Policy 72: Physical Restraint and Contact Policy

Last updated by: SH, JH

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1. **Scope**

i) This policy includes all situations where workers are in contact with service users in public or in their own homes and whether during group activities and events or in one-to-one service provision situations;

ii) Shops and some Age UK York (AUKY) services have their own policies which should be read in association with this policy;

iii) The Lone-working Policy (Policy 36) is also relevant as it concerns the safety of workers.

2. **Aims, intentions and ethos**

i) The Trustees of AUKY believe and intend that AUKY should provide a caring, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and psychological wellbeing of every individual service user;

ii) The Trustees recognise and welcome the contribution that AUKY workers make to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our service users and the older people of York generally.

3. **Responsibilities**

i) The Trustees are responsible for the safe provision of AUKY services and have devolved day to day responsibility to the Chief Officer (CO);

ii) All AUKY workers have a full and active part to play in protecting service users from harm and are responsible for their own actions regarding this protection;

iii) Workers should consult their line manager or supervisor in all situations where any doubt arises about their own safety or the safety of service users or anyone connected with them, such as carers and family members;

iv) In appropriate situations, workers must seek medical or other help, which may include the police, and must then be guided by them. They must also contact their own line manager or supervisor;

v) In such situations, workers can expect to receive, and should seek, physical and emotional support from their line manager or supervisor.

4. **Legislation and training**

i) There is no current legislation regarding physical restraint and contact specifically relating to the types of service provision provided by AUKY;

ii) However, legislation exists regarding situations where AUKY may become involved, such as in cases of mental ill health or where there are children. Such legislation must be
followed;

iii) All workers have a duty to play a full and active part in protecting service users from harm;

iv) Workers will undertake training provided by AUKY before commencing any service activity with service users. This training will include discussion of particular situations covered by legislation such as in cases of mental ill health or where children are involved;

v) In discussion, workers will be helped to recognise the line between their responsibilities and those of the statutory authorities.

5. Safeguarding

i) The Trustees and workers of AUKY have a duty to safeguard service users and all those involved in their care;

ii) Safeguarding includes:
   - acting to prevent accidents;
   - restraining service users who may be appearing likely to harm themselves or others;
   - being alert to signs that service users are being subjected to inappropriate physical or other restraint by others.

iii) Worker will always act in accordance with the ethos of AUKY and with regard to the need for sensitivity.

6. Planning and risk assessment

i) At the point of referral, a full risk assessment will be carried out;

ii) This will include questions to discover if there is any likelihood that the service user will behave in ways that could lead to the need for restraint;

iii) If there is any such likelihood, the manager/service organiser will decide on the suitability of such a person given AUKY’s skills and experience;

iv) If a service is declined, an alternative service will be suggested if at all possible;

v) If a person is accepted, the risk assessment will identify specific issues that may lead to them requiring more support at any time and to any 'triggers' to be avoided which may result in service users becoming more anxious, worried or less able to cope;

vi) The service user's notes will set out what action is to be taken when necessary;

vii) Service users may vocalise wildly or behave violently for a number of reasons such as:
   - Mental or physical ill health;
   - Anger or frustration over a particular incident;
   - Fear;
   - Learned behaviour, such as believing that by showing anger an outcome favourable to that service user will result.

7. Objectives of physical restraint
i) Physical restraint is intended to prevent harm or injury to others, including the service user and the workers themselves;

ii) Physical restraint is a last resort;

iii) Workers should first ask the person who is causing concern to stop their behaviour and point out the consequences of them not doing so. This should not be done in a threatening manner as this could escalate the situation;

iv) Workers should continue to speak to the individual using a calm, low pitch and speaking clearly but not forcefully;

v) Body language and position are important. Standing with hands on hips or behind a desk are both positions indicating power and authority and should be avoided;

vi) Workers can touch the individual on the shoulder or arm and may feel it appropriate to stroke an arm or gently hold a hand if the service user does not object;

vii) Where a service user or other individual indicates a violent intention such as throwing something or 'coming at' another person, a worker may use reasonable force. This can include taking hold of the arm that is about to throw something or seeking to guide the person into a different direction;

viii) The worker must judge how much force is reasonable in any given situation, bearing in mind factors such as the size and weight of the service user, the level of violence and the fact that older people have very sensitive skin and much weakened muscles and joints;

ix) The worker should ask anyone else, such as carers or family members (but not children) to assist;

x) Workers should consider seeking medical or police assistance;

xi) If a situation escalates so that the worker feels out of control, s/he should leave the area having summoned assistance and having done what may be possible to ensure the safety of the service user.

8. Appropriate contact

i) Physical contact may be misconstrued by an older person, carer or observer;

ii) Touching service users, including well-intentioned gestures can, if repeated, lead to questioning as to the reasons for such contact;

iii) Workers should be prepared to justify their repeated use of physical contact. Such justification could include:
   • handling and moving support, as outlined on the service user's care plan and risk assessment;
   • occasional comfort in cases of distress, such as a family member might offer.
iv) Where a service user engages in physical contact with a worker, this must also be appropriate. Any worker who is uncomfortable with any kind of physical contact must discuss this with their supervisor or line manager immediately and must not give any indication of acceptability of that contact to the service user;

v) Some service users find any kind of physical contact to be unacceptable. This will be recorded on their care plan. In such instances, physical contact will only be used when there is need for restraint (see paragraph 7.).

v) Care only by workers of the same sex may be appropriate in some cases and this will be decided by the supervisor or line manager;

vi) Inappropriate personal touching could be indicative of abuse. Workers must report any instances to their line manager or supervisor at once.

9. Recording incidents

i) The Trustees recognise that there may be occasions where workers will act with the best of intentions but will afterwards be shown to have acted misguidedly;

ii) To ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and lessons learned, workers will:
   - record all incidents in an incident log;
   - inform their line manager or supervisor where there has been any situation out of the normal practice and routine of that service provision;
   - report any incidents to the service user's carer or family member on the same day that the incident occurred.