

CHANGING LIVES

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Policy Summary

Changing Lives is committed to having quality services but also provides a clear framework for action and accountability. This ensures that all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, donors, and staff, can have confidence in the charity's dedication to excellence. This policy ensures that Changing Lives adheres to all relevant statutory/legal requirement and regulations/compliance for all its activities.

Document Name: Quality Assurance Policy

Author: Sommer Stringer

Approval Standard Required: Senior Leadership

Date of Approval: July 2026

Next Revision Date: June 2028

Approved by: Board

The digital version of this document is the most recent version. The printed version of this document is uncontrolled, and should not be used unless it has been formally issued and provided with a document reference number.

Revision	Date	Record of Changes	Approved by
1.0	15/08/2024	Initial Creation	Senior Leadership Team
1.1	30/06/2026	Review & Updated	Senior Leadership Team

1. Objective

1.1 Definition: Quality Assurance is a systematic process aimed at ensuring that services meet specified quality standards and requirements. It involves evaluating various aspects of a project, service, facility to ensure that standards are being met consistently.

1.2 This Quality Assurance Policy ensures that Changing Lives consistently provides services and activities that meet the needs of; people accessing our services, staff, stakeholders, and partners. It enables continuous service improvement and rigorous quality control including compliance against set standards, and with all relevant legislation and regulations. The policy ensures that we:

- Keep our beneficiaries at the centre of everything we do.
- Provide excellent quality services
- Have effective governance and management of the organisation.
- Value and support our staff and volunteers.
- Commit to working in partnership with other organisations.
- Seek continual improvement in all areas of our work.
- Adhere to relevant regulations, standards and best practices
- Have continuous improvement, embrace learning and adapt to enhance quality.
- Mitigate risk by identifying and addressing quality-related risks.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all services, processes, activities, and operations of Changing Lives, including those carried out by staff, volunteers, and third-party providers.

3. Quality Framework

3.1 The Quality Framework at Changing Lives is structured to ensure consistent quality throughout all operations. It includes:

- Reviewing and updating our policies, procedures and standards.
- Our Being, Becoming, Belonging and Beyond framework which guides our work and develops our services.
- Regular training and development for staff and volunteers, investing in skills to maintain quality.
- Actively seeking and acting on feedback from people accessing our services and stakeholders. Providing different mechanisms for feedback and complaints.
- Recording and Monitoring learning and action on our Organisational Learning Log (OLL)
- Communicating openly about quality matters, transparently with all parts of the organisation.
- Ensuring accountability sits with all staff, volunteers and managers and each plays a role in quality assurance.
- Demonstrating decisions that are based on evidence and data.
- A minimum of every 2 years reviews and audits of our systems and processes take place.

The Quality Framework supports continuous improvement and learning to enable Changing Lives to continue to deliver excellent services.

3.2 The Quality Framework – comprises 5 pillars to promote the delivery of Excellent Services, adapted from the CQC's quality framework and aligned to standards of being:

Safe: A safe service is one that provides both a physically and psychologically safe space for both people who access the service and colleagues who work there. This includes a joint understanding of how risk is identified, understood and managed and robust systems to support this. Safe environments are also one's in which both staff and people accessing our services can raise concerns and work together to ensure learning when things go wrong.

Effective Services: are those that understand the needs and strengths of the people who use them and deliver evidence-based support empowering people to make informed choices. They are also accessible and relevant to the diversity of the communities in which we work. Staff are skilled and equipped to deliver professional support and work in a coordinated way as a team and with other agencies.

Caring: relates to the quality of the relationships we develop and how we communicate with people. This involves kindness, respect and compassion as well as setting appropriate and clear boundaries

and expectations whilst ensuring respect for people's privacy and dignity.

Responsive: A responsive service is one in which the person is central to the support they receive and the activity of the service. This ranges from involving people in their care plans and risk assessments to the co-production of service design and delivery. Being responsive also includes the way in which the service manages complaints and concerns raised as well as difficult interactions such as: evictions, rent arrears or suspension from services.

Well-Led: This includes how well staff are supported, protected and enabled to fulfil their roles by both the service management as well as the organisational governance. Well-led services are those in which colleagues are clear about the purpose and aims of the service and collaborate in achieving these. It is also how the service undertakes continuous improvement through the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

3.2 Being, Becoming, Belonging and Beyond (BBBB)

Changing Lives supports people facing the most challenging of circumstances to make positive and lasting change in their lives. We follow a framework called Being, Becoming, Belonging & Beyond (BBBB) to guide our work and develop our services. This framework ensures that no matter which door someone enters through at Changing Lives, our response is guided by BBBB principles.

Being - We help people feel safe and accepted by:

- Creating safe and accessible environments that consider gender, identities, and diverse needs.
- Building trust and relationships.
- Setting clear boundaries to define what we can and cannot do as a worker and as a service.
- Supporting people to start to build a vision for their future.
- Listening to and valuing people's experiences.

Becoming - We help people understand and overcome trauma and other experiences by:

- Helping people identify their own strengths.
- Collaboratively developing a plan.
- Using Trauma-Informed practice and relationships, following our Trauma Pathway Model (Appendix 1)

Belonging – We enable people to feel safe and belong in the spaces we provide, move away from services and find long term support networks by:

- Creating inclusive spaces that accept and celebrate differences.
- Minimising "us and them" and maximising "us".
- Creating an environment where people feel they belong, rather than just being 'present'.

- Helping to identify activities and communities that support long-term recovery.
- Providing an open door if individuals need our support again in the future.

Beyond – we work to ensure that other services and the wider system support people’s progress through:

- Advocating for individuals with other services and agencies, amplifying their voices and facilitating access to necessary support.
- Collaborating with other services to provide integrated support.
- Influencing local and national changes to improve services and prevent future injustices.
- Adapting to changes to better serve individuals.

Responding to immediate crisis - Sometimes individuals come to us in crisis, or crises occur while they are using our service. Assisting individuals during these critical moments is a fundamental part of our work, ensuring their safety and helping them manage the immediate situation while continuing to make progress. We work with people no matter what is happening for them, with acceptance and belief in the potential for positive change.

3.3 Quality assurance will be informed through triangulation of multiple sources of evidence, including:

- Quantitative data (performance metrics, incidents)
- Qualitative feedback (service user voice, staff insights)
- Observations and audits (QASAR, service reviews)

This ensures a robust and balanced assessment of service quality.

3.4 Changing Lives is committed to co-production, ensuring that people with lived experience are actively involved in shaping, reviewing, and improving services and quality assurance processes. Please refer to Involving People and Co Production Policy

4. Service Development Reviews and Quality Assurance Self-Assessment Review (QASAR)

4.1. Service Development Reviews and QASARs will be conducted a minimum of every 2 years to ensure that we continuously improve delivery. A new service will have their first review with 6 months of its start date.

4.2 Service Development Review

Focus areas for the service reviews are Strategy, Quality, Impact, Feedback and Performance, Financial performance, staffing, buildings and property, relationships, and risks. We also assess and review how the service is implementing the BBBB framework.

4.3 QASAR is our peer led quality audit. It aims to identify good practice within services as well as utilise the expertise of colleague from across the organisation to support continuous learning and development. QASARs explore areas of quality of delivery, such as the relationships that exist within services, impact of service, and connection to the wider community.

QASAR audits assess against all five areas of the Quality Framework, as well as evidence-based practices including:

- Person centred
- Trauma-informed
- Asset-based
- Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE).

Our Quality Audits gather evidence that is both quantitative and qualitative. They provide assurance that our services are performing well and identifies areas where we need to improve.

QASAR audits follow a standardised methodology, including defined criteria, scoring systems, and moderation processes to ensure consistency and reliability across services.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Board holds ultimate accountability for the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Framework and receives regular assurance reports.

5.2 The Risk Committee provides oversight of quality, risk, and compliance, including scrutiny of Organisational Learning and audit outcomes.

5.3 The Executive Team is responsible for embedding a culture of quality, ensuring adequate resources and driving continuous improvement.

5.4 Operational Leads are accountable for implementing quality assurance processes within services and ensuring completion of action plans.

5.5 The Quality and Impact Team provides independent oversight, facilitates audits, and triangulates data to provide assurance of service quality.

6. Learning and Development

Identified actions for improving learning and development are fed directly to the Learning and Development team.

The Learning and Development team are responsible for the quality of training delivered across Changing Lives and the identification of the right provider/trainer whether that be internal or external delivery. Quarterly Learning and Development Reviews help inform the required training needs with representation from Leads, Quality team and Exec Representation. The review also includes discussion on new or emerging changes for services or practice.

Please refer to the [Learning and Development Policy](#).

7. Monitoring and Review

7.1 This policy and the Quality Framework will be reviewed every 2 years by Senior Management, and the Risk Committee to ensure their continuing suitability and consistency with the organisation's overall business policies.

Quality assurance activities directly inform the organisational risk management framework. Emerging risks identified through audits, reviews, or feedback are escalated and incorporated into the Risk Register, with appropriate mitigation and oversight.

7.2 Organisational Learning Log (OLL). Changing Lives is committed to improvement, the organisational learning log allows us to collect, act, reflect, monitor all organisational learning.

The learning will also be transferred to the Risk Register if relevant and monitored by the Risk Committee.

Following the key process of knowledge creation, retention and transfer, we will share learning effectively within the organisation.

Learning captured through the Organisational Learning Log (OLL) will be systematically reviewed, with clear actions assigned, implemented, and evaluated to ensure sustained improvement.

Significant learning will be escalated to senior governance forums and shared across services to promote organisational learning.

The Organisational Learning Log captures learning from the following:

- Safeguarding,
- External Audits,
- QASAR,
- Serious and Untoward incidents,
- Health and Safety,
- Compliance, GDPR /Data protections,
- People/HR,
- Incident reporting system,
- Business Development,
- Mobilisation,
- Complaints,
- Feedback/Surveys,
- Investigations,

- Lesson Learned activities.

This list is reviewed regularly.

7.3 Action plans will be produced for all service development reviews, QASARs and external audits, services/staff will be monitored for their completion of those actions by the relevant manager and operational lead.

7.4 External Audits and Accreditations

Changing Lives is committed to actively participate in and completing all relevant external audits to high standard.

Ensuring that organisation effective and compliant, external inspections provide an independent perspective and help us to assess the effectiveness and quality of our services.

Standards, Audit and Accreditations:

- OFSTED
- ISO2007
- Cyber Essential Plus
- CHAS
- Care Quality Commission
- Charity Commission
- GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Leading Lights
- Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation
- One Small Thing – Trauma Quality Kite Mark
- BCP

External audits and accreditations are used not only for compliance but to benchmark performance, identify best practice, and drive continuous improvement.

7.6 We regularly assess our quality framework, processes, performance, and make necessary adjustments.

8. Continuous Improvement

8.1 Changing Lives is committed to the continuous improvement of our all activity and that of our partners. We will set measurable quality objectives and review them during management reviews.

8.2 Quality objectives will be supported by clearly defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) aligned to the five pillars (Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive, Well-led).

8.3 These may include (but are not limited to):

- Service user outcomes and progression
- Safeguarding incidents and response times
- Complaints and resolution times
- Staff training compliance rates
- Service user satisfaction and engagement
- Audit and QASAR scores

8.4 Performance against KPIs will be reviewed regularly through governance structures and used to inform decision-making.

9. Compliance

All staff and volunteers must comply with this policy. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or as necessary to ensure it remains effective and relevant to the organisation's needs.

11. Support and Additional Resources

11.1 Managers can reach out to Operational Leads, Quality and Impact Lead and Executive team for additional support.

11.2 Managers can contact the Quality and Impact Lead for clarification on policy details, advice on submitting review forms, audits and assistance in addressing any concerns related to Quality Assurance

11.3 This policy is to be in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Incident Reporting & Investigation
- Working with Sudden Death
- Serious and Untoward Protocol
- Charity Commission Reportable Incidents Policy
- Risk Assessment and Management
- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding Adults
- Safeguarding Children
- Complaints Policy
- Data Protection & Information Security
- Learning and Development
- Trauma Pathway Model
- Involving People and Co Production Policy

Appendix. 1



CHANGING LIVES

Changing Lives is the operating name of The Cyrenians, registered Charity Number: 500640
and registered Company Number: 995799 in England.