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QUALITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE

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QUALITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

This policy details the quality and quality assurance processes Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited (herein after referred to as Nursing Direct) adopts to maintain its standards and ensure continual improvement.

POLICY AIM

The aim of this policy is to set out its key organisational priorities in order to maintain high quality care and to improve care where it does not yet meet the standard of quality as per the regulatory standards and the national and local requirements. This policy also aims to support on how to achieve continuous improvement in the services provided by Nursing Direct as a care provider, reflecting person-centred high-quality care.

Alongside the above core aim that promotes best quality care, the approaches outlined in this policy supports Nursing Direct to meet effective, caring, responsive, safe, and well- led Key Lines of Enquiry/Quality Statements as per the regulatory aspects outlined by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To set out how Nursing Direct intends to achieve continuous improvement in the services it provides, reflecting national and local requirements as well as the priorities of Nursing Direct.

- To ensure the consistent delivery of safe, effective Care that results in a positive Service User experience.
- To detail what Nursing Direct defines as "quality" guided through industry best practice guidance as per the regulatory aspects and relevant legislations. By doing this Nursing Direct aims to achieve:
 - A shared understanding of what high quality care is and what needs to be done to achieve it among service users, Staff including Agency Workers, and other stakeholders of Nursing Direct.
 - More effective and aligned support towards quality.
 - Building stronger partnerships, building on existing relationships and commitments, and taking joint action to encourage improvement of high-quality care.
 - Improved quality in care services which Nursing Direct provide.
 - Measurable outcome of its care delivery service to be consistent high quality which makes a real difference to the lives of their service users, families, and community.
 - Enhancing organisational efficiency, productivity and required standards by addressing challenges, mitigating risks through strategic action planning, evaluating, and monitoring performance. This process is informed by case studies, lessons learned from reported incidents in day-to-day practice, quality audits, surveys, and ensuring adequate resourcing for the seamless coordination of care services.

In view of such purposes Nursing Direct defines what high quality person-centred care is, taking into consideration what matters to service users and/or their families including service users who may not have families to support them.

QUALITY ASPECTS FOR SERVICE USERS;

- **Caring:** Nursing Direct approaches care provision with compassion, dignity, and respect for individuals.
- **Responsive:** Nursing Direct services adapt to diverse needs, prioritising solutions identified by individuals themselves, with professional support.
- **Safe:** Nursing Direct ensure service users are shielded from harm, neglect, and abuse. Any errors or incidents are managed through safeguarding procedures, complaints reporting, and candid communication.
- **Effectiveness:** Nursing Direct care practices aim to enhance quality of life, grounded in best practices.
- **Well-led:** Nursing Direct strive to create a positive experience through effective leadership and management.

QUALITY ASPECTS FOR NURSING DIRECT;

- **Well-led:** Nursing Direct have good governance and quality assurance systems and policies in place to promote a culture that is open, transparent, and committed to learning and improvement.
- **Efficiency & Productivity:** Nursing Direct have strategies in place including safer recruitment, performance management, training, and development strategies to recruit qualified, skilled, and experienced Staff including Agency Workers. Nursing Direct support Staff including Agency Workers for their continuous training and development to contribute to deliver services efficiently.
- **Sustainability:** Enhance sustainability at Nursing Direct by ensuring responsible use of resources through staff including Agency Workers, while also ensuring fair access for all.
- **Safety and Risk Management:** Nursing Direct have safety and risk management strategies and compliance systems in place alongside other processes. These include safeguarding, information governance, data protection, incident reporting and care and safety management software systems, equality and diversity, and communication.

1.2 **Relevant Legislations, Laws, Rules, and Regulations**

To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Nursing Direct undertake it has taken into consideration the following when complying with its duties:

- Data protection Act 2018
- The Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The local authority social services and National Health service complaints (England) Regulations 2009
- Management of Health and safety at work Regulations 1999

- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding of vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- UK GDPR

2. SCOPE

2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- Staff including Agency Workers
- Service Users
- Family
- Advocates
- Commissioners
- External health professionals
- Local Authorities
- NHS/ ICB

3. OBJECTIVES

- To commit towards quality, ensuring that robust governance processes exist and support to meet the needs of its service Users, its Staff including Agency Workers, commissioning bodies, the CQC and other stakeholders.
- To ensure continuous quality improvement emphasising that the provision of evidence based best practice underpins all activity within Nursing Direct and that its processes are benchmarked against NICE Guidelines and other best practice guidance.
- To create a framework to identify and ensure quality at Nursing Direct that Staff including Agency Workers, service users and other stakeholders understand.
- To ensure that Staff including Agency Workers of Nursing Direct understand the quality assurance process, roles, and responsibilities to achieve consistently good service outcomes against quality markers.
- To have the tools to measure the progress and development of Nursing Direct and its Staff including Agency Workers in meeting quality in every aspect of the service.

4. POLICY

Nursing Direct aim to deliver safe, caring, efficient and high-quality care services which fully integrates quality, and performance as detailed in its vision, mission, and value statements.

Nursing Direct will ensure that there is effective governance in place, including assurance and auditing systems and processes. These will assess, monitor, and drive improvement in the quality and safety of the services provided, including the quality of the experience for Service Users.

The systems and processes will also assess, monitor, and mitigate any risks relating to the health, safety and welfare of Service Users and others. Nursing Direct is committed to ensuring that it continually evaluates and seeks to improve its governance and auditing practice.

Nursing Direct recognises that a quality service is one that takes account of the needs and circumstances of each Service User. A quality service ensures that Care services are accessible, appropriate, safe, and effective for all including protected characteristic groups. We also believe that workplaces must be free from discrimination so that staff including Agency Workers can thrive and deliver excellence.

Nursing Direct will anticipate and be responsive to the changing needs of our diverse Service Users and the changing needs within their local community. We are committed to providing the best possible care and value the professionalism of our Staff including Agency Workers.

Quality of Care

Nursing Direct promotes Quality of Care through everything that it does including putting quality in the centre of everything that it does, demonstrating that it should reflect quality in every aspect.

In doing so, a special emphasis will be given to;

- Promote and encourage seamless, integrated care.
- Perform duty of care and support all activities performed to benefit Service Users without causing harm.
- Provide consistency by shared view of Quality with commissioning bodies and other stakeholders within industry standards.
- Prioritise the needs of service users by actively listening to their input, engaging them in decision-making processes, and comprehensively understanding their perspectives regarding service quality. Furthermore, foster transparency by openly showcasing how their feedback has influenced the development and delivery of services.
- Use methods that are safe, affordable, and appropriate to reduce, mitigate or avoid risk
- Practice according to set standards laid down by clinical/ regulatory guidelines and protocols.
- Executing appropriate actions when they are needed. Keep on improving the standard of service until excellence is attained.

For the Service User;

- Nursing Direct takes full responsibility for service quality, collaborating with professionals, service users, families, and stakeholders. They actively promote a shared quality vision outlined in their policy, delivering high-quality, safe, effective, caring, responsive, and sustainable services.
- Nursing Direct proactively engages with other professionals across the system and adheres to national guidelines, and how Nursing Direct works collaboratively with others can contribute to improving quality.
- Nursing Direct recognises their pivotal role in developing and delivering quality services by collaborating as equal partners with commissioners, maintaining transparency about their quality initiatives and improvement strategies.
- Nursing Direct foster openness within quality systems, aligning with broader frameworks like the Care Quality Commission's standards. Nursing Direct effectively communicate their value in terms of quality to commissioners, service users, and the wider professional network.

- Nursing Direct recruits and supports high-quality Staff including Agency Workers, empowering them to do their best work and continue to develop their professional skills, for the consistent high quality service provision.

For the Staff including Agency Worker;

- Staff including Agency Workers must have a clear understanding of quality and their pivotal role in delivering high-quality care, both now and in the future.
- Staff including Agency Workers must maintain collaborative relationships within teams and support diversity, ensuring they are capable, confident, and equipped to deliver safe, effective, and compassionate care.
- Staff including Agency Workers must encourage open communication and recognising other Staff including Agency Worker expertise, fostering good teamwork and efficient resource use.
- Staff including Agency Workers must emphasise values-based care, reliability, and ongoing professional development to enhance service user confidence and strengthen the Nursing Direct workforce.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance of Nursing Direct is all about how the service delivery is monitored and evaluated, in order to make sure it is delivering high quality care. It is a set of activities that are planned for, carried out systematically or in an orderly manner and continuously seeking to improve quality of Care. It involves;

- Being orientated for meeting the needs and expectations of Service Users their families and the community the setting of standards and protocols
- Monitoring to see if there is a gap between what is being done now and what is expected.
- Addressing the gap on a regular basis (Quality Improvement)
- Focussing on systems and processes
- Using data to analyse service delivery processes and outcome and action the gaps appropriately
- Encouraging a team approach to a problem solving and quality improvement
- Using effective communication to improve service delivery.

Importance of Quality

- Increased demand for effective and appropriate Care
- Need for standardisation and variance control
- Cost saving measures
- Benchmarking and Reputation
- Accreditation, certification, and regulation
- Provider/organisational performance meeting
- Service User needs and expectations to their satisfaction
- Competition and enhance marketing.
- improvements in Care and services
- Recognition and strive for excellence
- Ethical considerations

Benefits of Quality Assurance

For Service Users;

- Good health outcomes
- Service User satisfaction
- Value for money
- Less frustration

For Staff including Agency Workers:

- Satisfaction with their contribution to work
- Better Understanding of Service User needs
- Improved Communication between Staff including Agency Workers

For Nursing Direct:

- Service User satisfaction
- Increased revenue
- Better working environment and culture
- Better reputation

Quality Assurance Framework

This provides quality services through meaningful engagement leading to effective outcomes for Service Users and Staff including Agency Workers at Nursing Direct:

Safe and Effective Practice:

- Risk Management and adverse incidents
- Research, evidence-based practice and informed decision-making

Accessible, Flexible and Responsive Services:

- Involvement of Service Users and Staff including Agency Workers
- Integrated working

Effective Communication and Information:

- Information management
- Standards, outcomes, and audit
- Complaints and compliments

Leadership and Accountability:

- Supervision and performance appraisal
- Organisational learning and continuous professional development
- Human and financial resources
- Leadership and management

Governance

Nursing Direct will ensure that there is effective governance in place, including assurance and auditing systems and processes. These will:

- Assess, monitor, and drive improvement in the quality and safety of the services provided, including the quality of the experience for Service Users
- Assess, monitor, and mitigate any risks relating to the health, safety and welfare of Service Users and others.
- Securely maintain an accurate, complete, and contemporaneous record for each Service User of the Care and treatment provided.
- Maintain records in relation to Staff including Agency Workers and the management of care
- Seek and act on feedback from Service Users, families and relevant others on the service provided by Nursing Direct

Nursing Direct is committed to ensuring that it continually evaluates and seeks to improve its governance and auditing practice.

Nursing Direct will deliver safe, caring, efficient and high-quality Care services which fully integrate quality, performance and governance as detailed in its vision and values to:

- Provide care and support to Service Users and their families which is in accordance with the individual wishes of the Service User, whilst fully supporting their human rights and the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Deliver a management style, policies and day-to-day practices that promote open communication, a culture of problem resolution rather than blame, and the involvement of all stakeholders
- Nurture a culture that is supportive of continuous improvement that is maintained by way of regular audit and review of standards of performance across the service, followed by open discussions about strengths and weaknesses, with action-planning to resolve weaknesses

Within Nursing Direct, key individuals with the appropriate skills, experience, and knowledge will be identified to have responsibility for the following:

- Implementation of quality procedures and systems
- Meeting legal, regulatory, and contractual compliance
- Auditing of the service
- Collation of data and information to monitor performance against agreed quality standards
- Listening and responding to Service User concerns, feedback, and views
- Listening and responding to concerns raised by Staff including Agency Workers and other key stakeholders

The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for:

- Developing a culture of quality
- Ensuring there is ongoing compliance with regulatory and contractual requirements.
- Ensuring compliance with policies and procedures.
- Managing efficiently the resources of Nursing Direct and ensuring there are sufficient numbers of Staff including Agency Workers with suitable skills, experience, and knowledge to deliver safe care and maintain a high-quality service.
- Reviewing and learning from accidents, incidents (including safeguarding's), complaints and sharing this learning .
- Seeking feedback from Service Users and stakeholders.
- Acting on results of audits and reviews of the service.
- Developing systems to achieve continuous improvement.
- Collation, reporting and using data to inform stakeholders of the quality of the service.
- Promoting a supportive, transparent culture where Nursing Direct can learn from any mistakes.
- Collaborative working with commissioners, Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- Staff including Agency Workers being regularly supported and supervised
- Establishing effective leadership

Results are analysed and used to:

- Develop action plans
- Steer the direction for quality initiatives and review of the strategy of Nursing Direct
- Form supervision, training, and performance management where necessary

This does not replace any additional, more frequent quality assurance checks that are completed as locally agreed by Nursing Direct.

View of Quality

In practice, Staff including Agency Workers at Nursing Direct deliver care that is:

SAFE:

- Delivered in a way that avoids harm to Service Users from Care that is intended to provide.
- Continuously reduces risk, empowers, supports, and enables Service Users to make safe choices and protects Service Users from harm, neglect, abuse, and breaches of their human rights.
- Ensures improvements are made when problems occur.

EFFECTIVE:

- Informed by consistent and up to date high quality training, guidelines, and evidence
- Designed to improve the health and wellbeing of a population and address inequalities through prevention and by addressing the wider determinants of health.
- Delivered in a way that enables continuous quality improvements based on research, evidence, benchmarking, and clinical audit.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE:

- Responsive and personalised - shaped by what matters to Service Users, their preferences, and strengths; empowers Service Users to make informed decisions and design their own Care; coordinated; inclusive and equitable.
- Caring - delivered with compassion, dignity, and mutual respect.

WELL-LED:

- Driven by collective and compassionate leadership, which champions a shared vision, values, and learning.
- Delivered by accountable organisations and systems with proportionate governance.
- Driven by continual promotion of a just and inclusive culture, allowing organisations to learn rather than blame.

SUSTAINABLY RESOURCED:

- Focused on delivering optimum outcomes within available finances
- Reduces the negative impact on public health and the environment

EQUITABLE:

- Committed to understanding and reducing variations and inequalities
- Ensuring that everybody has access to high-quality care and outcomes

Person-Centred Care

Nursing Direct recognises that a quality service is one that understands the needs and circumstances of each Service User, because they are supported to give their views and express their wishes in every aspect of their Care from design through to delivery. Nursing Direct will ensure full-Service User engagement in all elements of the service and will ensure best interest decisions are made if a Service User is assessed as lacking capacity, consulting with the Service User's representatives, family and assigned professionals.

Nursing Direct is dedicated to providing a quality service that ensures Care is accessible, appropriate, safe, and effective for all in the local community, and that this includes protected characteristic groups. Nursing Direct will ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination so that Staff including Agency Workers can thrive and deliver excellence.

Anticipate Change

Nursing Direct will anticipate and be responsive to the regulatory frameworks, the changing needs of its diverse Service Users and the changing needs within its local area, working in partnership to understand the present and future needs.

Nursing Direct is committed to providing the best possible Service User Care and values the professionalism of its Staff including Agency Workers.

Resources

Nursing Direct will ensure that necessary resources are available to effectively monitor key performance indicators. This data will be used to inform management decisions which support the delivery of quality services, ongoing quality improvement and business planning decisions.

Areas of Responsibility

Within Nursing Direct, key individuals with the appropriate skills, experience and knowledge will be identified to have responsibility for the following:

- Implementation of quality procedures and systems
- Meeting legal, regulatory, and contractual compliance

Auditing of the service;

- Collation of data and information to monitor performance against agreed quality standards.
- Listening and responding to Service Users' concerns, feedback, and views
- Listening and responding to concerns raised by Staff including Agency Workers at Nursing Direct and other key stakeholders.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Delivering Quality Care: The Six Steps

These six steps can help improve the quality of Care at Nursing Direct .

1. SETTING CLEAR DIRECTION AND PRIORITIES:

- Based on evidence including the views of Service Users, their families and Staff including Agency Workers

2. BRINGING CLARITY TO QUALITY:

- Setting clear standards for what high quality Care looks like
- Based on what matters to Service Users and communities

3. MEASURING AND PUBLISHING QUALITY:

- Measuring what matters to Service Users at Nursing Direct
- Monitoring quality and safety consistently
- Sharing information in a timely and transparent way
- Using data effectively to inform improvement and decision-making

4. RECOGNISING AND REWARDING QUALITY AND LEARNING:

- Recognising, celebrating, and sharing outstanding health and Care
- Learning from others and helping others learn
- Recognising when things have not gone well

5. MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING QUALITY:

- Working together to maintain quality, reduce risk and protecting Service Users from harm
- Building capability for improvement:
 - By improving leadership, management, professional and institutional culture, skills, and behaviours to assure quality and sustain improvement
 - Supporting Staff including Agency Workers development and wellbeing

6. STAYING AHEAD:

- By adopting innovation, embedding research and monitoring Care and outcomes
- To provide progressive, high-quality Care

Nursing Direct Quality Assurance Framework

QUALITY FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The framework at Nursing Direct should be developed specifically for the service, and any improvements required. The basic steps (Skills for Care 2024) are:

Define Standards: Establish clear objectives aligned with organisational values, national practice standards, and regulatory requirements. Clarify roles for implementation across various the department at all levels.

- The quality assurance framework should articulate the desired outcomes, which can be specific improvements or aligned with the broader vision of Nursing Direct. It must be guided by organisational values and consider national practice standards, legislation, and regulations. Responsibility for quality assurance is distributed across various roles within the organisation, with Staff including Agency Workers upholding practice standards, team leaders ensuring quality care delivery, managers overseeing regular quality assurance activities and disseminating findings, and learning and development leads ensuring integration of learning from quality assurance activities into Staff including Agency Workers development.

Monitor and Measure Quality: Utilise diverse methods such as audits, inspections, workforce data, feedback mechanisms, and observations to assess performance comprehensively.

- Various methods are employed to monitor and measure quality, including audit tools, care plan audits, inspection reports from regulatory bodies like the Care Quality Commission, analysis of workforce data benchmarked against other organisations, gathering feedback from complaints, verbal feedback, interviews, meetings, focus groups, surveys (both paper-based and online), comments books, supervisions, incident and accident reviews, and internal and external observations.

Inclusive Approach: Engage multiple stakeholders including service users, professionals, Staff including Agency Workers, and the public to gain holistic insights into quality.

- Quality assurance activities involve diverse stakeholders such as service users, their families and advocates, other professionals like social workers and district nurses, Staff including Agency Workers, the public, inspectors, board members, trainers, and volunteers to ensure a comprehensive assessment of performance.

Analysis and Action: Benchmark findings against standards, implement action plans for improvement, and integrate lessons learned into various aspects of service provision.

- After assessing quality, benchmark findings against desired outcomes or standards. If activities fall short, develop action plans for improvement. Take action by sharing insights with stakeholders, updating action plans, and linking learning to key service areas such as learning and development, supervision, complaints and compliments processes, workforce planning and development, commissioning, care plans, and service/business plans.

Quality Framework Key Components

The quality framework at Nursing Direct, overseen by the Registered Manager, emphasises a person-centred, intelligent, supportive, and proportionate approach. It includes:

- Clearly defined, specific, measurable, achievable, and time-sensitive quality objectives, alongside a person-centred approach to care, enabling service user involvement in setting objectives and reviews, and setting targets focused on meeting their needs, as well as organisational and stakeholder requirements.
- An organisational structure that identifies leaders providing vision and direction, supported by up-to-date policies and procedures reflecting best practices and contractual obligations, with regular audits ensuring compliance.
- A robust business plan outlining strategic priorities for the next five years, complemented by personal development plans, supervision, and appraisal systems for staff including Agency Workers to ensure competency.
- Effective communication tools to minimise barriers, active internal and external audit processes informing quality improvement efforts, and infrastructure and resources supporting service delivery.
- Building positive partnerships with stakeholders for multi-agency collaboration, while maintaining continuous evaluation and feedback loops to inform ongoing service development, underpinned by person-centred care principles, clear objectives, intelligent monitoring, governance and oversight, Staff including Agency Workers development, and collaborative partnerships.

Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission provide a regulatory regime of standards for Care services, and these should form the foundation of the quality expectations at Nursing Direct:

- The five key questions and quality statements are used to inspect whether regulated health and social care services are safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led, and provide a baseline for good and outstanding Care
- By using the five key questions and quality statements, Ms Leanne Harris can assess whether Nursing Direct meets the required quality standards, identify what to improve and plan improvements to meet the standards

Leadership

The Registered Manager will enhance quality through leadership and governance by:

- Establishing effective leadership at Nursing Direct.
- Creating governance processes to identify and address quality issues.
- Adopting a consistent and systematic approach to quality improvement.
- Developing systems for implementing evidence-based interventions and innovations, adaptable to local needs.
- Seeking professional advice promptly for necessary improvements.
- Promptly sharing relevant information on incidents or risks with relevant bodies.
- Nursing Direct will ensure that the principles of privacy, dignity and respect underpin all care delivery. Service Users are at the heart of any Care Planning and (with their consent) family or someone who can advocate on their behalf will be involved.
- All Service Users have a person-centred Care Plan that meets their needs, expectations and wishes, created (where possible) before their Care starts.
- Nursing Direct must ensure that risk assessments and Care Plans are reviewed when needs change, when there is an incident, concern or near miss, and then at least quarterly thereafter
- All care plans are reviewed and signed off by the Clinical Manager
- Nursing Direct will ensure that Service Users know how to raise concerns, share their views and how to get involved with shaping service delivery.
- Nursing Direct must audit the consistency and reliability of Care and take remedial action where required.
- Nursing Direct must ensure that principles of privacy, dignity and respect underpin all Care delivery, and this will be audited.

Staff including Agency Workers

Recruitment ensures that;

- The right people are recruited for the right job.
- All pre-employment checks are undertaken, and documents are held in line with Data Protection requirements.

All Staff including Agency Workers at Nursing Direct must understand their crucial role in delivering high-quality care. The Registered Manager will foster an open, honest, and caring culture by:

- Encouraging Staff including Agency Workers to participate in surveys to identify trends.
- Supporting a person-centred culture that encourages service users, families, or carers to report concerns.
- Ensuring whistleblowing and safeguarding policies are widely publicised and linked to procedures.
- Promoting a learning culture by disseminating audit and investigation outcomes to Staff including Agency Workers.
- Implementing identified actions from audits promptly.
- Providing regular supervisions for all Staff including Agency Workers.
- Holding regular Staff including Agency Workers meetings.

Culture

Nursing Direct has a workplace culture that is conducive to improvement. The Registered Manager will promote a culture that is open, honest, transparent, safe, and caring. The Registered Manager will ensure that:

- A values-based and robust recruitment practice is implemented.
- A formal induction process is provided to equip staff including Agency Workers with the necessary skills and knowledge.
- Staff including Agency Workers build on and improve skills and knowledge at all levels.
- The importance of fostering a workplace culture conducive to improvement is recognised.
- Everyone has a voice.
- Facilitating collaboration among staff including Agency Workers, service users, and families to enhance care delivery.
- Staff including Agency Workers participate in surveys to gauge engagement, motivation, commitment, and empowerment.
- Whistleblowing and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are widely publicised, complementing commissioning bodies procedures.
- Processes foster a person-centred, 'fair blame' culture, encouraging service users, their families, or staff including Agency Workers to report concerns.
- A learning culture is promoted, with audit and investigation outcomes shared to adjust practices and minimise recurrence of risk.
- Actions identified in audits are implemented promptly and supportively.

CLOSED CULTURES

CQC defines a closed culture as 'a poor culture that can lead to harm, including human rights breaches such as abuse'. In these services, people are more likely to be at risk of deliberate or unintentional harm. Any service that delivers care can have a closed culture.

Nursing Direct employs robust governance, quality assurance, and monitoring procedures to prevent closed cultures, as defined by the CQC, which can lead to harm. These measures include spot checks and audits to ensure compliance with CQC regulations and safeguarding legislation, promoting transparency and accountability. Spot checks provide real-time insights, while audits offer comprehensive evaluations, swiftly detecting and addressing issues of opacity or non-compliance.

By aligning with regulations and safeguarding requirements, Nursing Direct upholds ethical standards, prioritises transparency, and ensures an inclusive and safe environment for all service users and staff including Agency Workers.

Delivering Person-centred Care

Nursing Direct and Staff including Agency Workers must always ensure that Service Users have the accessible opportunity to make a full and meaningful contribution to any and all aspects of their Care. Where this is not possible due to a lack of capacity, decisions will always be made in the Service User's best interest.

- Nursing Direct must ensure that Service Users know how to raise concerns, share their views and how to get involved with shaping service delivery
- Nursing Direct will listen and respond, documenting any action taken
- Nursing Direct must audit the consistency and reliability of Care and take remedial action where required

Staff including Agency Workers should refer to the Supporting Personal Care Policy and Procedure at Nursing Direct.

Service User Care Plan

The Registered Manager must ensure that all Care Records for Service Users:

- Are complete, legible, indelible, accurate and up to date, with no undue delays in adding and filing information, as far as is reasonable. This includes results of tests, correspondence, and changes to Care Plans
- Include an accurate record of all decisions taken in relation to Care and treatment and make reference to discussions with Service Users, their families and those lawfully acting on their behalf. This includes consent records and advance decisions to refuse treatment
- Are accessible to authorised people in order to deliver Service User's Care and treatment to meet their needs and keeps them safe
- Are created, amended, stored, and destroyed in line with current legislation and nationally recognised guidance
- Are kept securely at all times and only accessed or securely destroyed by authorised people.

Staff including Agency Workers should refer to the Service User Care Planning Policy and Procedures at Nursing Direct.

Policies and Procedures

The Registered Manager:

- Has responsibility for ensuring that Staff including Agency Workers can access policies and procedures from the company website. Alternatively, policies and procedures can be requested and shared via email.
- Must review the policies and procedures annually to ensure that they meet the needs of Nursing Direct and make amendments where required to meet local policy requirements.
- Must ensure that the policies and procedures are implemented and embedded within Nursing Direct and will undertake regular compliance audits.
- Must keep up to date with any local policy or best practice changes and ensure these changes are cascaded to Staff including Agency Workers.

Guidance, NICE Advice and Quality Standards

Nursing Direct can be confident that Nursing Direct is providing the best quality care if they use NICE guidelines. Application of evidence-based recommendations will be put in place to help improve practice and quality.

Training

The Registered Manager or a delegated other will must ensure that all Staff including Agency Workers within Nursing Direct are professionally trained and supported by implementing the following measures:

- A training matrix should be established, with all trainings adhering to the Training policy and procedure of Nursing Direct.
- Training and development should be given high priority, and Staff including Agency Workers are required to attend.
- Training and development should also be prioritised for all Staff including Agency Workers within Nursing Direct to maintain a knowledgeable and competent workforce who update their personal and professional development.
- An environment of continuous learning enables the development and review of practice and systems based on research, good practice, and evidence-based care.
- Nursing Direct will review training materials alongside published policies and procedures to ensure consistency and alignment where necessary.

Quality Improvement

INCLUDES:

- Identifying the quality issue
- Understanding the issue from a range of perspectives, with an emphasis on using and interpreting data
- Developing a theory of change
- Identifying and testing potential solutions, using data to measure the impact of each test, and gradually refining the solution to the problem
- Implementing the solution and ensuring that the intervention is sustained as part of standard practice

Findings from audits will highlight areas for improvement and what is working well. Results will be analysed and used to:

- Develop action plans to improve practice
- Steer the direction for quality initiatives and review of the strategy of Nursing Direct
- Inform supervisions, training, and performance management where necessary.

Any individual concerns identified will be addressed through the appropriate policies and procedures. Nursing Direct will report through governance structures to ensure that system-wide improvements can be made where trends are identified through audits.

Audit

The Registered Manager or a delegated other will undertake monthly quality control audits and reviews of the service as dictated by the quality framework. These service reviews will include the following:

- Financial transactions
- Health and safety
- Accidents and incidents
- Safeguarding
- Compliments, concerns, and complaints
- Service User and Staff including Agency Workers feedback
- Infection control
- Care and safety performance, e.g. Care documentation, medicine management, nutrition, fluid, skin integrity
- Home visit spot checks
- Supervisions and Appraisals
- Compliance including Safer Recruitment Assessments
- Maintenance
- Observations/spot checks
- Data protection

Thematic audits and national audits will also be used to provide focused reviews of quality. Best practice standards will also be applied. This does not replace any additional, more frequent quality assurance checks that are completed as locally agreed by Nursing Direct.

Clinical Governance

Nursing Direct recognises that Clinical Governance is relevant within the business and will ensure a culture of continuous improvement.

Seeking Feedback

- Nursing Direct will actively seek feedback from Service Users and their families about their experience and the quality of care they receive at Nursing Direct.
- Nursing Direct will actively seek views from a wide range of external stakeholders about their experience and the quality of care provided by Nursing Direct. This should include Staff including Agency Workers, visiting professionals, commissioners etc.
- Nursing Direct will evidence that they have reviewed, responded, and taken action to address any issues from any feedback, in order to make improvements.
- Nursing Direct will consider, implement, and evaluate improvements.

Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments

Staff including Agency Workers should refer to the Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Policy at Nursing Direct.

Other Records

The Registered Manager or delegated other will ensure that all records pertaining to Staff including Agency Workers and Staff including Agency Workers, as well as the management of Nursing Direct, adhere to the following standards:

- Records are created, amended, stored, and disposed of in compliance with current legislation and guidelines.
- Information relevant to the employment of Staff including Agency Workers, including requirements outlined in Regulations 4 to 7 and Regulation 19 of Part 3 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, is included. This obligation applies to all Staff including Agency Workers. Nursing Direct must comply with data protection laws regarding the retention of confidential personal information.
- Confidentiality of Service Users is upheld, following the guidelines of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Continuous Improvement Plan

Nursing Direct will have a continuous improvement plan for quality improvement. This plan will be based on feedback from Staff including Agency Workers, Service Users, and external stakeholders. The improvement plan will be a 'live' document which is regularly reviewed, amended, and added to. This plan is Nursing Direct's commitment to continuous improvement of quality at Nursing Direct.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Nursing Direct is a socially responsible business and we recognise the active role we can play in helping to build happier and healthier communities by:

- Ensuring ethical purchasing with due diligence carried out on its supply chains
- Adhering to modern slavery and human trafficking laws as part of its purchasing strategy
- Complying with local waste reduction and recycling requirements
- Striving to be a responsible neighbour in the community in which it operates by ensuring the safety and security of the premises of Nursing Direct
- Finding and investing in technological solutions where possible, such as low energy lighting systems that can help it to use energy resources more efficiently
- Being a 'champion' of change, showing how much it cares about the need for a low carbon economy and reducing its carbon footprint by ensuring that Staff including Agency Workers can keep car journeys to a minimum with careful rostering
- Motivating Staff including Agency Workers to actively care about the environment, giving them guidance and information to help them make a real difference

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Staff including Agency Workers

6.1.1 Staff

Denotes the employees of Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited.

6.1.2 Agency Workers

Refers to individuals who are contracted with Nursdoc Limited or another employment business as an Agency Worker (temporary worker) provided to Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited to perform care services under the direction of Nursing Direct.

6.2 Nursing Direct

Nursing Direct, also known as Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited, is the entity regulated by the CQC (Care Quality Commission) and responsible for the care service provision, contracted to provide homecare services to service users in their homes, in placements, essential healthcare facilities and in the community.

6.3 Nursdoc Limited

As the sister company to Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited, Nursdoc Limited acts as an employment business, specialising in providing staffing solutions to the healthcare sector.

6.4 CQC (Care Quality Commission)

CQC throughout this policy, the term "CQC" refers to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which is the independent regulator of health and social care in England.

6.5 Person-Centred Care

An approach where the person using care and support is at the centre of the way care is planned and delivered. It is based around their individual needs, preferences, and priorities. It treats people as an equal partner, and puts into practice the principle of 'no decision about me without me' - (GOV.UK: Adult Social Care, Quality Matters)

6.6 Quality

Quality refers to the level of excellence and effectiveness in delivering care and support services to individuals in their homes.

6.7 Policy

A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. A policy is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol.


6.8 Quality Framework

It sets out expectations in domains for quality and represents a single framework through which can be the evaluation, management, and improvement of the quality of the service. A quality framework is a structure which defines quality in practical terms for an organisation

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

To be 'outstanding' in this policy area you could provide evidence that:

- Nursing Direct subscribes to quality marks and initiatives to raise quality standards and takes part in national audits relevant to its service. It embeds any recommendations from the outcome of these
- Staff including Agency Workers have access to a range of best practice resources and have a competent understanding of quality and quality assurance
- Nursing Direct seeks feedback from stakeholders at every opportunity to mold the service around the needs of the Service User
- Nursing Direct has a culture of learning, reflecting, and reviewing of processes to ensure they remain fit for their purpose and are the most effective and efficient that they can be
- Nursing Direct reviews practice to ensure that policies, procedures, and audits are embedded and part of daily working practice
- Systems are in place to measure quality assurance and actions are completed in a timely manner which demonstrates embedment and sustainability
- Nursing Direct utilises mock inspection toolkits to identify where quality and compliance can be improved. Corrective action is taken as necessary and is documented

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|-----------------|---|
| COMPLETED DATE: | |
| SIGN OFF DATE: | |
| REVIEW DATE: | |
| SIGNED: |  Marc Stiff – Group Managing Director |