Business Continuity Policy

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**Policy Statement**

Age UK York provides a range of services and activities for older people within the City of York. In the event of major disruption, the organisation will need to survive and continue providing services.

This policy document outlines the step-by-step processes which should be followed to enable the organisation’s operations to continue in the event of a major disruption.

**Introduction**

This policy is intended to provide guidance and direction for all employees and volunteers carrying out work for Age UK York, including the trustees of the charity.

**Responsibilities and Accountability**

**Ultimate responsibility**

The Chair of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for implementation of this policy, including making the decision that an emergency has occurred. The Chief Executive Officer will oversee the implementation of the policy in an emergency and will ensure that this policy is approved by the Board of Trustees.

**Managers and Supervisors**

Managers and supervisors will ensure that they and their teams follow the policy in the event of the trustees declaring an emergency.

**Employees and Volunteers**

All employees and volunteers should follow the Business Continuity Policy in the event of an emergency.

The policy is not contractual and may be changed subject to the approval by the Board of Trustees and consultation with employees.

**Procedures and Implementation**

**Identifying and understanding threats to the organisation**

The Board of Trustees will consider the risks to the organisation at each board meeting. The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for maintaining a risk register (included as an Annex to this policy) which assesses the likelihood and impact of risks, identifies mitigating actions and tracks the completion of these actions.

Staff and volunteers who identify risks to the organisation should report these in the first instance to their service manager, who will inform the Chief Executive Officer of the risk(s). The CEO will determine if and how the risk can be prevented or mitigated and whether it should be logged on the risk register, and/or whether the risk is sufficiently severe and imminent in its impact for an emergency to be declared.
Declaring an emergency

The Chair of Trustees will call an Emergency Board meeting, to include the Chief Executive Officer if a risk to the organisation is judged to have been identified, and the risk is judged to have the potential to have a major or catastrophic impact on the organisation and its functioning (as defined in the risk matrix which forms part of the Risk Register).

This might be a risk which features on the organisational risk register, or an emergent threat not yet documented.

The Emergency Board will consist of at least three trustees together with the Chief Executive Officer and may make decisions on behalf of the whole Board of Trustees and will minute and communicate those decisions to the rest of the Board of Trustees as soon as practicable.

The Emergency Board meeting will:

- Assess whether the situation constitutes an emergency for the organisation
- Assess the potential impact of the emergency on service delivery
- Assess the potential financial impact of the emergency on service delivery
- Liaise with key external agencies to understand other emergency response provision
- Identify the vulnerability of the organisation in the emergency (availability of staff, availability of funds, interruption to normal operations)
- Identify key services which must be prioritised for continuing delivery
- Identify resources and staff for continued delivery of key services
- Identify the business support required for continued delivery of key services
- Take any decision required to ensure continued delivery of key services
- Ensure key business document and contact information is available to relevant staff or volunteers
- Set communications channels for the emergency and ensure decision making procedures are in place, including setting the regularity of emergency board meetings

Ensuring service delivery

The Emergency Board will take decisions to ensure key services are delivered and to support continuing service delivery in as many areas as possible.
The Emergency Board, acting on information and advice from staff, will identify the key services which must be maintained during an emergency. The Emergency Board will ensure all funders are aware of any changes to services and agree them. They will also ensure that insurers are aware of any changes.

The following criteria will be used to prioritise provision of services during the emergency:

1. Services which are not banned/closed or prevented by government or public authority guidance/legislation
2. Services which safeguard older people
3. Services which Age UK York are contractually obliged to deliver
4. Services which may form part of an emergency response for older people which do not duplicate those delivered by public authorities or other third sector providers

Older people using services which will be discontinued during the emergency period will be communicated with, and where necessary, alternative providers will be identified.

Staff will regularly monitor the ongoing provision of services and will recommend to the Emergency Board which services should be discontinued and which restarted.

The Emergency Board, supported by finance staff and the Treasurer, will regularly review the ability of the organisation to fund the continued operations, ensuring at all times that the organisation is a going concern.

**Ensuring business support**

The Emergency Board will ensure that sufficient business support is in place to support the ongoing delivery of services. This will include

- access to banking and adequate recording of financial transactions
- access to communications equipment
- access to organisational IT systems including payroll, finance, client database and document management systems
- access to post services
- access to staff contact details and key HR information

**Key resources and staff**

The Emergency Board will ensure that key resources and staff are available to ensure key services continue to be delivered and business support provided.

The Chief Executive Officer or other senior manager will ensure that the following provisions are made:

- Contingency locations are available
Contingency vehicles are available
Adequate PPE is available to staff
Contact details of staff are available and held in electronic and hard copy
Contact details of volunteers are available and held in electronic and hard copy
Contact details of trustees are available and held in electronic and hard copy

Contingency locations
Contingency locations may include office locations currently used by the organisation or shop spaces converted to office space. Staff may also be asked to work from home during an emergency. In this case they will be loaned computer equipment from office locations to support this.

The organisation may also consider converting office or shop space into storage space if necessary. In the event of both office locations and all five shop spaces being unavailable, York CVS offices and meeting space would be secured.

Contingency vehicles
In the event of Age UK York’s vehicles not being available, staff will use their own vehicles or alternative vehicles will be spot hired.

Availability of equipment and PPE
The Chief Executive Office will work with service managers to secure adequate supplies and storage space for PPE. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that all required equipment is available.

Contact details of staff
Contact details of staff are available on a Cloud hosted database. A hard copy will also be placed in the office emergency grab bag. These will be updated on a monthly basis.

Contact details of volunteers
Contact details of volunteers are available on a Cloud hosted database. A hard copy will also be placed in the office emergency grab bag. These will be updated on a monthly basis.

Contact details of trustees
Contact details of trustees are available on a Cloud hosted database. A hard copy will also be placed in the office emergency grab bag. These will be updated on a monthly basis.

Staff support
In the event of the emergency continuing beyond a week, consideration will be given to:

- Ensuring staff are adequately rested, for example through use of emergency rotas
Ensuring appropriate support provision is made to staff

In the event of the emergency continuing beyond a month, consideration will be given to:

- Ensuring staff are adequately rested, for example through ensuring staff are able to use annual leave
- Ensuring an interim debrief takes place for all staff involved in the emergency response

**Key business documents**

Key business documentation will be stored in electronic files which are stored in the Cloud and regularly backed up.

Additionally, copies of documents below will be produced in hard copy and placed in the office emergency grab bag and updated monthly.

- Details of bank accounts and access to online banking
- Insurance certificates for all policies

If the office buildings are inaccessible for more than one week, a postal redirect will be set up to a contingency location.

The insurer will be informed of the contingency location, contingency vehicles and changes to services following the initial Emergency Board meeting.

**Key external contacts**

Contact details of all key external contacts will be printed and place in the office emergency grab bag.

These will include but not be limited to:

- Funders
- City of York Council
- York CVS
- Insurers
- Banks
- Age UK

**Decision making in an emergency**

The service managers will meet regularly in the emergency to:

- Communicate information
- Make operational decisions
- Decide on recommendations to make to the Emergency Board
The Emergency Board will meet regularly throughout the emergency.

**Business recovery**

The Emergency Board, acting on the advice of the Chief Executive Officer will decide when an emergency has ended. At that point, an assessment will be made as to whether all services existing prior to the emergency are restarted. This will depend on:

- The priorities and needs of older people
- The availability of funding and resources to deliver the service

The Chief Executive Officer will manage the return to business as usual and closure of contingency locations and measures.

The Emergency Board will lead a lessons-learnt exercise which will include input from volunteers, staff and partners.

**Related Policies, Guidance and Procedures**

Health and Safety Policy
Lone Worker Policy

**Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and approved by the Board of Trustees. Additionally, the policy will be reviewed when an emergency has been declared at an end by the Emergency Board.

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1 Risk Register**

C:\Users\JenniferAllott\Age UK York\Senior Management – Documents\Jenny

Only accessible internally

**Appendix 2 Emergency Process**

**Appendix 2 Standard Emergency Board agenda**

1. Situation Description
2. Threat assessment
3. Impact assessment
4. Service delivery implications
(5) Business support implications
(6) Resource implications (staff, buildings, vehicles, equipment, information)
(7) Partners
(8) Communications

Appendix 3 Information required in the Office Emergency Grab Bag

- Staff contact details
- Volunteer contact details
- Trustee contact details
- Partner contact details
- Landlord contact details
- Copies of service contracts
- Copies of insurance certificates
- Bank account details and access information