### Policy 6: ETHICAL CHARGING FOR SERVICES POLICY

Last updated by: SH /JH

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OLDER PEOPLE’S COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICE

1. **Introduction**
   a) Age UK York (AUKY) has been working for older people in York for over forty years providing a wide range of personal and practical support;
   
b) This charging policy relates to all AUKY services and sub-contracts;
   
c) This Ethical Charging Policy has been drawn up to provide guidance to all those engaged in charging for services on behalf of Age UK York or its sub-contractors. It is employed consistently and rigorously to ensure fair charging for all service users.

2. **Legislation**
   AUKY works within all relevant UK legislation as amended, including, but not limited to legislation on data protection, money laundering and bribery, as well as following government guidance in relation to acts of terrorism and political activity.

3. **Responsibilities**
   a) The Trustees of AUKY have overall responsibility for AUKY and for the maintenance and continuation of the services it provides;
   
b) The Trustees have devolved day to day responsibilities on the Chief Officer (CO) who works with her senior management team to ensure the provision of quality services;
   
c) When the need arises, the CO will take advice from and be guided by the Trustees and by outside agency advisers as appropriate.

4. **Relationship with other service providers**
   a) Older People’s Community Support service (OPCSS) incorporates a number of preventative activities, delivered under contract to the City of York Council;
   
   b) The services are delivered alongside AUKY services and social enterprises;
   
   c) AUKY sub-contracts to the Alzheimers Society and Riccall Carers for services delivered under the OPCSS;
   
   d) Keep Your Pet is a service run jointly with the RSPCA in York and is not part of the OPCSS contract.

5. **Quality of services**
   a) AUKY aims to provide services offering the best quality and value for money;
   
   b) Quality of provision applies whether the service is free to the service user or subsidised with the service user paying a fee/charge.
6. Charging for services

a) It is sometimes thought that all services provided by AUKY should be free to the service user;

b) Where a service is provided under a contract, that service is free to the service user;

c) However, AUKY may offer and provide associated services, or identify provision needs as a result of contract provision and these services may be charged for;

d) Services are costed on an ethical basis and service users are not regarded as a source of profit to AUKY;

e) AUKY: Registered Charity Number 1118346 like other charities, is not allowed to make a profit for services unless that surplus is reinvested for the continuance of those services;

f) AUKY’s charging can always be subject to investigation by the Charity Commission.

7. Charged for Services

a) Services in relation to Information and Advice or Befriending visits will not be charged for;

b) Day Clubs charges are fixed for each individual club and will be dependent on the services provided within the club. Those requiring more regular and extensive personal care will attend the specific clubs with appropriate facilities. The charges will be greater for appropriate clubs;

c) Meals at clubs are charged for according to the type of meal and catering arrangement. Meals purchased on outings are paid for by the service user direct. Those service users who struggle to afford “extra” costs are supported by other mechanisms;

d) Minibus transport provided by AUKY will have standardised charges across the city for OPCSS clubs. Older people using private vehicles such as taxis will pay according to their journeys. Additional transport charges may be made for outings and visits, and these may be subsidised from club funds where and when appropriate;

e) Carer Support visits charges will be at a level accepted by the City of York Council and the Vale of York CCG and in proportion to the costs required to deliver the services. These charges may vary according to the venues used/activities delivered, but will be agreed as fair and reasonable at the regular meetings held of the organisations working to deliver services;

f) Alzheimers Society does not have formal charges for any service under the OPCSS. Donations are accepted with thanks;

g) Shopping services exist and are offered according to the level of support that the older person requires. The three types of shopping offered are: Internet Shopping Services, Escorted Shopping and Personal Shopping. Specific arrangements for each
service user are in accordance with their own situation and include arrangements such as hearing support, method of payment and choice of shop;

h) Carer Support visits charges will be at a level accepted by our contract providers and in proportion to the costs required to deliver the services. These charges may vary according to the venues used/activities delivered, but will be agreed as fair and reasonable at the regular meetings held of the organisations working to deliver services. Service users will be referred to other agencies for additional support when needed with regard to finance issues. Overnight support will be charged for at rates to ensure compliance with HMRC regulations;

i) Generally there is no charge for our Information and Advice service, however there are specific costs for information books and we invite a contribution towards postage for our fact sheets and/or books.

8. Ability to pay for services

a) AUKY is not always able to offer, nor is it always appropriate, to offer free services;

b) AUKY’s charging policy relates to each individual service area;

c) All parties involved in the delivery of OPCSS services will endeavour (wherever and whenever possible) to continue to provide services for those without the means to pay, or to find alternative solutions to resolve financial issues;

d) Charges will always be fair and equitable and are set at as affordable rate as possible;

e) The service’s affordability to the service user is part of the overall assessment process;

f) AUKY is non-discriminatory and all older people needing its services are assessed as individuals and related to their needs not their ability to pay or not to pay;

g) The Information and Advice service provides benefits checks for all service users to ensure they are receiving all eligible welfare benefits;

h) The Information and Advice service seeks to identify appropriate charitable trusts which may offer assistance for eligible applicants. AUKY will ensure that the requirements of GDPR are observed in such instances;

i) AUKY will make referrals for social care/carers and/or financial assessments as appropriate. AUKY will ensure that the requirements of GDPR are observed in such instances.

9. Changes to charges

Changes in older peoples’ services instigated by AUKY which necessitate a change or rise in charges to individual older people may initially be born by AUKY.