

AGE UK EXETER

Controlled Document

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Owner (Responsibility): Chief Executive Officer

Pass amendments to: Governance Officer

Revision History: See end of document.

Document Location: www.ageuk.org.uk/exeter/about-us/policiesandguidelines/

Document Description

This policy aims to guide Age UK Exeter's (AUKE's) decision-making processes so that they are in line with the charity's values. There are a number of decisions which need to be made on a day-to-day basis, particularly with respect to fundraising activities and who we align ourselves with and this document seeks to give guidance to those decisions.

Implementation and Quality Assurance

Implementation is immediate and this policy shall stay in force until any alterations are formally agreed.

The policy will be reviewed every three years by the Board of Trustees, sooner if legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate this is necessary.

All aspects of this policy shall be open to review at any time. If you have any comments or suggestions on the content of this policy, please contact the Chief Executive Officer on info@ageukexeter.org.uk or at Age UK Exeter, The Sycamores, Exeter, EX4 7AE, 01392 202092.

ETHICAL POLICY

Our Vision

Our vision is for a city in which all older people can love later life.

Our Mission

To enable older people in Exeter to make the most of life, whatever their circumstances.

Our Values and Principles

- To safeguard, support and serve the older people of Exeter, their families, and carers, by making ourselves aware of the community's needs and providing services to high standards.
- To safeguard, support and treat fairly our staff, volunteers, and service users.
- To participate in the Age UK network but to maintain our independence and charitable objectives.
- To be transparent, accountable and have strong governance systems.
- To seek financial support from a wide variety of appropriate sources.
- Within our resources, to maximise our provision of services, with the recognition that the governance and administration needs to be robust enough to ensure our principles are achieved.
- To be aware of potential conflicts of interest and to address them.
- To operate within all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
- To comply with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- To ensure that our actions promote the values and reputation of AUKE.

Introduction

The purpose of the Ethical Policy is to guide our decision-making processes in a manner appropriate for a charity dedicated to the welfare of older people. Maintaining the charity's reputation is paramount to its continued existence. In addition, we have an obligation to protect the Age UK brand.

Ethically correct decisions will often involve dilemmas and invariably there will be divergence of views in some areas and subjectivity depending on the ethical and moral viewpoint of individuals. It is however vital that each new interaction with an outside company/agency/organisation is well researched, and a decision made based on the best available evidence at the time.

We have specific policies for many of the areas covered, which expand on the general principles set out here. Relevant policies which may be referred to include:

1. Data Protection Policy
2. Financial Management Policy
3. Environment Policy
4. Gifts & Legacies Policy
5. Conflict of Interest Policy
6. Fundraising Policy

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all aspects of the charity's work, including:

1. Our reputation and standing in the community
2. Our staff and volunteers
3. Service users and service delivery
4. Partners and stakeholders
5. Suppliers
6. Conflict of interests
7. Security and confidentiality
8. Finance and investment
9. Income generation
10. Environmental practices: recycling and energy use.

We are seeking to avoid harm to:

- service users, their families, and carers
- our staff and volunteers
- our stakeholders
- the reputation of the organisation and the Age UK brand
- the environment.

Implementation

All new engagement with new organisations or agencies should be discussed with the Chief Executive Officer or Governance Officer. The background of the company/agency should be researched to aid informed decision making. The CEO and Governance Officer should use the three committees (Finance, Risk and Quality, Board) to fully discuss issues and new projects.

The trustees should be fully satisfied that any decisions made have followed this Ethical Policy.

Key principles

1. Our Community

We recognise our responsibility in terms of the contribution we can make to the wellbeing of our communities in Exeter.

We seek:

- to identify the needs of older people in Exeter.
- to contribute significantly to our community through our services, volunteering activities and participation in partnerships with local agencies and other charities.

- to inform local government and organisations on behalf of older people in the city.

2. Our Staff and Volunteers

As a recruiter and employer, we give equal respect, consideration, and opportunities to all.

- treating staff and volunteers fairly, openly, and honestly.
- prioritising co-operation over self-interest.
- treating colleagues with respect.

We expect our staff and volunteers to maintain the highest standards of behaviour when conducting any aspects of our work. Our employment practices support the high standards we have to ensure good conduct, honesty and integrity.

We strive to offer our staff a good work/life balance, flexible working where possible, and a supportive management culture that puts wellbeing at the top of the agenda.

We recognise the value of volunteers and the importance of the contribution that they make.

3. Our Services

Our reputation and success are dependent on our behaviour and standards in supporting and serving the needs of older people in Exeter, their families, and carers.

We wish to ensure:

- the right level of advice at the right time
- the highest standards of service and support
- the safeguarding of the individual
- the provision of professional, friendly, and responsive services
- a broad range of services, which are clear and accessible and meet a range of needs and interests.
- people can access our services in a variety of ways, enabling users to engage with those best suited to them.

4. Our Partners and Stakeholders

We aim for our partners to work to a similar set of ethical standards as ourselves and will raise concerns with them if there appears to be a major divergence of ethical standards between us. We wish to ensure:

- good communications
- high standards of service
- transparency, accountability, and robust reporting systems
- the security of user information
- there is no conflict of interest
- there is an accessible complaints procedure.

5. Suppliers

We recognise the important contribution suppliers make to our business and expect our staff and volunteers to treat them fairly and in an ethical manner.

We also expect suppliers to act in a fair and equitable manner when conducting their business.

We ensure that major contracts are reviewed from time to time and that appropriate suppliers have an equal opportunity to win our business at these times. We will try to use ethical suppliers where it is possible and resource effective to do so.

We aim to ensure that our suppliers comply with our standards, which cover the following areas:

- payment in accordance with the agreed terms and deal with exceptions in a timely manner
- transparency and accountability
- equal opportunities
- health & safety
- ethical business practices
- good environmental practices.

6. Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest exists where an individual (be it a staff member, trustee, volunteer, or client) has a financial or loyalty interest in a service or proceeding. We have a detailed Conflicts of Interest Policy and Register to help manage and overcome conflicts of interest and try to be transparent in all of our proceedings and only ever act in the best interests of the charity.

7. Security and confidentiality

We will ensure that personal information is held securely, and that the movement of information is monitored and controlled in a secure manner. Information should not be disclosed to any third parties without consent other than to those that process information on our behalf unless there are regulatory or legal obligations to do so.

8. Finance and Investment

- To ensure all surpluses are retained within the charity and used for charitable purposes.
- To seek financial support from a wide variety of sources to achieve a diversity of funding.
- To be transparent, accountable and have strong reporting systems.
- To use our reserves to manage risks in our budgeting.
- To monitor monthly accounts against the budget.
- To reward our staff fairly.
- To be aware of potential conflicts of interest and address them.
- To operate within all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
- To have an investment statement within our Financial Management Policy that does not conflict with our ethical standards.

We have adopted a medium risk approach to the investment of our reserves.

9. Income Generation

Income generation has a number of elements:

- Contracts
- Charges for services
- Grants & Trusts
- Community fundraising
- Donations
- Events
- Legacies
- Sponsorship
- Marketing and advertising
- Business partnerships
- Men in Sheds shop sales
- Group donations and sale of craft items

The paramount aim of any relationship we have is the wellbeing and best interests of our beneficiaries; and to enhance or maintain our reputation.

In addition, we will:

- seek financial support from a wide variety of sources.
- aim not to be over dependent on or favour particular companies or individuals.
- be transparent, accountable and have strong reporting systems.
- be aware of potential conflicts of interest and address them.
- operate within all applicable laws, rules and regulations.
- protect the reputation and standards of the Age UK brand.

An organisation or individual offering a source of financial support should be considered in the light of this ethical policy at an early stage to ensure that their ethical principles are similar to our own. In order to understand their service or product and the benefit the organisation or individual is purchasing we will confirm:

- the organisation or individual has a good reputation.
- they have good communication, transparency and have strong reporting systems.
- the method and source of financial support will be in the best interests of our service users if income is raised to support a service.
- the amount does not form a too large proportion of the overall income type received by the charity.
- that the benefit to the sponsor is not excessive or disproportionate to the level of the sponsorship income of the charity.
- that we are not explicitly endorsing a product or service.
- If in doubt, the decision should be taken to the Risk and Quality Committee.

We would wish to raise awareness of the importance bequests have to us and to encourage people to remember us in their will. We have an Offers of Gifts and Legacies Policy.

10. Environmental Practices

We recognise our responsibility to manage our activities in such a way as to respect the environment:

- We ensure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation and the other Codes of Practice and Agreements to which we subscribe.
- We have an Environment Policy that details how we manage and mitigate the charity's impact on the environment.

Guidance on putting this Ethical Policy into practice.

In deciding whether or not any act may be unethical it is useful to ask the questions:

- Does it feel right?
- Is it legal?
- Who else could be affected by our decision?
- Would I want to be treated this way?
- Would I be embarrassed if others knew what I had decided?
- Would my action be consistent with AUKE's policies and values?
- If I do it, how will I feel afterwards?
- Do I have all the necessary information to make my decision?
- Will I have acted in good conscience and be prepared and able to explain my actions?
- Is there any concern that the reputation of Age UK Exeter could be adversely affected?
- Should I discuss the matter with my manager or other appropriate person before committing to a course of action?

The process of making a decision could include:

1. Ascertain the facts.
2. Define the ethical issues.
3. Identify the affected parties.
4. Identify the consequences.
5. Identify the relevant principles, rights, and justice issues.
6. Consider your character and integrity.
7. Think creatively about potential actions and consequences.
8. Decide on a proper ethical action.

AUKE recognises its ethical position as a buyer of goods and services. Within the resources available to the charity and where practicable to do so AUKE will:

- Test the market and source goods and services locally wherever possible.
- Ensure all tradespeople are suitably qualified and insured to undertake work required.
- Use Fairtrade and Farm Assured products in our catering.
- Use paper that is sustainably sourced.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for the recycling of its waste.
- Be mindful of its energy use and carbon footprint and seek to minimise these where practical to do so.
- Settle our bills within the terms specified by our suppliers.

AUKE recognises there is sometimes a cost to sourcing goods and services ethically and decisions will therefore be taken on a case-by-case basis, based upon the cost to the charity and the product or service in question.

The Board of trustees will receive regular reports on all new partnerships and confirmation that this policy has been followed.

Revision History

Revision date	Summary of Changes	Other Comments
31.10.16	Versions 1 to 9 – formulating new policy. Reviewed by Standards Committee	Recommended to the Board for approval
8.11.16	Reviewed by the Board	Approved Next review due November 2018
3.9.18	Routine review by the Standards Committee.	Tweaks to Our Vision and Mission at the beginning. The coding for alcohol and gambling in the RAG table changed from green to amber. Recommended to the Board for approval.
11.9.18	Reviewed by the Board. Approved.	Next review due September 2021.
23.05.23	Policy updated in line with current best practice.	Next review due August 2026