

## 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.

*[Volunteers to be referred to the Confidentiality & Information Sharing Policy, Volunteer Guidelines, Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and GDPR Policy and ICT Policy]*

**Policy date: V 2 May 2020**  
**By: Anne Towers – Trustee**  
**Status: Final**

## 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 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 Confidentiality and Information Sharing policy.)

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

### **Presence on Public facing Social Media.**

Refugees Welcome as a whole has no monitored presence on Social Media e.g. Facebook at this time.

Refugees Welcome maintains a website, [www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk](http://www.refugeeswelcome.co.uk). This site is used to publicize 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. There is no personal or identifying information on this site about the Trustees, volunteers or refugee families we support. All content is managed by a web manager on behalf of the Trustees and any information on the site is approved by the Trustee Board.

The different projects within Refugees Welcome can each have a Facebook page. If desired, currently:

Ukraine Bollington Homes for Ukraine Scheme

As above there is no personal or identifying information on these Facebook pages about the refugee families we support. They are for the purposes of publicizing the work of the Refugees Welcome charity generally.

### **Existing Guidance:**

- 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** social media platform, as this could lead to Safeguarding or GDPR complaints.
- Any information that could identify any of the family members can only be used on the website or Facebook 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.
- Information about volunteer's experience of volunteering for the website should not contain personal information about the families and should be approved by a Trustee for use.

### **Volunteer Guidance:**

- Volunteers should not share more personal information about themselves with the families than is necessary to perform their role as a Refugees Welcome volunteer.
- Volunteers should not share information about their volunteering on any Social Media platform except in a general way, which will not identify the family, but to encourage more volunteers or people to donate to the charity.
- Volunteers should not share any personal information about the families they work with on any type of social media,
- Any requests from families to communicate outside the boundaries of the project on any social media platform should be firmly discouraged.

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- Volunteers should not add family members, especially minors, to any social media accounts (e.g. Facebook etc.) as friends where they have access to unnecessary personal information about you.
- Volunteers should not use abbreviations or emoji's which could be misconstrued.
- NO social media contact should be made with children directly or personally, e.g. Facebook, What's App or any other social media platform.
- Any Refugees Welcome Volunteers found to be sharing information or being the subject of a complaint re sharing information will be suspended from the service.

## **Amended guidance for Volunteers March 2020:**

- As a consequence of the Covid 19 outbreak (or any similar situation) and the need for isolation for families and volunteers, Volunteers can, in the course of their work as volunteers, contact the families on platforms that would not normally be necessary or sanctioned by guidelines or in face to face interventions.
- This could include in addition to email and phone calls, Skype, Zoom and 'What's App' video and Telegram. Other social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok etc. are not to be used.
- Any contact with any of the family members on social media platforms should be for the benefit of the family only, in the course of offering a volunteering service and not publicly available.
- Any contact with children via any social medium for the purposes of helping with home schooling, should be supervised by a parent in the family home.

## **Amended November 21 – use of 'What's App' by Volunteers**

- Refugees Welcome recognizes that families like to use 'What's App' or 'Telegram' for ease of communication. All contact with the family via 'What's App' /Telegram should be for a specific purpose of the volunteering and not for general conversation sharing. This medium is particularly vulnerable to complaints of inappropriate behaviour as it is not transparent due to encryption, so should be used sparingly and sensitively.
- Volunteers may wish to set up 'What's App' groups for ease of passing information between them, this should only be for the purpose of the volunteering with the family and should not routinely include the family.
- **Any chat with the family or with a volunteer group could become part of an investigation or complaint. By using What's App /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.**

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## **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 computers and the need for vigilance in what their children, especially teenagers are viewing onscreen.
- Information for volunteers around Digital Safety are attached in Appendix A which can be shared in an appropriate way with families and includes organisations which may be able to help if volunteers or parents are concerned.

**POLICY DATED: May 20**

**ADOPTED ON: 17.6.20**

**REVIWED: April 25 (No changes)**

**SIGNED BY: N.A Campbell**

**CHAIR of TRUSTEES**

**DATE: 24.4.25**

**NEXT REVIEW DATE: April 2026**

## Appendix A

This information is produced by the Community Sponsorship Team, (Resettlement, Asylum Support and Integration Service at the Home Office) but can equally apply to all Refugee and Evacuee Families.

### DIGITAL SAFETY

#### SAFEGUARDING FROM HARMFUL INFLUENCES ONLINE

- The impact of COVID-19 has meant that most of us were at home for an extended period and are likely to be spending increasing amounts of time online. **This has now become the norm.**
- The online world is a necessity for many children in accessing school work and it delivers huge benefits, not least in enabling us to stay connected to family and friends during this period. However, many parents may feel concerned about the content their children are accessing.
- Although rare, there is a risk that increased online activity and feelings of stress and isolation may be exploited by negative influences and online groomers of all kinds to target vulnerable children and young people directly.
- An understanding of digital safety will help parents and carers safeguard loved ones from a range of harms, whether that's child sexual exploitation, fraud, or extremist influences seeking to radicalise vulnerable people.
- Extremists may use the COVID-19 outbreak to promote hateful views, for example through conspiracy theories blaming a particular group for the virus, or through spreading misinformation regarding these groups' responses to it.

### What steps can I take to keep my child safe online?

- If you have downloaded new apps or bought new technology to help stay connected at this time, remember to review and adjust privacy and safety settings if you or your child is signing up to a new online service.
- Government has encouraged Internet Service Providers to allow parents to easily filter content to put you in control of what your child can see online.
- You can switch on family friendly filters to help prevent age inappropriate content being accessed on devices in your home.
  - The UK Safer Internet Centre provides [guidance](#) on how to do this.
  - Internet Matters has also provided [step by step guides](#) on how to setup parental controls.
- More information is included in the 'Further Resources' section.

## What are the signs that my child may be being exploited online?

- Online exploitation is often hard to recognise because it is a complex issue. When it comes to being drawn into extremist ideas online, sometimes there are clear warning signs, in other cases the changes are less obvious.
- Although some of these traits may be quite common among teenagers, taken together they could be indicators that your child may need some help:
  - Exploring new and unusual websites, chat forums and platforms. Harmful influences may push individuals towards platforms with a greater degree of anonymity.
  - Joining new or secret groups since isolation.
  - Speaking with new friends or being secretive about chats during online gaming or in forums.
  - A strong desire to seek new meaning, identity and purpose.
  - Using language you wouldn't expect them to know.
  - Watching, sharing or creating films online linked to religious, political or racial hate.
  - Becoming increasingly argumentative or refusing to listen to different points of view.

## Should I be concerned that a loved one is being exploited online?

- The above are merely signs that they might need help, but you know your child best and you will want to speak with them first. Check in with them and ask about what they are viewing, who they are speaking to and how they are feeling. This might feel difficult, but here are some pointers to help you:
  - Listen carefully to their fears and worries. Find some helpful tips [here](#).
  - Avoid explanations that could be interpreted as antagonistic, belittling or frightening.
  - Advice and support is available to help them [understand COVID-19](#).
  - If they are finding it hard to cope with bereavement and grief - advice can be found [here](#).

## What help is available if my child is being exploited online?

- It is important to safeguard loved ones from a range of online harms, whether that's child sexual exploitation, fraud, or extremist influences seeking to radicalise vulnerable people.
- If you are concerned that your child may be at risk of radicalisation, help is available to make sure they get the support they need to move away from harmful influences.
- Teachers, healthcare practitioners, social workers, the police, charities, psychologists and religious leaders work together to safeguard those vulnerable to radicalisation through a safeguarding programme known as Prevent.

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- Prevent protects people from being drawn into hateful extremism – regardless of the ideology. It works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gangs, drug abuse, and physical and sexual exploitation.
- Receiving support through Prevent is voluntary, confidential and not any form of criminal sanction. It will not show up on any checks or negatively affect an individual's future in any way.
- The type of support available is wide-ranging, and can include help with education or careers advice, dealing with mental or emotional health issues, or digital safety training for parents; it all depends on the individual's needs.
- With this specialist help, vulnerable people across the country have moved away from supporting hateful extremism, enabling them to live more stable and fulfilling lives.

## **How can I access support and advice for a loved one being radicalized?**

- As with other safeguarding functions, Prevent is still operating during this time and is here to support families in times of need.
- If you are worried that a loved one is being radicalised, you can call the police on 101 to get advice or share a concern so that they can get safeguarding support. Alternatively, you can contact your local authority safeguarding team for help.
- Contacting the authorities will not get the individual into trouble if a criminal act hasn't been committed. The local authority or police will discuss your concerns, suggest how they can best help and give you access to relevant support and advice.
- If you think someone is in immediate danger, or if you see or hear something that may be terrorist-related, trust your instincts and call 999 or the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

## **I have seen concerning hateful content online that could cause harm. What should I do?**

- Prevent takes robust action to tackle radicalisation online and to counter the ideology promoted by extremists. This includes removing terrorist-related material and action to suspend the accounts of those fuelling these views.
- Any member of the public can report terrorist content they find online through the [GOV.UK referral tool](#). The [Action Counters Terrorism campaign](#) provides more information on this.

## **Further resources**

There are resources available to help you understand and protect your child from different harms online.



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- [Educate Against Hate Parents' Hub](#) provides resources and government advice for parents and carers on keeping young people safe from extremism.
- [Let's Talk About It](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep children safe from online radicalisation.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) has guides on the privacy settings, parental controls and internet safety features of the major internet service providers.
- [Parent Zone](#) works with Prevent to provide digital safety advice for parents.
- [Thinkuknow](#) provides resources for parents and carers to help keep children safe online.
- [Childnet](#) has developed [guidance for parents and carers](#) to begin a conversation about online safety, and [on keeping under-fives safe online](#).
- [Parent Info](#) provides digital support and guidance for parents and carers from leading experts and organisations
- [NSPCC guidance for parents and carers](#) is designed to help keep children safe online. Their [Net Aware](#) website, produced in collaboration with O2, provides specific safety information on popular apps and websites.
- [Childline](#) can provide advice and support if your child is worried, from dialling 0800 1111 or downloading the 'For Me' app.
- This [list of online education resources for home education](#) includes resources to support your child's mental wellbeing.