



## **Social Media**

### **Policy Statement**

This policy sets out Refugees Welcome's policy in relation to the use of social media and the maintenance of confidentiality and data sharing.

All Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers are required to abide by this policy.

The policy applies to the confidentiality of all service users, volunteers, donors and any other individual or organization that has contact with the organization directly or indirectly on all Social Media Platforms.

**Policy revised: December 2025**  
**By Trustees: MB, PN, AT, EW**  
**Adopted on: 15.1.26**

## **Policy**

All work undertaken as part of Refugees Welcome should adhere to the Confidentiality and Information Sharing policy, ICT Policy, GDPR Policy, Volunteer Guidelines, Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and associated government /council policies as appropriate.

All trustees, contactors, advisors and volunteers engaged in the work of Refugees Welcome are required to be made aware of the requirements of this policy.

Refugees Welcome believes that the right to privacy, confidentiality and appropriate use of data are essential to ensure all individuals have full confidence in the organization and are treated with respect and dignity. It recognizes that misuse of data can be damaging and distressing and is committed to the principles of the Data Protection Act which provides individuals with protection from unwanted or harmful use of data. Information about an individual will not be divulged or passed on to a third party without the individual's recorded consent, except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. Safeguarding) where relevant sections of the Cheshire East Information Sharing Protocol apply (see Refugee Welcome's relevant policies regarding information sharing and confidentiality).

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**Guidance for all Refugees Welcome Trustees, Volunteers, Contactors and Advisors on compliance with the Social Media Policy:**

## **Current Presence on Website and Public-facing Social Media channels**

Refugees Welcome maintains a website, [www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk](http://www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk). This site is used to publicise the work of Refugees Welcome, to attract volunteers and encourage donations to the charity, via links for giving, for each strand of the charity's work.

We also use several social media platforms. This includes but is not limited to the official Refugees Welcome website, Instagram and Facebook pages and the Bollington Homes for Ukraine Facebook page.

## **Authorisation of New Websites and Social Media Channels**

The introduction of new websites and additional public-facing social media channels will be authorised by the Trustees Board.

## **Personnel and Roles**

All website content is managed by a Web Manager on behalf of the Trustees and any information on the site is approved by the Trustees Board. A back up web editor will provide cover when the Web Manager is not available.

Refugees Welcome's public Social Media platforms are managed and monitored day-to-day by our Refugees Welcome Social Media Manager with oversight, guidance and direction provided by the Refugees Welcome (RW) Social Media Sub-Committee. A back up Social Media Editor will be identified to cover when the Social Media Manager is not available.

A Trustee from the Sub-Committee (the Social Media Duty Trustee) will review and sign off content based on a weekly rota.

The RW Social Media Sub-Committee will meet regularly and will comprise at least two Trustees and the RW CVS representative.

Trustees on the Sub-Committee report to the Trustees Board.

Access credentials to website and social media channels will also be held by an organisation subcontracted to provide administrative support, such as CVS.

## **Content, Safeguarding and Privacy**

All Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers should ensure that they do not discuss the work of Refugees Welcome using any personal or identifying information about the families, on any official social media platform without written consent, as this could lead to Safeguarding or GDPR complaints.

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There should be no personal or identifying information about the refugee families we support or Refugees Welcome Trustees and volunteers unless specific, written consent has been given and only for the purposes of publicising the work of the Refugees Welcome charity generally. Safeguarding and GDPR guidance should be followed.

Particular attention should be paid to the use of images of children: written permission should be sought from both children and their parents before use in social media or on the website. Children should be well-clothed and full facial shots should not be used. If in doubt refer to the “Example of a photography and filming policy statement” suggested by the NSPCC.<sup>1</sup>

The Social Media Manager and the Web Manager will ensure that no images or videos are used that infringe other organisation or person’s copyright and will, if in doubt, contact the RW Social Media Sub-Committee to check. The Social Media Manager and the Web Manager will bear in mind copyright rules and will document the sources of images used.

Any information that could identify any of the family members can only be used on the Refugees Welcome website or official social media platforms with their express permission and in line with Data Sharing guidelines and must be approved by a Trustee for a specific purpose such as fundraising. This would be in an exceptional circumstance and not something to consider regularly.

Any information presented about volunteers’ experiences of volunteering should not contain personal information about the families and should be approved by a Trustee for use.

## **Content planning**

Barring exceptional circumstances, social media content will be planned 2 weeks ahead, where possible by the Social Media Manager with input from the RW Social Media Sub-Committee.

Significant website content will be planned by the Web Manager or the RW Social Media Sub-Committee and proposed to the Trustees Board.

## **Public Comments, Content Moderation and Escalation**

Comments will be enabled for the public for our social media channels, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Social Media Manager will review any added public comments on a daily basis but may also ask other members of the RW Social Media Sub-Committee for support.

If any of the public comments are, in the Social Media Manager’s judgement, clearly inappropriate or offensive and require urgent action, they will delete these comments. They will screenshot and report any such occurrences to the RW Social Media Sub-Committee.

If comments are contentious and / or require a response by RW, the Social Media Manager

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will escalate to one of the RW Social Media Social Media Trustees for further action (or another member of the Trustees Board if sub-committee members are not available).

## **Guidance for Volunteers using personal Social Media platforms re Refugees Welcome**

- Volunteers should not share more personal information about themselves with the families they work with than is necessary to perform their role as a Refugees Welcome volunteer.
- Volunteers are encouraged to share information about their volunteering on personal Social Media platforms however this should be in a general way, which will not identify any refugee family involved. This will obviously encourage more volunteers to get involved, and more people to donate to our charity.
- However, volunteers should not share any personal information about the families they work with on any type of personal social media, as this could endanger both families and our organisation.
- Requests from families to communicate, outside the boundaries of Refugees Welcome's activities, on any social media platform, should be referred to the appropriate channels: e.g. requests for furniture or emergency financial support should be referred to the relevant Trustee.
- Volunteers are discouraged from adding family members, to any social media accounts (e.g. Facebook etc.) as friends where they have access to unnecessary personal information about you.
- In particular, volunteers should **never** add minors (anyone under the age of 18) to any Social Media account, as friends or contacts. No social media contact should be made with children either directly or personally. If the situation does arise that communications with a minor are unavoidable, parents must be made aware, and the conversation should be screenshotted and saved. Where Refugees Welcome activities involve working with 16/ 17-year-olds, one additional Refugees Welcome representative will be copied into all communication.
- Volunteers should not use abbreviations or emoji's which could be misconstrued.
- Any Refugees Welcome Volunteer found to be sharing information or being the subject of a complaint re sharing information will be suspended from the service.

## **Guidance for volunteers using online groups on WhatsApp**

Volunteers may wish to set up WhatsApp groups for ease of passing information between themselves, this should only be for the purpose of volunteering with the family or group and should not routinely include the family.

Volunteers may set up WhatsApp groups to help implementing RW's activities, as long as a Trustee is informed. Group administrators must include guidance on not sharing personal contact details beyond the group. Such groups should not be used for socialising outside of RW's activities.

WhatsApp as a medium is particularly vulnerable to complaints of inappropriate behaviour as

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it is not transparent due to encryption, so should be used sensitively.

Any chat with the family or with a volunteer group could become part of an investigation or complaint. By using WhatsApp / Telegram all volunteers agree to 'export' any chat requested to another platform if requested to do so, if any situation arises where the information needs to be accessed by RW or other statutory organisations.

## **Guidance for Volunteers Regarding Online Activity with Families and Individuals**

Please note that our Guidelines for Good Practice state the following:

- Volunteers can, in the course of their work as volunteers, contact the families on platforms that would not normally be necessary in face-to-face interventions, if face-to-face is not convenient or appropriate, due to timing or situations beyond the control of volunteers, e.g. Zoom or WhatsApp video for family check-in or English practice sessions.
- Refugees Welcome recognises that families like to use WhatsApp or Telegram for ease of communication.
- Other social media platforms such as Snapchat, TikTok etc. are not to be used for communication with families/individuals we work with.
- Any contact with any of the family members on social media platforms should be for the benefit of the family only, in line with offering a volunteering service and not for general conversation or be publicly available.
- Any contact with children via any social medium e.g. for the purposes of helping with home schooling, should be supervised by a parent visible in the family home.
- Telegram is mainly used by the Ukrainian community and should be used only for disseminating information of use to the Ukrainian community or for requests for help from Ukrainian evacuees and not for any social contact.

## **Digital safety**

More time being spent online leads to the possibility of increased exposure to online terrorist content and influences, or sexually inappropriate content as groomers look to exploit feelings of stress and isolation among vulnerable individuals.

Volunteers should impress on the families the need for parental controls on phones/ computers and the need for vigilance in what their children, especially teenagers, are viewing onscreen.

Information for volunteers and families around Digital Safety can be found in a leaflet titled "Digital Safety-Safeguarding from Harmful Influences Online" published by the Home Office and available on our website. This can be shared in an appropriate way with families and includes organisations which may be able to help if volunteers or parents are concerned about an adult or child.

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**POLICY REVIEWED AND REVISED: December 2025**

**SIGNED BY: N.A Campbell**

**CHAIR of TRUSTEES**

**DATE: 15.1.26**

**NEXT REVIEW DATE: January 2027**