COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
Beneficiaries of any Refugees Welcome Service

STATEMENT

REFUGEES WELCOME aims to ensure that the service it provides is professional, friendly, effective and participative.
We welcome feedback on the service we provide and suggestions and comments for improvement as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the individual/s who have made the complaint.

Refugees Welcome hopes that where concerns are raised, every effort should be made to resolve these informally, directly with the relevant individual family or volunteer by the support worker or Lead Trustee

Where this is not possible or the complaint is of a serious nature, we want the Beneficiaries to know that they have the right to make a complaint using the following complaints procedure.

Policy date: **28.5 19**
By: **Anne Towers Trustee**
Status: **policy v2**
Adopted on: **7.6.19**

Where complaints come from

Complaints may come from any refugee group with whom we work. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy is strictly for complaints from members of a resettled family and does not cover complaints from Trustees, Advisors, Contractors or Volunteers providing resettlement care.

Confidentiality

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with the Refugees Welcome Trustee Board

Complaint by Beneficiaries of the Service

Refugees Welcome understands that it may be very difficult for Beneficiaries of the service to make a complaint should they feel that to be necessary.

The Refugees Welcome complaints policy aims to:

- Make sure beneficiaries are aware of the existence of our Complaint's Procedure by interpreted discussion, so that resettled families know how to make a complaint even if they are not literate in their own language.
- This should include a mechanism for obtaining translation when the beneficiaries have little knowledge of English.
- Make sure the complaints procedure is fair, clear and easy to use for resettled families under any scheme wishing to make a complaint.
- Make sure everyone providing resettlement support knows what to do if a complaint is received.
- Make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way.
- Make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.
- Make sure we gather information which helps us to improve the services provided.

Complaints procedure Beneficiaries

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of care provided as part of the services of Refugees Welcome. A list of the kinds of issues that may cause complaints is given below. These are called 'Grounds for Complaint'

Grounds of Complaint

- Where Refugees Welcome fails to deliver good practice in its work with individuals or families
- Where there is poor or ineffective communication by Refugees Welcome to individuals or family groups it is working with.
- Where Refugees Welcome fails to maintain good practice by not following our Policies and Procedures.
- Where a breach of confidentiality by Refugees Welcome causes the leakage of material which might prejudice or injure the interest of the resettled families we work with.
- Where the quality of support received does not meet the reasonable needs and expectations of the individual or family.
- Where the relationship with a volunteer working with the family has broken down to an extent that the individual or family do not feel comfortable to work with that person.
- Or any other issue where the individual or family feel they have not been treated fairly or respectfully.

Contact Details for Complaints

A complaint can be made verbally to any volunteer in the first instance.

Individuals or families who feel that they have a complaint should be able to approach any of the volunteers working with them for help with the process. They can also approach the Trustee Lead for their area. Volunteers can consult the support worker or Lead Trustee for advice.

If an individual or family wish to make a formal written complaint this may be sent to Refugees Welcome Complaints Trustee at the Westminster Road address, or emailed to refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com

Verbal complaints should be recorded as follows:

- Write down the name, address and telephone number of the complainant.
- Remind the complainant that there is a complaints procedure available to them.
- Where appropriate and feasible, ask the complainant to send a written account by post or by email to the complaint Trustee, or Supervising Trustee for their project.

Resolving Complaints

Every effort should be made to resolve the issue through dialogue facilitated by the support worker or Lead Trustee with unaligned interpretation facilities where necessary.

If the complaint cannot be resolved amicably and effectively by informal means then a formal complaint should be made as above and the individual or family given any help needed to use the process, including the use of interpreters or translators to enable a complaint to be made and to receive feedback on the outcome of the complaint.

All complaints we are notified of, whether formal or informal and whether resolved or unresolved, should be reported to the appropriate Complaints Trustee and recorded on the complaints log for scrutiny by the Trustee Board.

If Refugees Welcome is made aware of a formal complaint about a volunteer, the volunteer should not contact the individual or family for any reason until such time as the complaint is resolved. Depending on the outcome of the complaint it could mean that the volunteer may no longer be able to work with them in the future as trust may be damaged. If gross misconduct or illegal activity is alleged volunteers can be suspended from all work with Refugees Welcome until the outcome of the investigation is known and the police may have to be informed.

If an individual or family has a complaint about a service being provided by someone other than Refugees Welcome e.g. accommodation , medical, interpreters, English Tuition Providers or other statutory services, volunteers can help the family to use the complaints process of that service. Interpreters or translation services may be needed to enable the individual or family to make a complaint using the complaints procedure of the service that is the subject of the complaint.

All complaints made will be reviewed by the Trustee board to ensure that any lessons can be learned and any changes to Refugees Welcome policies, procedures and ways of working can be taken forward.

Review

This procedure 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.

Reviewed: **Nov 26**

SIGNED BY: N. A Campbell **DATE: 9.11.26**
[Trustee/Chair of Trustees]

POSITION in REFUGEES WELCOME: Chair of Trustees

Date for review: Nov 2027

Key to job roles and contacts referred to in this policy & procedures:

RW Designated Complaints Person – Chair Trustees refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com

There is a list of all Trustees and their key roles on the 'Refugees Welcome Current Trustee List pa
ge' on the Website.
WWW.refugeeswelcome.co.uk

Support Worker information (when available) is also on the website with Trustee information.
All volunteers have this information and for the Lead Trustee (email and phone contact)

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

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

Appendix 1.

Stage 1 – Making a formal complaint

If the individual or family need to make a complaint about the kinds of issues listed above in 'grounds for complaint' or any other issue, they should:

- Speak to any volunteer working with the Beneficiary or speak directly or by phone to The support worker or a Lead Trustee as appropriate or other person from Refugees Welcome with whom they feel comfortable.
- **The person who receives a phone or in person complaint should:**
    - Write down the facts of the complaint for the individual or family on the complaints form.
    - Make sure they have up to date contact details for the person making the complaint.
    - Remind the individual or family that we have a complaints procedure and provide a copy they can read or that can be explained to them.
    - Tell the individual or family what will happen next and how long it will take
    - Where appropriate and feasible, ask the person to send a written account by email to the Designated Complaints Trustee at refugeescheshireeast@gmail.com so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words. This can be facilitated by volunteers, interpreters or translators.

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about with the help of the support worker or Lead Trustee. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to the appropriate RW Complaints Trustee **within 2 working days and recorded in the complaints log**.

Complaints in writing should be sent to the Complaints Trustee at Refugees Welcome either using the Complaint Form or in other written form as desired by the individual or family. (See list of Supervising Trustees on the website: **WWW.refugeeswelcome.co.uk**).

All complaints in whatever form will be recorded on the complaints form and passed on to the RW Complaints Trustee as appropriate to be recorded in the complaints log.

Stage 2 – Investigation of the Complaint

- If the complaint has not been resolved by the person responsible for the issue complained about or who first received it, the complaint should be fully investigated by a Trustee designated by the Complaints Trustee.

- The person investigating the complaint will contact the individual or family making the complaint to let them know that the complaints process has been started and who will be looking into it**, within 3 working days of receipt of the complaint**.
- If the complaint is about Refugees Welcome policies or procedures and found to be valid, the policy or procedure will be reviewed and a plan of action will be made to correct this.
- If the complaint is about an individual i.e. Trustee, Contractor, Advisor or volunteer and is deemed a valid complaint they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.
- Once the investigating person has interviewed the people concerned The Trustee will report back to the Trustees Board on the outcome of the interview/s and how the complaint will be answered.
- Following the investigation, the Trustee will contact the individual or family to let them know the conclusion, any action/s required and who will act. **This should take no longer than 14 days.**

- If it is not possible to resolve the complaint in 14 days, the person who is investigating the complaint should let the individual or family know what progress has been made and when a final outcome should be known.

Stage 3 – Opportunity to Appeal

- If the individual or family is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, or the action taken by the investigating Trustee the complaint will be referred to the Chair of Trustees. The Chair of Trustees will contact the individual or family **within 7 working days** to arrange a meeting with the individual or family to agree a mutual way forward.
- The Chair of Trustees (or a suitable senior person) will review the original complaint, and any conclusions and actions required, with the original investigator and respond to the individual or family **within 1 month**. If the process is longer than this, the complainant should be informed of progress and the likely conclusion date.
- The final reply. whether the complaint was upheld or not, should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, conclusions and any action taken because of the complaint
- Any individual who is the subject of the complaint should have the opportunity to respond further as part of the review of the facts and decisions taken but should not directly contact the complainant.
- All individuals dealing with the complaint should be kept informed of the process.
- In cases where the complaint cannot be fully resolved by Refugees Welcome involvement of an independent arbitrator (e.g. Community and Voluntary Services Cheshire East) could be considered.
- The whole matter will be put before the arbitrator and the arbitrator's findings will be final and must be accepted by both Refugees Welcome and the individual or family making the complaint.

Variation of the Complaints Procedure may be undertaken if for good reason by the Complaints Trustee.

Complaint Form

1. DETAILS OF COMPLAINT (to be completed by complainant or officer taking complaint)

Name of complainant: ..... Date of Complaint: .....

Contact details of complainant……

Name of officer taking complaint……..

Contact details of officer……

Organization

_____

_____

Telephone : ..... Email: .....

Investigating officer……

2nd Investigating officer…….

Nature of complaint: (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

2. ACTION TAKEN BY REFUGEES WELCOME

Outcome of investigation

Restorative actions/policy or procedure changes undertaken by Refugees Welcome

3. CLOSING OF COMPLAINT

Has complaint been satisfactorily resolved? Complaints Trustee YES /NO

Signed _____ Date _____

If No what further Action is required?

Name (Manager or Trustee)…….Date……..