunteers who have raised funds on our behalf through various events such as running a marathon or climbing a mountain.

Financial review

The trustees believe that the current financial position is satisfactory, with sufficient funds to continue to deliver the current levels of service.

Over the course of the financial year, net expenditure (£456,381) exceeded net income (£376,606). As a result, this deficit of £79,775 was funded by a reduction in our reserves, which stood at £105,850 at our financial year end. The charity's expenditure grew steadily throughout the first half of the financial year, reflecting increasing demand for our services and our plans to meet this demand. The increasingly difficult fund-raising environment caused a pause in our expansion plans and some consolidation was necessary to ensure our costs are better aligned to the income we expect to receive.

The charity continues to be very conscious of the need to ensure that resources are focused on the provision of services to our clients. In this context, support service costs amounted to 31% of total expenditure (28% last year). Although this is a slight increase, the Board believes Platform for Life compares favourably with similar charities.

During the course of the financial year, we saw a significant increase in the proportion of restricted grants, which amounted to 70% of income (31% in the prior year). This shift is a result of more new grants being restricted in nature and the completion of our multi-year funding grant with Westminster Foundation, which provided unrestricted funds. Of the remaining sources of funds, 19% of our income came from unrestricted grants and donations, 10% derived from the provision of counselling services and 1% was income from investments. As noted earlier in the report, we have been successful in securing a number of multi-year funding arrangements which provide a level of financial security for future years.

A number of the restricted grants include provisions for the coverage of core costs, which is very beneficial to the charity. The following table provides a summary of the restricted grants which the charity benefited from during the course of the financial year:

Name of Funder	Brief Description of the Objectives of the Award
Cheshire Community Foundation - Bridge Foyer project	Supporting the charity to deliver multiple therapy sessions to young people resident at the Cheshire West & Chester Bridge Foyer accommodation centre
The Pixel Fund	This grant was complete as at 31 March 2025 and was used to provide counselling for children and young people struggling to attend school
Sanctuary Housing	Supporting the charity to deliver therapy sessions to clients based in Lache. This grant was complete as at the 31 March 2025
Cheshire Community Foundation - Reframe Project	As part of a wider project, known as "Reframe", to support local women and children affected by domestic violence. Includes a contribution towards core costs

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Steve Morgan Foundation	A multi-year award funding the activities of the Family Support Worker, who provides practical support to families with mental health challenges. This award includes a client fund to support activities such as travel to dentist appointments, etc
Nationwide Community Grant	This grant was complete as at 31 March 2025 and was used to provide counselling and support to women and children affected by domestic violence, with some contribution to the charity's core costs
Grocers Hall Charity	This grant was complete as at 31 March 2025 and was used to provide counselling for young people at risk of homelessness
Clarion Futures	Provides funding for part of the client coordinator/volunteer manager role, which ensures the efficient management of client referrals and the coordination of volunteer activity. This grant was complete as at 31 March 2025
Global's Make Some Noise	A multi-year award providing funding towards the costs of the therapy team, including a contribution to the charity's core costs
Cheshire West Mental Health Alliance Funding	This grant was complete as at 31 March 2025 and was used to run a programme of community-based wellbeing and creative expression groups for women
National Lottery - Reaching Communities Fund	A multi-year award providing funding towards the costs of the therapy team, including a contribution to the charity's core costs
National Lottery - Awards for All Fund	As part of the Reframe Domestic Violence project, providing individual one-to-one therapy support together with a number of group sessions and a contribution to wider operational and governance costs
Earl of Chester Fund	Supporting the delivery of a bereavement project to a number of local primary schools, including a contribution to the charity's core costs
Avenue Services	Supporting the delivery of counselling services to a number of schools in the Blacon area
Henry Smith Foundation	A multi-year award providing funding towards core costs incurred by the charity
James Tudor Foundation	Supporting the charity to deliver therapy sessions to school aged children, often in partnership with local schools
Cheshire Community Foundation - Thriving Families project	Working in partnership with Koala North-West, Capa First Response and Power 2, provides funding to deliver targeted holistic support to young people and their families.

The amount of income awarded but not yet recognised is £617,817, a significant increase on the position last year (see note 19).

The operation of our reserves policy has been unchanged over the year. It continues to require that our free reserves balance should be sufficient to undertake an orderly wind-up of the charity over a six-month period. This policy is a prudent approach and is designed to allow us to safely finish therapy without damaging our clients' mental health. We ended the year with free reserves of 90% of the estimated amount required to undertake an orderly wind-up over a six-month period however, with the new multi-year funding arrangements, the amounts of income received can be "lumpy" from quarter to quarter and significant income was received in the following quarter April to June 2025.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The majority of our financial assets comprise bank deposits. We have maintained a diversified cash position across a number of financial institutions in order to ensure our funds enjoy a better level of protection from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. We seek to earn a competitive amount of investment income, whilst still maintaining a very prudent approach to investments.

Our key financial objective for the year ahead reflects the challenging environment which we are operating in. In this context, we seek a modest level of growth and look to diversify our income and funding sources. This is especially the case given the overall environment for foundations and trusts, which is more competitive than ever.

Funding sources

The charity is very grateful to its principal grant funders:

Avenue Services

Cheshire Community Foundation

Cheshire West and Chester Members Awards Scheme

Cheshire West Mental Health Alliance Funding

Clarion Futures

Earl of Chester Fund

Global's Make Some Noise

Grocers Hall

JD Foundation

James Tudor Foundation

National Lottery - Awards for All Fund and Reaching Communities Fund

Nationwide Community Grant

Sanctuary Housing

Sir Donald and Lady Edna Wilson Charitable Trust

Steve Morgan Foundation

The Fitton Trust

The Henry Smith Foundation

The Pixel Fund

Trusthouse Foundation

Westminster Foundation

We are also very appreciative of donations/ fundraising support provided by Back Quarter Art Collective, Blacon Butterflies, Bristol Myers Squibb, Cavern of the Curious Gnome, Chester BID, Chester Business Club, Chester City Club, Chester Music Society, Chester University Pole Fitness Team, Chester Races, Excel TM Group, Mitchell Group, PDA Law, Portal Golf Club, PSR Solicitors, Sykes Holiday cottages, St Mary's Lodge (Masonic Hall), TUV Rheinland, Upton Drama Society and The Ship Inn. Thanks to the individual fundraisers who also participated in various events to raise funds to support our work and to the various organisations who donated prizes to support our fundraising activity.

Plans for future periods

Given the current challenging funding environment and the continued cost of living crisis which is significantly impacting the charity sector, as well as the beneficiaries we support, the challenge to remain sustainable sits at the forefront of our focus and priorities for the future. As with last year we will continue to focus on short to medium term priorities, as opposed to long-term objectives, to ensure we can react to change and increase our sustainability. We plan to further strengthen our organisation and our offer, in preparation for safe and sustainable longer-term growth.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The priorities for the charity for this year will therefore be:-

- NHS/Local Authority relationships being fostered with a view to ongoing partnership.
- Working relationships and partnerships with other charities to offer comprehensive packages/solutions to clients across a continuum of support.
- To continue to grow and diversify our income and funding sources through the development of increased supporter and corporate/charity of the year partnerships, growing our individual fundraising strategies, and growing connections with major donors.
- To continue to apply our Theory of Change model to identify areas of development and to support specific client needs. It is our intention to constantly test our theory of change model and to continue to adapt it to ensure it is effective for our current business needs.
- To grow our geographical base to support more pockets of deprivation within the Chester region and its borders.
- To sustainably broaden our offer of mental health support in alignment with our priority focus on early intervention to also include preventative measures support in our offer.
- The focus on the impact of poor parental mental ill health will be an important priority and we will work to continue to engage clients in difficult to reach areas such as youth homelessness.
- To work collaboratively with like-minded organisations and individuals to strengthen our service, network and growth.
- To increase our Volunteering opportunities for interested parties including supporting organisations' employees and possible progression pathways for clients.
- To run another residential weekend for families in partnership with the Youth Hostel Association.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The governing document is a memorandum and articles of association dated 14 July 2017.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr G Hartley	
Mr P Rossiter	(Resigned 30 June 2025)
Ms EL Price	
Ms C Jones	
Mrs S Taylor	
Ms AV Gill	
Mr A Kerr	
Mrs JM Hinnigan	
Ms C Diggory	(Resigned 8 May 2024)
Ms P Massey	(Resigned 8 May 2024)
Mr A Sieber	
Mr I Minshall	(Appointed 10 July 2024)
Mrs K Ferdenzi	(Appointed 10 July 2024)
Ms CL George	(Appointed 20 May 2025)

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment of new charity trustees takes place following trustee resignations or the identification of trustee skills gaps, by the Board, based on the charity trustee skills audit. New trustees are identified via recommendation or targeted advertising. Following an initial meeting with the Chair and CEO, if deemed suitable, the CV of the prospective trustee is circulated to the remaining trustees for their vote of approval. Following approval, the new trustee undergoes a DBS check and then undertakes a structured programme of induction and training, including completion of all documentation required by the Charity Commission.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Board is effective and supportive of the staff and has a good mix of skills and experience in local government, legal, business, risk management, education, counselling and charity management. The Board meets quarterly for routine business with the senior management in attendance and other members of staff invited to attend as appropriate. Ad hoc meetings of the Board may be called to address specific matters. The management of the clinical discipline, together with day-to-day management of clients and associated case management matters, is undertaken by Clinical Director. Following the resignation of Philippa Davies, CEO, the Charity took the opportunity to restructure and from January 2025 Debbie Thomas, Operations Director, and Shelagh Hatton, Clinical Director, took over the CEO role jointly on an interim basis.

Further oversight is provided by three subcommittees chaired and led by trustees, covering Finance and Risk, HR and Governance and Professional Standards. These meet 4 times per year with invitees from the management team and report into each Board meeting. All policies are reviewed by the relevant Committees and formally approved by the Board.

None of our Trustees are related or married to each other and we have in place a fixed term limit policy which means Trustees can serve for a maximum of 9 years. This equates to 3 terms of 3 years with Trustees needing to resign and be reappointed by the Board at the end of each term.

Advisors

We are grateful to our Patron David Briggs who provides input and support on a regular basis. The charity has benefitted from skills and donors in a number of different areas facilitated by Cheshire Connect. Support and training has also been provided by Cheshire West Voluntary action for which the charity is very grateful.

Safeguarding

The charity has a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually and updated whenever opportunities for improvements are identified. The policy requires that all the charity's personnel have valid DBS certificates and appropriate safeguarding training. The Clinical Director and Chair of the Board all have level 3 safeguarding certificates.

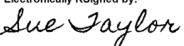
Audit

The Company is exempt from audit under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 (accounts and audit) order 2015 as the gross income is less than £1 million. Since our gross income for the year is between £25,000 and £1,000,000 we have engaged an independent examiner of "appropriate skill or ability" to verify our accounts.

Small companies exemption

The annual report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (Charities SORP) and the Companies Act 2006 as applicable for a small charitable company.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Electronically RSigned by:

ENV 67492365-8910-CACC-1279-EDFC

Mrs S Taylor
Chair/Director

Date: 19 August 2025

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF PLATFORM FOR LIFE

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Platform for Life (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, the independent examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the Companies Act 2006.
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Electronically RSigned by:

ENV 67492365-8910-CACC-1279-EDFC

Mr R Smith FCA

c/o UHY Hacker Young
4th Floor Merchants House
Crook Street
Chester
CH1 2BE
Date: 19 August 2025

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	69,863	266,337	336,200	226,859	119,936	346,795
Charitable activities	4	36,200	-	36,200	35,355	-	35,355
Investments	5	4,206	-	4,206	4,068	-	4,068
Total income		110,269	266,337	376,606	266,282	119,936	386,218
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	213,961	242,420	456,381	308,959	63,087	372,046
Total expenditure		213,961	242,420	456,381	308,959	63,087	372,046
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		(103,692)	23,917	(79,775)	(42,677)	56,849	14,172
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		115,776	69,849	185,625	158,453	13,000	171,453
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		12,084	93,766	105,850	115,776	69,849	185,625

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		756		1,205
Current assets					
Debtors	13	1,158		17,408	
Cash at bank and in hand		116,626		172,679	
		117,784		190,087	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(12,690)		(5,667)	
Net current assets			105,094		184,420
Total assets less current liabilities			105,850		185,625
Net assets			105,850		185,625
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	16	93,766		69,849	
Unrestricted funds		12,084		115,776	
		105,850		185,625	

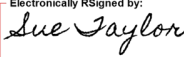
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 19 August 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Electronically RSigned by:

ENV 67492365-8910-CACC-1279-EDFC

Mrs S Taylor
Chair/Director

Company registration number 10729008 (England and Wales)

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Platform for Life is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre, The Parade, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5HN.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

In accordance with accounting standards, the economic contribution of general volunteers is not included in the accounts.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Plant and equipment	20% straight line
Computers	33% straight line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Donations and gifts	25,526	-	25,526	35,139	-	35,139
Grants	34,250	266,337	300,587	160,352	119,936	280,288
Fundraising	10,087	-	10,087	31,368	-	31,368
	<u>69,863</u>	<u>266,337</u>	<u>336,200</u>	<u>226,859</u>	<u>119,936</u>	<u>346,795</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Charitable activities		
Counselling services	36,200	35,355

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Other income	4,206	4,068

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Counselling 2025 £	Counselling 2024 £
Direct costs		
Staff costs	258,204	210,129
Other counselling costs	58,904	56,401
	317,108	266,530
Share of support and governance costs (see note 7)		
Support	137,491	103,896
Governance	1,782	1,620
	456,381	372,046
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	213,961	308,959
Restricted funds	242,420	63,087
	456,381	372,046

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7 Support costs allocated to activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs	105,921	79,195
Depreciation	678	601
Admin	24,547	19,502
Other staff costs	1,977	849
Rent	1,379	1,454
Insurance	2,073	1,765
Telecommunications	834	470
Charges	82	60
Governance costs	1,782	1,620
	<u>139,273</u>	<u>105,516</u>
Analysed between:		
Counselling	<u>139,273</u>	<u>105,516</u>

8 Net movement in funds

	2025 £	2024 £
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Fees payable for the independent examination of the charity's financial statements	1,782	1,620
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	<u>678</u>	<u>601</u>

9 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
	<u>13</u>	<u>11</u>
Employment costs	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	332,898	265,499
Social security costs	24,893	18,664
Other pension costs	<u>6,334</u>	<u>5,161</u>
	<u>364,125</u>	<u>289,324</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

10 Employees

(Continued)

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Aggregate compensation	102,298	94,237

Aggregate compensation includes annual gross salary, employer's national insurance contributions and employer's pension contributions.

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and equipment £	Computers £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2024	1,144	1,806	2,950
Additions	-	229	229
At 31 March 2025	1,144	2,035	3,179
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 April 2024	1,144	601	1,745
Depreciation charged in the year	-	678	678
At 31 March 2025	1,144	1,279	2,423
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2025	-	756	756
At 31 March 2024	-	1,205	1,205

13 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	-	6,435
Prepayments and accrued income	1,158	10,973
	1,158	17,408

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other taxation and social security	5,670	457
Other creditors	71	-
Accruals and deferred income	6,949	5,210
	<u>12,690</u>	<u>5,667</u>

15 Retirement benefit schemes

	2025 £	2024 £
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	<u>6,334</u>	<u>5,161</u>

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

16 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cheshire Community Foundation Bridge Foyer Project	7,286	10,367	(8,843)	8,810
The Pixel Fund	3,297	-	(3,297)	-
Sanctuary Housing	2,500	2,500	(5,000)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation Reframe Project	4,263	15,440	(15,960)	3,743
Steve Morgan Foundation	2,502	31,093	(16,685)	16,910
Nationwide Community Grant	36,696	-	(36,696)	-
Grocers Hall Charity	3,811	-	(3,811)	-
Clarion Futures	9,494	-	(9,494)	-
Global's Make Some Noise	-	29,000	(21,400)	7,600
Cheshire West Mental Health Alliance Funding	-	12,390	(12,390)	-
National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund	-	94,367	(75,774)	18,593
National Lottery Awards for All Fund	-	19,780	(11,844)	7,936
Earl of Chester Fund	-	7,500	(3,660)	3,840
Avenue Services	-	8,000	(3,400)	4,600
Henry Smith Foundation	-	23,400	(10,080)	13,320
James Tudor Foundation	-	10,000	(2,490)	7,510
Cheshire Community Foundation Thriving Families Project	-	2,500	(1,596)	904
	<u>69,849</u>	<u>266,337</u>	<u>(242,420)</u>	<u>93,766</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

16 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
Westminster Foundation	5,500	-	(5,500)	-
Severn Trent	7,500	3,000	(10,500)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Domestic Violence Project	-	14,750	(10,487)	4,263
The Pixel Fund	-	8,100	(4,803)	3,297
Sanctuary Housing	-	5,000	(2,500)	2,500
Steve Morgan Foundation	-	18,137	(15,635)	2,502
Nationwide Community Grant	-	46,560	(9,864)	36,696
Cheshire Community Foundation - Bridge Foyer Project	-	9,895	(2,609)	7,286
Grocers Hall Charity	-	5,000	(1,189)	3,811
Clarion Futures	-	9,494	-	9,494
	<u>13,000</u>	<u>119,936</u>	<u>(63,087)</u>	<u>69,849</u>

Details of the purpose of each restricted fund can be found in the trustees' annual report.

17 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2025 £
General funds	<u>115,776</u>	<u>110,269</u>	<u>(213,961)</u>	<u>12,084</u>
Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
General funds	<u>158,453</u>	<u>266,282</u>	<u>(308,959)</u>	<u>115,776</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 March 2025:			
Tangible assets	756	-	756
Current assets/(liabilities)	11,328	93,766	105,094
	<u>12,084</u>	<u>93,766</u>	<u>105,850</u>
	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	1,205	-	1,205
Current assets/(liabilities)	114,571	69,849	184,420
	<u>115,776</u>	<u>69,849</u>	<u>185,625</u>

19 Contingent assets

The charity has been awarded several multi-year grants which are only recognised in annual accounts in subsequent periods. Each year's grant payment is contingent on the charity meeting specific conditions, such as delivery of agreed annual outcomes. The total amount of income awarded but not yet recognised as at 31 March 2025 is £617,817 from the following funders:

Steve Morgan Foundation
Trusthouse Foundation
National Lottery
Global's Make Some Noise
Henry Smith Foundation
Cheshire Community Foundation

20 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2024 - none).

Accounts

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mr G Hartley Mr P Rossiter Ms EL Price Ms C Jones Mrs S Taylor Ms AV Gill Mr A Kerr Mrs JM Hinnigan Mr A Sieber	
Patron	David Briggs MBR KStJ	
Senior management	Ceri George Shelagh Hatton	Chief Executive Officer Clinical Lead
Charity number	1176429	
Company number	10729008	
Registered office	Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre The Parade Blacon Chester CH1 5HN	
Independent examiner	Mr N S Jenkins FCA c/o UHY Hacker Young St John's Chambers Love Street Chester Cheshire CH1 1QN	

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

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PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

The charitable objectives of Platform for Life agreed with the Charity Commission are:

1. To enable the treatment and care of parents, parents-to-be and carers who experience individual, societal, economic or relationship psychological stress by the provision of counselling to enable them to provide safe, secure and nurturing environments for their children.
2. To enable the treatment and care of children and young people who are in families where psychological stress could be impairing their normal emotional development by the provision of play therapy and counselling.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the strategy for the year.

Working in communities with high levels of deprivation the charity provides therapy including counselling that is:

- Local and Community based, working where clients live so there are no transport problems for them to address or children to pull out of school.
- Flexible, working around clients and not restricting the number of sessions they can access or penalising them if they do not attend every session. The charity understands the challenges clients face and tries to be as flexible as possible to their needs and situation at any given time.
- Accessible. The charity aims for short referral times so clients can access support quickly and operates without the usual levels of bureaucracy or thresholds that screen out the majority of those seeking help to address mental health issues.
- Tailored to the needs of each client, providing support for as long as they require it rather than the usual fixed number of sessions (6-8) offered by mainstream mental health services.
- Preventative, with an aim of breaking the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next.
- Family focused, recognising that parental trauma can have a profound effect on children. This means the charity may sometimes work with a parent(s), child or both to make a difference for the family.
- Free of charge to clients.

There's an inextricable link between poverty and poor mental health. Once established and left unchecked, it can leave people feeling trapped and disadvantaged throughout their life. All too often it becomes a negative cycle that's repeated through the next generation, sentencing their children to a life of difficulties and lost opportunities.

We work in three areas of Chester that fall within the bottom 10% of the government produced Index of Multiple Deprivation. Many of the adults, children and young people we support have experienced multiple life challenges and there are often also intergenerational traumas and issues which may be negatively affecting them. Covid and the cost of living crisis have heaped further pressure on families and intensified matters for those already living in poverty and struggling with their mental health.

Those who are most in need of help to address mental health issues often find themselves unable to access suitable and timely support. There are often too many barriers put in their way. These include restricted referral routes, high thresholds for access, extremely long wait times to be seen (several months or longer is not uncommon), inflexible session times, lack of childcare, costs of transport and an overall lack of trust in statutory services. Clients that Platform for Life works with often feel invisible and forgotten in society and the difficulties they have accessing help to address mental health issues, only serves to reinforce this.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Platform for Life exists to fill this gap. We know that people experiencing the most significant disadvantages in life face the greatest risks to their mental health. This is why we are removing the barriers faced by people and improving access to mental health support for those who would otherwise go un-helped. In particular we support those who cannot afford to pay for private therapy when mainstream services are unavailable or difficult to access; and those who may sometimes need longer-term support to recover from the traumas they have experienced.

Demand for the charity's service continues to be strong and since Covid, we have experienced a 70% growth in referrals. Over the last two financial years, we have noticed an increase in the number of clients accessing our service with complex mental health issues. The reasons for this include clients not having met thresholds for other services, waiting a considerable length of time to be seen by NHS Mental Health Services or being discharged after a few sessions even though they have not yet recovered. There is an acute shortage of suitable mental health services available to people, particularly those on low incomes who cannot afford to pay for private therapy. Without Platform for Life many in the highest need areas of Chester would go without much needed support.

Platform for Life doesn't restrict the number of sessions a client can access (many services restrict access to 6-8 sessions) and due to the increased levels of complexity that clients are presenting with, many require a much longer therapeutic intervention to feel well again. Despite the charity increasing the number of sessions it offers over the year by 12% to 3583, the level of client complexity has undoubtedly impacted on wait times, which rose to an average of 12 weeks.

Nearly 37% of all referrals received in the financial year were self-referrals for adults and young people and parent referrals for a child and young person. Other key referral routes include schools (27%), Medical Centres and Health visitors (19%) and Social Services (5%).

A key tenet of Platform for Life's service is accessibility, and the growth of self and parent referrals is a testament to this approach. At a time when NHS services are under severe strain and getting a GP appointment can be challenging, providing alternate referral routes including via self-referral, helps to ensure clients can access the help they need when they need it.

Being based in the heart of the communities we serve, has helped us forge a relationship of trust with clients. We work really hard to ensure every client who accesses our service feels visible, valued and cared for and we always look for additional ways in which we can meet their individual needs.

"This is the only thing that has helped me in all the years I have struggled with abuse and my mental health. My therapist was amazing and I am truly grateful. They have helped me so much to see a light at the end of the tunnel and see that I can recover." Adult client

"Every time I have counselling, I feel like a weight has been lifted from my shoulders. It's such a relief to speak to my counsellor to get stuff off my chest. I've never done that before. It took a lot to talk about it all, but I'm glad. My plan is to come back in a few months to work on the other stuff with my therapist." Adult client

"I felt comfortable during the sessions and it felt like a safe space to talk about everything that I wanted to talk about." Young person

Our team

We have a team of highly qualified therapists with experience of working successfully with clients with multiple challenges. With a majority of our clients having suffered significant traumas, abuse and other adversities, we believe it is important that therapists have the appropriate level of qualifications and experience to work with this level of complexity. Our team is managed by a Clinical Lead with over 20 years experience and a deep understanding of our client needs. Whilst striving to provide an excellent level of support for all clients, we aim to do the same as an employer. We are an accredited Living Wage Employer and believe in paying our staff fairly for the work they do. We offer all of our team flexible working options and foster a compassionate approach to leadership.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

We also provide placement opportunities for a small number (usually 2-3) of students at any one time. Students are closely supervised by the Clinical Lead and their client load is appropriate to their level of experience. This is critical for both client and student. We follow British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) guidelines on managing placements to ensure our students have an excellent training experience which is safe, conducted ethically and focuses on sound practice without using students as an additional resource that replaces established professional roles. Once qualified students are then paid sessional rates whilst continuing to work with any clients to complete their therapy.

As well as offering clients access to therapeutic services, we also provide practical support through our Family Support Worker. Their goal is to help reduce some of the stressors our clients face and ensure they can effectively engage with therapy. They work with clients on a 1-2-1 basis to help them access support to address practical needs and, where necessary, act as an advocate on their behalf. They also facilitate warm introductions for clients who sometimes lack the confidence to contact local agencies independently.

Since September 2023, our Family Support Worker has helped 32 clients. Their support has included helping a client access a hardship fund from a utility provider resulting in £1700 debt being written off, introducing others to local domestic abuse support groups and recovery programmes, helping clients register with a dentist, make hospital appointments and advocating for them in meetings with school about their children's attendance levels and in team around family discussions.

Connections with groups working locally

Our clients often have multiple needs and we have well established links with a number of other local charities and agencies that provide complementary services designed to support clients in the local communities where we work. These include local food banks and food community stores, KidsBank which provides clothes, toys and equipment for babies and children, Koala North West offering practical family support, Penny Smart debt advice service and Citizen's Advice Community Connectors. We have developed reciprocal signposting and referral processes and this ensures clients can receive more holistic support.

We are members of the Cheshire West Mental Health Alliance which was set up in 2022 to bring together local voluntary and community agencies providing mental health support locally. Facilitated by Cheshire West Voluntary Action and with well over 40 members, the Alliance provides a forum for networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration amongst members. With the restructuring of the NHS into Integrated Care Boards, members have been informed that future commissioning of mental health services with local community organisations will be done through this Alliance.

We also have relationships with specific Local-Authority departments such as Social Services, Education Access and Domestic Violence support teams and receive referrals from these, alongside the other well established referral routes from schools, GPs, health visitors, local charities etc. We also engage with specific roles within the Local Authority such as the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) as a number of clients access our service with experience of domestic violence.

In October 2023, we partnered with the Youth Hostel Association to take 8 client families away on a residential weekend outside Chester. Alongside a range of outside activities such as archery, fencing and fire building, families had an opportunity to spend time together in comfortable surroundings, enjoy good food, and meet others with similar experiences to them. For some this was their only experience of spending time away from home outside their community.

As well as formal referring relationships to and from local agencies, we have also developed relationships with Sanctuary Housing (local social housing provider), ward councillors, community forums and local groups. They know that they can signpost clients or make referrals on their behalf into our service and alongside direct client input, help inform our understanding of local issues and how we develop our service. The Lord Mayor of Chester recently referred to Platform for Life as a 'ray of light' in the community.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Volunteers

Unlike many counselling charities, Platform for Life does not make extensive use of volunteer therapists as a matter of policy. This is because the client needs are often complex and therapy is demanding and it's important that they have relevant qualifications and experience to manage this.

We recognise the importance and value of volunteers but until recently did not have sufficient capacity within Platform for Life to effectively recruit and manage these, other than for a small number of therapy student placements and fundraising volunteers for specific events. In summer 2023 we expanded our Client Coordinator's role to include Volunteer Manager responsibilities and also appointed a Family Support Worker. These two developments have significantly opened up opportunities for volunteers within Platform for Life and at the end of March 2024 we had two volunteers in place offering administrative support and a further two supporting the work of the Family Support Worker.

Achievements and performance

Key achievements

- 315 clients actively engaged with Platform for Life's service. Whilst the number of clients worked did not significantly increase over the previous year, the average number of sessions each client accessed grew from 10 to 12 as more clients required a longer intervention because of complexities they presented with.
- Offered 3,583 therapy sessions, an increase of 12% on the previous year.
- Maintained a high client attendance rate of 79%. Given the challenges many clients face, this level of engagement in therapy is extremely positive.
- Expanded therapy capacity by 25% to meet client need and ensure wait times to be seen remained manageable.
- Secured funding to appoint a Family Support Worker to help clients address some of their more practical needs and support their engagement with therapy. They have already helped 32 clients and been described as an 'angel sent to us'.
- Ensured the charity's income level grew to cover the increase in expenditure associated with expansion of therapy provision.
- Raised the charity's profile locally through social media activity, presentations, meetings with key stakeholders and fundraising activities. This has led to us being selected as charity to support in 2023/24 by two local choirs and a pub restaurant.
- One of 40 small charities nationally to be chosen by Global's Make Some Noise to raise funds for on their 6th October 2023 Make Some Noise Day across 8 of their radio brands.

Impact of the Charity's work

We capture a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of our service on clients at an individual, family and sometimes community level. Changes are individual to each client and however big or small, we celebrate them all.

We know that positive changes to a person's mental health can have significant benefit for the rest of their family, meaning the impact of our service on people's lives can be further amplified by 3-4x.

Outcomes

We use online system Lamplight to collect and report client outcome data in terms of number of referrals, number of sessions offered, attendance rate, client location etc.

Impacts

We currently use CORE Standardised Assessment Tool to measure risk and wellbeing of adult and young person clients at the beginning, middle and end of therapy. Data suggests that 85% of adults and 88% young people recorded improvements in their wellbeing by the end of their work with Platform for Life. For children the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is used. This is completed by either a parent/carers or teacher and assesses before, middle and after therapy emotional health needs. We have found this more challenging to capture data from as parents sometimes fail to return completed forms and pressures in school mean teachers don't have the time to complete their part of the assessment.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Over the next 6 months we plan to move to using one assessment tool across all age groups called the 'Outcome Star'. This is a more holistic measurement tool which can empower the client in making changes or adapting to factors in their life.

Through an end of counselling feedback form Platform for Life also asks adult and young person clients to rank how they feel and capture changes they have noticed since having therapy. A simplified version of this form which is more pictorial is used with children. The following table summarises the results of the feedback over the past year:

Statement	Adult	Young person	Child
I am more able to cope	93%	75%	84%
I am more positive about my future	93%	88%	N/A
I feel happier after counselling	N/A	N/A	96%
I have noticed positive changes in my life since having therapy	100%	100%	N/A

Capturing individual changes

We also share individual client testimonials, feedback and stories which capture their journey, including any changes to how they feel about themselves and what they are now able to do which might previously have been difficult or impossible.

Examples of client feedback

"This therapy has saved my life. If it wasn't for this therapy, I would have ended it a long time ago." **Adult**

"Counselling has made me feel like a real person again." **Young person**

"X has helped me think about myself in a better way." **Child**

"I cannot put into words how truly grateful we are for the time, patience and kindness they have shown my child. My child struggles to make relationships with people away from their comfort zone but from the offset I knew they were comfortable working alongside their therapist. The sessions have been amazing." **Parent**

Danielle's story

Young mum Danielle approached her 9-year-old daughter's school for help. She'd recently split from her partner and wasn't coping. She often felt suicidal and worried about the impact on her children. Team around the Family (TAF) was in place and we arranged to see her as a priority. Danielle had a history of abuse. She'd experienced emotional and physical abuse from both parents and their partners. Her relationship with her ex-partner was emotionally and financially abusive. His coercive and controlling behaviour had cut her off from family. He also manipulated their children, telling them their mum was mentally ill.

Danielle's childhood trauma was often triggered if she felt people were judging her or being unsupportive. Sometimes this caused her to become aggressive and verbally abusive, followed by remorse and suicidal thoughts. When this happened, she felt so overwhelmed that she had considered putting her children into care.

Danielle could see the impact this was having on her daughter and worried about history repeating itself. She wanted stability in her life and to feel in control. Through counselling she began to understand the long-term impact of her abusive relationships, past and present, and developed strategies to regulate her emotions. She was able to see that she was in fact a good mother and cared well for her children, a fact supported by Social Services.

Danielle referred her daughter to Platform for Life. She is currently working with a play therapist, who has also forged a good relationship with Danielle, which is supportive in strengthening the family unit and reinforcing positive parenting skills. By the end of our time working with Danielle the TAF was closed and she had started a GCSE maths course with the view to returning to work. After a lifetime of abuse, counselling helped Danielle create a better life for herself and her children.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Longer term impacts

The way in which Platform for Life works, gives clients the time and space they need to process and heal from their traumas and experiences. We know from client feedback, that for some therapy is quite literally life saving. It also leads many clients to feel more empowered and able to make specific changes in their life. These include:-

- Strengthening or re-building relationships with family, friends and peers.
- Applying for work for the first time or after an absence.
- Pursuing opportunities to volunteer.
- Having the confidence to seek increased responsibility or promotion at work.
- Making lifestyle changes, including taking up exercise and eating more healthily.
- Accessing school or college when this has previously been difficult or not possible at all.
- Making successful transitions from the nurturing environment of primary school to high school where more independence is required.
- Breaking free from abusive and negative relationships.
- Stopping destructive and risky behaviours, including self-harm.
- Pursuing new hobbies and interests

As well as capturing ad hoc feedback from clients who keep in touch after therapy has ended, some consent to providing more formal feedback after 6 or 12 months. When you ask a client, 9 months after counselling ended, what difference did it make and they say, ***"I'm still alive"***, you know the service is improving the lives of those who need it.

Typically, people from the communities we serve, struggle to engage with statutory services. Having a positive experience with Platform for Life, leads some to go on and seek further support for themselves or their families. Examples include:-

- One client attended a well man clinic, agreed to see a dietician and now understands how to follow a healthy diet with regular exercise.
- Another client is now under assessment for bi-polar with an NHS psychologist
- A client with autism now understands what it means to be autistic and feels confident enough to engage with all services for the benefit of his son, who is also autistic.

Progress on priorities identified in last year's report

To reflect the speed of change and increased levels of uncertainty, the charity believes it needs to be agile and able to respond quickly to outside events. Rather than set long-term objectives, it was agreed that the charity should identify a series of projects that would enable it to move forward. The projects the charity agreed to focus on last financial year were as follows:-

- Diversifying funding sources
- Trauma informed leadership
- Becoming a Centre of excellence in the provision of mental health services, meeting client needs and evidencing impact.
- Pilot project to open up referrals to a key referrer operating in other pockets of deprivation in Chester.
- More fully measuring the charity's impact, especially over the longer term.

Diversifying funding sources.

Good progress. The charity has been successful in growing its funding to keep pace with demand and diversifying funding sources, with 17% of all income derived from fundraising activities and donations and a further 9% from counselling activities (predominantly the contribution local schools make towards our provision for their pupils).

Trauma informed leadership

Good progress. We are working hard to ensure trauma informed practice is deeply embedded in the heart of the Charity and in our policies and practices. Our leadership team understands that staff, including themselves, will struggle at times and may be impacted by past or current trauma experiences. This may be on a personal level or vicariously through the work we do. Our leadership team recognise the signs of stress and are encouraged to respond effectively and compassionately, communicating clearly and offering support to foster good self care and resilience.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Becoming a Centre of Excellence in the provision of mental health services, meeting client needs and evidencing impact

Good progress. Last year we developed our theory of change model to provide direction and clarity and to focus our activities so that people can realise the change (outcomes and impact) they want to achieve. Our model is evolving through continuous improvement and learning to ensure we adapt to new demands and remain focused on addressing the core problem we have identified and want to solve. We have used this to refine the measures we use to evidence impact.

Pilot project to open up referrals to a key referrer operating in other pockets of deprivation in Chester

Progress. We have expanded our service into Kingsway, another area of high need, via a local primary school and are developing relationships with local stakeholders to help build understanding of the community and trust.

More fully measuring the charity's impact, especially over the longer term

Good progress. We publish an annual social impact report to tell our story over the previous year, the client and families we have supported and the difference we are helping them make in their lives. This includes details of longer-term follow ups with clients, 12 months or longer after they accessed our service. We have also secured funding to support a research project being undertaken by Dr Emma Price at University of Chester, aimed at:-

- Identifying areas of improvement for service user data collection to enable Platform for Life to demonstrate its impacts more effectively.
- Identifying the social impacts of Platform for Life's work. This would include a detailed literature review to identify the potential cost savings to society of the work Platform for Life undertakes.
- Ensuring Platform for Life has the right measures in place to demonstrate its impact. This would include producing a longitudinal report on the impacts of the charity's work.

The research will use data and client feedback to identify the wider social impacts of Platform for Life's work, evidencing that the benefits extend beyond the individual service user. Academic literature will be utilised to evidence how these impacts provide significant benefits to society as a whole. Through this, a detailed analysis of the social financial savings will be outlined. The research will consider savings made to the educational system, employment and benefits costs, physical and mental health service expenses, social services costs and potential criminal justice savings.

Financial review

The trustees believe that the current financial position is healthy with sufficient funds to continue to deliver the current levels of service and for prudent expansion, reflecting the continued increase in demand for our services.

Over the course of the financial year, we recorded a modest net income of £14,172 on turnover of £386,218. Of this latter figure, 59% of our income took the form of unrestricted grants and donations, 31% were restricted grants, 9% derived from the provision of counselling services and 1% was income from investments. A particular feature of fund raising activity in the past year has been the significant increase in restricted grants. We have also been successful in securing a number of multi-year funding arrangements which provide a level of financial security for future years.

The operation of our reserves policy has been unchanged over the year. It continues to require that our free reserves balance should be sufficient to undertake an orderly wind-up of the charity over a six month period. This policy is a prudent approach and is designed to allow us to safely finish therapy without damaging our clients' mental health. We ended the year with free reserves of £114,571. Given that the amounts of income received can be "lumpy" from quarter to quarter, this represents a prudent level of reserves. As in the previous year, this year-end balance is somewhat inflated due to the majority of our income (58%) being credited in the second half of the year.

The charity's expenditure has continued to grow steadily throughout the year, reflecting both the success of our fundraising efforts and the increasing demand for services referred to earlier. The charity is very conscious of the need to ensure that resources are focused on the provision of services to our clients. In this context, support service costs amounted to 28% of total expenditure. This is a lower percentage than last year and one which the Board believes compares very favourably with similar charities. In line with the growth in the charity, we continue to implement improvements to our financial controls.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The majority of our financial assets comprise bank deposits. We have continued to diversify our cash deposits between a number of financial institutions in order to ensure our funds enjoy a better level of protection from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. As part of these changes, we have taken advantage of the general increase in interest rates to earn more investment income whilst still maintaining a very prudent approach to investments.

Our key financial objective for the year ahead is similar to last year, namely, to continue to grow and diversify our income and funding sources. Although we were successful in relation to this objective last year, fund raising is a continuing challenge. This is especially the case given the overall environment for foundations and trusts, which is more competitive than ever.

Funding sources

The charity is very grateful to its principal grant funders:

Cheshire Community Foundation
Chester Bluecoat Charity
Decibellas Choir
Earl of Chester Fund
Grocers Hall
Irving Memorial Trust
Marjorie Boddy Charitable Trust
Nationwide Community Grant
PLaces for People
Sanctuary Housing
Steve Morgan Foundation
The Pixel Fund
The Robert Clutterbuck Charitable Trust
Ursula Keyes Trust
Westminster Foundation

We are also very appreciative of donations / fundraising support provided by Bristol Squibb Myers, Chester BID, Chester Business Club, Chester City Club, Chester Music Society, Chester Races, Decibellas Choir, Mitchell Group, Portal Golf Club and The Ship Inn.

Plans for future periods

Post-pandemic, and with the cost of living crisis significantly impacting the charity sector, as well as the beneficiaries we support, the challenge to remain sustainable, sits at the forefront of our focus and priorities for future plans. This year we will continue to focus this year on short to medium term, as opposed to long-term objectives, to ensure we can react to change. However, through the forthcoming year, we plan to further strengthen our organisation and our offer, in preparation for safe and sustainable longer-term growth.

The priorities for the charity for this year will therefore be:-

- To continue to grow and diversify our income and funding sources through the development of increased supporter and corporate partnerships, growing our individual fundraising strategies, and growing connections with major donors.
- To continue to develop our Trauma Informed Leadership.
- To grow our geographical base to support more pockets of deprivation within the Chester region and its borders.
- To sustainably broaden our offer of mental health support in alignment with our priority focus on early intervention to also include preventative measures support in our offer.
- To raise our profile and be recognised as a Centre of excellence in the provision of mental health and wellbeing services.
- To work collaboratively with like-minded organisations and individuals to strengthen our service, network and growth.
- To increase our Volunteering opportunities for interested parties including supporting organisations' employees and possible progression pathways for clients.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. The governing document is a memorandum and articles of association dated 14 July 2017.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr G Hartley	
Mr P Rossiter	
Ms EL Price	
Ms C Jones	
Mrs S Taylor	
Ms AV Gill	
Mr A Kerr	
Mrs JM Hinnigan	
Ms C Diggory	(Resigned 8 May 2024)
Ms P Massey	(Resigned 8 May 2024)
Mr A Sieber	

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Recruitment of new charity trustees takes place following trustee resignations or the identification of trustee skills gaps, by the Board, based on the charity trustee skills audit. New trustees are identified via recommendation or targeted advertising. Following an initial meeting with the Chair and CEO, if deemed suitable, the CV of the prospective trustee is circulated to the remaining trustees for their vote of approval. Following approval, the new trustee undergoes a DBS check and then undertakes a structured programme of induction and training, including completion of all documentation required by the Charity Commission.

None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

The Board is effective and supportive of the staff and has a good mix of skills and experience in local government, legal, business, risk management, education, counselling and charity management. The Board meets quarterly for routine business with the CEO and Clinical Lead in attendance and other members of staff invited to attend as appropriate. The management of the clinical discipline, together with day-to-day management of clients and associated case management matters, is undertaken by Clinical Lead, who reports to the CEO.

Further oversight is provided by 3 subcommittees chaired and led by trustees, covering Finance and Risk, HR and Governance and Professional Standards. These meet 4x per year with invitees from the management team and report into each Board meeting. All policies are reviewed by the relevant Committees and formally approved by the Board.

None of our Trustees are related or married to each other and we have in place a fixed term limit policy which means Trustees can serve for a maximum of 9 years. This equates to 3 terms of 3 years with Trustees needing to resign and be reappointed by the Board at the end of each term.

Advisors

We are grateful to our Patron David Briggs who provides input and support on a regular basis. The CEO receives valuable support and advice from a CEO peer support group and the charity has benefitted from skills donors in a number of different areas facilitated by Cheshire Connect. Support and training has also been provided by Cheshire West Voluntary action for which the charity is very grateful.

Safeguarding

The charity has a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually and updated whenever opportunities for improvements are identified. The policy requires that all the charity's personnel have valid DBS certificates and appropriate safeguarding training. The Clinical Lead, CEO and Chair of the Board all have level 3 safeguarding certificates.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024*

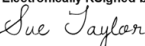
Audit

The Company is exempt from audit under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 (accounts and audit) order 2015 as the gross income is less than £1 million. Since our gross income for the year is between £25,000 and £1,000,000 we have engaged an independent examiner of "appropriate skill or ability" to verify our accounts.

Small companies exemption

The annual report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (Charities SORP) and the Companies Act 2006 as applicable for a small charitable company.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Electronically RSigned by:

ENV 26904846-8371-ABAD-8996-DCAD

Mrs S Taylor
Chair/Director

10 July 2024

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Platform for Life Limited (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Electronically RSigned by:

ENV 26904846-8371-ABAD-8996-DCAD

Mr N S Jenkins FCA

c/o UHY Hacker Young
St John's Chambers
Love Street
Chester
Cheshire
CH1 1QN

Dated: 25 July 2024

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	226,859	119,936	346,795	265,890	18,000	283,890
Charitable activities	4	35,355	-	35,355	29,735	-	29,735
Investments	5	4,068	-	4,068	1,305	-	1,305
Total income		266,282	119,936	386,218	296,930	18,000	314,930
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	308,959	63,087	372,046	295,233	21,454	316,687
Total expenditure		308,959	63,087	372,046	295,233	21,454	316,687
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		(42,677)	56,849	14,172	1,697	(3,454)	(1,757)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		158,453	13,000	171,453	156,756	16,454	173,210
Fund balances at 31 March 2024		115,776	69,849	185,625	158,453	13,000	171,453

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		1,205		-
Current assets					
Debtors	13	17,408		6,220	
Cash at bank and in hand		172,679		173,631	
		190,087		179,851	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(5,667)		(8,398)	
Net current assets			184,420		171,453
Total assets less current liabilities			185,625		171,453
Net assets			185,625		171,453
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	16	69,849		13,000	
Unrestricted funds		115,776		158,453	
		185,625		171,453	

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 10 July 2024

Electronically RSigned by:
Sue Taylor
ENV 26904846-8371-ABAD-8996-DCAD

Mrs S Taylor
Chair/Director

Company registration number 10729008 (England and Wales)

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Platform for Life Limited is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre, The Parade, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5HN.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

In accordance with accounting standards, the economic contribution of general volunteers is not included in the accounts.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Plant and equipment	20% straight line
Computers	33% straight line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Donations and gifts	35,139	-	35,139	28,042	-	28,042
Grants receivable	160,352	119,936	280,288	234,712	18,000	252,712
Fundraising	31,368	-	31,368	3,136	-	3,136
	<u>226,859</u>	<u>119,936</u>	<u>346,795</u>	<u>265,890</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>283,890</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Charitable activities		
Counselling services	35,355	29,735

5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Interest receivable	4,068	1,305

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Counselling 2024 £	Counselling 2023 £
Direct costs		
Staff costs	210,129	167,150
Other counselling costs	56,401	35,384
	266,530	202,534
Share of support and governance costs (see note 7)		
Support	103,896	112,833
Governance	1,620	1,320
	372,046	316,687
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	308,959	295,233
Restricted funds	63,087	21,454
	372,046	316,687

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

7 Support costs allocated to activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	79,195	97,837
Depreciation	601	192
Admin	19,502	6,832
Other staff costs	849	1,977
Rent	1,454	3,708
Insurance	1,765	1,578
Telecommunications	470	637
Charges	60	72
Governance costs	1,620	1,320
	<u>105,516</u>	<u>114,153</u>
Analysed between:		
Counselling	<u>105,516</u>	<u>114,153</u>

8 Net movement in funds

	2024 £	2023 £
The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Fees payable for the independent examination of the charity's financial statements	1,620	1,320
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	<u>601</u>	<u>192</u>

9 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>
Employment costs	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	265,499	244,678
Social security costs	18,664	16,270
Other pension costs	<u>5,161</u>	<u>4,039</u>
	<u>289,324</u>	<u>264,987</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10 Employees

(Continued)

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Aggregate compensation	94,237	80,411

Aggregate compensation includes annual gross salary, employer's national insurance contributions and employer's pension contributions.

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and equipment £	Computers £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2023	1,144	-	1,144
Additions	-	1,806	1,806
At 31 March 2024	1,144	1,806	2,950
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 April 2023	1,144	-	1,144
Depreciation charged in the year	-	601	601
At 31 March 2024	1,144	601	1,745
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2024	-	1,205	1,205
At 31 March 2023	-	-	-

13 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	6,435	5,359
Prepayments and accrued income	10,973	861
	17,408	6,220

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Other taxation and social security	457	-
Trade creditors	-	81
Accruals and deferred income	5,210	8,317
	<u>5,667</u>	<u>8,398</u>

15 Retirement benefit schemes

	2024 £	2023 £
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	<u>5,161</u>	<u>4,039</u>

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

16 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
Westminster Foundation	5,500	-	(5,500)	-
Severn Trent	7,500	-	(7,500)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Domestic Violence Project	-	14,750	(10,487)	4,263
The Pixel Fund	-	8,100	(4,803)	3,297
Sanctuary Housing	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
Severn Trent	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Steve Morgan Foundation	-	18,137	(15,635)	2,502
Nationwide Community Grant	-	46,560	(9,864)	36,696
Cheshire Community Foundation - Bridge Foyer Project	-	9,895	(2,609)	7,286
Grocers Hall	-	5,000	(1,189)	3,811
Places for People	-	9,494	-	9,494
Sanctuary Housing	-	2,500	-	2,500
	<u>13,000</u>	<u>119,936</u>	<u>(63,087)</u>	<u>69,849</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

16 Restricted funds

(Continued)

Previous year:	At 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2023 £
Westminster Foundation	-	5,500	-	5,500
SJP Charitable Foundation - counselling delivery for school children at risk of exclusion	2,870	-	(2,870)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Improving Outcomes in Deprived Neighbourhoods	7,500	-	(7,500)	-
The Pixel Fund	6,084	-	(6,084)	-
Sanctuary Housing	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
Severn Trent	-	10,000	(2,500)	7,500
	<u>16,454</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>(21,454)</u>	<u>13,000</u>

17 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
General funds	<u>158,453</u>	<u>266,282</u>	<u>(308,959)</u>	<u>115,776</u>
Previous year:	At 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2023 £
General funds	<u>156,756</u>	<u>296,930</u>	<u>(295,233)</u>	<u>158,453</u>

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	1,205	-	1,205
Current assets/(liabilities)	<u>114,571</u>	<u>69,849</u>	<u>184,420</u>
	<u>115,776</u>	<u>69,849</u>	<u>185,625</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

(Continued)

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
At 31 March 2023:			
Current assets/(liabilities)	158,453	13,000	171,453
	<u>158,453</u>	<u>13,000</u>	<u>171,453</u>

19 Contingent assets

The charity has been awarded a number of multi-year grants which are only recognised in annual accounts in subsequent periods. Each year's grant payment is contingent on the charity meeting specific conditions, such as delivery of agreed annual outcomes. The total amount of income awarded but not yet recognised as at 31 March 2024 is £172,831.

Westminster Foundation - final year of grant
Chester Bluecoat Charity - final year of grant
Steve Morgan Foundation - first year of three year grant
Trusthouse Foundation - first year of three year grant

20 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2023 - none).

Accounts

Charity registration number 1176429

Company registration number 10729008 (England and Wales)

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mr G Hartley Mr P Rossiter Ms E L Price Miss C Jones Mrs S Taylor Ms A V Gill Mr A Kerr Mrs J M Hinnigan Ms C Diggory Ms P Massey Mr Alan Sieber	(Appointed 18 May 2022) (Appointed 4 October 2022) (Appointed 4 October 2022) (Appointed 4 October 2022)
Patron	David Briggs MBE KStJ	
Chief Executive Officer	Ceri George	
Charity number	1176429	
Company number	10729008	
Registered office	Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre The Parade Blacon Chester CH1 5HN	
Independent examiner	Champion Allwoods Ltd 2nd Floor Refuge House 33-37 Watergate Row Chester CH1 2LE	

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

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Balance sheet	10
Notes to the financial statements	11 - 19

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The charitable objectives of Platform for Life agreed with the Charity Commission are:

1. To enable the treatment and care of parents, parents-to-be and carers who experience individual, societal, economic or relationship psychological stress by the provision of counselling to enable them to provide safe, secure and nurturing environments for their children.
2. To enable the treatment and care of children and young people who are in families where psychological stress could be impairing their normal emotional development by the provision of play therapy and counselling.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the strategy for the year.

Working in communities with high levels of deprivation the charity provides counselling that is:

- Local and Community based, working where clients live so there are no transport problems for them to address or children to pull out of school.
- Flexible, working around clients and not restricting the number of sessions they can access or penalising them if they do not attend every session. The charity understands the challenges clients face and tries to be as flexible as possible to their needs and situation at any given time.
- Accessible. The charity aims for short referral times so clients can access support quickly and operates without the usual levels of bureaucracy or thresholds that screen out the majority of those seeking help to address mental health issues.
- Tailored to the needs of each client, providing support for as long as they require it rather than the usual fixed number of sessions (6-8) offered by mainstream mental health services.
- Preventative, with an aim of breaking the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next.
- Family focused, recognising that parental trauma can have a profound effect on children. This means the charity may sometimes work with a parent(s), child or both to make a difference for the family.
- Free of charge to clients.

Platform for Life's work was recognised by NHS Cheshire Wirral Partnership in 2023 through a Community Star award. Whilst no part of the charity's work is currently commissioned by Cheshire Wirral Partnership, this award provides an important endorsement of the services it offers and their impact at a local community level.

Platform for Life works in three locations in Chester; Blacon, Lache and Kingsway, areas which fall within the bottom 10% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. A significant number of families in these communities have one or more family members who are struggling with mental health issues and social deprivation makes this more acute. The charity's client group have experienced many life challenges that encompass traumas (often in childhood), abuse and other adversities. These include domestic violence, substance misuse, difficult family relationships including absent/missing parents, different forms of abuse, being a young carer for parent and/or siblings, imprisonment of family members, bereavement and loss in all its forms, neglect and financial hardship. Such experiences not only shape and impact clients' own lives and mental wellbeing, but also that of other family members. In the case of children and young people, when they go on to have their own family, this can be passed down to the next generation, continuing the negative cycle.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Clients that Platform for Life works with often feel invisible and forgotten in society and the difficulties they have accessing help with mental health issues from mainstream services, only serves to reinforce this. Before Covid, clients in these communities often struggled to access and engage with primary care services. These set high thresholds for access, offered inflexible and time limited provision that penalised them if they could not attend every appointment and failed to properly accommodate any special needs they might have. Post Covid, the situation has become more acute, with access thresholds raised yet further and wait times to be seen by a therapist often exceeding one or more years. This means only those who can afford to pay for private therapy are able to access timely support. Without services like Platform for Life, clients on low incomes are left to struggle on alone. Their mental health issues go untreated affecting not only their own life chances but those of any children they have or may go on to have in the future.

Platform for Life works really hard to ensure every client feels visible, valued and cared for. It offers a variety of therapeutic services including counselling, art therapy, play therapy and parent work. Decisions on how to work with a client are considered on an individual, family and situation basis and the charity's aim is always to help bring about positive change for the client and by association, their family. Referrals come from a wide range of agencies that families in these communities interact with. These include schools, GPs, health visitors, midwives, social workers, family intervention workers as well as other charities operating locally. As part of the charity's family focused approach, all referrers are offered the opportunity to make referrals for children and young people, as well as adults (parents and carers). There is also an option for adults to refer themselves or another family member directly into Platform for Life and over the last year this option has been extended further to include young people in a local high school. Clients are contacted as soon as their referral is received to tell them a bit more about the service, let them know the wait time and to answer any questions they might have. The charity's aim is to build a relationship of trust with clients that can then carry on into their work with a therapist.

Platform for Life is an advocate for early intervention and does not set a threshold for how severe a client's mental health issues need to be before they can access support. The aim is to work with clients as early as possible when they experience poor mental health to avoid it becoming a long-term issue that negatively impacts their life chances. Clients present with a range of mild to more complex mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, behavioural issues, low self-esteem, stress, sleep disturbances and PTSD. The majority of referrals made into the service are for complex mental health issues and alongside significant growth in the number of referrals, the charity has observed increased level of complexity these over the last two years.

Demand for the charity's service continues to be strong and referrals over the last 2 years have grown by 50%. This growth has not been linear and there have been significant peaks at the start of each new academic and calendar years. For the second year running, referrals for children and young people have been higher (53%) than those for adults (47%) and the charity expects this to continue.

Over 35% of all referrals came from schools, with self-referrals accounting for a further 29% (6% of these were parental referrals for a child into Platform for Life). Referrals from Medical Centres, Health visitors and Starting Well teams contributed a further 21% and Social Services 7%. The growth of self-referrals is a testament to the charity's focus on making the service easily accessible to all clients.

Having taken steps to expand its counselling capacity in the previous year, the charity has largely been able to respond to the continued growth in demand, although there has been increased pressure on wait times in the second half of the year. Whilst Platform for Life currently serves 3 areas of high deprivation within Chester, it has noticed an increasing number of referrals being made for low-income clients in other parts of the City. Because of high demand in its 3 focus areas and a need to ensure the service does not become overwhelmed, it has not been possible to accept these referrals, but the charity has an ambition to extend its services to the whole of Chester, subject to funding.

There is currently a national shortage of qualified therapists who can work with children, and this has made the recruitment and retention of employed and sessional therapists more challenging than pre-Covid. The charity benefits from a team of experienced and highly qualified counsellors, art and play therapists, a mix of employed and sessional roles. Overall, the team is very committed to the charity, and it does its best to be a fair employer in terms of salary, working conditions and benefits such as flexible working. Platform for Life has recently been accredited as a Living Wage Employer. Nevertheless, there has been some therapist turnover, mainly on the sessional side which the charity has sought to fill each time.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Achievements and performance

Key achievements

- Client referrals remained strong and the number of agencies making referrals continued to grow. 86% of referrers surveyed in 2022 believe there are no other agencies offering a service like Platform for Life to children and 100% believe there is nothing similar for parents/carers.
- 310 clients actively engaged with Platform for Life's service.
- Offered 3,205 therapy sessions between April 2022 and March 2023 with a client attendance rate of 80%. Given the challenges many clients face, this level of engagement is extremely positive.
- Maintained counselling capacity despite a very competitive labour market.
- Ensured the charity's income level grew to cover increase in expenditure.
- Raised the charity's profile locally through presentations, meetings with key stakeholders and fundraising activities.
- Charity was recognised with an award in the Community Service Category from Cheshire Wirral Partnership at their Community Mental Health Awards.
- Developed Platform for Life theory of change model with support from Westminster Foundation.
- Accredited as a Living Wage Employer.

Impact of the Charity's work

Platform for Life captures a mix of quantitative and qualitative data to assess the impact of its service on clients at an individual, family and sometimes community level. Positive changes to a person's mental health can have significant benefit for the rest of their family, meaning the impact of its service on people's lives can be further amplified by 3-4x. Based on the charity's support for 310 active clients over the last year, this means up to 1,240 further family members have been impacted by its service.

The charity uses CORE Standardised Assessment Tool to measure risk and wellbeing of adult and young person clients at the beginning, middle and end of therapy. Data suggests that 84% of adults and 85% young people recorded improvements in their wellbeing by the end of their work with Platform for Life. For children the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is used. This is completed by either a parent/carer or teacher and assesses before, middle and after therapy emotional health needs. Data shows that 80% of parents observed improvements in their child's wellbeing.

Through an end of counselling feedback form Platform for Life also asks adult and young person clients to rank how they feel and capture changes they have noticed since having therapy. A simplified version of this form which is more pictorial is used with children.

Statement	Adult	Young person	Child
I feel more able to cope	91%	79%	90%
I feel more positive about myself	86%	72%	80%
I am more positive about my future	91%	76%	N/A
I feel happier after counselling	N/A	N/A	76%

"If I hadn't accessed your service I don't know how I would have avoided going back on drugs because it's a way of taking away the feelings of what you feel like, to be in another place. I've really loved the service. It's helped a lot." **Adult**

"The sessions have changed not only my life but my son's too." **Adult**

"My counsellor's kindness and understanding calmed me and helped me realise how to help myself. Being able to express my emotions was very helpful." **Young person**

"When I started counselling, I was in a different school and unhappy. I then never went to school for about 4 months but I had my sessions. I'm now in a new school and I'm happy and have learned some strategies along the way." **Young person**

"I love my counsellor. They made me happier." **Child**

"It's fun to be around her and it's easier to talk about my feelings. She helped me shrink my problems and worries. It's made me feel better about myself." **Child**

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Progress on priorities in last year's report:

The charity agreed to continue addressing the strategic objectives set in 2021 which were as follows:-

Build and develop community partnerships with other agencies on the basis of mutual benefit, to ensure optimal referral, co-working and post-counselling support.

Good progress. The charity continues to build relationships with local community groups and agencies offering support. In particular, a strong relationship has been forged with Koala North- West (another family-focused charity operating in the area) which makes referrals into Platform for Life's service and accepts introductions from its clients into their service.

Ensure that the charity scopes and finds ways to diversify its client base and ensure it is easy to reach for those who have most to benefit from its service.

Good progress. The charity continues to identify areas of need in the communities we work in and evolve its service to address these and ensure it is easy to access. An example of this is the Young Person self-referrals pilot which has moved into next phase and been opened up to all pupils in local high school.

Use qualitative and quantitative data to raise the charity's profile and demonstrate impact

Very good progress. The charity has strengthened its quantitative assessments and piloted capturing longer term feedback from clients. It has also produced an annual social impact report in 2021 and 2022, telling its story, the families that were supported and the impact this had on their lives. This has been well received by funders and other key stakeholders and has helped the charity demonstrate the difference it makes.

Continuously reflect and refine on how the charity can improve its service to clients and be at the forefront of best practice and innovation in this area

Very good progress. Over the last year the charity has developed its theory of change model, benefitting from expertise kindly provided by Westminster Foundation. This articulates the change it wants to make in people's lives and identify ways to make most effective use of its resources and activities to achieve this. Different client personas have been put through the model to identify how/if the charity meets their needs and ways in which its service can be further improved. This has generated a number of actions which the charity will pursue in the next year.

Recruit, train, develop and retain the highest quality of staff possible and for staff to feel highly valued and recognised in their work.

Very good progress. The charity has increased the number of training opportunities staff have at both an individual and group level and introduced more on the job training options. The Charity works hard to be a fair employer as evidenced in the steps it has taken to support staff during cost of living crisis and the flexibility it has shown with regards to work patterns. Platform for Life has recently been accredited as a Living Wage Employer.

Ensure sustainable funding and support for the charity through diverse means and sources and which support its vision and strategic objectives

Progress. The charity has been successful in growing its funding and nearly 12% of this came from fundraising activities and donations. It still remained largely dependent on trusts and foundations which accounted for 79% of income. The adoption of the new Health and Social Care Bill from July 2022 has meant substantial changes to the commissioning/delivery of NHS services and some delays in implementing these. Many contacts previously made have moved onto other roles or have left the NHS which has meant starting again to build relationships. The charity is a member of Cheshire West Mental Health Alliance and was recently recognised by Cheshire Wirral Partnership in their Mental Health Awards. Whilst these have both helped raise Platform for Life's visibility with statutory bodies, becoming a commissioned service remains an unmet goal.

Ensure that the charity's board of trustees have the necessary expertise, structures and systems to provide necessary support, governance and challenges to allow it to achieve its vision and strategic objectives

Good progress. The charity benefits from a committed Chair and Board of trustees. A skills audit in 2022 showed an excellent and varied range of skills and expertise amongst trustees. These have been especially helpful to the charity as it navigates through a changing landscape and the management team have been able to rely on active support from trustees in a number of areas, not least fundraising.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Financial Review

The trustees believe that the current financial position is healthy with sufficient funds to continue to deliver the current levels of service and for prudent expansion, reflecting the increase in demand for our services seen over the past year.

During the past year, we received income of £314,930. Of this, 84% took the form of unrestricted grants and donations, 6% were restricted grants with the other 10% derived from the provision of counselling services.

Our reserves policy continues to require that our free reserves balance should be sufficient to undertake an orderly wind-up of the charity over a six month period. This policy is a prudent approach and would allow us to safely finish therapy without damaging our clients' mental health.

During the year, the Board approved a revised methodology of how this amount should be calculated given the charity is now a more mature organisation than when the earlier calculation method was devised. The new calculation methodology recognised that not all costs would be continued to be incurred over a full six month period in the event of an orderly wind-up. This has resulted in a modest reduction in the calculated required amount of reserves (compared to the previous approach). We ended the year with free reserves of 148% of the amount required to undertake an orderly wind-up over a six month period. Given that the amounts of income received can be "lumpy", this represents a prudent level of reserves. As in the previous year this year-end balance is somewhat inflated due to nearly 60% of our income being credited in the second half of the year.

The charity's expenditure has continued to grow steadily throughout the year, reflecting both the success of our fundraising efforts and the increasing demand for services referred to earlier. The charity is very conscious of the need to ensure that resources are focused on the provision of services to our clients. In this context, support service costs amounted to 36% of total expenditure. This is a similar percentage to last year and one which the Board believes compares favourably with similar charities. Recent infrastructure investments – the Lamplight clinical database and the Sage financial and accounting software – have continued to bring benefits and have been instrumental in improving clinical and financial management information.

One of our objectives for the last financial year was to enhance our fundraising efforts, both in terms of the overall amount raised and to diversify the sources of funding. In terms of the former, the amount raised in 2022/23 was an increase of 46% compared to the previous year. In terms of diversifying our sources of funding, charitable trusts and foundations continue to provide the bulk of our funds (80%). In this context, we are particularly grateful for the five year strategic partnership with the Westminster Foundation. During the year we have significantly increased the amounts received through donations due to a range of successful initiatives.

Another objective for the last financial year was to diversify our cash deposits between a number of financial institutions in order to ensure our funds enjoy a better level of protection from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. This has been achieved, with new arrangements put into place ahead of the mainly USA banking scares seen this year.

Our key financial objective for the year ahead is to build on the momentum achieved in 2022/23 to increase our income, thereby allowing the charity to meet the increased demand for services. Given the cost of living crisis, to which the charity is not immune, more effective fundraising is required in order to cover increased costs. In doing this, we will continue to seek to diversify further our sources of funds.

Funding sources

The charity is very grateful to its principal grant funders:

Avenue Services
Cheshire Freemasons
Chester Bluecoat Charity
Development Youth of Chester Fund
Earl of Chester Fund
Kelly Family Charitable Trust
Sanctuary Housing
Severn Trent Foundation
Westminster Foundation

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Future Plans

With change occurring at an exponential rate and increased levels of uncertainty in recent years, the charity believes it needs to be agile and able to respond quickly to outside events. Rather than set long-term objectives, it was agreed that the charity should identify a series of projects that enable it to move forward. Once these are complete or are no longer valid because of external events, a further set should be identified. The projects the charity has agreed to focus on:-

- Diversifying funding sources
- Trauma informed leadership
- Becoming a Centre of excellence in the provision of mental health services, meeting client needs and evidencing impact.
- Pilot project to open up referrals to a key referrer operating in other pockets of deprivation in Chester.
- More fully measuring the charity's impact, especially over the longer term.

The charity has recently secured funding to appoint a Family Support Worker to help clients address some of the more practical needs they have, which can sometimes hinder progress with their therapist. This role is currently being recruited and will be in place in the second half of the financial year.

Structure, governance and management

The trustees, who are also directors for the purpose of company law, who were the charity's trustees on the date the report was approved or who served as a trustee in the reporting period were:

Mr G Hartley	
Cllr T Richards	(Resigned 29 June 2022)
Mr P Rossiter	
Ms E L Price	
Ms B Hook	(Resigned 29 June 2022)
Miss C Jones	
Mrs L Hill	(Resigned 29 June 2022)
Mrs S Taylor	
Ms A V Gill	
Mr A Kerr	
Mrs J M Hinnigan	(Appointed 18 May 2022)
Ms C Diggory	(Appointed 4 October 2022)
Ms P Massey	(Appointed 4 October 2022)
Mr Alan Sieber	(Appointed 4 October 2022)

The Board is effective and supportive of the staff and has been strengthened with three new trustees, adding skills and experience in education, counselling and charity management.

The Board meets quarterly for routine business. The CEO Ceri George and Clinical Lead Shelagh Hatton are in attendance and other members of staff are invited to attend as appropriate. The management of the counselling discipline, together with day- to-day management of clients and associated case management matters, is undertaken by Clinical Lead Shelagh Hatton, who reports to the CEO.

Further oversight is provided by 3 subcommittees chaired and led by trustees, covering Finance and Risk, HR and Governance and Professional Standards. These meet 4x per year with invitees from the management team and report into the Board.

Over the last year, the charity has made progress on a number of governance areas.

Continue working on clearly defined roles and accountabilities.

- All trustees have attended bespoke governance training session provided by a charity law specialist.
- All trustees except the Chair who provides oversight, are members of and/or Chair one or more sub-committees.

Increase the effectiveness of the risk register by including a 'traffic-light' system and undertaking regular reviews

- Charity reviews risks on quarterly basis within Finance and Risk Management Committee and reports on these at Board meetings.
- Charity uses traffic light system to monitor and report on risks.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Recruit at least one trustee with knowledge of mental health and/or the NHS and one with counselling experience

- Charity benefits from two qualified counsellor trustees and a trustee with many years health service experience.

Increase charity cohesion via the flow of knowledge from staff to trustees enabling trustees to gain an understanding of the work undertaken and the pressures on the staff ('coalface' understanding of work undertaken)

- Trustees continue to pursue opportunities to meet with both therapy and operational staff to learn more about the work being undertaken.
- A number of trustees have been involved in specific projects such as the development of the charity's theory of change model and volunteering to fundraise.

Over the next financial year, the Board will continue to focus on these governance areas.

Advisors

We are grateful to our Patron David Briggs who provides input and support on a regular basis. The CEO receives valuable support and advice from a CEO peer support group and the charity has benefitted from skills donors in a number of different areas facilitated by Cheshire Connect. Support and training has also been provided by Cheshire West Voluntary action for which the charity is very grateful.

Safeguarding

The charity has a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually and updated whenever opportunities for improvements are identified. The policy requires that all the charity's personnel have valid DBS certificates and appropriate safeguarding training. The Clinical Lead, CEO and Chair of the Board all have level 3 safeguarding certificates.

Volunteers

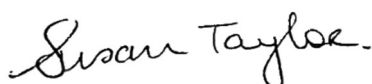
Unlike many counselling charities, Platform for Life does not make extensive use of volunteer counsellors as a matter of policy. This is because the counselling is demanding and mostly requires experience and particular specialisms which are less common in the volunteer pool. The charity does offer a small number of carefully supervised placements for therapy students and has also benefitted from marketing, IT and leadership training related skills donor volunteers. It is anticipated that the new Family Support Worker role will help to open up additional volunteering opportunities within the charity.

Auditors

The Company is exempt from audit under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 (accounts and audit) order 2015 as the gross income is less than £1 million. Since our gross income for the year is between £25,000 and £1,000,000 we have engaged an independent examiner of "appropriate skill or ability" to verify our accounts.

The annual report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (Charities SORP) and the Companies Act 2006 as applicable for a small charitable company.

By order of the board



Mrs S Taylor

Chair/Director

Dated: 5 July 2023

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Platform for Life Limited (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

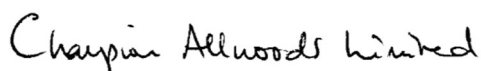
Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



Susan Harris MA ACA
Champion Allwoods Limited
Refuge House
33-37 Watergate Row
Chester
CH1 2LE

Dated: 5 July 2023

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

		Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	265,890	18,000	283,890	137,606	51,200	188,806
Charitable activities	4	29,735	-	29,735	26,520	-	26,520
Investments	5	1,305	-	1,305	-	-	-
Total income		<u>296,930</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>314,930</u>	<u>164,126</u>	<u>51,200</u>	<u>215,326</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	<u>295,233</u>	<u>21,454</u>	<u>316,687</u>	<u>180,404</u>	<u>65,947</u>	<u>246,351</u>
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/							
Net movement in funds		1,697	(3,454)	(1,757)	(16,278)	(14,747)	(31,025)
Fund balances at 1 April		<u>156,756</u>	<u>16,454</u>	<u>173,210</u>	<u>173,034</u>	<u>31,201</u>	<u>204,235</u>
Fund balances at 31 March		<u>158,453</u>	<u>13,000</u>	<u>171,453</u>	<u>156,756</u>	<u>16,454</u>	<u>173,210</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		-		191
Current assets					
Debtors	12	6,220		5,845	
Cash at bank and in hand		173,631		173,676	
		<u>179,851</u>		<u>179,521</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(8,398)</u>		<u>(6,502)</u>	
Net current assets			171,453		173,019
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>171,453</u>		<u>173,210</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	14		13,000		16,454
Unrestricted funds			158,453		156,756
			<u>171,453</u>		<u>173,210</u>

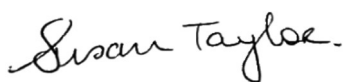
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 5 July 2023



Mrs S Taylor
Chair/Director

Company Registration No. 10729008

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Platform for Life Limited is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre, The Parade, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5HN.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the charity will continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

In accordance with accounting standards, the economic contribution of general volunteers is not included in the accounts.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accrual basis. Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of all its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support costs. Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountants' fees and costs linked to strategic management of the charity.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Plant and equipment	20% straight line
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The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £
Donations and gifts	28,042	-	28,042	8,381	-	8,381
Grants receivable	234,712	18,000	252,712	129,225	51,200	180,425
Fundraising	3,136	-	3,136	-	-	-
	<u>265,890</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>283,890</u>	<u>137,606</u>	<u>51,200</u>	<u>188,806</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

4 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Counselling services	29,735	26,520

5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Interest receivable	1,305	-

6 Charitable activities

	Counselling 2023 £	Counselling 2022 £
Staff costs	167,150	113,083
Other counselling costs	35,384	44,094
	202,534	157,177
Share of support costs (see note 7)	112,833	87,974
Share of governance costs (see note 7)	1,320	1,200
	316,687	246,351
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	295,233	180,404
Restricted funds	21,454	65,947
	316,687	246,351

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

7 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2023	Support costs	Governance costs	2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	97,837	-	97,837	72,092	-	72,092
Depreciation	192	-	192	229	-	229
Admin	6,832	-	6,832	2,815	-	2,815
Other staff costs	1,977	-	1,977	5,979	-	5,979
Rent	3,708	-	3,708	3,161	-	3,161
Insurance	1,578	-	1,578	1,387	-	1,387
Telecommunications	637	-	637	2,237	-	2,237
Charges	72	-	72	74	-	74
Examination fees	-	1,320	1,320	-	1,200	1,200
	<u>112,833</u>	<u>1,320</u>	<u>114,153</u>	<u>87,974</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>89,174</u>
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	<u>112,833</u>	<u>1,320</u>	<u>114,153</u>	<u>87,974</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>89,174</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the accountants of £1,320 (2022- £1,200) for independent examination fees.

8 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

9 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
	<u>11</u>	<u>7</u>
Employment costs	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	244,678	170,720
Social security costs	16,270	10,847
Other pension costs	4,039	3,608
	<u>264,987</u>	<u>185,175</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

10 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2022	1,144
At 31 March 2023	1,144
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2022	953
Depreciation charged in the year	191
At 31 March 2023	1,144
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2023	-
At 31 March 2022	191

12 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	5,359	2,041
Prepayments and accrued income	861	3,804
	6,220	5,845

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	81	-
Accruals and deferred income	8,317	6,502
	8,398	6,502

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

14 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Westminster Foundation	-	-	-	-	5,500	-	5,500
CRH Charitable Trust - counselling delivery and staff costs in Lache and Blacon	9,408	-	(9,408)	-	-	-	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - 1000 Days Project	8,873	-	(8,873)	-	-	-	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Cheshire Minds Matter	8,000	-	(8,000)	-	-	-	-
SJP Charitable Foundation - counselling delivery for school children at risk of exclusion	4,920	4,920	(6,970)	2,870	-	(2,870)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Improving Outcomes in Deprived Neighbourhoods	-	10,000	(2,500)	7,500	-	(7,500)	-
Sanctuary Housing - Lache counselling	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-	-	-
The Pixel Fund	-	7,300	(1,216)	6,084	-	(6,084)	-
DHSC Suicide Prevention Fund	-	26,480	(26,480)	-	-	-	-
Sanctuary Housing	-	-	-	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
Severn Trent	-	-	-	-	10,000	(2,500)	7,500
	<u>31,201</u>	<u>51,200</u>	<u>(65,947)</u>	<u>16,454</u>	<u>18,000</u>	<u>(21,454)</u>	<u>13,000</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

15 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	-	-	-	191	-	191
Current assets/(liabilities)	158,453	13,000	171,453	156,565	16,454	173,019
	<u>158,453</u>	<u>13,000</u>	<u>171,453</u>	<u>156,756</u>	<u>16,454</u>	<u>173,210</u>

16 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2022 - none).

Accounts

Charity registration number 1176429

Company registration number 10729008 (England and Wales)

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mr G Hartley Mr P Rossiter Ms E L Price Miss C Jones Mrs S Taylor Ms A V Gill Mr A Kerr	(Appointed 12 October 2021) (Appointed 19 May 2021)
Patron	David Briggs MBE KStJ	
Chief Executive Officer	Ceri George	
Charity number	1176429	
Company number	10729008	
Registered office	Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre The Parade Blacon Chester CH1 5HN	
Independent examiner	Champion Allwoods Ltd 2nd Floor Refuge House 33-37 Watergate Row Chester CH1 2LE	

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

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PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The charitable objectives of Platform for Life agreed with the Charity Commission are:

1. To enable the treatment and care of parents and parents-to-be who experience individual, societal, economic or relationship psychological stress by the provision of counselling to enable them to provide safe, secure and nurturing environments for their children.
2. To enable the treatment and care of children who are in families where psychological stress could be impairing their normal emotional development by the provision of counselling and play therapy.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the strategy for the year.

Working in communities with high levels of deprivation the charity provides counselling that is:

- Local and Community based, working where clients live so there are no transport problems for them to address or children to pull out of school.
- Flexible, working around clients and not restricting the number of sessions they can access or penalising them if they do not attend every session. The charity understands the challenges they face and tries to be as flexible as possible to their needs and situation at any given time.
- Accessible. The charity aims for short referral times so clients can access support quickly and without the usual levels of bureaucracy.
- Tailored to the needs of each client, providing support for as long as they require it rather than the usual fixed number of sessions (6-8) offered by mainstream mental health services.
- Preventative, with an aim of breaking the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next.
- Family focused, working with the parent(s), child or sometimes both.
- Free of charge to clients.

Platform for Life works in two locations in Chester; Blaen and Lache, both areas which fall within the bottom 10% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. A significant number of families living in these communities have a parent/carer or child and sometimes both, struggling with poor mental health. The charity works closely with local schools, GP practices, health visitors and other community agencies to get referrals and identify those most in need of our help. There is also an option for parent/carers to self-refer themselves or another member of their family into the service directly.

The issues faced by many families are amplified by their social deprivation and a range of past traumas, abuse and other adversities. These include poverty, debt, domestic violence, substance abuse, neglect, absent parents, fractured family relationships, bereavement, special educational needs and for some, family members in prison. The charity focuses on strengthening family relationships and creating more stable and nurturing environments for children. The ultimate aim is to stop the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next. The charity therefore works with parents and children, sometimes together and sometimes separately as appropriate.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Feedback from referrers and clients suggests that the families the charity supports, often find it difficult to access and engage with statutory provision because of a lack of trust as well as inflexible provision, long wait times and high thresholds for severity of mental ill health before they can be seen. They do not have the means to access private therapy and as a result, those who are most in need of therapy for poor mental health, are often least likely to be able to access it.

"I believe Blacon is lucky to have this service. Since COVID-19 we have been working across all of Cheshire West and Chester and many areas have nothing like this to tap into. Talking therapies via the GP or other avenues can take a long time to access whereas your support is very quick." Health visitor

Clients access the charity's service with a broad range of mild to complex mental health issues and referrals are not restricted to only the most severely affected. The aim is to work with clients as early as possible when they experience poor mental health to avoid it becoming a long-term issue that negatively impacts their life chances. The charity finds that delivering a person-centred service in a flexible way in the heart of the local community helps clients engage more effectively.

Demand for the charity's service continued to grow strongly in 2021-22 and 58% more referrals were received compared with the previous year. Whilst the charity saw an increase across all age groups, referrals for young people more than doubled. For the first time since the charity's inception, referrals for children and young people were higher than those for adults. This reflects the national picture which suggests an epidemic of poor mental health amongst England's children and young people, further accelerated by the Covid pandemic. In 2017 the NHS reported 1 in 9 children and young people between the ages of 6 and 16 having a probable mental health condition. By July 2021 this had risen to 1 in 6, equivalent to 5 children and young people in every school classroom.

Over 40% of all referrals came from schools, with self-referrals accounting for a further 20%. Referrals from Medical Centres and Health visitors together contributed a further 20%. The continued strength of self-referrals suggests that, despite the option for many clients to be referred by a GP or other agency, many feel more comfortable referring themselves or another family member directly into Platform for Life's service.

The charity took steps to expand overall counselling capacity to accommodate the growth in demand and delivered 38% more sessions than the previous year. The majority of these were face to face. There are no signs of demand levelling off and the charity anticipates a further growth in client numbers next financial year. This is without extending coverage to other areas of high need in the Chester area.

The growth in the number of sessions the charity delivered happened against the backdrop of a buoyant employment market and strong demand for private practice work. This impacted the availability of some sessional counsellors and led the charity to seek more employed counsellors to ensure continuity of provision. Recruitment in a buoyant market proved challenging but the charity was ultimately successful in appointing four new part time counselling and art/play therapists, all with previous experience of working with clients struggling with significant trauma and life challenges.

Although Covid restrictions were more relaxed during the last financial year, it continued to present challenges for the charity. These included managing Covid related team absences, late cancellations by clients because of Covid and continued disruption in some of the venues where it operates, the result of Covid outbreaks and more caution about opening up to external visitors.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Achievements and performance

Key achievements

- Client referrals increased by 58% to 339, compared with the previous financial year.
- Delivered 2396 counselling sessions between April 2021 and end March 2022, an increase of 38% on the previous 12 months.
- Number of agencies making referrals continued to grow and client self-referrals accounted for 20% of all referrals received.
- Broadly maintained the charity's income levels in a very challenging funding landscape and secured commitment from local schools to making a financial contribution towards the charity's work with their students.
- Expanded the employed and sessional counsellor pool to help meet an increase in demand for our service.
- Successfully delivered 3 pilot projects: Opening up self-referral option to young people at a local high school; 1000 days project providing mental health support to low-income parents during pregnancy and first two years of their child's life; Group work with young people aimed at building greater awareness of mental health and wellbeing.
- Client satisfaction with Platform for Life's service continued to be high, with 98% of adults and young people confirming they would recommend the service to others.

Pilot projects

These pilot projects were set up to test out new ideas for supporting specific client groups and help the charity assess their value and capture any learning before they were extended to a wider client group.

Young person self-referral pilot: allowed young people at a local High school to access the charity's service directly rather than through a referral by their school or GP. As well as giving pupils increased autonomy, the self-referral option allows those pupils who might be struggling silently to access help with mental health issues. In total, 18 young people referred themselves into the service last year through the pilot, attending an average of 9 sessions each. Positive feedback was shared by both the school and pupils, who felt more autonomous and in control of how and when they access mental health support.

1000 days project: supporting low income parents to address mental health issues during pregnancy and first 2 years of an infant's life, a critical period in their development. Improving parents' mental health leads to a safer and more nurturing home environment for the infant, which in turn can positively impact their life chances. 9 clients (8 female and 1 male) took part in this pilot project and with the exception of the 1 male, all were already parents to between 1 and 5 other children. This meant improvements in their mental wellbeing also benefitted their existing families. This is illustrated by the experience of one client, a mother of 5 children, one of whom was a small baby. She told her counsellor that had she not been able to access support with her mental health issues from Platform for Life, she would have found it difficult to avoid going back on drugs as they *"take away the feeling of what you feel like, to be in another kind of place."* This would have had a devastating impact on her and her family.

Young person group work: this was aimed at helping young people build greater awareness of mental health and wellbeing and address lower level mental health issues they may have. 14 young people in two separate groups took part in the pilot. As well as showing improvements in wellbeing scores at the end of the pilot, all young people agreed that having a group that focused on their needs and experiences was helpful and they would (and did) recommend the workshops to their peers. Two young people recognised their need for one to one support and felt empowered to self-refer themselves into our counselling service. Feedback from school staff was also very positive *"As a school, we have found that these sessions have helped to access a larger number of pupils for which the majority need initial interventions of support around managing their emotions and their general wellbeing. It then opens up the conversation further for those that feel they need extra support."*

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Measuring the impact of our work

Platform for Life measures the impact of its work using both quantitative and qualitative information. For adults and young people, CORE 34 and CORE YP quantitative assessment scores are used and with children the Strengths Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Clients are asked to complete an end of counselling feedback form which rates their experience and allows them to share qualitative feedback. They also provide testimonials and stories which capture their individual journeys and progress, including what counselling has enabled them to do which may previously not have been possible e.g. attending school, applying for new jobs, rebuilding relationships with specific individuals etc.

The charity also captures feedback from referrers and sends out a survey to them at the end of each academic year to measure their satisfaction with our service and identify any areas for improvement.

During financial year 2021-2022 84% of adults, 89% of young people and 80% of children reported an improvement in their emotional wellbeing as a result of working with Platform for Life. Feedback suggests that for many, counselling has led to significant changes in their lives. These include building more positive family and peer relationships; accessing education, making successful transitions from primary to high school, pursuing training and further education as an adult, applying for work and feeling more able to deal with other challenges in their life.

Client feedback

"Thank you for being there for me, for helping and letting me trust you. I've never trusted before. I've been able to be open and make big changes. I am completely different to who I was when I started this process. My thinking, the way I react (or not) to negative stuff. I speak more freely and am more confident in myself. My older children don't have to carry me anymore, massive change. Everything has changed for the better. You changed my life."

Adult

"If you're anxious about anything, it's a good place to get it off your chest and forget about your worries."

Child

"I really struggled with lots of panic attacks when I first started counselling. I still have them now from time to time but I can manage them better than I used to. I have learned lots of strategies to help me cope with these feelings. I understand what's happening."

Progress on priorities in last year's report:

Due to the continued uncertainties over Covid, during 2021-2022 the Board opted for flexibility based on a set of priorities agreed at the start of the financial year, which were as follows.

Consolidation of key community relationships to further our objective around broadening access for harder to reach groups.

Good progress. The charity has continued to build up relationships with local community groups such as Blacon Beacon and Lache Larder food banks and shared details of our service and how to make referrals with local Police Community Support Officers. We have also worked closely with a local mental health charity The Chapter on two projects, aimed at supporting wellbeing of specific groups: parents of children with mental health issues and young people.

Continuing to develop and pilot projects that target specific areas of need identified in the communities we work in. This includes supporting more children identified as at risk of exclusion.

Very good progress. As well as the three new pilot projects outlined, the charity is in the second year of a pilot project to support children at risk of exclusion from school.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Developing relationships with relevant mental health local statutory body teams, with a view to securing future funding.

Progress. Whilst the charity has been introduced and begun to develop relationships with a number of contacts in NHS commissioning agencies, the adoption of the new Health and Social Care Bill from July 2022, means substantial changes to the commissioning/delivery of services. As a result, some of the existing contacts we have made will change roles or no longer be in post and so further efforts will be required to build these relationships.

Embedding social impact reporting within our charity, including the capture of longer-term client feedback and impacts.

Good progress. The charity produced its first annual social impact report in June 2021, telling its story during 2020-2021, the families that were supported and the impact this had on their lives.

Continuing to grow awareness of the charity amongst potential clients, referrers, potential funders and more generally online and in the Chester area.

Good progress. The charity's reputation has continued to grow with clients, many of whom have recommended its service to family members, neighbours and friends. Local MP Chris Matheson has been introduced to the charity and visited a school referrer to learn more about its impact on young people. The charity has also pursued local media opportunities and been featured in print and online media.

Implementing a three year charity fundraising plan.

Good progress. The charity has created a detailed fundraising strategy and appointed a fundraising and communications manager to support implementation of this.

Creating an organisation development plan that can fulfil the charity's growth aspirations whilst ensuring staff wellbeing

Good progress. The charity developed a longer-term organisation development plan which was approved by the Board of Trustees in October 2021. The first stage of the plan has been successfully implemented.

Financial review

The trustees believe that the current financial position is healthy with sufficient funds to continue to deliver the current levels of service and to expand, reflecting the increase in demand seen over the past year.

Our reserves policy requires that our free reserves balance should be sufficient to undertake an orderly wind-up of the charity over a six month period. This policy is a prudent approach and would allow us to safely finish counselling without damaging our clients' mental health. In order to do this, we look to keep reserves between 50% and 100% of the current annual expenditure (based on most recent quarter annualised). We ended the year with free reserves of 70% of annual expenditure (based on the final quarter annualised). As in the previous year this year-end balance is inflated due to 75% of our income being credited in the second half of the year.

During the past year, we received income of £215,326. Of this, 64% took the form of unrestricted grants, 24% were restricted grants with the other 12% derived from the provision of counselling services and other income.

We have continued to invest in building the infrastructure of the charity, in order to support the overall growth of our services. Despite this investment, support service costs amounted to 36% of total expenditure, which the Board believes compares favourably with similar charities. We are now seeing the benefit of investments made in the previous year. The clinical database, Lamplight, has been populated and is being used to manage counselling activity, including providing useful management information. In terms of finance and accounting, the use of Sage has been expanded, which both reduces workload and has enabled the production more sophisticated and timely management reports.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

One of our financial objectives during the past financial year has been to diversify our cash deposits between a number of financial institutions in order to ensure our funds enjoy protection from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Progress has been made on this front, with further developments planned for the coming year.

We continue to look to expand our work to meet increased demand from our communities. As a result of the generosity of our funders the charity is on a firm financial footing and the five-year strategic partnership with the Westminster Foundation has been particularly valuable in giving us some long-term stability. Despite the charity's healthy end of year cash position, we will need to actively raise new funds to continue our work with existing clients, meet the growth in demand and maintain cash reserves within the levels required by our policy.

Our key financial objective for the year ahead is therefore to continue to grow our income, both in terms of the absolute amounts raised and to diversify further our sources of funds. We will also review whether our reserves policy should be updated given the increasing maturity of the charity.

Funding sources

The charity is very grateful to its principal grant funders:

Avenue Services
Cheshire Community Foundation
Chester Bluecoat Charity
Marjorie Boddy Trust Pixel Fund
Sanctuary Housing
St James Place Charitable Foundation
Westminster Foundation

Future plans

The charity remains committed to making progress towards the strategic objectives that trustees agreed in June 2021.

- Build and develop community partnerships with other agencies on the basis of mutual benefit, to ensure optimal referral, co-working and post-counselling support.
- Ensure that the charity scopes and finds ways to diversify its client base and ensure it is easy to reach for those who have most to benefit from its service.
- Use qualitative and quantitative data to raise the charity's profile and demonstrate impact.
- Continuously reflect and refine on how the charity can improve its service to clients and be at the forefront of best practice and innovation in this area.
- Recruit, train, develop and retain the highest quality of staff possible and for staff to feel highly valued and recognised in their work.
- Ensure sustainable funding and support for the charity through diverse means and sources and which support its vision and strategic objectives.
- Ensure that the charity's board of trustees have the necessary expertise, structures and systems to provide necessary support, governance and challenges to allow it to achieve its vision and strategic objectives.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Structure, governance and management

The trustees, who are also directors for the purpose of company law, who were the charity's trustees on the date the report was approved or who served as a trustee in the reporting period were:

Dr J Breadon	(Resigned 19 May 2021)
Dr A Garman	(Resigned 19 May 2021)
Mr G Hartley	
Cllr T Richards	(Resigned 29 June 2022)
Mrs W Bell	(Resigned 19 January 2022)
Mr P Rossiter	
Ms E L Price	
Ms B Hook	(Appointed 12 October 2021 and resigned 29 June 2022)
Miss C Jones	(Appointed 12 October 2021)
Mrs L Hill	(Appointed 12 October 2021 and resigned 29 June 2022)
Mrs S Taylor	(Appointed 19 May 2021)
Ms A V Gill	
Mr A Kerr	

Dr John Breadon resigned as Chair and trustee in May 2021 and was replaced by Susan Taylor, who joined the charity following her retirement from Cheshire West and Chester Council. Due to his relocation to the South of England, Dr Andrew Garman who founded the charity, also stepped down as a trustee at this time. A further trustee Wendy Bell resigned in January 2022. The Board has been strengthened with four new trustees, adding skills and experience in social welfare, marketing and counselling.

The Board meets quarterly for routine business. The CEO, Ceri George is in attendance and other members of staff are invited to attend as appropriate. The management of the counselling discipline, together with day-to-day management of clients and associated case management matters, is undertaken by Clinical Director, Della Austin, who reports to the CEO.

The charity has benefitted from external governance support provided by a very experienced Chair and trustee. They helped the charity make good progress on the areas identified at the start of last financial year.

Continue working on clearly defined roles and accountabilities.

- All trustees have attended bespoke governance training session provided by a charity law specialist.
- Charity committee structure reviewed and strengthened to focus on three key areas: HR and Governance; Professional Standards and Social Impact; Finance and Risk Management.
- Chair role description in place and work is ongoing to define these for other trustee roles.

Increase the effectiveness of the risk register by including a 'traffic-light' system and undertaking regular reviews

- Charity reviews risks on quarterly basis within Finance and Risk Management Committee and reports on these at Board meetings.
- Charity has introduced traffic light system for monitoring risks.

Recruit at least one trustee with knowledge of mental health and/or the NHS and one with counselling experience;

- Two qualified counsellor trustees recruited, both with experience of working in the charity sector.

Increase charity cohesion via the flow of knowledge from counsellors to trustees enabling trustees to gain an understanding of the work undertaken and the pressures on the staff ('coalface' understanding of work undertaken).

- Trustees have taken up opportunities to meet with both counselling and operational staff to learn more about the work being undertaken.

Over the next financial year, the Board will continue to focus on these governance areas.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Advisors

We are grateful to our Patron David Briggs who provides input and support on a regular basis. The CEO receives valuable support and advice from a CEO peer support group and the charity has benefitted from skills donors in a number of different marketing areas facilitated by Cheshire Connect. Support and training has also been provided by Cheshire West Voluntary action for which the charity is very grateful.

Safeguarding

The charity has a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually and updated whenever opportunities for improvements are identified. The policy requires that all the charity's personnel have valid DBS certificates and appropriate safeguarding training. The Clinical Director, CEO and Chair of the Board all have level 3 safeguarding certificates.

Volunteers

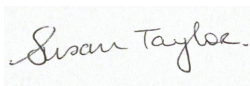
Unlike many counselling charities, Platform for Life does not make extensive use of volunteer counsellors as a matter of policy. This is because the counselling is demanding and mostly requires experience and particular specialisms, which are less common in the volunteer pool. The charity has benefitted from marketing related skills donor volunteers and a teaching professional who has provided one to one literacy support for specific clients.

Auditors

The Company is exempt from audit under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 (accounts and audit) order 2015 as the gross income is less than £1 million. Since our gross income for the year is between £25,000 and £250,000 we have engaged an independent examiner of "appropriate skill or ability" to verify our accounts.

The annual report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (Charities SORP) and the Companies Act 2006 as applicable for a small charitable company.

By order of the board



Mrs S Taylor

Chair/Director

Dated: 06/07/2022.....

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Platform for Life Limited (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Susan Harris MA ACA
Champion Allwoods Limited
Refuge House
33-37 Watergate Row
Chester
CH1 2LE

Dated:

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	137,606	51,200	188,806	175,254	39,360	214,614
Charitable activities	4	26,520	-	26,520	6,925	18,500	25,425
Total income		<u>164,126</u>	<u>51,200</u>	<u>215,326</u>	<u>182,179</u>	<u>57,860</u>	<u>240,039</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	5	<u>180,404</u>	<u>65,947</u>	<u>246,351</u>	<u>126,514</u>	<u>49,621</u>	<u>176,135</u>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds		(16,278)	(14,747)	(31,025)	55,665	8,239	63,904
Fund balances at 1 April		<u>173,034</u>	<u>31,201</u>	<u>204,235</u>	<u>117,369</u>	<u>22,962</u>	<u>140,331</u>
Fund balances at 31 March		<u><u>156,756</u></u>	<u><u>16,454</u></u>	<u><u>173,210</u></u>	<u><u>173,034</u></u>	<u><u>31,201</u></u>	<u><u>204,235</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		191		420
Current assets					
Debtors	10	5,845		3,213	
Cash at bank and in hand		173,676		204,782	
		<u>179,521</u>		<u>207,995</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	<u>(6,502)</u>		<u>(4,180)</u>	
Net current assets			173,019		203,815
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>173,210</u>		<u>204,235</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	12		16,454		31,201
Unrestricted funds			156,756		173,034
			<u>173,210</u>		<u>204,235</u>

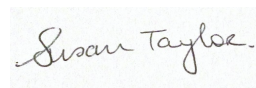
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 06/07/2022



.....
Mrs S Taylor
Chair/Director

Company Registration No. 10729008

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Platform for Life Limited is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre, The Parade, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5HN.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the charity will continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

In accordance with accounting standards, the economic contribution of general volunteers is not included in the accounts.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accrual basis. Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of all its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support costs. Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountants' fees and costs linked to strategic management of the charity.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Plant and equipment	20% straight line
---------------------	-------------------

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £	2021 £	2021 £
Donations and gifts	8,381	-	8,381	15,205	-	15,205
Grants receivable	129,225	51,200	180,425	159,623	39,360	198,983
Fundraising	-	-	-	426	-	426
	<u>137,606</u>	<u>51,200</u>	<u>188,806</u>	<u>175,254</u>	<u>39,360</u>	<u>214,614</u>

4 Charitable activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Counselling services	<u>26,520</u>	<u>25,425</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	26,520	6,925
Restricted funds	<u>-</u>	<u>18,500</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5 Charitable activities

	Counselling 2022 £	Counselling 2021 £
Staff costs	113,083	93,633
Other counselling costs	44,094	22,705
	<u>157,177</u>	<u>116,338</u>
Share of support costs (see note 6)	87,974	58,657
Share of governance costs (see note 6)	1,200	1,140
	<u>246,351</u>	<u>176,135</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	180,404	126,514
Restricted funds	65,947	49,621
	<u>246,351</u>	<u>176,135</u>

6 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2022 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2021 £
Staff costs	72,092	-	72,092	49,746	-	49,746
Depreciation	229	-	229	229	-	229
Admin	2,815	-	2,815	1,513	-	1,513
Other staff costs	5,979	-	5,979	1,729	-	1,729
Rent	3,161	-	3,161	2,358	-	2,358
Insurance	1,387	-	1,387	838	-	838
Telecommunications	2,237	-	2,237	2,116	-	2,116
Charges	74	-	74	128	-	128
Examination fees	-	1,200	1,200	-	1,140	1,140
	<u>87,974</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>89,174</u>	<u>58,657</u>	<u>1,140</u>	<u>59,797</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>87,974</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>89,174</u>	<u>58,657</u>	<u>1,140</u>	<u>59,797</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the accountants of £1,200 (2021- £1,140) for independent examination fees.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

7 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2022 Number	2021 Number
	7	6
Employment costs	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	170,720	133,630
Social security costs	10,847	7,007
Other pension costs	3,608	2,742
	185,175	143,379

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2021	1,144
At 31 March 2022	1,144
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2021	724
Depreciation charged in the year	229
At 31 March 2022	953
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2022	191
At 31 March 2021	420

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

10 Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	2,041	2,582
Prepayments and accrued income	3,804	631
	<u>5,845</u>	<u>3,213</u>

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	<u>6,502</u>	<u>4,180</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

12 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2020	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
CRH Charitable Trust - counselling delivery and staff costs in Lache and Blacon	4,905	14,500	(9,997)	9,408	-	(9,408)	-
Lloyds Bank Foundation - brand development	13,137	-	(13,137)	-	-	-	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - 1000 Days project	-	9,680	(807)	8,873	-	(8,873)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - COVID-19 phase 1	-	3,180	(3,180)	-	-	-	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Cheshire Minds Matter	-	12,000	(4,000)	8,000	-	(8,000)	-
SJP Charitable Foundation - counselling delivery for school children at risk of exclusion	4,920	-	-	4,920	4,920	(6,970)	2,870
Social Finance Limited	-	18,500	(18,500)	-	-	-	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Improving Outcomes in Deprived Neighbourhoods	-	-	-	-	10,000	(2,500)	7,500
Sanctuary Housing - Lache counselling	-	-	-	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
The Pixel Fund	-	-	-	-	7,300	(1,216)	6,084
DHSC Suicide Prevention Fund	-	-	-	-	26,480	(26,480)	-
	<u>22,962</u>	<u>57,860</u>	<u>(49,621)</u>	<u>31,201</u>	<u>51,200</u>	<u>(65,947)</u>	<u>16,454</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

13 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	191	-	191	420	-	420
Current assets/(liabilities)	156,565	16,454	173,019	172,614	31,201	203,815
	<u>156,756</u>	<u>16,454</u>	<u>173,210</u>	<u>173,034</u>	<u>31,201</u>	<u>204,235</u>

14 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2021 - none).

Accounts

Charity Registration No. 1176429

Company Registration No. 10729008 (England and Wales)

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Dr J Breadon Dr A Garman Mr G Hartley Cllr T Richards Mrs W Bell Mr P Rossiter Mr Andrew Kerr Ms Ann Gill Ms Emma Price	(Appointed 20 January 2021) (Appointed 4 November 2020) (Appointed 4 November 2020)
Patron	David Briggs MBE KStJ	
Chief Executive Officer	Ceri George	
Charity number	1176429	
Company number	10729008	
Registered office	Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre The Parade Blacon Chester CH1 5HN	

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

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Balance sheet	13
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PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

The charitable objectives of Platform for Life agreed with the Charity Commission are:

1. To enable the treatment and care of parents and parents-to-be who experience individual, societal, economic or relationship psychological stress by the provision of counselling to enable them to provide safe, secure and nurturing environments for their children.
2. To enable the treatment and care of children who are in families where psychological stress could be impairing their normal emotional development by the provision of counselling and play therapy.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities and setting the strategy for the year.

Working in communities with high levels of deprivation we provide counselling that is:

- Local and Community based, working where our clients live so there are no transport problems for them to address or children to pull out of school.
- Flexible- We work around our clients and don't restrict the number of sessions they can access or penalise them if they don't attend every session. We understand the challenges they face and try to be as flexible as possible to their needs and situation at any given time.
- Accessible- we aim for short referral times so clients can access support quickly and without the usual levels of bureaucracy.
- Tailored to the needs of each client, providing support for as long as they require it rather than the more usual fixed number of sessions.
- Preventative - with an aim of breaking the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next.
- Family focused, working with the parent(s), child or sometimes both.
- Free of charge to clients.

We are currently based in two locations in Chester, Blacon and Lache, both areas of high social deprivation. Both these communities have significant numbers of families struggling with poverty and mental health issues, and referrers we work with cite a lack of appropriate services to help address their mental health. This is reflected in the high demand for our service. We work closely with local schools, GPs practices and community centres to get referrals and identify those most in need of our help.

The clients we work with often struggle to access other mental health provision for several reasons: the life challenges may make it difficult to keep appointments, they may have difficulty with transport or they may find that what is offered by state provision does not meet their needs. This means many of the most vulnerable people - those living with a combination of poverty and poor mental health - fail to access effective help. We find that delivering a person-centred service in a flexible way in the heart of the local community, means that these clients can engage effectively. Clients' attendance rate over the last 12 months was 83%.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Many of the families we work with are living with very challenging issues- debt, use of food banks, Universal Credit, domestic violence, substance abuse, neglect, absent parents and fractured family relationships. We focus on strengthening family relationships and creating more stable and nurturing environments for children. Our ultimate aim is to stop the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next. We therefore work with parents and children, sometimes together and sometimes separately as appropriate. As one Headteacher remarked: *"Only when we see a change in the parent do we see a change in the child."*

Service provision during the COVID-19 pandemic

The last financial year has been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In line with Government guidance (23rd March 2020) to remain at home, we moved from offering an in the community face to face counselling service to one which was delivered remotely. Some clients opted to pause counselling until we could resume meeting them face to face but the majority chose to continue working with us remotely. During this period we offered clients:-

1. Ongoing therapy sessions delivered via telephone, text messaging and WhatsApp video conferencing.
2. Ongoing coaching/psychoeducational sessions via telephone text messaging and WhatsApp video conferencing.
3. A 'drop in' option to address new issues as and when they arose. This was both for clients we continued to work with and those who paused for the duration of lockdown.

We also offered additional/alternative interventions for others in the family e.g. a parent engaging with our service even though work with their child was coming to an end or for us to help give them strategies to support a young child we had been working with who could not engage with us remotely.

As restrictions eased over summer, we adapted once again to offer a mix of face to face and remote sessions and returned to working face to face in schools once they fully re-opened in September 2020. We provided a detailed guidance document and risk assessments to our team for the different venues we work in. These specified the measures we were taking to minimise the risk of infection. When working in schools and local community venues, we also followed any specific guidance they provided. We continued to work in this way until the end of December 2020.

With the resumption of a full lockdown from the 5th January 2021, we once again suspended face to face sessions and adapted to working with clients remotely. In the first lockdown we found some clients reluctant to work remotely, opting to pause until we could resume face to face sessions. During the most recent lockdown, very few clients opted to pause. This may be an indication that clients now feel more comfortable working remotely or that with no clear end date to the lockdown, they did not feel able to wait until face to face sessions could be resumed. Those clients who did opt to pause, are still able to access support via a virtual 'drop in' service.

With the re-opening of schools to all pupils from 8th March 2021, we end the year once again offering a mix of face to face and remote sessions to clients. Whilst the last 12 months have been very challenging, we have been quick to adapt our service in line with restrictions and lockdowns and found new ways to continue our support of clients throughout the pandemic.

Like the rest of the country, Platform for Life's biggest challenges over the last 12 months have been associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. These have included adapting our service at short notice in line with lockdowns and other local restrictions; managing fluctuations in demand linked to the school closures and re-openings; growing capacity, particularly for children's counselling, against a background of restricted availability from some of our counselling pool due to vulnerabilities; increased uncertainty around funding and additional costs to ensure we were able to operate in a COVID-secure way once restrictions were eased between September and November 2020.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

A further challenge during the lockdowns has been the reduced visibility referrers like schools and GPs have had of families struggling with mental health issues. To address this, we have sought other ways to reach families directly and provided self-referral leaflets to local Foodbanks and charities such as Passion for Learning, to include in their food/resource boxes. Leaflets have also been available through the local chemist and Spar retailer. Online, we have posted details about our self-referral option in local community social media groups and promoted it on the home page of our website.

Demand for our service has continued to grow over the last 12 months and the recurring restrictions and lockdowns meant this growth came in spikes. Whilst we expanded our overall counselling capacity to accommodate this, we did come under increased pressure in our work with children and young people. This was due to a mix of circumstances; some sessional counsellors deciding to take up other work and counsellors within our team having vulnerabilities which meant they could not do face to face work in schools. We were able to recruit additional sessional counsellors in Autumn 2020 to ensure we could manage the growth in demand.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and performance

Key features of the past year include:

- Remained open to clients throughout the pandemic, adapting our service in line with local/national restrictions and lockdowns to ensure continuity of support for clients.
- Client referrals into our service increased by 25% to 214 over the last financial year.
- Introduction of a self-referral scheme to reach families who have been less visible to referrers during the pandemic. This was promoted via leaflets in foodbank boxes and online, resulting in 39 self-referrals.
- Delivered 1736 counselling sessions between April 2020 and end March 2021, an increase of 53% on the previous 12 months.
- Expanded local community contacts and relationships to help ensure clients more practical needs (e.g. emergency food parcels, medication requirements, benefits support) were met during the pandemic.
- Delivered project for Cheshire West and Chester Council through a contract with Social Finance, interviewing and capturing the voices/stories of 30 families with experience of school exclusion in all its forms. This is being used to help shape a pilot due to be launched in Autumn 2021 aimed at improving support for children/young people struggling to access education.
- Increased the charity's income by 14% in a very challenging funding landscape.
- Expanded the employed and sessional counsellor pool to help meet an increase in demand for our service.
- Continued development of the charity's skills and infrastructure to help support longer term sustainability.

Measuring the impact of our work

We measure the impact of our work using both quantitative and qualitative information. For adults and young people, we use CORE 34 and CORE YP quantitative assessment scores and with children the Strengths Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). We capture changes clients report through a relationship/external environment wheel that's completed at the beginning and end of counselling. Clients are asked to complete an end of counselling feedback form which rates their experience and allows them to share qualitative feedback. They also provide testimonials and stories which capture their individual journeys and progress, including what counselling has enabled them to do which may previously not have been possible e.g. attending school, applying for new jobs, rebuilding relationships with specific individuals etc.

We also capture feedback from referrers and survey them to measure their satisfaction with our service and identify any areas for improvement. Because of Covid-19 and the additional pressures our referrers in the NHS and schools have been under as a result, we made the decision not to survey them at this time. We plan to resume this part of our impact measurement in the next financial year.

Over the last 12 months 91% of adults and 83% of young people report an improvement in emotional wellbeing as a result of working with Platform for Life. Feedback suggests counselling has led to significant changes in clients' lives; building more positive family and peer relationships; accessing education, making successful transitions from primary to high school, pursuing training and further education as an adult, applying for work and feeling more able to deal with other challenges in their life.

Many clients have commented on how much the regular counsellor contact has helped them through the uncertainty and additional stressors caused by the pandemic. It has provided much needed stability/security and given them an outlet to vent / talk / explore thoughts and feelings away from the people in their house.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Some examples of client feedback are:

"I have learned that I can rely on my counsellor to be there every week; the consistency is beyond perfect. I feel a great sense of genuine trust being built up with every session."

"Counselling has been especially important during this time. It has been one hour for me, when I have little else, no other means of escape. It has been key to my sanity"

A small number of clients confided that they had been having suicidal thoughts and would likely have ended their life if they hadn't been working with a counsellor and knew they had their support.

"If I hadn't had the sessions with you, I don't think I'd be here today."

"It has helped me a lot by keeping me at a stable point for the most part. It has made a difference by preventing me from committing suicide."

Other client feedback

"I didn't think counselling would work for me but once I let down my hard exterior, I learnt to grow, and it was the biggest learning curve for me. It was good knowing I had that one person who understood me. I used to be explosive but now I feel stable and have realised there are other feelings in life. I can't change the past, but I can impact the future. I have learned to control my anger and communication has opened up my relationship with my partner." - Parent

"For once in my life I am able to face things that would normally have weakened me." - Parent

"I started believing that I will drown in this situation and no one will ever come to rescue me. I was in my darkest phase of life. Lost all hope for recovery. Platform for Life acted like a lifeline for me. It is really a life saving engine where somebody can feed their problem and worries and in return get solution to move ahead." - Parent

"I have hope and for the first time ever I don't feel stupid. I can and I will do things, life is going to be good for me and my boys; we are all getting on so much better now we actually have laugh. Me doing my courses is making my lads think how important school is too." - Parent

"It's definitely made a difference to me. I am more confident. I put things into practice which helps us both. To begin with I thought it was only my son who needed help but looking back I needed help too. I wish I had accessed this a long time ago." - Parent

"I can talk about issues and problems with someone I would never talk about with anyone else, someone I can trust and with someone that listens" - Young person

"I feel much better about myself and have built up relationships with friends and family. I have applied for a job when I did not think I could." - Young person

"I really enjoyed my sessions with L. I loved playing games and explaining Minecraft to her. I felt better after my sessions. I knew I could talk to L about my feelings and she would help me understand them." - Child

We are looking at ways to capture the longer-term impact of our work on clients' lives. We now ask all clients that we work with for permission to follow up with them 12 months after they finish counselling and this is recorded on their data management file.

A few months ago, we received unprompted feedback from one of the first clients Platform for Life worked with, demonstrating the longer term impact our counselling has. This parent had a history of abusive relationships, significant debt issues and was unable to leave the house when we first started working with them and their two children.

"I am currently enrolled on a swim teacher course and also have an induction to work at Tesco over Christmas. The kids are both in school and doing well. I just wanted to thank you as even though I still have episodes and still self doubt and lack confidence, if it weren't for all the help you have given me I don't think I'd be doing any of these things."

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Infrastructure

In February 2020 we implemented Lamplight data management system, which has helped us to be more data efficient and improve data security. The set-up and first year operational costs were funded as part of an Enable grant from Lloyds Bank Foundation. The system is now fully operational and being used consistently by all staff. Lamplight makes it much easier for us to analyse data, look for trends and produce specific reports to help us monitor our performance and outcomes.

We have continued to develop our operational policies and procedures, with a particular focus on ensuring we have effective financial governance in place to support the charity over the longer term. We have implemented SAGE accounting software and working with Lloyds Bank as part of their Skills Exchange programme, have strengthened our financial control and planning procedures.

Progress on priorities in last year's report:

Given the unknown impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of our beneficiaries and how it might affect our service model, the Board decided against setting rigid objectives for the charity at the start of last year. Instead, the Board opted for flexibility based on a set of strategic objectives and principles which were agreed at a March 2020 vision and strategy workshop. Despite a challenging year, we have been able to make progress against a number of these objectives.

To build community partnerships so that we also tackle the psychosocial stress

Good progress. One of the positives from the pandemic has been the way in which local agencies and charities have worked together in a more joined up way to meet the needs of communities. We have built relationships in Blacon and Lache with the social prescriber, Citizen's Advice Community Connectors and Foodbanks. These have helped ensure clients have been able to access food boxes, medical support, prescription pick-ups and benefits advice during the pandemic. We have also connected with a number of local charities like Kids Bank and Passion for Learning, who have offered further support to clients.

To develop a more holistic approach to mental health, pre- and post-therapy

Good progress. Our adapted Covid-19 service, has included a drop-in service and working remotely with clients using a mix of telephone, Whatsapp video and texting. Feedback from clients has been very positive and they like the flexible approach we have taken. It is very likely that we will continue to offer the option of some remote sessions once restrictions are fully lifted, as this could help further improve access for those clients who struggle to leave their home.

To broaden access to hard-to-reach groups and expand to other communities

Progress. We have developed a project to support children/young people identified as at risk of exclusion from school, with counselling. Our plan to extend into Kingsway area of Chester has been delayed because of a surge in demand from the 2 areas we already offer our service in.

To demonstrate the full impact of our work on the lives of our clients, those around them and on society as a whole

Good progress. The quantitative assessments we use are now completed online via Lamplight. Counsellors have a start and end of counselling tick-list they use to ensure they collect information to assess the impact of our service. We have built a strong evidence bank of impact via case studies, client testimonials and feedback.

To raise our profile and promote a deeper understanding of the mental health needs in disadvantaged communities, and of our approach to tackle those needs

Good progress. We have developed our online profile via social media and been given media coverage through a small number of local press stories. We have also begun developing relationships with local statutory bodies and sharing more about our approach.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Be a learning organisation, allowing space to learn more about the communities we work in and how best to serve them

Good progress. We have sought feedback from clients throughout the pandemic about their experience of our service, their practical needs and the challenges they face. This has helped deepen our understanding, adapt our service in a flexible way during the lockdowns and provided a focus for the connections we have fostered with other local organisations to support clients in a more joined up way.

Be a great place to work, nurturing staff well-being and expertise growth

Progress. The pandemic has placed additional pressures on the team. The charity has a positive and supportive culture for all staff. There are training opportunities for all staff to develop skills and expertise further and procedures are in place to gather staff feedback.

Ensuring smooth and reliable funding growth by diversifying our income sources

Good progress. The charity has increased funding sources over the last 12 months and made progress raising our profile and building relationships with statutory bodies and local businesses.

Future plans

With the Covid-19 pandemic not yet over, the charity anticipates another year of turbulence and uncertainty. We remain committed to making progress towards our strategic objectives, whilst recognising the need to remain flexible and adapt in line with future Covid-19 related restrictions.

Our priorities for the year ahead include:-

- Consolidation of key community relationships to further our objective around broadening access for harder to reach groups.
- Continuing to develop and pilot projects that target specific areas of need identified in the communities we work in. This includes supporting more children identified as at risk of exclusion.
- Developing relationships with relevant mental health local statutory body teams, with a view to securing future funding.
- Embedding social impact reporting within our charity, including the capture of longer-term client feedback and impacts.
- Continuing to grow awareness of the charity amongst potential clients, referrers, potential funders and more generally online and in the Chester area.
- Implementing a three year charity fundraising plan.
- Creating an organisation development plan that can fulfil the charity's growth aspirations whilst ensuring staff wellbeing.

In addition, we also plan to begin offering counselling to adults in Kingsway from June 2021 and to children in one of the key local primary school from September 2021.

Financial review

The trustees believe that the current financial position is healthy with sufficient funds to continue to deliver the current levels of service and to expand to meet some of the expected demand post-Covid.

Our reserves policy requires that our free reserves balance should be kept between 50% and 100% of the current annual expenditure (based on most recent quarter annualised). This policy would allow us to safely finish counselling without damaging our clients' mental health and this level of reserves has been met throughout the year. We ended the year with free reserves of 95% of annual expenditure (based on the final quarter annualised). As in the previous year this figure is inflated due to almost 75% of our income being credited in the second half of the year. A part of our income (£18,500), specifically related to a contract secured with Social Finance, to interview families whose children had/were struggling to access their education in the Cheshire West area.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

This year, in line with the growth and evolution of the charity, we have again invested in our administration and infrastructure. This expenditure now accounts for 34% of total expenditure, however the Board believes that this proportion is still modest compared with similar charities. This investment is yielding dividends. The clinical database, Lamplight, has been populated and is beginning to yield useful information. We have implemented Sage for our accounts. In time that will both reduce workload and provide more sophisticated management reports enabling more effective financial management. Our financial policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated. Importantly our engagement with the Lloyds Bank Skills Exchange programme, which provides expert support to charities, has re-assured us that our financial management is robust.

There is a good opportunity to expand our work further as a result of the generosity of our funders. The five-year strategic partnership with the Westminster Foundation has been particularly valuable in giving us some long-term stability. However, we could not operate at the desired level without also attracting further grant income. Despite the charity's healthy end of year cash position, we will need to actively raise funds to continue our work with existing clients, meet the growth in demand and maintain cash reserves within the levels required by our policy.

Our financial objectives for the year ahead include: to spread our cash deposits between several platforms to ensure that that our funds have FSCS protection and to continue the challenging task of attempting to diversify our sources of income as we strive to become sustainable.

Funding sources

We are very grateful to our principal grant funders:

Avenue Services
Cheshire Community Foundation
CRH Charitable Trust
Development of the Youth of Chester Fund
MBNA Foundation
National Lottery Community Fund
Pixel Fund
Redrow Kings Moat Community Fund
St James Place Charitable Foundation
Westminster Foundation

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity. The governing document is the Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also directors for the purpose of company law, who were the charity's trustees on the date the report was approved or who served as a trustee in the reporting period were:

Dr J Breadon	
Mr A Burch	(Resigned 30 April 2020)
Dr A Garman	
Mr G Hartley	
Cllr T Richards	
Mrs W Bell	
Mr P Rossiter	
Mrs K Wilson	(Resigned 30 April 2020)
Mr Andrew Kerr	(Appointed 20 January 2021)
Ms Ann Gill	(Appointed 4 November 2020)
Ms Emma Price	(Appointed 4 November 2020)

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

In November 2020 the charity's Vice Chair Dr John Breadon took over from Dr. Andrew Garman to become Interim Chair. Dr Garman continues to serve as a trustee. The board has been further strengthened by new trustees with skills in finance, primary education and research into social sciences.

The Board meets annually for strategic planning and quarterly for routine business. Additional meetings occur as necessary, for instance to agree our response to the Covid pandemic. The CEO, Ceri George, the Clinical Director, Della Austin and the Finance and Client Support Manager, Laura Nield are in attendance. Other members of staff are invited to attend as appropriate. The management of the counselling discipline, together with day-to-day management of clients and associated case management matters, is undertaken by our Clinical Director, Della Austin, who reports to the CEO.

The trustees have kept under review the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

We review our governance practices annually, using the Charity Commission's Governance Code as a framework, and take action where areas for improvement are identified. Based on the findings from previous reviews we identified two areas for improvement and have acted on each.

- Board effectiveness: we have further diversified the board in terms of skills and experience. We have also taken steps to improve the functioning of the board by providing opportunities for increased interaction between trustees and by formalising the committee structure.
- Understanding the mental health stresses faced by our beneficiaries: a project commissioned and funded by the Social Finance organisation has involved thirty interviews with families of children 'not accessing education'. The project over-achieved on the objectives set by the funder whilst also increasing our knowledge and understanding of our potential clients.

For the year ahead we have identified the need to:

- Continue working on clearly defined roles and accountabilities. A key piece of work in this regard, to be undertaken in the first instance by the Governance Committee, is the creation of a Scheme of Delegation, designed to complement our existing policy documents and in particular the Terms of Reference for each of the charity's sub-committee;
- Increase the effectiveness of the risk register by including a 'traffic-light' system and undertaking regular reviews;
- Recruit at least one trustee with knowledge of mental health and/or the NHS and one with counselling experience;
- Increase charity cohesion via the flow of knowledge from counsellors to trustees enabling trustees to gain an understanding of the work undertaken and the pressures on the staff. ('coalface' understanding of work undertaken).

Advisors

We are grateful to our Patron David Briggs who provides input and support on a regular basis. The CEO receives valuable support and advice from a CEO peer support group 'Connect, Lead and Learn'. The charity has also benefitted from skills donors in marketing and strategy areas facilitated by Cheshire Connect.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Safeguarding

The charity has a Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed annually and updated whenever opportunities for improvements are identified. The policy requires that all the charity's personnel have valid DBS certificates and have appropriate safeguarding training. The Clinical Director, CEO and Chair of the Board all have level 3 safeguarding certificates.

Volunteers

Unlike many counselling charities, we do not make extensive use of volunteer counsellors as a matter of policy. This is because our counselling is demanding and mostly requires experience and particular specialisms, which are less common in the volunteer pool. We have benefitted from skilled donor volunteers in marketing and strategy areas.

Auditors

The Company is exempt from audit under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 (accounts and audit) order 2015 as the gross income is less than £1 million. Since our gross income for the year is between £25,000 and £250,000 we have engaged an independent examiner of "appropriate skill or ability" to verify our accounts.

The annual report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (Charities SORP) and the Companies Act 2006 as applicable for a small charitable company.

By order of the board



.....
Mr P Rossiter

Trustee/Director

Dated: 17/06/21

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Platform for Life Limited (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Champion Allwoods Limited

Susan Harris MA ACA
Champion Allwoods Limited
Refuge House
33-37 Watergate Row
Chester
CH1 2LE

Dated: 21 June 2021

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	175,254	39,360	214,614	171,425	34,420	205,845
Charitable activities	4	6,925	18,500	25,425	4,620	-	4,620
Total income		182,179	57,860	240,039	176,045	34,420	210,465
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	5	126,514	49,621	176,135	76,443	30,770	107,213
Gross transfers between funds		-	-	-	7,924	(7,924)	-
Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds		55,665	8,239	63,904	107,526	(4,274)	103,252
Fund balances at 1 April		117,369	22,962	140,331	9,843	27,236	37,079
Fund balances at 31 March		173,034	31,201	204,235	117,369	22,962	140,331

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		420		649
Current assets					
Debtors	10	3,213		6,156	
Cash at bank and in hand		204,782		136,871	
		<u>207,995</u>		<u>143,027</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	<u>(4,180)</u>		<u>(3,345)</u>	
Net current assets			203,815		139,682
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>204,235</u>		<u>140,331</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	12	31,201		22,962	
Unrestricted funds		173,034		117,369	
		<u>204,235</u>		<u>140,331</u>	

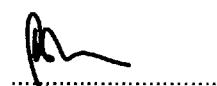
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 19/06/21



Mr P Rossiter
Trustee/Director

Company Registration No. 10729008

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Platform for Life Limited is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 8 Parade Enterprise Centre, The Parade, Blacon, Chester, CH1 5HN.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities applying FRS 102 Update Bulletin 1 not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the charity will continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

The trustees have considered the on-going situation with regards to COVID-19 as part of their going concern assessment. The view of the trustees is that, whilst they acknowledge the significant disruption that the pandemic has brought and will continue to bring over the coming weeks and months, they believe that the charity is well placed to negotiate the unique set of conditions currently facing the UK economy, which gives the directors comfort in being able to meet the company's liabilities for the coming 12 months.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

In accordance with accounting standards, the economic contribution of general volunteers is not included in the accounts.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is included on an accrual basis. Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of all its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support costs. Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the accountants' fees and costs linked to strategic management of the charity.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Plant and equipment	20% straight line
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The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2021 £	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £	2020 £
Donations and gifts	15,205	-	15,205	16,477	-	16,477
Grants receivable	159,623	39,360	198,983	150,428	34,420	184,848
Fundraising	426	-	426	4,520	-	4,520
	<u>175,254</u>	<u>39,360</u>	<u>214,614</u>	<u>171,425</u>	<u>34,420</u>	<u>205,845</u>

4 Charitable activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Counselling services	<u>25,425</u>	<u>4,620</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	6,925	4,620
Restricted funds	18,500	-
	<u>25,425</u>	<u>4,620</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

5 Charitable activities

	Counselling 2021 £	Counselling 2020 £
Staff costs	93,633	48,789
Other counselling costs	22,705	12,200
	<u>116,338</u>	<u>60,989</u>
Share of support costs (see note 6)	58,657	45,426
Share of governance costs (see note 6)	1,140	798
	<u>176,135</u>	<u>107,213</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	126,514	76,443
Restricted funds	49,621	30,770
	<u>176,135</u>	<u>107,213</u>

6 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2021 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2020 £
Staff costs	49,746	-	49,746	35,244	-	35,244
Depreciation	229	-	229	229	-	229
Admin	1,513	-	1,513	1,619	-	1,619
Other staff costs	1,729	-	1,729	839	-	839
Rent	2,358	-	2,358	3,526	-	3,526
Insurance	838	-	838	415	-	415
Telecommunications	2,116	-	2,116	1,603	-	1,603
Charges	128	-	128	88	-	88
Brand development	-	-	-	1,863	-	1,863
Examination fees	-	1,140	1,140	-	600	600
Board expenses	-	-	-	-	198	198
	<u>58,657</u>	<u>1,140</u>	<u>59,797</u>	<u>45,426</u>	<u>798</u>	<u>46,224</u>
Analysed between Charitable activities	<u>58,657</u>	<u>1,140</u>	<u>59,797</u>	<u>45,426</u>	<u>798</u>	<u>46,224</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the accountants of £1,140 (2020- £1,140) for independent examination fees.

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

7 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2021 Number	2020 Number
	6	4
Employment costs	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	133,630	76,438
Social security costs	7,007	6,186
Other pension costs	2,742	1,409
	143,379	84,033

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2020	1,144
At 31 March 2021	1,144
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2020	495
Depreciation charged in the year	229
At 31 March 2021	724
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2021	420
At 31 March 2020	649

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

10 Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	2,582	3,099
Prepayments and accrued income	631	3,057
	<u>3,213</u>	<u>6,156</u>

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accruals and deferred income	<u>4,180</u>	<u>3,345</u>

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

12 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	Movement in funds		Transfers £	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Movement in funds		Balance at 31 March 2021 £
		Incoming resources £	Resources expended £			Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	
Cheshire Community Foundation - counselling delivery in Lache and Blacon	10,979	-	(10,979)	-	-	-	-	-
Chester Municipal - counselling delivery and staff costs in Lache and Blacon	513	-	-	(513)	-	-	-	-
CRH Charitable Trust - counselling delivery and staff costs in Lache and Blacon	3,333	14,500	(12,928)	-	4,905	14,500	(9,997)	9,408
Westminster Foundation - counselling delivery in Blacon and Chester including Ellesmere Port	3,750	-	-	(3,750)	-	-	-	-
Anne Duchess of Westminster - counselling delivery in Blacon	5,000	-	(5,000)	-	-	-	-	-
Cheshire West & Chester - counselling delivery	3,661	-	-	(3,661)	-	-	-	-
Lloyds Bank Foundation - brand development	-	15,000	(1,863)	-	13,137	-	(13,137)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - 1000 Days project	-	-	-	-	-	9,680	(807)	8,873
Cheshire Community Foundation - COVID-19 phase 1	-	-	-	-	-	3,180	(3,180)	-
Cheshire Community Foundation - Cheshire Minds Matter	-	-	-	-	-	12,000	(4,000)	8,000
SJP Charitable Foundation - counselling delivery for school children at risk of exclusion	-	4,920	-	-	4,920	-	-	4,920
Social Finance Limited	-	-	-	-	-	18,500	(18,500)	-
	27,236	34,420	(30,770)	(7,924)	22,962	57,860	(49,621)	31,201

PLATFORM FOR LIFE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

13 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	420	-	420	649	-	649
Current assets/(liabilities)	172,614	31,201	203,815	116,720	22,962	139,682
	<u>173,034</u>	<u>31,201</u>	<u>204,235</u>	<u>117,369</u>	<u>22,962</u>	<u>140,331</u>

14 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2020 - none).

