



Refugees at Home believes that it is never acceptable for a child or vulnerable adult to experience abuse of any kind and is committed to the safety of all members of the Refugees at Home community, including hosts and the members of their households, guests, home visitors and our employees. This is everyone's responsibility.

Refugees at Home recognises that the welfare of children and vulnerable adults is paramount and that children and vulnerable adults, without exception, have the right to equal protection from abuse regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

This policy applies to all board members, volunteers, including hosts and home visitors, and employees of Refugees at Home.

### **Guests**

Refugees at Home arranges hosting for adults who are, in the main, refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees at Home's referral policy states that we do not host unaccompanied minors, people with substance abuse problems or those with severe mental health issues. Nevertheless, we recognise that the people we are hosting are in a vulnerable position, sometimes in ways which are not immediately apparent. That doesn't mean they aren't articulate, intelligent, determined human beings with personal agency, but they are also in a complicated legal, financial and personal situation, often having endured very difficult circumstances that have left them with very complex things to work through, and all this in an alien country and culture.

### **Hosts**

All hosts are assessed during a home visit by one of our Home Visitors who are asked to discuss, as part of the information sharing and assessment conducted by the Home Visitor, the issue of the power differential between the host(s) and their guest, and bear this power differential in mind in all their dealings with their guest. Our Home Visitors are qualified to conduct home assessments and will have a professional working background to reflect this. References are taken up on both hosts and Home Visitors.

Refugees at Home recognises that hosts and guests are ultimately responsible for their hosting relationship, but we are committed to supporting the safety of hosts and guests.

### **Employees and volunteers**

Refugees at Home recognises that its employees and volunteers may also be vulnerable, and is committed to practice which protects them.

## **Abuse**

Abuse may include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Abuse can take place in any setting, public or private, and can be perpetrated by anyone.

## **Rights & Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Refugees at Home board members, directly or by delegation to the Executive Director, include:

- Ensuring all volunteers and employees are aware of the importance of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring all volunteers and employees are aware that our guests are in a vulnerable position while being hosted.
- Recruiting and selecting volunteers and employees responsibly.
- Providing guidance and/or training to our volunteers and employees as appropriate.
- Ensuring that all volunteers and employees understand that, if abuse is identified or suspected, they must inform one of the 'identified individuals'. For Refugees at Home the identified individuals are the Executive Director, the Safeguarding Trustee or the Chair of the Board.
- Notifying the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.
- Ensuring that members of the Refugees at Home community are informed of the safeguarding policy and procedures as appropriate.
- Supporting the safety of guests and ensuring that referrers are encouraged to help us identify individuals at particular risk.
- Supporting the safety of all other individuals who are part of the Refugees at Home community.

The responsibilities of Refugees at Home volunteers and employees include:

- Being familiar with this safeguarding policy.
- Offering guidance on boundaries and behaviour where appropriate.
- Taking appropriate action in line with this policy.
- Declaring any existing or subsequent convictions that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended)

## **Support for those who report abuse**

Anyone making a complaint or allegation or expressing concern about safeguarding should be reassured that:

- Their complaint or allegation will be recognised, taken seriously and responded to appropriately by the board members, volunteers and employees of Refugees at Home.
- Their complaint or allegation will be treated confidentially, subject to Refugees at Home's responsibilities to notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.

In particular, guests whose hosting is arranged through Refugees at Home have the right:

- To be made aware of this policy as appropriate.
- To have any complaint or allegation recognised and taken seriously.
- To receive fair and respectful treatment throughout.
- To be involved in any process as appropriate.
- To receive information about the outcome.

Any safeguarding concerns or complaints which guests or hosts may have can be raised with their home visitor in the first instance (or with any other volunteer or employee of Refugees at Home). Any concerns or complaints raised must then be escalated as soon as possible to the 'identified individuals' noted above.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

**Adopted by the board of Refugees at Home on 14 December 2020**

**Amended and adopted by the Board on 13 December 2021**