

## **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES**

### **Objectives**

Refugees Welcome Cheshire East aims to enable all refugee families in any of the Refugees Welcome Projects to live fulfilling and independent lives, fully integrated into the local community.

All Refugees Welcome Volunteers will work collaboratively with other volunteers, and with the Family themselves to:

- Respond to each family's strengths and needs as they settle in an unfamiliar environment.
- Treat refugees with dignity and respect, encouraging independence and integration and maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Follow the Equality Act, celebrating diversity and avoiding any kind of discrimination.
- Ensure adults and children are safeguarded
- Provide opportunities to make links with the wider community.
- Report back on families' needs to enable this to be recorded and integrated into continuing services
- Empathize with the experiences of the families and have an understanding of cultural differences

### **Best practice principles**

Support will embody the following best practice principles:

- Tailored support to individuals/ families' needs,
- Enable the family to settle within Cheshire East, to access the community and local services, and to develop their English speaking through practicing informally.
- Seeking to foster independence in every contact.
- Recognize and accept when families are able to do things independently of any voluntary support and step back and/or cease voluntary support as needed.

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## Values and Principles

Refugees Welcome supports vulnerable adults and children (in partnership with Cheshire East Council and delivery of the service is informed by the following values and principles:-

**Privacy:** The right of individuals to be left alone or undisturbed and free from intrusion or public attention to their affairs

**Dignity:** Recognition of the intrinsic value of people, regardless of their circumstances, by respecting their uniqueness and their personal needs and treating them with respect

**Independence:** The adult, child or young person will be encouraged to maintain independence, even in circumstances when he/she needs personal assistance. This should be provided in an enabling and supportive way.

**Choice:** The adult, child or young person's opportunity to select independently from a range of options and to influence the nature of their support or services provided, and the style in which these are provided.

**Rights:** The adult, child or young person will have all the entitlements associated with citizenship and will be aware of their right to comment upon the quality and the support of services they receive.

**Fulfillment:** The adult, child or young person will be supported in his/her right to have control over the quality of his/her life in their own home.

**Equality and Diversity:** The adult, child or young person will receive the same quality of service as delivered to other residents within the borough, with recognition of their unique additional needs due to their experiences.

**Opportunity:** Irrespective of gender, culture, race, disability or special personal requirement, opportunities for the adult, child or young person will be considered individually to support maximizing their potential to learn, be active and work.

**Confidentiality:** Provide confidential and safe services which respect the individual and preserve people's dignity

## **Policies and procedures**

Volunteers must always adhere to the Refugees Welcome policies and procedures as set out in the Volunteer training, in order to safeguard individual/families and volunteers and to ensure equity of experience for volunteers across Refugees Welcome.

## **Personal Safety**

- Please work at all times to maintain safe practice. This requires you to work within the boundaries of the Safeguarding Policy and Health and Safety Policy for Refugees Welcome and the Volunteer Risk Assessment
- Do not undertake any task for which you feel that you have insufficient knowledge or training
- Report any incidents or “near misses” to the Designated Trustee or Volunteer Supervisor
- Ensure someone knows where you are going and the time you are expected back if you are working alone.
- Take your mobile phone with you to use in case of emergency
- You are under no obligation to remain in a situation in which you feel unsafe, e.g. if you think the person you are visiting may be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. Report your concerns to the Designated Trustee Project Manager and Volunteer Supervisor as soon as possible.

## **Managing Boundaries**

Volunteering is a service in which the relationship between volunteer and individuals/families is open to scrutiny by others. This relationship is distinct from friendship, which is a private, mutual relationship, although over time the relationship can become a friendship by mutual consent. The volunteering relationship with individuals/families carries a high level of responsibility. When working with those new to the country and culture, the volunteer can often be seen as a role model. In order to protect both individuals/families and volunteers it is essential that appropriate boundaries are maintained at all times.

If you are concerned about where the boundaries should lie, you should talk to the Volunteer Supervisor if available, and ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the individual/family understand my role as volunteer?
- Is this relationship meeting my needs more than those of the individual/family?
- Am I being completely open about things, and if not, why not?
- Will any action I undertake leave me or Refugees Welcome open to reasonable criticism?
- Does this action undermine the work of others in Refugees Welcome or staff at Cheshire East?

## **Specific Boundaries**

The list below, whilst not exclusive, sets out examples of boundaries that volunteers are expected to maintain.

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- Ensure the refugee individual/ family understands the nature of your relationship with them.
- Do not give out personal details about yourself, such as where you live or your home phone number in the early stages.
- Choose a suitable method of communication for you to facilitate communication i.e. mobile or email address. Once a relationship of trust has been established volunteers may offer any method of communication at their own discretion and risk to facilitate the service offered. Use of mobiles should be primarily for the purposes of information sharing. There is an opportunity to have RW phone if desired.
- Do not embark on a relationship which could lead to accusations against you e.g. sexual or emotional relationships or financial involvement
- Do not add family members, especially minors, to any social media accounts (e.g. Facebook) as friends where they can have access to private information about you and your family.
- All communication needs to be transparent.
- Do not use abbreviations or emoji's which could be misconstrued.
- Do not lend money to individual/familys, make payments on their behalf, accept free gifts or services or give financial advice
- Do not take responsibility for caring for children in the absence of their parents
- Be aware of cultural norms which may prohibit a male volunteer from working on a 1:1 basis with a female individual.
- Do not use your position to establish an unfair or improper relationship
- Avoid physical contact, beyond what is culturally acceptable as greeting or expression of sympathy, as this may be misconstrued by the individual/family or an observer
- Do not meet up with individuals/families outside agreed arrangements
- Do not disclose or discuss any personal issues or problems
- Do not use alcohol or illegal substances with the individual/family, or undertake volunteering whilst under any such influence
- Meetings with individuals/families will usually take place in the family home or in a suitable public space. Meetings should not be in any other private place. Once a relationship of trust is established individuals/families may be invited to the Volunteer's home at their discretion and their own risk.
- Do not impose your own personal beliefs, views, values or attitudes on a individual/family
- Avoid comments and discussions which could be misinterpreted or cause distress or embarrassment e.g. politics, religion or sexual comments
- Do not refer to your role as a Refugees Welcome volunteer or to the individual/family on social media to preserve their privacy.
- Do not offer any advice on Immigration matters refer to qualified services.
- If you have any concerns that any of your actions or words may have breached any of these boundaries or may have been misinterpreted, or if you feel an exception should be made in any of these areas, discuss these with the Volunteer Supervisor, Project Lead or Supervising Trustee.

## **Confidentiality**

There is sensitivity surrounding the resettlement of refugees and their integration into the community, and therefore particular attention should be paid to confidentiality at all times. All volunteers must sign the Confidentiality Agreement before starting their involvement and must comply at all times with Refugees Welcome Confidentiality Policy and Procedures.

## **Reliability**

Volunteers are expected to offer the level of commitment they have agreed to and feel comfortable and able to provide. If you will be unavailable for a period e.g. because of holiday or personal circumstances, or are unable to carry out a pre-arranged task, you are expected to give reasonable notice to the Volunteer Supervisor so that alternative arrangements can be made.

## **Travel and insurance**

If using your car for Refugees Welcome activity, it is your responsibility to ensure that your car is fully taxed, insured, maintained and serviced as Refugees Welcome can accept no liability for this. You will need to contact your insurance company to check whether volunteering is covered by your insurance and obtain written confirmation of this. You will not normally be expected to carry individual/families in your car, but in an exceptional situation where you may be asked to do this, you must only do so if you have seat restraints which meet statutory requirements for children of particular age/size, and where you have written evidence that your insurance covers transport of passengers in your volunteering activity. Volunteers must not transport children without a parent present. Except where this activity has prior approval from Volunteer Supervisor (.e.g. outing with young people)

## **Personal Interests**

We ask that you do not act in such a way that your personal or professional interests come into conflict with the best interests of Refugees Welcome. If you have a conflict of interest by volunteering with Refugees Welcome, this should be noted up front at the time of appointment so that it can be managed by the Volunteer Supervisor.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually for currency and accuracy by the Chair of Trustees or individuals delegated by him/her. This does not prevent any changes taking place to this policy at any other time due to changes in practice or legislation.

**V2 May 19**

# **REFUGEES WELCOME**

*Westminster Road, Macclesfield SK10 1BX*

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**Reviewed April 2023**

**SIGNED BY: N.A. Campbell**  
**[Trustee/Chair of Trustees]**

**DATE: 20.4.23**

**POSITION in REFUGEES WELCOME: Chair of Trustees.**

**Next Review Date: April 2024**