



Refugees At Home Coronavirus Policy.

Last Updated 23.05.22

Coronavirus is a viral infection which causes symptoms similar to 'flu. Current advice suggests that infection with the virus leads to a mild to moderate illness for the majority of people. A small proportion of the population is at risk of becoming more seriously unwell.

Coronavirus and concerns about the impact on the work of Refugees At Home (RAH).

Refugees at Home have been adapting over the last 24 months to ensure as much as we can that placements can continue to be made safely.

This policy outlines the general principles which will form our response to this uncertain and ever changing situation. **We will be guided by the official advice provided by the NHS and the Government, including devolved decisions from the four nations. This means there will be different approaches in each area.**

Employees and volunteers **cannot give advice** about the Coronavirus: hosts, guests, volunteers, referrers and home visitors will be asked to consult official NHS and Government advice when thinking through their own responses to possible exposure of the virus or the development of symptoms.

There is now different advice in different parts of the UK with all four nations providing guidance on how to keep safe rather than enforceable restrictions.

What is a household?

For the purposes of hosting, Refugees At Home is working on the premise that a guest is part of a household. If a guest who is currently hosted needs to move, we will review our ability to continue support depending on the specific level of risk in the area and the hosts we have available.

Refugees at Home will still be encouraging guests and hosts to practice the wearing of face masks and the take up of the vaccination programme. Additional rules may be imposed on a placement by a host and Refugees at Home will ask that they are followed so long as they are reasonable.

Placements will go ahead where both host and guest are fully happy with any restrictions required for that placement.

Any further advice issued by the Government that is not detailed in this policy should be followed.

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Vaccinations

Our guests are eligible for the Coronavirus vaccine and many have already had both doses plus their booster. Not all guests will have been vaccinated when they need a placement. We understand that some hosts will want a guest to have received the vaccination before agreeing to a placement. While we will encourage vaccine take up, we cannot enforce this. This may mean that we have to ask a different host about a placement. It is unlikely, but if we are unable to find a host willing to offer a placement for a guest without a vaccine this may result in us not being able to host that guest.

Testing

Some of our hosts have enquired about a guest having a test before starting a placement. This might be possible on occasion however it will depend on the individual referrer and their capacity to organise this. Free tests are no longer readily available and if requested hosts will be required to fund this. **If a test is carried out prior to someone moving into a placement, we cannot guarantee that they will not come into contact with the virus before the move takes place.** We fully understand and respect your wishes if you request that a test is done, however if a guest is at risk of imminent street homelessness we may have to ask another host. We will however make a note of your request and be sure to approach you with another guest just as soon as we can. Testing will also be conditional on the consent of our guests and we respect their right to refuse a test if they wish, which they may do for various reasons.

Symptoms of Coronavirus

As Coronavirus is a relatively new virus we are still learning about it and there are new strains emerging. Some people may develop all or some of the symptoms and others may not develop any at all.

The main symptoms of Coronavirus can be found [here](#)

Hosting

We are open to new referrals and are working with our trusted referral partners to ensure guests fully understand the importance of continued measures.

As vaccine rates increase, we are no longer asking guests to self isolate when they move into a placement. However, if anyone in the household develops symptoms they should follow normal self isolation rules.

For current placements, hosts and guests will be asked to update RAH as soon as possible if they test positive for Coronavirus

House Rules

In addition to the required social distancing and hygiene rules, some hosts may have individual house rules, which we will ask guests to respect, so long as they are reasonable. Guests should not move between their host's home and friends for long periods of time and

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overnight, unless this is something their current host is happy with. A guest should not be staying away from their placement for multiple nights a week.

We will ask referrers to ensure that guests are aware of the current policy advice. If a guest will not abide by these rules we will end the placement and will not be able to offer further hosting.

We **ALWAYS** depend on our referrers to ask appropriate questions of guests and inform us of any health conditions. We rely on this more than ever. We are asking referrers to talk to their guests about the virus, using a translator if necessary. Information about a guests health is shared with hosts.

If someone develops symptoms -

Self isolation is no longer a legal requirement, however Refugees at Home still recommends the following if someone in a placement catches Coronavirus.

If a host or guest develops Coronavirus or symptoms of Coronavirus, and either the host or guest asks for the placement to end, we will do all that we can to assist but must advise that **members of a household should self isolate together on the same premises.** We will not be able to offer further placements until the guest has recovered and is no longer contagious. If we are to offer further placements after this time, the nature of how the original placement ended will be shared with prospective hosts.

If a host asks that a placement ends because of concerns surrounding the Coronavirus but not because any one has the virus, we will do all we can to find a new placement. However this cannot be guaranteed.

Home Visits

Home visits may once again take place face to face. We encourage continued use of face masks and social distancing where possible.

Where a virtual home visit is organised, we will ask that home visitors visit in person in the future - when everyone feels comfortable with that arrangement.

Any questions that the home visitor is unsure about should be relayed back to the placement team so we can provide consistent answers for our hosts and home visitors.

Employees and Volunteers

Much of the work involved in Refugees At Home is undertaken remotely so there is limited face to face contact between volunteers, guests, hosts, referrers and others

The Placement team and volunteer team can seek advice from the Executive Director and Trustee Operations Group should they have concerns or questions about how to deal with this situation