Catharsis Quality Assurance and Quality Framework

Catharsis provides support services to children, young people and adults who require creative arts and other psychotherapies. We also provide Clinical Supervision to other professionals, as well as training and creative workshops. Catharsis is committed to providing safe, effective, ethical, person-centred and high-quality creative arts therapies, psychotherapies and all our other related services. The purpose of this Quality Assurance and Quality Framework Policy is to establish the overarching framework through which Catharsis:

- maintains and monitors the quality and safety of its services;
- ensures that therapists and other workers are appropriately qualified, registered, competent and suitable for the work they undertake;
- listens and responds to the experiences of clients, referrers, partner organisations and other stakeholders;
- identifies, manages and learns from risks, incidents, complaints, concerns and safeguarding issues;
- monitors compliance with relevant legislation, professional standards, contractual requirements and Catharsis policies;
- identifies areas for improvement and takes appropriate action;
- promotes a culture of openness, learning and continuous improvement; and
- provides evidence that quality is actively governed rather than assumed.

This policy is an **umbrella framework**. It does not replace the individual policies and procedures that sit beneath it. Instead, it brings those arrangements together into a coherent approach to quality assurance. Where Catharsis works within another organisation's premises or contractual framework, the relevant policies, procedures and quality requirements of that organisation will also be considered.

This policy should be read alongside the following policies and procedures:

- **Safeguarding Policies**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**
- **Compliments and Complaints Policy**
- **Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy**
- **Incident Reporting Policy**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Lone Working Policy**
- **Business Continuity Policy / Statement**
- **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- **Fraud Prevention, Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Absence, Sickness and Health Support Policy**
- **Risk Assessment procedures**
- **Lockdown Policy**
- **COSHH Policy**, where applicable.

Where a specific policy provides a more detailed procedure, that policy should be followed.

Catharsis Quality Principles

Catharsis considers quality to be based on the following principles.

- Safe: People using Catharsis services should be protected from avoidable harm, abuse, neglect and inappropriate practice.
- Effective: Services should be delivered by appropriately qualified and competent professionals and should have a clear therapeutic or service purpose.

- Person-centred: Services should respond to the individual needs, circumstances, preferences, identity and lived experience of the people who use them.
- Respectful and inclusive: People should be treated with dignity, respect and without discrimination. Equality, diversity and reasonable adjustment are integral to quality.
- Professionally accountable: Therapists must comply with the requirements of their relevant regulator, professional body, insurer and professional code of conduct.
- Responsive: Catharsis should listen to feedback, respond appropriately to concerns and adapt its services where necessary.
- Learning: Incidents, complaints, safeguarding concerns, feedback and identified weaknesses should be used as opportunities to learn and improve.
- Transparent: Catharsis will seek to be open and honest about the quality of its services, including where things have gone wrong.
- Proportionate: Quality assurance activity will be proportionate to the size, nature and risk profile of Catharsis and the services being delivered.

What Quality Means at Catharsis

Catharsis recognises that quality in therapeutic services cannot be measured solely through numerical performance indicators. Quality includes both measurable outcomes and professional judgement**,** together with the experiences of people who use our services.

Catharsis considers quality across the following areas:

1. **Safety and safeguarding**
2. **Clinical and professional practice**
3. **Client experience and outcomes**
4. **Workforce competence and suitability**
5. **Equality, diversity and accessibility**
6. **Information governance and confidentiality**
7. **Risk management**
8. **Incident management and learning**
9. **Complaints, compliments and feedback**
10. **Governance and accountability**
11. **Contractual and regulatory compliance**
12. **Business continuity and service resilience**
13. **Continuous improvement**

Catharsis will maintain proportionate quality monitoring arrangements. Monitoring may include:

Quality area	Examples of evidence
Client experience	Feedback forms, surveys, verbal feedback
Complaints	Complaints log, outcomes, themes
Compliments	Compliments log and positive feedback
Incidents	Incident log, investigations, actions
Safeguarding	Safeguarding concerns, referrals, outcomes
Workforce	Registration, qualifications, DBS, insurance
Training	Induction, CPD and training records
Professional practice	Concerns, referrals, professional requirements
Information governance	Data breaches, SARs, audits
Health & safety	Incidents, risk assessments, near misses
Equality	Adjustments, concerns, feedback
Business continuity	Incidents, disruption, continuity reviews

Quality area	Examples of evidence
Contracts	Commissioner/partner feedback and compliance
Policies	Annual policy review and implementation
Improvement	Quality improvement/action plans

Quality information may be reviewed through Senior Leadership Team meetings, service reviews, supervision or management discussions, policy reviews, audits and other appropriate governance processes. Where appropriate, Catharsis will look for themes, trends, recurring concerns, emerging risks and examples of good practice across services. Where monitoring identifies a concern or opportunity for improvement, an appropriate action will be identified, allocated to a named person and monitored to completion. Where necessary, the effectiveness of the action will subsequently be reviewed.

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the Catharsis Quality Framework. The Senior Leadership Team supports the Managing Director in implementing and monitoring the framework. Catharsis recognises however that quality is not the responsibility of one individual or solely of the Senior Leadership Team. Everyone working on behalf of Catharsis has a role in maintaining safe, ethical and high-quality services.

The Catharsis **Managing Director** is responsible for:

- overall quality governance;
- ensuring appropriate policies are in place;
- reviewing significant risks and incidents;
- ensuring appropriate action is taken where concerns arise;
- monitoring contractual and organisational compliance;
- ensuring the Quality Framework is reviewed;
- ensuring significant learning is acted upon.

The Service Development Manager supports quality governance through:

- policy coordination;
- monitoring compliance;
- supporting audits and reviews;
- maintaining appropriate records;
- coordinating feedback;
- supporting incident and complaint monitoring;
- identifying areas requiring improvement;
- supporting implementation of quality actions.

Senior Leadership Team / Clinical Leads contribute professional expertise to:

- review clinical or therapeutic concerns;
- consider professional practice issues;
- support risk management;
- identify learning;
- contribute to service development;
- escalate concerns where appropriate.

Therapists and Clinical Supervisors - All therapists and workers have responsibility for:

- working safely and professionally;
- complying with Catharsis policies;
- maintaining their professional registration and competence;
- maintaining appropriate external clinical supervision;

- reporting incidents and concerns;
- participating in feedback and quality improvement;
- raising concerns when standards are not being met;
- being open and honest when things go wrong.

Quality Assurance Cycle

Catharsis is committed to continuous improvement and therefore will use a continuous cycle of:

PLAN → DELIVER → MONITOR → LEARN → IMPROVE → REVIEW

This ensures that quality assurance is an ongoing process rather than an annual policy exercise.

Where monitoring identifies an issue, Catharsis will determine:

1. What is the concern?
2. What is the potential impact on clients, staff or the organisation?
3. What immediate action is required?
4. What caused or contributed to the issue?
5. What action will prevent recurrence?
6. Who is responsible for the action?
7. When should it be completed?
8. How will Catharsis know whether the action has worked?

Actions arising from complaints, incidents, safeguarding, audits, contractual reviews or other sources may be combined where this provides a clearer organisational picture.

Safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with Catharsis Safeguarding Policies and relevant statutory and local procedures. Quality assurance will consider whether identified risks have been appropriately recognised, escalated, managed and reviewed.

Catharsis will seek to ensure that people delivering services are appropriately qualified, experienced and suitable for the work undertaken (see Catharsis Recruitment and Employment Policy). Therapists are responsible for accessing appropriate external clinical supervision in accordance with the requirements of their professional regulator, professional body, insurer and/or professional practice. Catharsis will use its governance arrangements to ensure that therapists understand their responsibilities and provide support as appropriate. Where a concern arises regarding a therapist's competence, professional conduct, fitness to practise or ability to practise safely, Catharsis may escalate the matter to the relevant professional body or regulator where appropriate.

Catharsis recognises that its workforce includes freelance professionals who retain their own professional responsibilities. The Catharsis Quality Framework therefore does not seek to duplicate the functions of professional regulators but ensures that appropriate organisational checks and escalation arrangements are in place.

Catharsis recognises that people who use its services are important contributors to quality assurance. Wherever practicable and appropriate, Catharsis will seek to involve clients and other stakeholders in understanding the quality and effectiveness of its services. Feedback may include:

- client feedback forms;
- digital surveys;
- verbal feedback;
- feedback from parents or carers where appropriate;

- feedback from referrers;
- feedback from partner organisations;
- compliments;
- complaints;
- service reviews;
- outcome measures where appropriate to the service.

Complaints will be managed in accordance with the **Catharsis Compliments and Complaints Policy**. Catharsis will monitor complaints and concerns for patterns, recurring issues and opportunities for improvement.

Concerns involving serious wrongdoing, unsafe practice, criminal activity, serious professional misconduct or other matters meeting the criteria for whistleblowing will be managed under the **Catharsis Whistleblowing Policy**.

Where a concern indicates that a professional may not be fit to practice, Catharsis will consider whether referral to the relevant professional regulator is necessary.

Catharsis recognises that incidents and near misses provide important information about the safety and quality of its services. Incidents will be managed in accordance with the **Catharsis Incident Reporting Policy**.

Catharsis will maintain systems to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of personal information. This is governed principally through the **Catharsis Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy** and associated procedures.

Catharsis recognises equality, diversity and inclusion as integral to quality rather than as a separate organisational issue. The **Catharsis Equality and Diversity Policy** provides the detailed organisational requirements.

Catharsis will seek to identify and address inequalities in access, experience and outcomes wherever these are identified. Quality assurance will consider whether:

- services are accessible;
- reasonable adjustments are considered;
- discriminatory barriers are identified;
- client needs are appropriately understood;

Catharsis will maintain a proportionate approach to risk management. The Senior Leadership Team will review significant organisational risks and determine whether further action is required. Risk may arise from:

- individual client circumstances;
- safeguarding;
- clinical practice;
- workforce capacity;
- premises;
- lone working;
- health and safety;
- information governance;
- financial management;
- fraud;
- business continuity;
- contractual requirements;
- external events.

Where Catharsis identifies that a required standard has not been met, the response will be proportionate to the seriousness and potential impact of the issue. Quality assurance is not solely about identifying failures however; Catharsis will also actively identify and share good practice.

Positive feedback, successful interventions, innovative approaches and examples of effective partnership working may be used to:

- recognise individual and team contributions;
- strengthen practice;
- support training and induction;
- inform service development;
- share learning across delivery teams;
- improve the client experience.

Where permission and confidentiality requirements allow, positive feedback may be shared with the relevant therapist.

Quality Framework Statement

Catharsis recognises that quality cannot be demonstrated simply by having policies in place.

Our quality assurance approach is therefore based on evidence of what we do, how we monitor it, what people tell us, what we learn and what we change as a result.

Review

Implementation / Review date	**Reviewers**
August 2026	Hannah Robertson
Next Review date	Keren Adler
August 2027	