

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK



PLATF **FORM**

For mental health and social change
Dros iechyd meddwl a newid cymdeithasol

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CHANGING THE NARRATIVE AROUND MENTAL HEALTH



1 WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear applicant

Thank you for your interest in the role of Trustee with Platform. We are looking to recruit a number of new Trustees to our Board which we intend to do in two tranches over the next twelve months. As we complete a merger with the Mayday Trust, we bring our learning and experience together and expand our work in Wales into England. It is a busy and exciting time.

I joined the Platform Board in 2020. I was initially attracted to Platform because of the organisation's purpose and ambition, and the clarity of its strategy. It was clear we had a shared value and commitment to social justice. This is very much at the heart of our thinking and actions.

I was particularly taken by the honesty of Platform's anti-racism statement. This not only acknowledges being part of the problem but sets out an action plan, demonstrating a commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation. We still have much to do and as Chair part of my role is to ensure we stretch our ambitions and do not become complacent.

I stepped into the Chair role in September 2023, following in the footsteps of Ubongabasi Obot. I am proud to be part of the leadership of an organisation where we strive to live our values in all that we do, and work hard to deliver on ambition. I am also so happy that we do the work, even when it's tough with smiles on our faces, with kindness and humour. We work hard, and we laugh a lot.

For me, the culture of our Governance sets the bar for what we expect from the rest of the Platform team – our values of connectedness, compassion, bravery, and curiosity are how we do our business together.

We are welcoming, open, honest, and kind to each other. Our meetings, whilst focused and well-structured, are relatively informal and relaxed, encouraging diversity of thought plus opportunities for innovation.

We meet as a full Board every six weeks and have two standing committees, the Governance and Remuneration Committee and the Business Resilience Committee, which meet four times a year. We are keeping this structure under review as we ensure our governance is fit for now and the future - so things might change.

We are growing fast and we need to ensure robust scrutiny whilst ensuring there is enough time at full board meetings for generative thinking, strategy and a deep understanding of our impact, influence and delivery of our purpose.

We expect high standards of papers and presentation from our CEO and the executive team, and we keep things moving at pace. We expect preparation, attendance, and engagement from our Trustees.

I thank you again for your interest in our work and wish you well with your application. If you would like an informal discussion about the role, you are welcome to talk to Ewan Hilton our CEO. You can arrange a time for a call with him by contacting Heidi O'Driscoll, Executive Team PA, at heidiodriscoll@platform.org.

With my best wishes

Anne-Louise Clark
Chair of Board of Trustees

2 WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Platform is the charity for mental health and social change.

We are rooted in the experiences of the people we support, in the communities in which we work, and in our fight for social justice.

We started life in the late 80's as Gofal Housing trust, a small Welsh charity based in Bridgend in South Wales, providing housing and support to adults leaving long-stay psychiatric institutions. Over the years we have grown and diversified what we do to offer support to people experiencing challenges with their mental health.

In 2018, we sensed a need to change. Even though Gofal was looking successful on the outside, it wasn't feeling that way on the inside. We started to reflect on what we had become, and to think about our purpose - and we started to realise that although good work was being done, we were also part of the problem within the mental health system.

We began a strategic review of who were and what we wanted to be; it was clear to us that we needed to change. A blog from our CEO written at the time sums up where our thinking took us: <https://platform.org/blog/on-calling-it-out/>

We didn't know when we started our review that Platform would be the result - but it was, and on 24th July 2019 we launched our new strategy and our new brand. Platform for Change was born.

There was now a refreshed mission, a clear purpose and a focused strategy setting our direction of travel. We handed work back to commissioners that no longer sat right with our purpose and values.

Our Vision is

Sustainable wellbeing for all.

Sustainable meaning "long lasting," Wellbeing meaning "a sense of purpose, optimism, hope, agency, and direction", and All meaning "us, our community, who we work with, and wider human and non-human communities."

Our Mission is to

change the dominant narrative around mental health

- By advocating for an understanding of the role that trauma, life experiences and socio-economic circumstances have on our mental health and ability to heal.
- By making the evidence for this accessible to help shift public perceptions.

make our 'helping systems' work better for people

- By changing how we provide services to people in distress.
- Focus first on the mental health, housing, homelessness, and young people's systems we interact with.

Our mission is the litmus test for everything we do and importantly don't do. If it doesn't pass the litmus test then we don't do it.

It has been and continues to be an adventure where we are learning every day – things move fast, we experiment, we fail, and we succeed.



**WE ARE A
MISSION DRIVEN
CHARITY.**

PLATF FORM

BRAVE, COMPASSIONATE, CONNECTED, CURIOUS

OUR VALUES

In everything we do we strive to be

- **Brave**
because we want to change the world.
- **Compassionate**
because we believe this is so often missing from our helping services.
- **Connected**
because without connection we are nothing.
- **Curious**
because we never want to stop learning.

What we do

- **Crisis prevention and home**
Crisis services, supported accommodation, homelessness prevention and specialist housing support.
- **Employment, volunteering, and skills development**
Work placements, peer mentoring, qualifications and community support.

- **Children, young people, families, and communities**
Wellbeing programmes, one-to-one and group support, peer networks, out of hours drop-in, community projects.
- **Wellbeing**
Talking therapies, clinical supervision, workplace wellbeing, trauma informed organisations and bespoke consultation.

We work to make the world a better place through:

- **Influence**
Policy, public affairs and campaigns work to change public sector systems and evolve the narrative around mental health. You can find out more about our work here: <https://platform.org/system-change/>

Why have we adopted a social justice model of mental health?

Core to becoming Platform was a realisation that our mental health systems aren't fit for purpose. They're built around medical concepts that look at symptoms, and then try to find and treat the cause of those symptoms within the person.

But mental health doesn't work like that. An increasing body of evidence shows us that our distress is a response to our past experiences and current circumstances – not the result of something 'wrong' within us that can be 'fixed.'

Therefore, in order to actually progress towards our visions of 'wellbeing for all,' we need to look at the root causes of distress – within our society, within our individual and collective traumas, and within our relationships or lack thereof.

This model of understanding mental health needs to be reflected within mental health services and systems, and government policy needs to allow for and make provision for this. And within Platform, too, we need to demonstrate this approach – within the support we offer, the changes we call for, and our own organisational culture.

That organisational culture must be embodied by our leadership at all levels, including the Board – and it's a key role of the Board to balance our ambition as a charity with our responsibility as an employer, moving us forward in a sustainable way, and making sure our teams are with us along the way.

This starts with living our values: Brave, Compassionate, Connected and Curious. They're our touchstone to question and guide our approach each step of the way.

To find out more about the social determinants of mental health, and the evidence behind our approach, read our manifesto at platform.org/manifesto

“ THE WONDERFUL EFFRO HAS BEEN A SUPPORT TO MY HUSBAND AND MYSELF FOR OVER TWO YEARS. THE ACTIVITIES HAVE BROUGHT CHEER TO MY HUSBAND AND ENCOURAGED A SENSE OF WELLBEING. THE TEAM HAS SUPPORTED ME IN MANY WAYS INCLUDING COMING TO TERMS WITH DIFFICULT AND EMOTIONAL SITUATIONS AS A RESULT OF MANAGING MY HUSBAND’S DEMENTIA”.

Person whose loved one accessed support through our Effro dementia project

“ I HAVE NEVER BEEN ANYWHERE LIKE THIS. I WAS NERVOUS, BUT ALL STAFF SHOWED ME KINDNESS. I WAS AFRAID OF BEING JUDGED BUT NO, THEY SAW ME AS A PERSON AND THEY ARE ALL FAB HERE”.

Guest at Tŷ Cynnal crisis support house

OUR WORK AND IMPACT

- We employ circa 300 staff and over 100 volunteers and associates.
- We support over 12,000 people a year across more than 150 projects and services.

Within this, 4,930 were across our Crisis Prevention and Homes work; a place of safety where people can feel safe, especially during times of crisis, is a cornerstone of wellbeing. 84% of those we worked with through these projects reported an improvement to their mental health and wellbeing – and 81% said they felt more able to manage their own accommodation.

Our Children, Young People and Families teams worked with 3,708 people, with 87% saying that their wellbeing improved. 97% felt listened to and heard – this a really key point for us, as much of our services in this area are built on the idea of co-production, and of making sure that young people’s views and experiences form a core part of designing the services that offer them support.

This central aim of providing support as people find their own way forwards is also reflected in our Employment programmes, which worked with 676 people last year. Forming new connections within communities where these projects work is a good example of the ways in which we aim to work across the organisation; taking the

time to listen, and to understand the root causes of the barriers people face in life.

We have a growing footprint, working mostly in Wales with a gradual geographical spread into England.

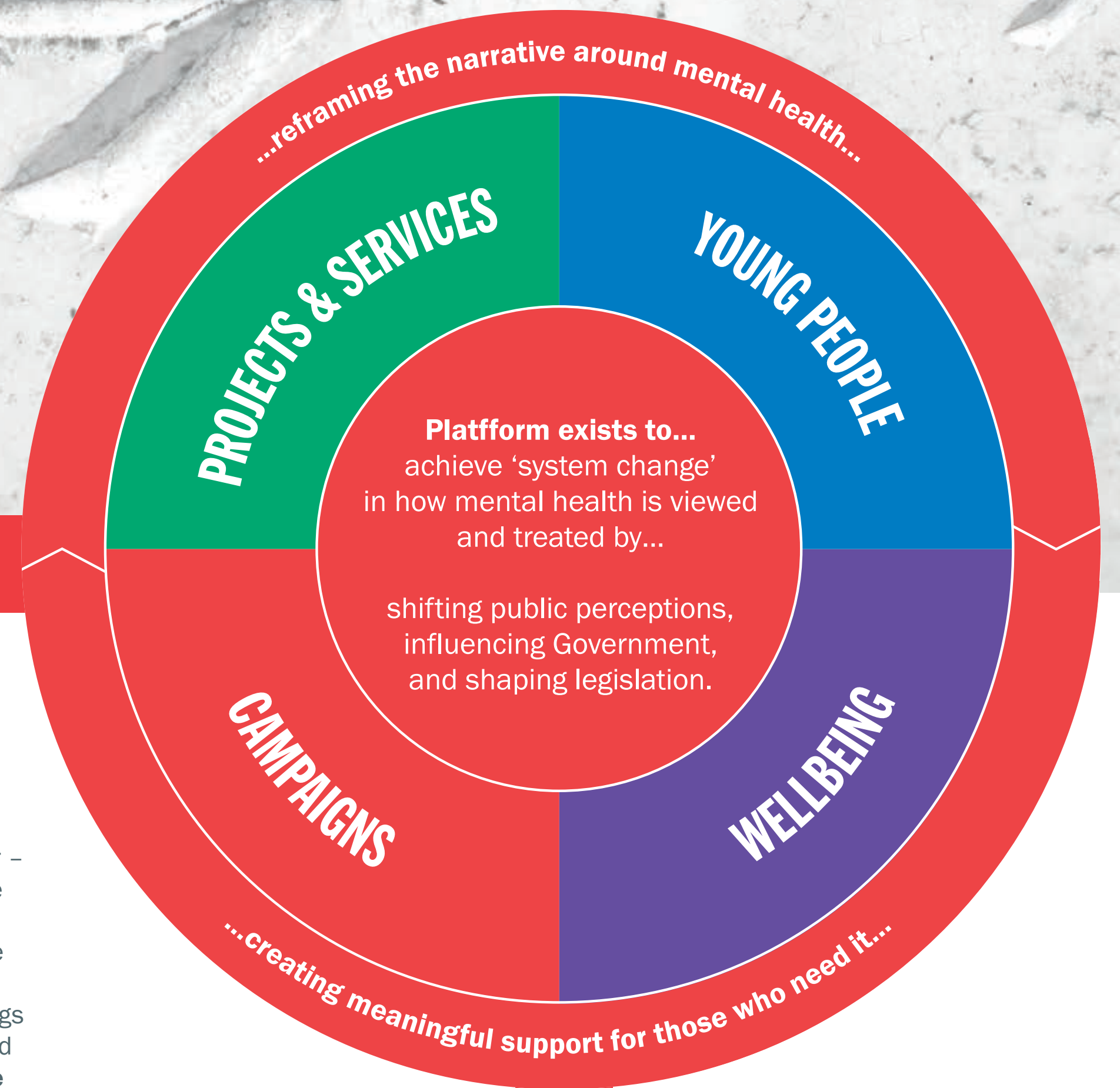
In July 2023 the Mayday Trust approached us to explore a merger – our long-standing relationship and commitment to system change meant that it passed the ‘litmus test.’ Bringing our work together and building on our shared learning and experiences will increase our reach and impact. In October Mayday became a subsidiary of Platform and full integration into Platform is underway. This brings with it an opportunity to make a strategic move into England – find out more about this merger further in the pack under **Doing more together: new merger brings new horizon.**

“ PLATFORM ENABLED ME TO ACCESS THE SUPPORT I NEEDED IN A WAY THAT WAS LED BY ME, AS THE YOUNG PERSON [...] I COULD DECIDE WHAT CHANGES I NEEDED TO MAKE IN MY OWN LIFE. PLATFORM WAS THERE TO SUPPORT ME THROUGH THIS PROCESS AND HELP ME ACCESS ANY TOOLS OR RESOURCES THAT I NEEDED.”

Young person accessing support in Swansea

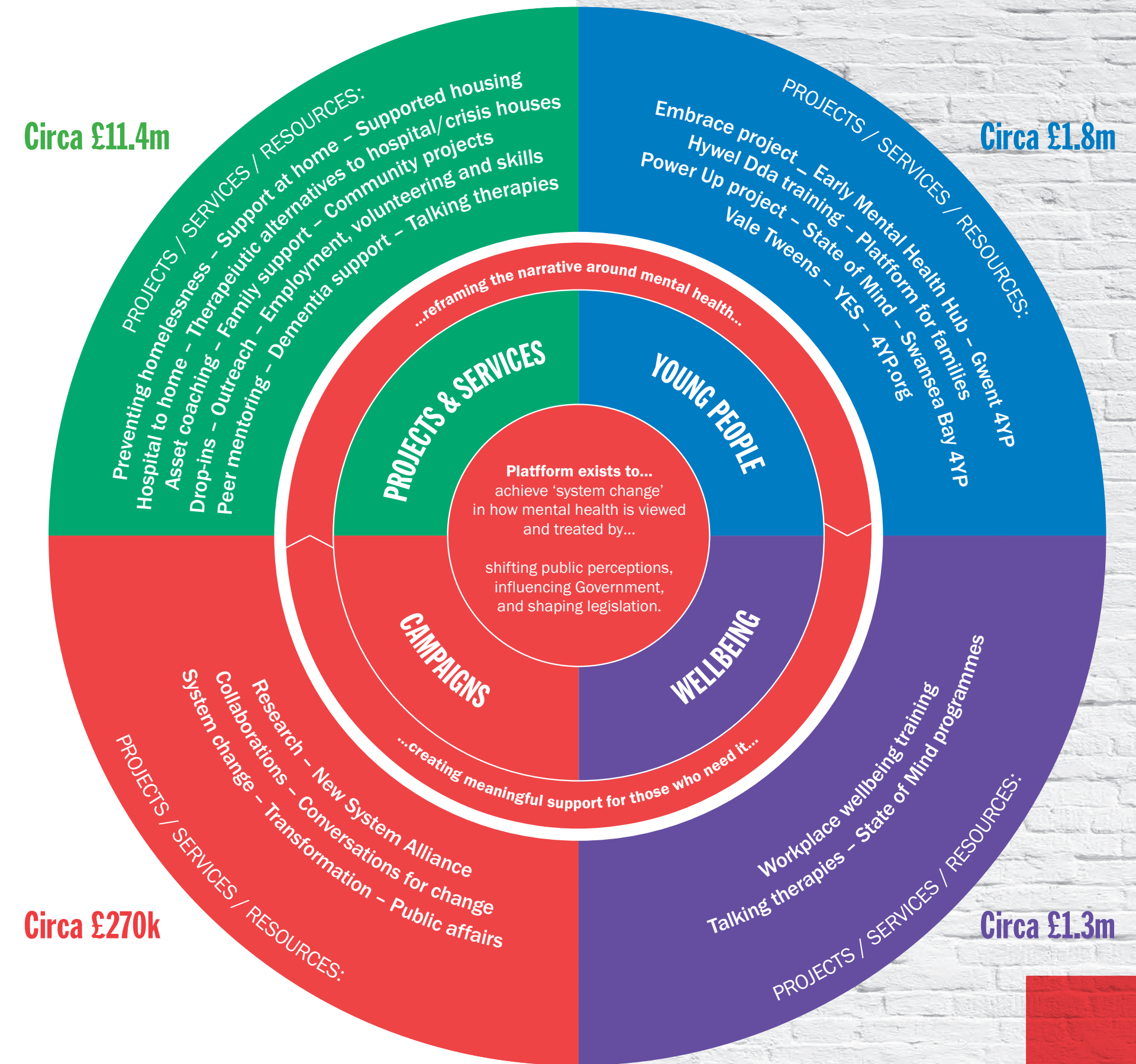
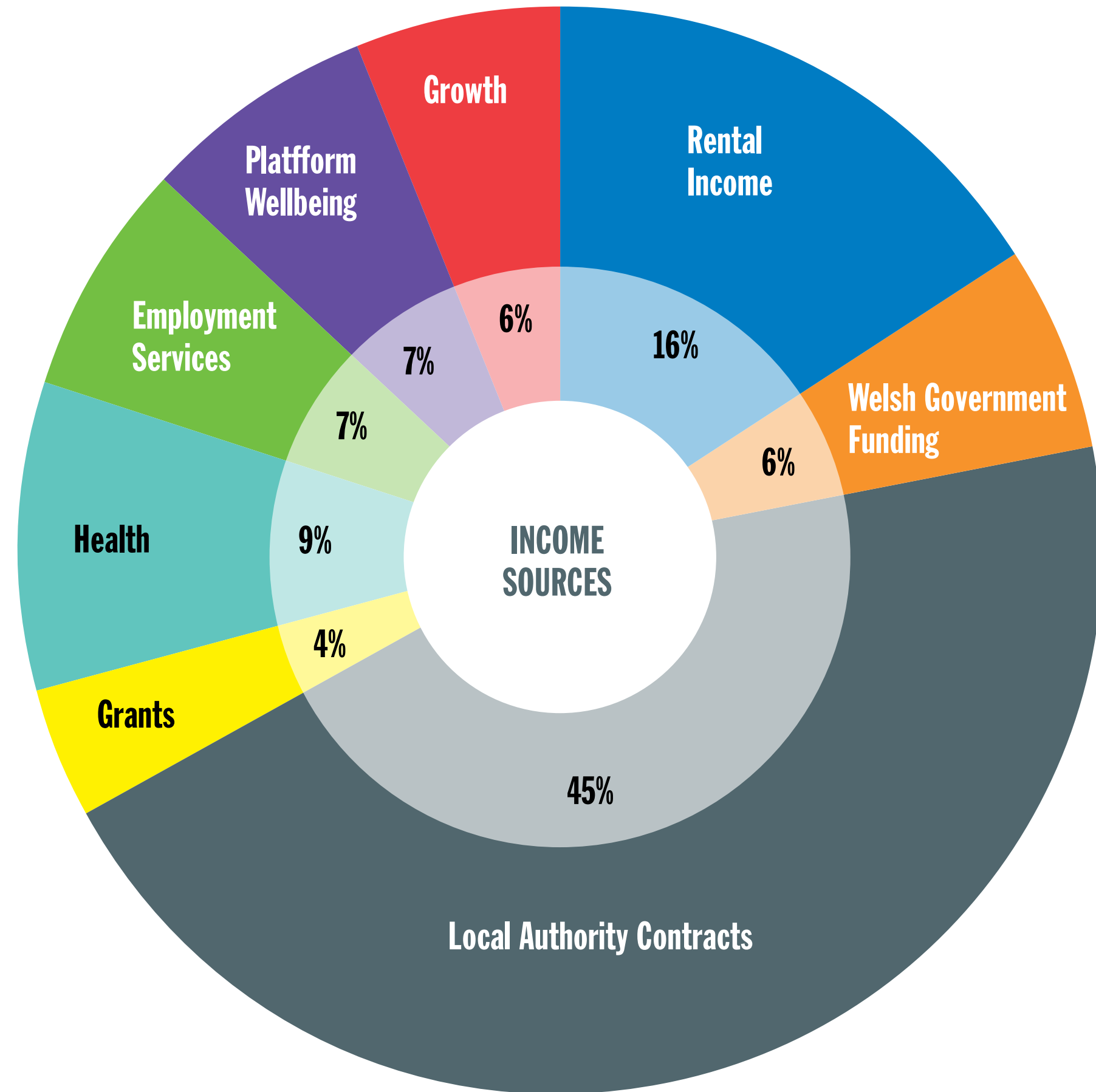
“ COMING HERE EVERY WEEK HAS BECOME A ROUTINE FOR ME AND GIVES ME SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO”.

Person attending a community connection event in Gwent



3 OUR FINANCES

We have an annual income of Circa £15m that comes from a variety of sources detailed below.



4 CONSTITUTION AND STRUCTURE

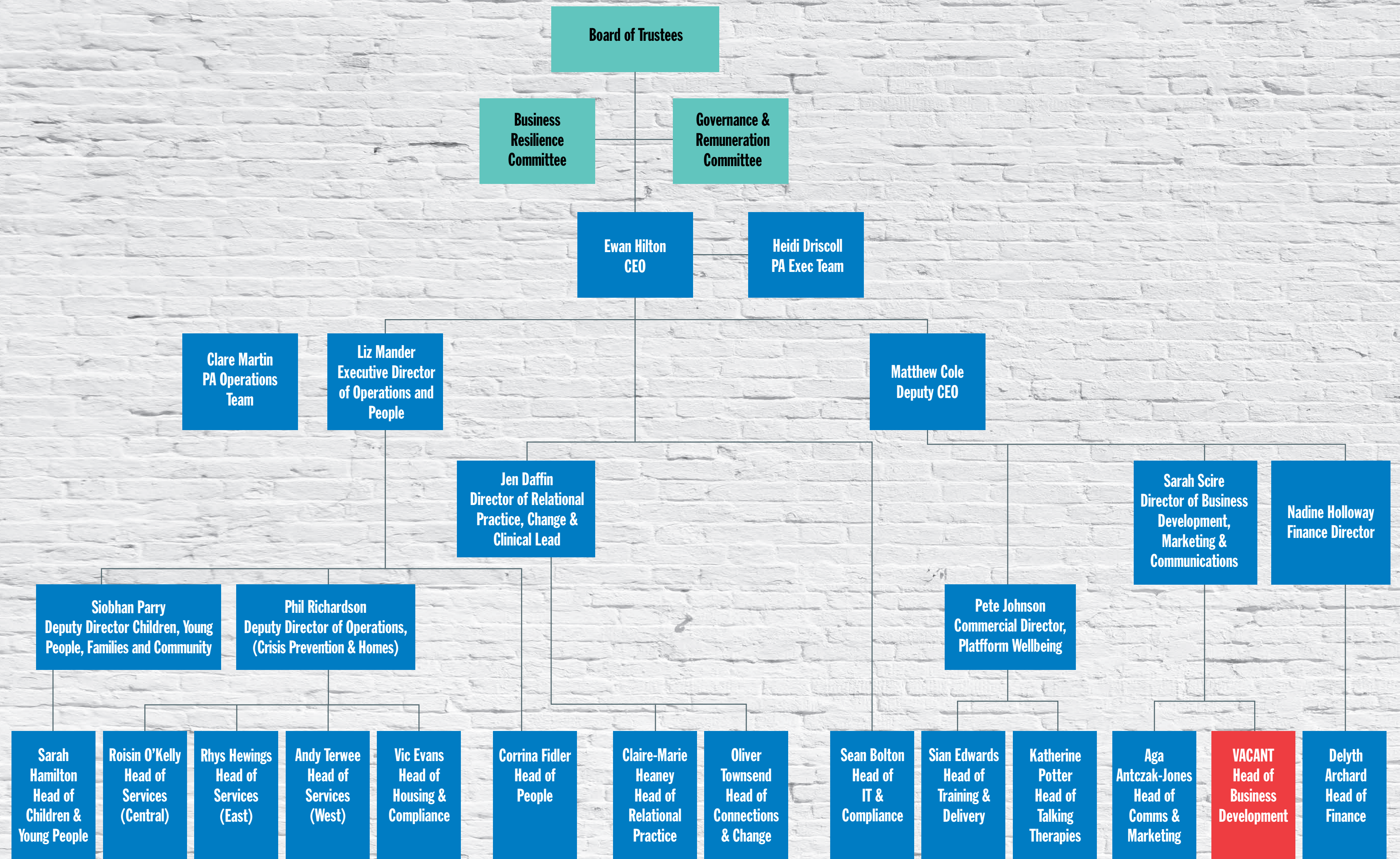
We are a registered charity (charity number 1000889). You can view our information including governing documents and audited accounts on The Charity Commission website here <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regId=1000889&subId=0>.

Organisational structure: Board and Leadership

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the strategic leadership, governance, and appropriate management control of Platform. The Board meets every six weeks with two in-person away days a year.

There are two standing committees – The Governance and Remuneration Committee and the Business Resilience Committee. You can meet some of the Platform team here <https://platform.org/about-us/this-is-us/>

You can read more about the legal duties of Trustees here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>



WE NEED TO LIVE OUR VALUES

5 LOOKING FORWARD

Strategic Priorities

If we are to deliver on our mission, then we need to look after every part of the organisation well. We need to live our values and role model our commitment to relational and trauma informed work in all that we do. Having a clear focus on each of the priority areas listed below will move us closer to delivering our purpose.

- **Looking after our financial resources**

Ensuring the continuation of excellent financial management and control, and ensuring robust and effective medium-to-long-term financial and income generation plans are in place.

- **The people we support**

Ensuring the people we support experience a relational, trauma-informed service. We do this by continuing to develop and embed our relational trauma informed practice within our work, projects and services while collecting honest stories and data about our journey.

- **Our people**

Ensuring our workforce experience a relational, trauma informed culture that is inclusive, embraces diversity and equality, and is aligned to our values. Making sure we all have tools, resources and conditions to do our jobs well.

- **Coherent and targeted influence, marketing and communications strategies**

Ensuring we have a relational and trauma informed communications and influencing strategy that has adaptability across a range of audiences, utilises our internal touch points for relationships, is measurable and is achievable within our resourcing capacity.

- **Ensuring long term strategic view of current and emerging policy environment UK / nations**

Ensuring changing political circumstances do not derail our progress and our ability to achieve our vision.

- **Safeguarding and compliance**

Ensuring robust and fit-for-purpose operational and governance process and scrutiny of our safeguarding, health and safety and operational risk practices and responses to serious incidents.

Doing more together: new merger brings new horizon

In 2023, we merged with Mayday Trust, a charity that had followed a similar journey to us in England: from a traditional charity providing supported accommodation, to a voice for radical system change.

With closely aligned values, we had already worked with the Mayday team to form the New System Alliance alongside Homeless Network Scotland, and to deliver the Welsh equivalents

of projects like Mayday's pioneering Asset Coaching programme. At Platform we long admired Mayday's energy, focus, and unshakeable devotion to their values and a belief that system change was possible.

Whereas Platform has a Welsh focus, the systems we're trying to influence are UK-wide, and so it makes sense for us to try and extend our work beyond the Severn. Our commercial arm, Platform Wellbeing, is already doing great work establishing a foothold for us, but we also need to extend our charity work.

For these reasons and more, a merger made good sense for both charities. Speaking at the time, our CEO Ewan said:

“Coming together as a merged organisation feels like the logical next step, sharing our knowledge, experience, learning and resources to continue working to realise our ambition for strengths-based, relational and trauma informed public services.”

6 TRUSTEE ROLE AND WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

About the role:

You do not need to have had previous Board experience, but an ability to demonstrate an understanding of charity governance is needed.

You can find out more about the legal duties of Charity Trustees here - ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/5-minute-guides-for-charity-trustees))<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/5-minute-guides-for-charity-trustees> - and in more detail here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

At Platform we seek to lift the input and influence of our Trustees beyond the basics and into generative discussions and strategy formulation. We are firm believers in the brilliance of many minds, qualities, and experiences over the few. So, Platform Trustees are invited to be actively involved in helping to shape our strategic direction in collaboration with the executive team and wider Platform teams.

You can find out more about our Trustees, executive team, and some of the wider team here <https://platform.org/about-us/this-is-us/>

The Board meets every six weeks on-line. We hold an annual face to face Board / executive strategic event annually which is face to face and held over two days.

The roles are not remunerated but all reasonable expenses are paid.

Trustees hold office for up to two terms, the first term is 5 years and the second term is 4 years.

Who we are looking for:

First and foremost we need to you to be inspired by, and on board with our mission.

We are committed to living our values at Board level and being actively representative of those who are too often underrepresented in organisations. We are committed to continuing to increase the diversity of our Board of Trustees.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Group are currently building on our anti-racism work and developing programmes of work focusing on LGBTQ+ and neurodiversity education and allyship.

You can read our anti-racism statement and commitments here: <https://platform.org/equality/>

We are looking for people who have experience with governance and / or strategic leadership experience in the charity, public and commercial sectors, and who are confident in contributing to the governance of a fast-growing ambitious charity. We are specifically keen to hear from entrepreneurial leaders, who have experience of creating and enabling progressive growth environments as we look to strengthen and develop our Business Resilience committee.

Our Trustees need to be able to provide oversight, support, and challenge to ensure best use of resources and the safe operating of the charity, while also contributing to generative discussion and formulation of our ongoing strategy.

Here are some of the specific things we are looking for. If you don't see yourself here, but you connect to our mission and feel you have something to offer please do get in touch; we'd love to hear from you too.

- Senior, strategic leadership in charity, public or commercial sector
- Strategic business and/or finance, commercial and/or social impact investments, business growth and development
- Senior leadership in mental health or similar – safeguarding risk and compliance service delivery
- Policy, public affairs, and campaign
- Marketing communications, story telling
- Research data, impact
- Social Justice, system change
- Organisational development and HR

We are in the process of establishing an Business Resilience Committee and will be looking to populate this sub-committee as part of this recruitment round. If membership of this committee is of interest to you and you think you have the right skills and experience please do get in touch.

HOW TO APPLY:

If you are interested in the role and want to find out more, please have a good look around our website www.platform.org and follow us on Twitter at [@weareplatform](https://twitter.com/weareplatform).

If you'd like to have an informal chat about the role before submitting a formal application, please contact Heidi O'Driscoll, Executive Team PA, who will put you in touch with either Ewan, our CEO, or Anne-Louise, our Chair - heidiodriscoll@platform.org.

For the formal application we would like you to send us:

- An up-to-date concise (three sides max) C.V. - please don't worry if you haven't got a massive paid employment history. A C.V. of life is just as interesting to us – so be as creative as you want to be.
- A short statement either written, video or voice note* answering the following three questions
 - o What is it about Platform that interests you and why?
 - o How would we experience you if you were to be a Trustee?
 - o What addition to our governance do you feel you would bring?
- A completed Equalities monitoring form. We're not keen on having lots of forms all the time either, but it is really important to us that we understand who are reaching – and, not reaching – so we can continue to do better in our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion work.

* *Written submissions must be no more than two sides of A4 font size 11, voice notes and videos must be no more than four minutes long in total.*

We will keep the advert open initially until the 18th August. We will respond to and meet with people as we receive their applications. Please apply as soon as you are able to.

Applications should be sent to Heidi O'Driscoll at heidiodriscoll@platform.org



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