**Freedom Programme**

**Quality Standards**

This document sets out the quality standards expected of a Micro-provider to join and be a member of the Freedom Providers programme.

All members of the programme are responsible for ensuring that their conduct does not fall below the standards set out in this document and that they safeguard the wellbeing of clients.

Please note that Freedom Providers cannot recommend any organisations and are not responsible for how the organisations deliver their service.

Freedom Providers reserves the right to refuse an application or remove a provider, in line with the Freedom Providers Quality Assurance Process.

**A Micro-provider will be expected to run a small business, enterprise, venture or group that is:**

• Totally independent of any larger or umbrella organisation.

• Has fewer than 8 (full time equivalent) employees and or volunteers

• Offer services or a range of supports that help people improve their health or wellbeing

To join the Freedom Providers programme each provider has made the following commitments:

**The services and supports offered by my enterprise or group:**

• Are designed to meet people’s needs and requirements

• Value the person or people I support

• Are flexible and responsive to change

• Promote people’s independence and choice

• Promote diversity and equality of opportunity

**I am committed to:**

• Ensuring that my enterprise and its activity is compliant with all legislative and regulatory requirements

• Undertake activities to which I am qualified, experienced and competent.

• Continually improving the quality of the services and supports that my enterprise offers

• Charging a fair price for my services

• Offering people who use my services a clear cost breakdown.

• Ensuring that my service is safe and follows safeguarding principles.

• Being open, honest and trustworthy, respecting confidential information.

• Honouring commitments, agreements and arrangements to provide services and, where it is not possible to do so, explaining why.

**My enterprise is well run and sustainable.**

**I confirm that I:**

• Have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) that is no more than 3 years old, for myself, any workers and/or volunteers

• Have current Public Liability and other insurance that covers all relevant aspects of the service my enterprise offers

• Have current guidelines on risk management, safety and safeguarding that covers all relevant aspects of the service my enterprise offers

• Have a current Complaints Procedure

• Have clear, up to date procedures for assessing and meeting the needs of the people who use my service

• Have written contracts with all the people who use my services and/or their representatives

• Fully understand the boundaries of Care Regulation (CQC) and operate my service within these boundaries at all times\*

**Unacceptable conduct, which may result in a Micro Provider membership being rescinded from the programme could include:**

**Putting anyone at risk of harm:**

• Abusing, neglecting or harming a client or their representative

• Discriminating unlawfully or unjustifiably against a client or their representative

• Abusing the trust of a client or their representative or abuse the access to personal information about them.

• Introducing a replacement worker to a client that lacks the appropriate skills, qualifications and experience to undertake the work.

• Introducing a replacement worker that is not legitimately self-employed, insured or holds an enhanced DBS clearance within three years.

**Breaching confidentiality:**

• Discussing information relating to clients or their representative with others (through any means of communication, including posting comments on social media, e.g. Facebook or Twitter)

• Having unauthorised access to or knowledge of customers PIN numbers, bank and credit cards or internet passwords

**Forming inappropriate relationships:**

• Provide services to people who lack capacity or do not have someone to legally advocate on their behalf.

• Forming inappropriate personal relationships with a client or their representative

• Accepting gifts, money or assets (other than wages) from a client or their representative

• Agreeing to look after valuable items belonging to a client or their representative

• Accepting loans from a client or their representative

**Inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour:**

• Bringing children or dependents to the place of work

• Smoking whilst working (including e-cigarettes and vaping)

• Consuming alcohol before or during working hours, even if duties require accompaniment to licensed premises (restaurant, bar, etc.)

• Using any illegal substances or engaging in illegal behaviours

• Using any personal items belonging to a client that are not required to carry out duties

• Using any inappropriate behaviour at work, including abusive and foul language

• Failing to provide a clear cost breakdown of services

• Poaching or solicitation of clients from previous employers

• Failing to regularly invoice, communicate clearly with clients and keep accurate and up to date records

• Setting excessive or inappropriate notice periods (e.g charging notice period following the death of a client)

• Use of foul language, including swearing and aggression towards clients or other Micro-providers.

**Legal & Regulatory Breaches (applicable for unregulated sole traders)**

• Co-ordinating the work of other Micro-providers

• Creating rota’s of care with other micro-providers

• Subcontracting to other Micro-providers

• Making decisions on behalf of the person receiving care or their legal

representative

\*If Micro-providers are unregulated all care should be led, controlled, directed and co-ordinated by the person receiving care or their legal representative

The Freedom Providers programme fully aligns itself with the standards set out in the “Code of Conduct for Healthcare, Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England”.

**Governance & Quality Assurance**

Freedom Providers have a quality assurance process to manage the quality and satisfaction of the services listed as an approved provider.

**Conduct that may mean a provider is removed from the Programme include: -**

* Excessive charging – rates that are over and above local market rates
* Double charging e.g. supporting two or more people at the same time and charging them both a full hourly rate
* Setting prices as a group or network working together to fix prices or carve up markets
* Discriminating against customers by charging different prices for the same service

**Further Information and Guidance**

**Fair Pricing**

All members of the Freedom Providers programme need to ensure they offer a clear, fair, consistent and transparent price for their services. Rates must be based on local market conditions and reflect the nature and level of service provided.

ERYC currently have set rates for people who are eligible for council funded care. People wishing to use a direct payment to either employ a personal assistant or engage with an unregulated Micro-provider, will have a Direct Payment budget.

These rates are not binding for Micro-providers but offer a useful benchmark against which small care providers can assess their own rates.

**Notice Periods**

Approved Micro-providers are to have contracts with their customers to include procedures for absence or ending the agreements.

These notice periods enable either the customer or the provider to end this agreement by giving ...... weeks’ notice to the other party in writing.

As the provider we would expect you not to give notice until you had tried to resolve all the difficulties that had arisen.

As a provider you may terminate an agreement with immediate effect if the customer fails to pay for the service you have provided and owes you more than one month’s payment.

**Employment Status (for self-employed Micro-providers)**

Being self-employed is not a matter of choice but is determined by the particular terms and conditions under which a Micro-provider operates.

**Micro-provider’s and Regulation**

For guidance around the regulatory basis on which Micro-providers operate please see: Micro-providers (PA's) working and CQC Registration Requirements

Should a Micro-provider be found to be operating an unregulated care service that should be regulated they will be immediately removed from the programme and reported to the Care Quality Commission.

For more information on Regulation please contact the CQC on 03000 61 61 61 or

visit: http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/what-registration#accordion-1.

**Micro-providers and Medication**

Micro-providers are able to assist with medicines under the direction of the person receiving care or their legal representative providing their customer:

• Put this request in writing and sign an authorisation form.

• Check whether any specialist training is needed to deliver the medication.

• Set down in writing exactly what they are asking a Micro-provider to do and sign that request to allow consent (e.g. take inhaler from fridge at 12 noon and assist in using the inhaler by pressing down the button while the person breathes in).

• The Micro-provider completes MAR (Medication Administration Records)

You should talk to your insurance adviser about whether you will need extra cover because you are assisting with medication.

For further information please see: Managing medicines for adults receiving social care in the community NICE guideline [NG67]

**Mobility aids and equipment**

Micro-providers must have formal training to use mobility aids and equipment. This training can be provided by the person themselves and/or their family and you must have a record of the training provided, signed by the person delivering the training.

Micro-providers should check their insurance to make sure you are covered if there is .an accident to their client when using the mobility aid.

Contact us at:

**Suzanne Sellers & Sarah Colbourne**

Email: info@freedomproviders.org.uk

Tel: 07778319735/ 01262 213155

**Agreement to the Freedom Providers Programme:**

To be an approved member I agree to meet the criteria set in the Quality Standards document

Signed:……………………………………………………………..……………………………………

Date:……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Signed (Freedom Providers co-ordinator):………………………………………………………..

Date:……………………………………………………………………………………………………