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**A Guide for [GROUP NAME] Volunteers**

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# Part One: The Volunteer Relationship

## What is your role as a volunteer?

One of the great things about Community Sponsorship is the lasting friendships created in the local community. Whatever your role, you should consider the distinction between being a friend, and volunteering. Friendship is a private mutual relationship. As a volunteer of (ADD GROUP NAME) you are providing a service which is open to scrutiny by others, and it will require some boundaries.

## Why are boundaries Important?

Managing boundaries will be difficult and complex.

There will be a power imbalance between volunteers and family members when they first arrive. The family will be reliant on us for information and resources, and to access vital services. We will know private and confidential information about them.

So, we need to set boundaries to redress this power imbalance, and maintain their dignity, privacy and control over their own lives.

It is also important to set boundaries so that we can support the family to become independent as quickly as possible.

It gives us confidence to know how to act in certain situations.

Finally, we will also need to set boundaries for our own self-care, to ensure that we have time to switch off and recuperate.

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## Empowering People to Live Independent Lives

**Overcoming your natural instinct to help or solve problems for other people or to make decisions for them will be hard**.

Since you are dedicating your time to this project, it is likely that you care very deeply about supporting people. This is brilliant, but it is important that your compassion doesn’t lead you to doing things *for* the family, rather than guiding them to solve problems themselves. It is important that we help the family to build the skills and knowledge they need to live with autonomy.

### Follow these principles:

* **Never do for others what they can do for themselves.** Don’t rush to do things *for* family members – encourage & support them to do things themselves.
* **Include** families in our group meetings and planning, so that they can define their own goals and support needs.
* **Provide** families with enough information to make informed decisions.
* **Encourage** families to make their own choices
* **Support** their decisions – even if you disagree

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#### **What does that mean in practise?**

* Families will make decisions for themselves and set their own goals to work towards.
* If someone doesn’t know how to do something yet – guide and support them until they can. Be patient, it may take time.
* You work in partnership with families – they are not dependent on you.
* Sometimes, families will make decisions you disagree with and sometimes they will make mistakes.
* Some people may need more encouragement than others.
* You may need to remind the family about what your role is – and what it is not.

For more information about empowering the families we are supporting, visit the Reset website –

<https://training-resetuk.org/toolkit/working-with-refugees/empowering-refugees>

## Communicating Boundaries

**Speak out if there is something you feel uncomfortable doing.**

The family have a lot of information to remember and may forget. Explain your why the boundaries have been set in an honest and open way. They may not understand why you are trying to be more ‘professional’ in your approach.

**Don’t be afraid to clarify boundaries if the family ask you to do something which is not your role.**

Bear in mind that the family may have limited understanding of the volunteers’ roles and may have unrealistic expectations about what may be offered. Try to be clear from the outset about the boundaries of your role. For example, you are not expected to carry out household tasks or errands, or to pick up children from school (children always remain the responsibility of their parents).

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# Part Two: Code of Conduct

*(ADD TO AND ADAPT ACCORDING TO YOUR GROUP’S AGREED RULES)*

We expect you to follow the following guidelines while you are in a volunteer role. The family will be presented with these guidelines also. These are intended to keep you and the family safe and supported.

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| Your Personal Safety |
| **Prioritise your own safety.** | Always prioritise your own health and safety. If you think anyone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, if you are concerned about anyone’s behaviour, or you feel at risk, you under no obligation, and should NOT remain in a situation you consider unsafe. |
| **Let others know where you are** | When you visit the family, let someone else know where you are going and when you expect to return.  |
| **Mobile Phone** | Take a charged mobile phone with you in case of emergencies |
| **Drugs, Alcohol, and Smoking** | You must not visit the family while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Do not smoke in the family home.  |
| **Report issues to the DSL** | Report any health and safety concerns or incidents (even minor incidents or ‘near misses’) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: ADD NAME AND CONTACT OF D.S.L HERE.  |

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| Visiting the Family |
| **Two-person rule.** | There must be two people present when meeting families. *The leadership team will review this rule once a relationship with the family has been established and communicate any changes to the group.*  |
| **Lone working**. | If, once a relationship has been established with the family, you are working alone, the leadership team should be aware before it occurs. Think about what the risks might be, how to minimise these, and what to do if something goes wrong.  |
| **Public places.**  | Try to organise some of your activities in public places so families can get out into the community. Make sure the places you use are appropriate, free, and not a complete culture shock.  |
| **The family home**. | You should not visit the family’s home without an appointment or invite. |
| **Invites to your home.** | The leadership team should review and approve any invitations to the family to visit you in your own home.  |
| **Drugs and Alcohol** | You must not volunteer while under the influence of drugs or alcohol |

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| Gifts & Money |
| **Gifts.** | Don’t give gifts to family members; discuss with the team if you wish to offer a gift or to reciprocate hospitality. Receiving hospitality may be an important way for the family to maintain dignity and reciprocity. But if you are concerned that they are spending too much, have an open conversation with them, and raise this with the leadership team.  |
| **Money.** | Don’t lend to or borrow money from any person you are supporting. Be clear that it is the family members’ responsibility to manage their money and make decisions about what they spend; you are not responsible if they are struggling with this, but you can bring concerns to the attention of the group. |
| **Trips.**  | Be mindful that the family will need to manage within the resources available to them; if you suggest outings or shopping trips, ensure that these will be affordable to the family |

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| Communication |
| **Sharing contact details.** | Only pre-approved designated leads within the group need to their personal mobile number to family members.If you feel you need to share your contact details with, or have the contact of someone you are supporting, the family should give consent, and the leadership team should be aware.  |
| **Have clear times for communication.** | If, after agreement, you share contact details with the family, decide times of day that you can be contacted for non-emergencies (e.g. between 8am to 9pm) and communicate this clearly to the family. Ask the family what times of day they are happy to be contacted also.  |
| **Private contact.** | There is no need for volunteers to have any private contact with the family which is not part of their volunteer role. If you feel that you are building genuine friendships and would like to connect outside of your volunteer role, consider stepping back from your volunteer role. Genuine & mutual friendships are vital to wellbeing, and you could bring even more joy and value in this way.  |

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| Empowerment, Advice & Decision Making |
| **Empowerment.** | Never do for others what they can do for themselves.  |
| **Making Decisions.** | Provide family members with the information they need to make informed choices, and empower them to make their own decisions. Don’t let your personal opinions interfere with supporting the family in their chosen course of action. |
| **Refer to specialist organisations or individuals** | It is not safe to give specialist advice outside of your knowledge (e.g. immigration, healthcare, legal). With the permission of the family member, you should signpost them to people and organisations best placed to give them professional advice. **NOTE:** Giving immigration advice if you are not an OISC regulated adviser is a **criminal offence**.  |

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| Maintaining Positive Relationships |
| Respect  | Respect differences in beliefs, religion, culture, gender, sexuality, ability, age and experience. Do not try to impose your beliefs on others.  |
| Reliability | If you’re unable to attend a planned visit, give as much notice as possible. Although events can happen that are beyond your control, the person you are supporting may feel very let down. Avoid taking on too much and risk letting people down. |
| Be positive and professional | Never collude with the family’s negative comments about other family members or volunteers. When speaking about a family or group member, imagine they are in the room with you. |

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| Confidentiality |
| **Confidentiality**. | It is never acceptable to discuss personal information about volunteers or the family without their express permission, except where withholding such information could lead to harm occurring to the person concerned or to others, or where an illegal activity is being carried out. |
| **Avoid sharing information informally** | Avoid talking about confidential information or making casual comments about individuals in informal or social settings, including with your own family or friends. You should also take care when speaking to a person about a confidential matter in a public place. |

# Part Three: Volunteer Self-Care

**What does self-care look like?**

Self-care looks different for everyone but looking after your physical and emotional needs is important. It may include:

* **Maintaining physical health and fitness.**
* **Peer support.**
* **Recognise your changing emotions.**
* **Regular contact with your family members and close friends**.
* **Clearly defined boundaries and limits.**
* **Reflecting on your work and challenging unhelpful thinking**.
* **Meditation, relaxation or spiritual practice.**
* **Asking for help.**

**Top tips for volunteer self-care**

1. **Remember - You can only do what you can**. The family may have experienced very traumatic events. Their whole lives are uprooted, they will have left behind close friends and family members, and they may be bereaved. Being a migrant and living on benefits in the UK can be very challenging.

You should not feel that you can prevent the family from feeling depressed or disheartened, nor that this reflects on the support you are providing. Taking their grief upon yourself will not help them – the best you can do is to provide a warm welcome, and practical support.

1. **Take care of yourself!** Give yourself a break when you start feeling worn out either mentally or physically. To accept your limits is not a sign of weakness, but one of strength, because it means you’re taking responsibility for yourself and therefore for others.
2. **Say no.** “No” can be a hard word to hear, and sometimes even harder to say. We need to respect our own boundaries of what we can and cannot take on. Don’t be afraid to say “no” when needed.
3. **Stay home if you are sick.** Sometimes we feel a lot of pressure to perform, even when we are not in the state of health to do so. If you are feeling under the weather, give yourself the time needed before returning to your volunteer duties.
4. **Be Kind to yourself**. Nobody is perfect, and mistakes happen. Even as a skilled volunteer, things will not always go as we hoped. When this happens, forgive yourself and move on.

# Part Four: Identifying and Reporting Safeguarding Concerns.

### What is a safeguarding concern?

A safeguarding concern is any worry or concern about the safety or well-being of a person. This includes any concerns about the behaviour of a volunteer which is harmful or puts others at risk. A concern may arise in several ways, for example:

* Someone’s behaviour gives you cause for concern.
* Someone says they are being harmed, exploited, abused or neglected.
* Someone indicates they want to harm themselves.
* You spot signs of harm, exploitation, abuse or neglect.
* You directly witness someone being harmed.
* An adult survivor tells you about their experience of harm, exploitation, abuse or neglect (often called ‘historical abuse’). The perpetrator may still be alive, and others may be at risk.

## Identifying safeguarding concerns

Everyone should be alert to the signs of potential harm, exploitation, abuse and neglect.

You should familiarise yourself with the types of harm and abuse outlined in **Appendix One.**

You must act if you have any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult, or if you observe concerning behaviour from others they may be working with.

**Follow the 3 ‘R’s – React, Record, Report.**

### React

If something seems unusual, or you are worried about a person’s safety or well-being try to speak to the person, if appropriate, to seek further information.

***Clarifying questions*.** It is *not* your responsibility to investigate safeguarding concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation.

That doesn’t mean that you cannot ask any questions. But you should **ONLY** ask enough questions to clarify whether this might be cause for concern. If it is necessary to seek further clarification, you should keep to open questions such as

Tell… Explain… Describe… What..? When..? Who..? How..? Where..?

Once you have clarified that a child or adult may being harmed or is at risk of harm (or you are reassured they are safe), no further questions should be required.

***Responding to a disclosure*.** Sometimes, people will share their worries or experiences of abuse with you and it is essential that you listen to them and their voice is heard and taken seriously. **Appendix Two** provides advice on how to respond to a disclosure.

### Record

Record contemporaneous notes, using the questions below as a guideline.

**Overview of the concern**

*Record the following factually: What were you worried about? Who was involved? What happened? Where? When? Any witnesses?*

**Background to the concern**

*Is there anything you have observed or know about the situation that might help in understanding the concerns?*

**Action taken.**

*What action has already been taken?**Include names of anyone who has been involved or helped, including emergency services or other organisations.*

**Impact on you.**

*What is the impact of this situation on you? Do you need any additional support?*

### Report

**Always report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) by telephone as soon as possible, or if they are unavailable, the Deputy DSO.**

Even if you don’t have conclusive evidence, or it seems insignificant, it might be the piece of a puzzle that builds up a larger picture of harm or abuse. It does not hurt to report a concern – but it can be very harmful not to.

*(NOTE: report via telephone or face to face. Email is not considered a secure way to send confidential information).*

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| **Name of Designated Safeguarding Lead** | TELEPHONE |
| **Deputy DSL** | TELEPHONE |

If it is not appropriate to report to the DSO (for example, if the concern is about them), or you do not think they have responded appropriately, you can escalate your concern to the following organisations (amend as applicable):

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| **Lead Sponsor Safeguarding Lead** | NAMECONTACT DETAILS |
| **Local Authority Safeguarding Board** | CONTACT DETAILS |
| **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** | NAME, CONTACT DETAILS |
| **Safer Neighbourhood Officer** | NAME, CONTACT DETAILS |
| **Home Office Contact Officer** | NAME, CONTACT DETAILS |
| **NSPCC** | 0808 800 5000<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>  |

### Next Steps

Once you have shared your concern the DSL will decide what the next course of action should be. As far as is appropriate, they will keep you informed of any action taken.

Where the concern involves a child, their parents/carers will be informed *unless* this may increase the risk of harm to the person, or they are part of the concern, or it may interfere with a criminal investigation.

### Emergency situations

**In any medical emergency or when there is a risk of imminent, significant harm, you must contact the appropriate emergency services immediately.**

For example:

* there is a life threatening physical or psychological injury or condition.
* the person is assessed to be at high risk of self-harm or suicide.
* there is a significant risk the person will seriously harm another.
* the alleged harm, exploitation or abuse is being carried out at a place they are about to go to.

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** must be informed as soon as possible.

# PART FIVE: Whistleblowing and Complaints

## Whistleblowing

All organisations face the risk of things going wrong or of unknowingly harbouring bad practice. If at any time you believe that anyone involved with (ADD GROUP NAME) has acted illegally, unethically or improperly, or that organisational policies with respect to safeguarding, confidentiality or data protection have not been complied with (for example, if you believe a safeguarding concern has not been escalated as it should have been) you should not hesitate to raise a concern.

You can raise any concern with: (add/amend contact information as suitable)

DSO / CHAIR / LEAD SPONSOR / LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) / HOME OFFICE CONTACT OFFICER

## Complaints Procedures

Our **Complaints Policy** details of how we will respond to formal complaints from family members about a volunteer or the group. You can request to see this at any time.

To make a formal complaint, contact

COMPLAINTS OFFICER NAME & DETAILS.

# Appendix One: Types of Harm or Abuse

This guidance aims to help you understand more about the types of risk and harm that children, young people and adults can be exposed to and to draw your attention to some of the possible signs and behavioural indications that abuse or harm is taking place.

### Remember:

● It is difficult to create an exhaustive list of all possible types of abuse and harm or of all possible signs and indicators and this guidance document should never be considered to be a checklist in any way.

● Abuse and harm can be carried out both deliberately and intentionally, or it can be unintentional and without malice.

● You do not need to know what type of abuse or harm is happening in order to report your concerns, you simply need to be able to explain what you have seen or heard that has caused concern.

## Types of Harm and Abuse:

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| **Sexual Abuse**  | **Sexual abusers** force or persuade others to take part in sexual activities. This doesn’t necessarily involve physical contact and can take place online.**Sexual exploitation** occurs when one party gains financial or other material benefit from the sexual activity of another.**Sexual exploitation online** occurs when someone is forced or persuaded to post or send sexual images of themselves, take part in sexual activity via webcam or smartphone or take part in sexual conversations by message or text.**Grooming** is the processes by which someone builds an emotional connection with, and gains the trust of, a child or adult for the purpose of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. |
| **Emotional/****psychological abuse**  | **Emotional abuse** is the ongoing maltreatment of an individual.It may involve telling a person they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the person opportunities to express their views. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a person. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection or preventing a person from participating in normal social interaction. |
| **Physical abuse** | **Physical abuse** occurs when the abuser intentionally inflicts harm and pain on the abused. It can include all kinds of physical acts such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm |
| **Neglect and acts of omission** | When an individual is deprived of the means to meet their basic physical and psychological needs this is neglect. Neglect can be caused intentionally, for example deliberately withholding food, or medical care or failing to protect the vulnerable from danger. It can also be a consequence of other circumstances, for example, being financially unable to provide sufficient nutrition through meals or adequate clothing. With children and young people neglect also occurs when they are left without adequate supervision for their age leaving them vulnerable to harm. |
| **Institutional abuse** | This is the abuse or mistreatment of individuals brought about when care and other services are either not provided or are inadequate. It includes instances when systematic poor practice affects a whole organisation. It can also occur when an individual's wishes and needs are sacrificed for the smooth running of a group, service or organisation.Example of institutional abuse include; failure to attend to medical needs, lack of respect for dignity and privacy, disregard for cultural, religion or ethical needs and wishes, discouraging or preventing independence |
| **Exploitation, trafficking** and **modern slavery** | This happens when an individual is recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. In many cases will have their passport and other official papers taken away to prevent them from fleeing. Usually they will be manipulated or even forced into some kind of activity from which others will benefit financially such as domestic servitude, prostitution, criminal activity and arranged marriages. |
| **Honour based abuse** | Honour based abuse is an incident or crime which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and or the community. Often the abuse is a way to prevent a person from bringing shame to a family or community, or punish them for doing so. Examples include: **Female genital mutilation -** the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons. **Forced marriage** - where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. |
| **Financial/****material abuse** | When an individual’s money or material goods are subject to theft, fraud or exploitation, this is **financial / material abuse**. Abuse often results in the individual experiencing a loss of control over their assets. Examples include: claiming to have lost money someone else asked you to look after or selling someone’s possessions without their knowledge or consent. |
| **Abuse of rights/****discriminatory abuse** | **Discriminatory abuse** denies opportunities to some individuals or groups. When discrimination is demonstrated on grounds such as gender, race, age, disability, colour, language, culture, religion, politics, appearance or sexual orientation, abuse can occur - especially if this discrimination leads to the denial of essentials such as food, shelter, warmth and medical services or results in a hate crime.  |
| **Domestic Abuse** | **Domestic abuse** is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship which can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial. Domestic abuse often takes place behind closed doors in the family home and those who carry out the abuse can behave very differently when other people are around.Domestic abuse is characterised by a partner (or ex-partner) in a relationship being coercive, controlling, threatening, intimidating and manipulating towards the other and it can occur in any age group**Witnessing domestic violence and abuse is a form of child abuse.** |
| **Bullying** | **Bullying** is intentional, deliberately hurtful behaviour that singles out a specific individual or group. Bullying is repeated either because it happens multiple times or because it is carried out by multiple people at the same time and the person who is being bullied feels powerless to prevent it. Bullying can be physical, emotional or psychological and can take place in person or remotely such as over the internet and this is known as Cyberbullying. |
| **Harassment** | **Harassment** involves violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Harassment is usually linked to a protected characteristic, such as age, sex, disability, race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. |
| **Online and social media** | Online harm can come in many different forms including **online sexual abuse** and **grooming**, **emotional abuse**, **online bullying** and **online exploitation**. |
| **Self-harm** | **Self-harm** is any behaviour by an individual that is deliberately intended to inflict pain or cause injury such as cutting, burning, biting or hair pulling. It can also come in the form of excessive risk taking, such as experimentation with drugs, excessive alcohol consumption and deliberate exposure to the possibility of catching sexually transmitted infections. Those who self-harm often do so as a way of coping and may find it difficult to express themselves or put important thoughts into words. They may find it hard to deal with emotional thoughts or feelings in a positive way, they may be trying to come with a traumatic experience or want punish themselves for being worthless or ‘bad’.**Drugs, Alcohol and Substance abuse** is another form of self-harm.  |
| **Smacking and physical punishment** | Physical punishment or physical discipline can take many forms. It includes but is not limited to: smacking, skelping, spanking, slapping. **Scotland & Wales:** Physical punishment of any kind is illegal. If a parent or carer uses physical punishment or physical discipline on their child, they can be charged with assault.**England & Northern Ireland:** It is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack a child except where this amounts to ‘reasonable punishment’. The term ‘reasonable’ is not further defined in law making it something of a grey area. There are, however, strict guidelines about the severity of punishment that can be considered reasonable and where a physical punishment results in wounding, actual bodily harm, or grievous bodily this is considered to be physical abuse. It is never legal for a professional or other person providing child care to smack or physically punish them.[More info here](https://www.madeformums.com/school-and-family/smacking-children-what-are-the-laws-across-the-uk/): <https://www.madeformums.com/school-and-family/smacking-children-what-are-the-laws-across-the-uk/>  |
| **Radicalisation** | **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.**Extremism** is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which:* Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
* Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts
* Encourage serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
* Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

Those who may perhaps be most vulnerable are those individuals who are isolated, feel disenchanted by the world around them, have been let down or betrayed by people they trusted. Those who radicalise will exploit these vulnerabilities and often try to create a feeling of belonging, security and protection that the vulnerable individual is otherwise lacking. |

# Appendix Two: How to listen and behave if you receive a safeguarding concern.

Sometimes, people will share their worries or experiences of abuse with you and it is essential that you listen to them and their voice is heard and taken seriously.

Here’s what you should do to support this:

* **Listen carefully and compassionately** to what is being said.
* **Reassure the person** that they’ve done the right thing in telling you.
* **Do not show shock or distress.** Try to stay calm.
* **Don’t make promises**, particularly about confidentiality or outcomes.
* **Allow the person to continue at their own pace** and avoid asking them to repeat their story.
* **Ask open ended questions for clarification only** – it is not your responsibility to investigate.
* **Tell the person what you’ll do next** and with whom you’ll share the information, except where doing this may put them or someone else at risk.
* **Record in writing what was said** using, wherever possible, the person’s own words as soon as you can. Note the date, time, places, allegations, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given.
* **Report to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.**