

Home Visitor Coronavirus Policy

All Home Visits from 30th June 2020 TBC

As the Coronavirus pandemic has an increasing impact on lives in the United Kingdom, Refugees At Home has developed a temporary policy to help guide hosts and home visitors.

The safety and wellbeing of hosts, home visitors and guests is our priority and we should still all be practicing Social Distancing. We are however facing increased demand for placements and a significant reduction in the number of hosts available. To try and ensure as many hosts can be 'visited' as possible, we are adapting to allow virtual home visits where possible.

As part of the Home Visit, key questions about Coronavirus should be asked of the host. These will be explained to you by the placement team or volunteer when you are asked to conduct a home visit, eg regarding potential vulnerability etc.

Virtual Home Visits

During a virtual home visit, a host should be able to conduct a virtual tour of the house - the areas that a guest would use. The Home Visitor should be available via video call to answer questions as would normally happen on a home visit. Skype, What'sApp or Facetime all have video functions. This might mean that the visit takes a little longer than normal. Trying to have hosting related conversations over video call may not always allow for the body language or silences to be interpreted well, so we are asking home visitors to give hosts that extra bit of support during this virtual home visit to make sure that everything is covered. We will still need a written home visit report and references to be taken up before we can place guests with any new hosts.

Once we are through this crisis, we would expect Home Visitors and Hosts to meet as normal, although at that point a full home visit will not be needed.

Socially Distanced Home Visits

We understand the importance of face to face contact when conducting a home visit and we want to be able to get back to this way of working once it is safe to do so. We will continually review the situation but this may not be possible for the foreseeable future.

If a Home Visitor is asked to do a visit where there is an outdoor space, they may visit to meet the host from a distance - in the garden or patio for example. Social Distancing of 2 metres should still be adhered to and the Home Visitor should not enter the home. We will still need a video assessment of the internal space. This option is subject to both the host and the home visitor being comfortable with the arrangement. We strongly discourage this option where either the host or home visitor falls into a higher risk category and would ask that a completely virtual home visit be scheduled.

Postponing Home Visits

For those unable to take part in a virtual home visit, we are asking that visits be postponed until at least September and, for anyone showing signs of Coronavirus (host or HV), that the visit should be rescheduled.

For hosts with specific concerns about Coronavirus, we are taking the necessary precautions and asking, as standard, that our referrers have the appropriate conversations with guests about symptoms and preventative measures (using an interpreter if necessary).

Ending placements

We are also explaining to hosts that should they host and either they or their guest develop symptoms, our recommendation is that they all self isolate together. If a host does not want to do this and is adamant that the guest should leave, we will unfortunately not be able to offer a further placement during the period which the guest should be in self isolation.

Because of the decrease in the number of available hosts we are being transparent with referrers that we may not be able to offer hosting for as long as previously discussed, or that it might need to end at short notice. We will be making hosts aware of this too when we ask them to take on a new placement.

Hosts are likely to feel anxious about hosting and may need some extra support - this includes hosts who you, as Home Visitor, have already met.

Please read our Coronavirus policy at <https://www.refugeesathome.org/coronavirus-policy/>

If you have any questions about this new policy, or the steps we are taking please contact info@refugeesathome.org