Catharsis Recruitment and Employment Policy

1. Introduction

Catharsis is an Arts Therapy service established in 2004. Whilst we are based in Derby Catharsis actively seeks to grow as a business and may apply for tenders or seek approval to join frameworks throughout the country. We therefore aim to maintain a pool of freelance Arts Therapists, Integrative Psychotherapists and therapists trained as Clinical Supervisors who are available to work as and where needed, and who have a wide range of skills, experience and professional interests.

Catharsis offers a range of services including 1:1 therapy, group interventions, workshops, training and Clinical Supervision. Work can take place in a variety of settings and may consist of short-term or longer-term contracts.

Catharsis provides support services to children, young people and adults who require creative arts and other psychotherapies due to a wide range of difficulties. The quality of our service is important to us and, as such, we seek to recruit therapists who we believe will maintain and enhance our excellent reputation in the East Midlands and beyond.

All therapists engaged by Catharsis are expected to operate within the organisational ethos and the policies and procedures established by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Therapists engaged by Catharsis are normally engaged under contracts for services as independent/freelance practitioners. The contractual arrangements, responsibilities and payment arrangements will be set out in the relevant Freelance Therapist Agreement. Catharsis recognises that employment status is determined by the reality of the working relationship and not solely by the terminology used in a contract. The organisation will keep its engagement arrangements under review to ensure that they accurately reflect the nature of the relationship.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Catharsis has a consistent, fair and robust approach to the recruitment and engagement of therapists and other relevant professionals.

The policy aims to ensure that:

- people engaged by Catharsis are appropriately qualified, experienced and registered;
- safeguarding is central to recruitment and ongoing engagement;
- appropriate checks are undertaken before therapists are offered work;
- recruitment decisions are fair, inclusive and based on relevant criteria;
- professional standards and ethical practice are maintained;
- appropriate records are maintained;
- therapists receive suitable induction and support;
- potential conflicts of interest are identified and managed;
- Catharsis continues to meet the expectations of commissioners, partner organisations and relevant professional and regulatory bodies.

3. Recruitment Principles

Catharsis is committed to a recruitment process which is:

- fair and transparent;

- inclusive and non-discriminatory;
- proportionate to the role and level of responsibility;
- focused on the safety and wellbeing of service users;
- based on qualifications, professional registration, experience, skills, values and suitability;
- consistent with relevant legislation, professional standards and safeguarding guidance.

Recruitment decisions will be based on objective, role-related criteria wherever practicable and appropriate records of the recruitment decision will be maintained.

4. Professional Qualifications, Registration and Experience

Freelance therapists are selected through an application and interview process. Before engagement, Catharsis will establish that the therapist has the relevant qualifications, experience, professional registration and professional support required for the work they are being considered for.

Catharsis Arts Therapists will normally be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and will normally also belong to the relevant professional body for their specialism, for example the British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth).

Catharsis recognises the different regulatory and professional arrangements that apply to different therapeutic professions. Integrative Psychotherapists are required to work in accordance with the ethical framework of an appropriate professional body, such as the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), as appropriate to their professional status and training.

Catharsis will verify professional registration directly with the relevant regulatory or professional body before engagement and periodically thereafter.

Therapists are expected to maintain their professional registration, continuing professional development, professional competence and ethical standards throughout their engagement with Catharsis.

Where a therapist's registration, qualification or professional status changes, they are expected to notify Catharsis promptly.

5. Professional Insurance and Clinical Supervision

Freelance therapists must maintain appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance for the services they provide and must provide details as requested.

All therapists are required to have appropriate external clinical supervision arrangements in place. The name and professional details of the Clinical Supervisor will be recorded on the Catharsis Central Recruitment and Compliance Record (CRCR). Therapists are expected to ensure that their supervision arrangements are appropriate to their client work, level of experience and professional requirements.

Where a therapist's supervision arrangements change, Catharsis should be informed where this is relevant to the therapist's work with the organisation.

6. DBS and Criminal Record Checks

Catharsis will undertake the appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for each role in accordance with current DBS eligibility requirements. The level of check will be determined by the duties, client group and circumstances of the role.

Where a role constitutes regulated activity with children or adults, Catharsis will undertake the relevant DBS and barred-list checks where legally permitted and required.

Catharsis will not request a level of DBS check for which it is not legally entitled.

Where appropriate, Catharsis may accept an existing DBS certificate and use the DBS Update Service, subject to the legal requirements for doing so. This includes checking the original certificate, ensuring that the current role is eligible for the relevant level of check and obtaining the individual's consent to an Update Service check.

Therapists are expected to maintain a current DBS Update Service subscription where appropriate and practicable. However, an Update Service subscription does not replace Catharsis's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate checks have been undertaken.

As a minimum, Catharsis SLT will check the DBS status of current therapists annually where the Update Service is being relied upon. Where a therapist's Update Service subscription has lapsed, or the status can no longer be verified, Catharsis may require a new DBS certificate before further work is undertaken.

Any information arising from a DBS check will be considered carefully, proportionately and in accordance with applicable legislation, data protection requirements and Catharsis's safeguarding responsibilities. A disclosure or other criminal record information will not automatically prevent a person from working with Catharsis; decisions will take account of the nature, relevance and circumstances of the information.

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7. Safeguarding

Safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk is a fundamental consideration throughout the recruitment and engagement process.

All therapists must complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role and client group and must comply with Catharsis's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and relevant statutory guidance.

Where therapists work with children in or on behalf of educational settings, Catharsis will have regard to the current edition of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE) and other applicable statutory safeguarding guidance. KCSIE 2026 comes into force on 1 September 2026. (GOV.UK)

Therapists are required to understand their responsibilities for identifying, responding to and reporting safeguarding concerns. Appropriate safeguarding guidance and induction will be provided.

Catharsis will maintain appropriate arrangements for responding to safeguarding concerns about therapists, including the possibility of suspending referrals or work while a concern is assessed.

See also the Catharsis Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies, Staff Code of Conduct, Compliments and Concerns Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Recruitment and Selection Process

The recruitment process normally includes the following stages:

1. **Role identified and recruitment criteria agreed**
2. **Advert**
3. **Application**
4. **Shortlisting against relevant criteria**
5. **Recruitment event and/or interview**
6. **References**
7. **Induction – to include the following checks: Professional qualification and registration / DBS / identity including Right to Work / insurance / Clinical Supervision arrangements checks**
8. **Freelance Therapist Agreement issued and signed**
9. **Review of suitability for referrals**
10. **Addition to Catharsis IT systems and appropriate records**
11. **Ongoing compliance and professional review**

Catharsis may undertake additional checks or assessments where these are considered necessary and proportionate to the role, client group, commissioner requirements or safeguarding considerations.

References will normally be obtained before a therapist is offered work. A minimum of two references will normally be sought, ideally including:

- one reference from the current or most recent employer or placement; and
- one professional reference or university reference, where appropriate.

References will be considered alongside other recruitment information. Unexplained gaps in employment, training or professional activity will be explored where relevant.

Any significant discrepancies identified during recruitment will be considered before a decision is made about engagement.

9. Trainee Clinical Placements

Due to the nature and complexity of Catharsis's work, it is generally considered that second-year trainees on relevant MA psychotherapy courses are the most appropriate trainees for clinical placement opportunities with Catharsis.

Trainees wishing to undertake a placement with Catharsis will be required to:

- provide a current CV;
- attend an interview to assess suitability;
- meet the requirements of the relevant university and Catharsis;
- provide appropriate references;
- complete the required safeguarding and other checks; and
- comply with the Catharsis Trainee Clinical Placement Policy.

As a minimum, references will normally be sought from the university and the first-year Placement Supervisor.

Further requirements relating to supervision, clinical responsibility, DBS checks and the scope of trainee activity are set out in the Trainee Clinical Placement Policy.

10. Identity and Right to Work

Catharsis will verify identity before a therapist undertakes work for the organisation.

Where a right-to-work check is legally required, Catharsis will undertake and record the appropriate check in accordance with current Home Office requirements.

Where right-to-work evidence is retained, it will be stored securely and retained for the required period. Current Home Office guidance requires evidence of right-to-work checks to be retained for the duration of the engagement and for two years afterwards before being securely destroyed. (GOV.UK)

11. Central Recruitment and Compliance Record

Catharsis maintains a **Central Recruitment and Compliance Record (CRCR)** for therapists engaged by the organization (this was previously referred to as the Single Central Record – SCR)

The CRCR records relevant information such as:

- identity checks including right-to-work checks, where applicable;
- profession
- professional registration;
- DBS information and status checks;
- professional indemnity and public liability insurance;
- clinical supervision arrangements;
- references;
- relevant compliance checks including details of safeguarding training
- dates of review and 1:1's.

The CRCR is an internal organisational record. It should not be confused with the statutory Single Central Record maintained by schools and colleges.

Information from the CRCR may need to be shared with schools, commissioners or other partner organisations where this is necessary and lawful. Information will only be shared where Catharsis has an appropriate lawful basis for doing so and, where required, appropriate safeguards or consent are in place.

The frequency of DBS checks, safeguarding training and other compliance requirements will be recorded on the CRCR and reviewed as appropriate.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Catharsis processes personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable data protection legislation. Further information is contained within the Catharsis Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy.

Catharsis will collect and process only personal information that is necessary, relevant and proportionate for recruitment, safeguarding, contractual, regulatory, professional and operational purposes.

Therapists will be provided with appropriate privacy information explaining what personal information Catharsis collects, why it is collected, the lawful basis for processing, how long it is retained, who it may be shared with and the individual's applicable data protection rights.

Personal information will only be shared where there is a lawful basis for doing so. This may include sharing information with commissioners, schools, partner organisations, professional or regulatory bodies, safeguarding agencies, insurers, legal advisers or other relevant organisations where necessary and lawful.

Particular care will be taken with special-category personal data and criminal-offence data. Such information will only be processed where the relevant legal requirements and safeguards are met. (ICO)

Access to personal information will be restricted to those who need it for legitimate organisational purposes and appropriate technical and organisational security measures will be applied.

Catharsis will maintain appropriate retention arrangements for recruitment and engagement records. Retention periods will depend on the type of information, its purpose, relevant legal or regulatory requirements and Catharsis's retention schedule. Information will not be retained for longer than necessary.

Therapists have applicable data protection rights in relation to their personal information, including rights of access and rectification and, where applicable, rights relating to erasure and restriction of processing. These rights are subject to the relevant legal exemptions and circumstances. (ICO)

Where a therapist has a question or concern about how their personal information is being processed, they should refer to the Catharsis Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy or raise the matter with the appropriate member of SLT.

13. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Catharsis is committed to equality, diversity, inclusion and fair treatment in recruitment and engagement. See also the Catharsis Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement.

We will not unlawfully discriminate against applicants, therapists, contractors, students, service users, suppliers or other individuals on the basis of:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage or civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; or
- sexual orientation.

Catharsis also recognises that individuals may experience disadvantage or discrimination on grounds beyond the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including caring responsibilities, socioeconomic circumstances, language, nationality, professional background or other personal circumstances.

We will seek to identify and remove unnecessary barriers wherever reasonably practicable.

Applicants and therapists are encouraged to tell Catharsis about any reasonable adjustments required to enable them to participate fully in recruitment, induction or work.

Equality monitoring information, where collected, will be handled appropriately and separately from recruitment decision-making wherever practicable, in accordance with data protection requirements.

14. Supporting Therapists

Catharsis is keen to support all therapists working within the team. This includes promoting the skills and interests of freelance therapists and encouraging new and innovative ideas and suggestions.

Given the emotional and professional demands of therapeutic work, Catharsis strongly encourages therapists to maintain appropriate personal and professional support. This may include personal therapy, clinical supervision, reflective practice, peer support and other appropriate forms of professional wellbeing support.

Catharsis offers support through access to SLT, peer groups, WhatsApp team messages and reflective practice opportunities.

Therapists remain responsible for ensuring that their own professional support and supervision arrangements are appropriate to their practice and professional requirements.

15. Catharsis Arts Therapy Centre and Private Practice

Catharsis has its own Arts Therapy Centre in Derby. We want this to be an inspiring environment and a great place for therapists to work.

We encourage private practice, sharing of knowledge and skills, as well as the use of our space for training.

Therapists and other relevant professionals using the Catharsis Arts Therapy Centre for private practice are expected to work within the ethos of Catharsis and to comply with the requirements relating to safeguarding, professional conduct, confidentiality, data protection, insurance and fitness to practise.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken before private bookings are agreed. These may include consideration of professional registration, DBS status, insurance, safeguarding requirements and the nature of the proposed activity.

Use of the Centre for private practice does not create a Catharsis clinical relationship with the private practitioner’s clients, and responsibility for the practitioner's private practice remains with the practitioner.

16. Freelance Working, Secondary Work and Conflicts of Interest

Therapists working for Catharsis do so on a freelance basis and are free to apply for and undertake other work, provided that this does not create a conflict of interest or otherwise compromise their responsibilities to Catharsis or its service users.

It is a requirement of the Freelance Therapist Agreement that secondary work is declared where relevant, in order that potential conflicts of interest can be identified and managed.

Potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- working for a competing provider where this creates a conflict;
- working directly for a commissioning organisation in relation to the same service or client;
- treating privately someone who was referred through Catharsis;
- personal or family links with clients or their families;
- dual relationships with service users;
- financial or other interests that could affect professional judgement.

Therapists are expected to raise potential conflicts with SLT at the earliest opportunity.

Further guidance is contained within the Catharsis Staff Code of Conduct and relevant professional ethical frameworks.

17. Allocation of Work

Once accepted into the Catharsis pool of therapists, referrals and opportunities may be offered as appropriate to the therapist's skills, experience, availability, professional registration and the requirements of the particular service.

As independent/freelance practitioners, therapists are able to accept or decline work offered to them. Acceptance into the Catharsis pool does not guarantee a particular volume or frequency of work.

Catharsis will seek to match therapists with work appropriately and will consider the needs and best interests of service users when making referrals.

18. Ongoing Compliance and Review

Recruitment checks do not represent the end of Catharsis's responsibility to ensure that therapists remain suitable for the work they undertake.

Catharsis will undertake appropriate ongoing checks and reviews, which may include:

- professional registration;
- DBS status;
- safeguarding training;
- insurance;
- clinical supervision arrangements;
- qualifications and professional development;
- relevant declarations;
- compliance with Catharsis policies and procedures.

Therapists are expected to notify Catharsis promptly of any significant change that may affect their suitability to undertake work, including changes to professional registration, DBS status, insurance, safeguarding circumstances or professional conduct.

Catharsis may undertake additional checks where required by a commissioner, school, partner organisation, regulatory body or other relevant authority.

19. Suspension and Removal from the Catharsis Pool

Where concerns arise regarding a therapist's suitability to remain in the Catharsis pool, Catharsis may suspend referrals or work while the matter is reviewed.

Decisions will be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the concern and will take account of safeguarding, professional, contractual and legal requirements.

Where appropriate, the therapist will be given an opportunity to provide information or respond to concerns before a final decision is made.

Immediate suspension of referrals or work may be considered where there is:

- a DBS or barring-status concern;
- loss, suspension or significant restriction of professional registration;
- loss of required insurance;
- a serious professional conduct concern;
- a serious breach of confidentiality or data protection;
- a serious safeguarding concern;
- an allegation or circumstance indicating an immediate risk to service users;
- serious non-compliance with Catharsis policies or contractual requirements.

Suspension is a precautionary measure and does not in itself imply that a concern has been substantiated.

Where appropriate, Catharsis will work with relevant safeguarding, professional, regulatory or commissioning bodies and will make referrals or notifications where there is a legal, regulatory or safeguarding requirement to do so.

Removal from the Catharsis pool may occur where concerns are substantiated or where a therapist no longer meets the requirements for engagement.

The following Catharsis Policies are linked: Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding (Children and Adults), Compliments and Concerns, Whistleblowing.

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20. Leaving Catharsis

Therapists engaged by Catharsis are normally contracted as independent/freelance practitioners under contracts for services. As such, therapists are free to accept or decline referrals at their own discretion.

However, in the interests of continuity of care and the best interests of clients, therapists are asked not to accept new referrals where they anticipate that they may soon be moving into full-time employment elsewhere, or where they know they will be taking a substantial period of time away from client delivery.

Therapists are expected to plan the ending of their work with clients carefully and sensitively, taking into consideration each client's individual needs, the duration of their therapeutic relationship, and the progress made during therapy. Therapists should provide SLT with as much notice as possible when they intend to cease working with Catharsis, with a **minimum of one month's notice** expected wherever practicable. This will allow sufficient time for an appropriate process to be put in place for the planned ending of therapy and, where necessary, the handover of clients to another therapist.

Following the cessation of a therapist's work with Catharsis, their Catharsis Gmail account will normally remain active for a period of a minimum **two months**. This allows time for any outstanding correspondence, clinical updates or administrative matters to be completed. At the end of this two-month period, the account will be suspended or deleted, depending on whether there is an expectation that the therapist may return to work with Catharsis in the near future.

An end interview will be arranged with any staff leaving Catharsis, in order to gain feedback on their experience and notify them of the process for de-activating their Gmail account.

ID badges should be returned to Catharsis.

21. References

Catharsis will normally provide factual references for current and former therapists, subject to applicable data protection and other legal requirements.

References will be provided by an authorised member of the Management Team and will normally confirm:

- the period of engagement;
- the role undertaken;
- the nature of services provided, where appropriate; and
- other factual information that Catharsis considers appropriate to disclose.

Catharsis will seek to ensure that references are accurate, fair and consistent.

22. Responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- overseeing implementation of this policy;
- ensuring that appropriate recruitment and compliance procedures are in place;
- ensuring that safeguarding considerations remain central to recruitment;
- ensuring that appropriate records are maintained;
- reviewing the policy and related procedures;
- responding appropriately to concerns about therapist suitability.

Therapists are responsible for:

- providing accurate information during recruitment and engagement;
- maintaining professional registration, insurance and appropriate supervision;
- completing required safeguarding and other training;
- complying with Catharsis policies and procedures;
- declaring relevant conflicts of interest;
- notifying Catharsis of significant changes affecting their suitability to work;
- maintaining appropriate professional standards and conduct.

23. Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read alongside the following Catharsis policies and documents, as applicable:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Adult Safeguarding Policy;
- Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Compliments and Concerns Policy;
- Trainee Clinical Placement Policy;
- Freelance Therapist Agreement / Contract
- Recruitment and Compliance Record / CRCR;
- relevant professional codes of ethics and conduct.

Review

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