



Job Description: Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer

Responsible to:	Director, Safeguarding Committee and Board of Trustees,
Location:	GARAS drop-in centre, Gloucester
Pay:	NJC Scale 27-31 (£38,220)
Hours:	Full Time (37.5 hours per week)
Holidays:	25 days, plus bank holidays
Period of Notice:	3 months, on either side

About GARAS

GARAS provides support, advocacy, and integration services for refugees and asylum seekers in Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire. We offer assistance with legal matters, access to essential services, arrange language support & other dynamic initiatives, to help individuals and families build a new life with dignity and security.

GARAS' vision is a welcoming, inclusive, safe space for refugees and people seeking asylum, where all live free of destitution and have the means and opportunities to realise their full potential. Our mission is to provide refugees and people seeking asylum with practical support when it is most needed, build connections between people and use what we learn to raise awareness and advocate for positive change.

We are a team of around 30 staff, both full time and part time staff working across and/or supporting the following teams and their sub-teams: Adult Advice Team, Youth Advice Team, Resettlement Team and Ukraine Team. These Teams work with both adults and children; the Adult Advice Team works with Parents and Families, the Youth Advice Team works with Unaccompanied Young People both in Care and who are Care Leavers. There is also an Employment Officer, DA & SV Lead Officer, a team of Freelance Therapists and volunteers across different roles and functions in the organisation.

Job Purpose

The postholder will have both strategic and operational responsibility for safeguarding. They will lead on the management and oversight of safeguarding concerns and cases, while also developing GARAS's safeguarding framework, policies, procedures, training, quality assurance and organisational strategy.

The role has been established in response to the findings of an Independent Safeguarding Audit, which identified a need for increased safeguarding leadership capacity, expertise, strategic oversight, clearer accountability, stronger quality assurance and more robust governance arrangements. The audit specifically recommended a dedicated senior DSL post responsible for strategic and operational safeguarding leadership, casework, quality assurance, training, policy review, audits, learning reviews, staff advice, safeguarding strategy and regular reporting to trustees.

The DSL will ensure that GARAS has a safeguarding system that is proactive rather than reactive, with safeguarding risks, trends and learning informing organisational priorities, staff development, policies and service delivery.

The post-holder is supported by Deputies within the Senior Team (Director & Office Manager) to manage safeguarding cases, direct statutory referrals, and lead the development of safeguarding policies, processes, and practices following the Independent Safeguarding Audit. The DSL serves as the lead point of contact for staff/volunteer safety, mental health, and trauma-related de-escalation and crisis management, while developing key partner networks across the county to mitigate crisis risks.

This job description aims to outline the primary duties of the Designated Safeguarding Lead but is not exhaustive. The role may require additional responsibilities as needed to support GARAS's evolving mission and goals.

This post is subject to an Enhanced DBS check.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Safeguarding Leadership and Governance

- Act as the senior Designated Safeguarding Lead for GARAS, providing authoritative and accessible safeguarding leadership across the organisation.
- Focus on Safeguarding policy, processes, and practices within GARAS, developing them further within the role and as recommended in the recent Independent Safeguarding Audit.
- Report regularly to the Board of Trustees and Safeguarding Committee on safeguarding metrics, quality assurance, and organisational risks.
- Establish and maintain clear case allocation frameworks, reporting pathways, and recording

standards across the organisation.

- Establish clear safeguarding accountability, ensuring that safeguarding concerns can be reported directly to the DSL or Deputy DSL without inappropriate filtering or delay.
- Provide safeguarding advice and professional challenge to the Director, Senior Team, Team Managers, practitioners, volunteers and commissioned professionals.
- Work closely with the Director and Deputy DSL to ensure appropriate resilience, cover and escalation arrangements.
- Develop and maintain a three-year organisational Safeguarding Strategy, with: clear strategic safeguarding objectives; annual priorities; identified organisational safeguarding risks; measurable outcomes and indicators; named accountability for each priority; timescales and milestones; training and resource requirements; and arrangements for monitoring progress and impact.
- Maintain a live Safeguarding Risk Register, identifying significant safeguarding risks, controls, gaps, actions, responsible owners and review dates.
- Ensure safeguarding is considered within organisational planning, service development, workforce planning, commissioning and risk management.
- Provide safeguarding leadership to ensure that GARAS develops from reliance on individual knowledge and goodwill towards a consistent, resilient and well-governed safeguarding framework.
- Support the Board and Safeguarding Committee to fulfil their safeguarding governance responsibilities and provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny.

Operational Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Working

- Provide day-to-day professional leadership for safeguarding concerns across GARAS.
- Receive, assess and oversee safeguarding concerns relating to adults, children and young people.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are appropriately triaged, risk assessed, recorded, escalated and referred.
- Oversee safeguarding referrals to statutory and specialist agencies, including Social Care, NHS services, police and other relevant safeguarding partners.
- Attend and represent GARAS at multi-agency safeguarding meetings where appropriate.
- Develop clear criteria determining: when a concern remains with the practitioner; when DSL oversight is required; when the DSL assumes case management responsibility; when a case requires senior or specialist oversight; and when external safeguarding advice or statutory intervention is required.
- Ensure safeguarding decision-making is based on risk, vulnerability, complexity and professional competence rather than simply operational capacity.
- Maintain appropriate oversight of complex, high-risk and cumulative-risk cases.
- Ensure practitioners with direct knowledge of a case are appropriately involved in

safeguarding discussions and decision-making.

- Ensure safeguarding decisions, professional rationale, actions and review dates are clearly recorded.
- Ensure safeguarding case meetings are formally recorded, with actions allocated and followed up.
- Maintain accurate safeguarding records using the Lamplight case management system, tracking actions and decision-making rationales.
- Ensure appropriate safeguarding handovers and continuity of oversight.
- Ensure safer recruitment, including ensuring DBS checks for staff and volunteers, alongside the Office Manager and Volunteer Coordinator

Mental Health, Trauma Support and Crisis De-escalation

- Be the lead point of contact for mental health and trauma-related de-escalation and crisis management within the GARAS office for service users, volunteers & staff.
- Develop further links with partner organisations within the county to try and act to prevent mental health and trauma-related crises within the cohort we work with.
- Oversee safeguarding compliance, expectations, and alignment for contracted therapists and external clinicians.

Staff Safety, Wellbeing and Training

- Be a lead point of contact for staff concerns and staff safety.
- Provide staff and volunteer training and workshops within the Safeguarding, Mental Health & Trauma-related fields.
- Formalise staff safety procedures, including written risk assessments, lone working check-ins, personal safety, and emergency response/lockdown arrangements.
- Facilitate regular structured reflective safeguarding supervision and wellbeing support for staff managing complex casework.

The DSL will be the organisational lead for the development, review, implementation and continuous improvement of safeguarding policies and procedures.

Responsibilities will include:

- Lead the review, development and updating of GARAS safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Ensure policies reflect current legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and recognised good practice.
- Develop a planned annual safeguarding policy review programme.
- Identify gaps between written policies and operational practice and lead corrective action.

- Ensure safeguarding policies are clear, accessible and practical for staff and volunteers.
- Develop and maintain clear safeguarding reporting and escalation pathways.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for the DSL, DDSL, Team Managers, practitioners, volunteers, trustees and commissioned professionals.
- Develop and maintain a formal safeguarding case allocation framework.
- Establish clear thresholds for escalation, management oversight and specialist safeguarding involvement.
- Develop organisational standards for safeguarding recording, including expectations regarding:
 - factual recording;
 - professional judgement and opinion;
 - chronology;
 - risk assessment;
 - decision-making;
 - professional rationale;
 - actions taken;
 - information sharing;
 - referrals;
 - escalation;
 - review dates; and
 - case closure.
- Lead the development and review of staff safety procedures, including lone working, violence and aggression, personal safety, emergency response and lockdown arrangements.
- Ensure policies relating to safeguarding, health and safety, lone working, mental health and staff wellbeing are appropriately aligned and do not contain conflicting responsibilities or processes.
- Ensure policies are not simply written but are implemented, communicated, trained, monitored and quality assured.
- Maintain a central policy and procedure schedule showing review dates, ownership, approval status and implementation actions.

About You

You will be an experienced safeguarding professional with strong knowledge of safeguarding practice, risk assessment and multi-agency working. You will have the confidence to provide professional challenge, make complex safeguarding decisions and advise senior leaders and trustees.

You will also bring experience of developing policies and procedures, quality assurance, training and organisational safeguarding improvement, with the ability to turn safeguarding information and emerging risks into clear strategic priorities.

Experience of working with refugees, asylum seekers, migrants, trauma and complex vulnerabilities would be highly desirable.

This is an opportunity to play a key role in strengthening and shaping safeguarding practice across GARAS and ensuring that safeguarding is embedded at every level of the organisation.

Application Deadline: midnight, Sunday 27 September 2026

To apply, please visit www.garas.org.uk/vacancies and download the application form. Please send completed application forms to GARAS' Director, Warren (director@garas.org.uk).