Children & Young People

Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Introduction

Refugees Welcome believes that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind and recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to practice that protects them. This policy will apply to contact with any Refugee/ Evacuee projects under Refugees Welcome. Also, to volunteers, Trustees and those working alongside Refugees Welcome.

Recruitment of Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers

There is a robust application and interview process for all volunteers working with families known to Refuges Welcome as per the Recruitment Policy including DBS checks updated every 3 years and taking references.
Appropriate recruitment systems are in place for Trustees, Contractors and Advisors.

Training

Volunteers working with families will receive safeguarding training to cover how to identify a concern, how to raise concerns, how to respond to safeguarding concerns. This ensures that volunteers can: Recognise, Respond and Record any cause for concern and Risk Assess the situation for appropriate escalation of concerns as outlined in this policy. Refresher Safeguarding training is offered every 3 years.

Trustees, Contractors, Advisors who do not have day to day contact with the families will be suitably briefed on Safeguarding matters. Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers are expected to act in an appropriate and professional manner and to avoid any kind of conduct which could undermine the wellbeing of the families or the service.
Examples of improper conduct in relation to safeguarding - see Appendix 1.

Concerns relating to RW Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers

This document outlines the policy and procedures for protecting children and young people in cases where there is a safeguarding cause for concern. These procedures cover incidents where a concern is raised regarding a volunteer or member of Trustees, Contractor, or Advisor. In such cases, this procedure will be followed in relation to escalating concerns and reporting incidents for protection of a child/children/ young person.

A volunteer or Trustee, Contractor or Advisor who is the subject of a safeguarding allegation will be suspended from providing services. Until the matter is resolved and any appropriate reports made to the relevant statutory authorities and professional bodies, the suspension will continue.
Any External Agencies working with Refugees Welcome are expected to have and adhere to their own appropriate safeguarding policies. A complaint against anyone from an external agency will be escalated to their Management/ Safeguarding Lead.

Refugees Welcome recognises that:

- The welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The purpose of the policy is:

- To provide protection for the children and young people who receive Refugees Welcome services through their families.
- To provide Volunteers Trustees, Contractors, and Advisors with guidance on procedures that they should adopt if they suspect a child or young person may be or has been experiencing, or be at risk of, harm.
- This policy applies to all Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers or anyone working on behalf of Refugees Welcome at any time.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- Valuing them, listening to and respecting them.
- Adopting safeguarding guidelines through policy and procedures available to Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers on the website **www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk**
- Safe recruitment and safeguarding training for volunteers who have contact with refugee families with children under 18years or children with special needs under 25yrs.
- A Guide to Good Practice for volunteers setting out information about principles, expectations, boundaries and safe working practice for working with Refugee groups.
- Recruiting Volunteers, Trustees, Contractors and Advisors safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made, including requiring references and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Providing support for Trustees, Contractors, and Advisors and support and training for Volunteers and ensuring training remains up to date.

- Ensuring that Volunteers, Trustees, Contractors, and Advisors, do not agree to friend requests on any social media platforms or 'Follow' children or send private messages to children on social media or via 'What's App' encrypted services. Nor request to 'follow' children on personal websites. All communications should be transparent and open to scrutiny. There should be **NO** social Media contact with children.
- Online /Digital safety guidance is available on the Refugees Welcome Website for volunteers and refugees **www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk** resources page, under 'Dealing with Abuse'
- Having complaints policies for the organisation, volunteers and beneficiaries of the service.

What is meant by children and young people?

Legislation: The Children Act 2004 and the Statutory Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' guidelines updated 2026.

A child for safeguarding purposes is any person between birth and under the age of 18. This includes young people up to their18th birthday. There are some exceptions to this: Children who are placed in local authority care are usually classed as children until aged 21, and those with some special needs are regarded as children while aged under 25.

Safeguarding Children Defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's health and development.
- Ensuring children grow up on circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Identifying Concerns

How to identify concerns will be covered in mandatory safeguarding training for all volunteers. A list of signs to look out for is included in Appendix II.

This includes being aware of signs of:

- Physical Abuse – a child being deliberately hurt.
- Sexual abuse (in person or online) including grooming.
- Neglect – Not being adequately cared for and having their basic day to day needs met, which can also lead to other forms of abuse.
- Emotional or Psychological abuse – deliberate treatment likely to damage a child's emotional health and development.
- Trauma - especially of displacement for Refugee children from conflict areas.
- Children or young people who may be being groomed into criminal activity or at risk of being influenced by terrorist ideology.

Safeguarding Procedure

Urgent cases, where a child is at risk of immediate harm, will be reported immediately by calling 999..

In an emergency or out of hours - if the Safeguarding Lead is not available contact: Cheshire East Consultation service – children's safeguarding team on 0300 123 5012 (Monday -Thursday 8.30am - 5pm or Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm) out of Hours Service (Emergency Duty Team) on 0300 123 5022

If the child or young person is in immediate danger or you suspect that a crime has been committed the police MUST be contacted and urgent medical care for any injury(call 999/111).

- If it has been necessary to inform Cheshire East Safeguarding or Emergency services, the **Safeguarding Lead Trustee** should be informed as soon as they are available.

In the event of any disclosure or concern regarding a refugee or evacuee child, either as a victim or a perpetrator of abuse:

- The Safeguarding First Contact person for all safeguarding **Tony Smith - Safeguarding Lead Trustee on** awrtjjs@gmail.com.
- At the earliest opportunity a record should be made of the details of the disclosure or concern on the **Safeguarding First Account form** found and downloadable on the Website www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk and forwarded securely to the Safeguarding Lead Trustee. The Safeguarding Lead Trustee, with others, will discuss what action is to be taken There may be times when a watch and wait approach is felt appropriate
- A decision should be made about appropriate involvement of parents'/ guardians of children at the earliest opportunity and consideration given to the safety of any other children in the family.
- It is important to work with parents/guardians of children and seek to understand the views of these adults in what action should be taken, unless the parent or guardian is part of the abuse.
- Where it is agreed that there is a potential safeguarding issue, the Safeguarding Lead Trustee, with others, will discuss whether this needs to be escalated immediately and if so, inform the relevant team in Cheshire East.
- If a concern is raised about the Safeguarding Lead Trustee contact **Anne Towers -Trustee on**: annetowersrw@outlook.com for guidance, and the matter will be taken to the Trustee Board immediately.
- Trustees, Contractors and Advisors should share concerns through their own management structures, and with the Safeguarding Lead Trustee without delay.
- Where concern is raised about an Advisor, Contractor or person from any other organisation working with Refugees Welcome, the Safeguarding Lead Trustee will report this to the relevant organisation and expect feedback on actions taken. Those organisations will be expected to follow their own Safeguarding Procedures.

The Safeguarding Lead Trustee

The Safeguarding Lead Trustee will be informed at the earliest available opportunity of any concerns about a child that have been passed on by a volunteer to a trustee or support worker. The Safeguarding Lead Trustee will ensure that progress is monitored and feedback received regarding any action needing to be taken by Refugees Welcome.

If the Safeguarding Lead Trustee does not receive satisfactory feedback and/or considers the matter should be referred to Children Safeguarding Team directly then action will be taken by RW itself to address this and the concerns about the child will be referred to the Children Safeguarding Team . Trustees will be kept informed of any action regarding safeguarding concerns.

The Safeguarding Trustee will also ensure that the safeguarding policy and procedures are kept up to date and reviewed.

How can a volunteer recognise that a child may be at risk?

- By referring to the types of harm and signs of abuse shared in the Safeguarding Training.
- By listening carefully to what the child says to them and sometimes what they are not saying.
- By noticing physical signs or changes in behaviour or personality.
- By hearing about the kind of situation they are living in, which might indicate they are living in a situation of coercive control or domestic abuse.
- Changes of behaviour occurring when being looked after by different people, e.g. living between separated parents.

What should you do if a child reports abuse to you?

If a child discloses to you, they are being abused, whether in the home or the support setting, then upon receiving the information, you should:

React calmly.

Reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame and take what they say seriously.

Keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Don't ask about explicit details.

Reassure but **do not promise confidentiality**, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.

Take reasonable steps to **ensure the child or other children are in no immediate danger** and seek medical treatment if required as a matter of urgency

Inform the child or young person what you will do next i.e. write down what they have told you in their own words and tell another person who will be able to help them.

Do not:

- discuss the allegation of abuse with the alleged perpetrator.
- disturb or destroy articles that could be used in evidence. Where an assault of some kind is suspected do not wash or bathe the person unless this is associated with first aid treatment necessary to prevent further harm.

Contact the police if it is thought a crime has been committed.

Complete a First Account Form of what has been said/heard as soon as possible and don't delay in passing on the information as per the RW Safeguarding Procedure.

What happens when there is Cause for Concern report:

- It is not the responsibility of RW to decide whether abuse has taken place or not and any Cause for Concern could form part of a wider picture of concerns for a child or young person. This needs to be passed on to the Safeguarding Lead Trustee so that Refugees Welcome can keep a log of further concerns to be passed on.
- If the concern for a child at risk is deemed serious enough to be passed on to the Children Safeguarding Team via Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) (or the out of hours Cheshire East Emergency Duty Team) this will be the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead Trustee, with support from the Trustee Board.
- **However, in an emergency or out of hours - contact: Cheshire East Consultation service – children's safeguarding team on 0300 123 5012 (Monday -Thursday 8.30am - 5pm or Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm) out of Hours Service (Emergency Duty Team) on 0300 123 5022.**
- **If the child or young person is in immediate danger or you suspect that a crime has been committed the police MUST be contacted and urgent medical care for any injury (call 999/111).**
- Refugees Welcome will keep a record of any Safeguarding referrals made to the Safeguarding Lead Trustee and Children Safeguarding Team (or the out of hours Cheshire East Emergency Duty Team) and any actions taken so that a written report can be provided at a later date if required. (First Account form, actions /notes, kept securely on data storage system)
- Any decision about whether the concern meets the threshold for Safeguarding action /referral to Children's Safeguarding for a Safeguarding Children Review will be made by the Children Safeguarding Team (or the out of hours Cheshire East Emergency Duty Team).
- Children's Social Services has a statutory duty under The Children Act 1989 & 2004 to ensure the welfare of a child or young person. If a child young person protection referral

is made, they have a legal responsibility to investigate and all agencies have a duty to co-operate with those investigations. This may involve talking to the child or young person and their family and gathering information from other people who know the child or young person. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police.

Applies to work with All Refugees/Evacuees supported by Refugees Welcome. Also, to volunteers, Trustees and those working alongside Refugees Welcome.

Policy review

RW is committed to reviewing this policy and good practice at least annually.

REVIEWED and AMENDED: November 26

SIGNED BY: N A Campbell DATE: 9/11/26
CHAIR of TRUSTEES

NEXT REVIEW DATE: November 27

Key to job roles referred to in this policy & procedures as at July 2026:

RW Chair of Trustees: Nicky Campbell

RW Designated Safeguarding Trustee: Tony Smith - awrtjjs@gmail.com

Alternative Safeguarding Concern First contact –
Volunteers Lead Trustee: Anne Towers: annetowersrw@outlook.com

All volunteers have direct contact details for Safeguarding leads.

To contact any Trustee please email:
refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com

and put FAO: (the name) in the subject bar

There is a list of all Trustees on the 'Refugees Welcome Current Trustees' List on the Website.
www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk

The Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) on 0300 123 5012

(Monday -Thursday 8.30am - 5pm or Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm)

Out of Hours Service (Emergency Duty Team) on 0300 123 5022

RESOURCES:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/individuals-at-risk-of-being-drawn-into-serious-and-organised-crime-a-prevent-guide https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/

APPENDIX 1 : *Examples of improper conduct of Trustees, Contractors, Advisors or volunteers include:*

- *Neglect / acts of omission / self-neglect - Causing harm by failing to meet needs e.g. ignoring physical or medical care needs, withholding food, medicines, failure to provide adequate supervision.*

- *Physical - Hitting, pushing, slapping, and using inappropriate physical restraint, burning, drowning, and suffocating, withholding medical care, feigning the symptoms of ill health or deliberately causing ill health.*

- *Sexual - Sexual activity of any kind where the vulnerable person does not or is not able to give consent.*

- *Psychological - Including verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying and harassment. Persistent emotional ill treatment, cyber-bullying, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others, domestic abuse (see section below)*

- *Discriminatory abuse - Treating a person in a way which does not respect the nine protected characteristics known as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief and sex and sexual orientation.*

- *Organisational abuse - Where routines and rules make a person alter his/her lifestyle and culture to fit in with the institution.*

- *Financial - Taking money and/or property without permission. Using pressure to control a person's money/property/ benefits. Taking or offering any financial inducements.*

- *Modern Slavery / Smuggling /Trafficking – Smuggling is defined as the facilitation of entry to the UK either secretly or by deception (whether for profit or otherwise). Trafficking involves the transportation of persons in the UK in order to exploit them by the use of force, violence, deception, intimidation, coercion or abuse of their vulnerability.*

- *Radicalisation - is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that (1) reject or undermine the status quo or (2) reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.*

APPENDIX II: Concerning Signs to Look Out For

<u>Neglect</u>
Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse or failure to participate in ante-natal care.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
- provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical harm or danger.
- respond to a child's basic emotional needs.
- ensure adequate supervision; (including inadequate substitute care-givers) • ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Signs which may suggest neglect:
- squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions.
- parents fail to attend to their children's health or development needs.
- children appear persistently undersized or underweight.
- children continually appear tired or lacking in energy.
- children suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision.
- the child is not attached or is anxiously attached to the parent.
- the child is not regularly sent to school including preschool.
- developmental delay due to lack of stimulation.
- the child has cold skin mottled with pink or purple.
- the child has swollen limbs with pitted sores which are slow to heal.
- the child's skin condition is poor, especially in the nappy area.
- the child has dry sparse hair.
- the child stays frozen in one position for an unnaturally long time.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Signs that may suggest physical abuse:
- any bruising to an immobile child.
- multiple bruising to different parts of the body.
- bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries.
- fingertip bruising to the face, chest, back, arms or legs.
- burns or scalds with clear outlines e.g. a gloves and socks effect or burns of uniform depth over a large area. Also, splash marks above the main scald area – associated with throwing.
- retinal or pinpoint haemorrhaging – associated with shaking;
- rib fractures in very young children.
- adult bite marks.
- an injury for which there is no adequate explanation.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:
- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate.
- causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger.
- seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another person.
- the exploitation or corruption of children; • serious bullying, including cyber-bullying.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs that may suggest emotional abuse:

- excessive bedwetting/soiling, eating, rocking, head banging, aggression; • self-harm.
- attempted suicide.
- high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal.
- seek out or avoid affection.
- sleeplessness/night terrors.
- food refusal.
- attention seeking.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration e.g. rape or oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images or in watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including via the internet. Sexual abuse may be committed by men, women and children.

Signs that may suggest sexual abuse:

- injuries, infections, or abnormal discharge, in the genital/anal/oral area.
- pregnancy, and identity of father is a secret or vague.
- shows worrying sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children or adults; • seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age.
- confusing of ordinary affectionate contact with abuse.

More detailed information on the signs of abuse can be found on the Cheshire East Council online procedures system