



## Volunteer Guidelines

Epsom & Ewell Refugee Network (EERN) volunteers work alongside internationally agreed refugee resettlement schemes, to support vulnerable people fleeing conflict to settle and become part of the local community.

These guidelines set out the parameters of what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour for our volunteers. Clearly defined boundaries are essential to protect both the volunteer and beneficiaries about what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour. They also provide a clear framework so volunteers can recognise when to stop and question what they are doing.

These guidelines are issued alongside the Safeguarding; Code of Conduct; Volunteer Role and Ethos, Values and Practises documents. Details of where to access these documents are later in this document. All volunteers working with the family will be expected to sign a copy of the Volunteer Role document to acknowledge they have received and understand this information.

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### Do's and Don'ts

#### DO

- **Recognise your own personal and EERN boundaries**
- **Avoid getting into situations that could be misinterpreted**
- **Think before you say "yes"**
- **Be conscious of accepting gifts from refugees.** It's part of some cultures to be social and offer food and drinks to visitors. EERN acknowledges that these may be accepted if

refusal will cause offence, but the line between a gift and a payment must never be crossed. If you have any doubts, please discuss with the volunteer coordinator.

- **Be cautious about giving out your personal contact details.** This may be necessary in some cases given the size of our organisation, but should be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator beforehand. Generally do not give out your personal phone number, address or e-mail address without first consulting.
- **Report any safeguarding concerns.** As a volunteer you will be made aware of our Safeguarding Policies. You have a responsibility to report any concerns you may have to the Admin team / Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Remember that **the main focus of the relationship is the needs and progression of all the family** to successfully settle and be independent in British society.

## **DON'T**

- Become emotionally over-involved. If you are concerned about this please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Get involved in an intimate or sexual relationship
- Buy expensive gifts or give, lend or borrow money as this blurs boundaries
- Perform any tasks that you are uncomfortable with
- Perform any tasks such as administering medication or undertaking any form of personal care
- Become involved in family disputes or personal affairs
- Promote your own religious or political opinions
- Ask questions about the family's past. They may choose to share information with you but you should not push them to do this.
- Repeat to others any stories or personal information shared with you by the people you are supporting. These are their stories to share with others if they wish to. Most of the people we work with are very private about what they have been through.
- Post anything on social media about your role, about the family or about their location.

## **INVITING PEOPLE INTO YOUR HOME**

Think carefully before inviting a refugee to your home. Our aim is to encourage and assist our beneficiaries in making their own bonds within the community, rather than providing those bonds ourselves.

## **SAFETY & SAFEGUARDING**

If at any time you do not feel safe or you feel uncomfortable in a refugee's home, you should leave immediately and contact your volunteer coordinator.

As a volunteer for EERN you have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns you may have. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy (see link below) and to the final page of this document "How to Report A Safeguarding Concern". Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately.

## **VOLUNTEER OR FRIEND?**

As a volunteer, you are expected to perform tasks assigned to you by ERN. Please refer to your specific Volunteer Roles documents. EERN holds no responsibility for any activities that take place without our prior knowledge and agreement.

While some level of emotional involvement with a family is an inevitable part of volunteering, it is important for a volunteer to draw a clear line between being a volunteer and being a friend.

If you find that you are doing tasks over and beyond what is expected of you as a volunteer, or engaging in a number of informal social activities with a family, please contact your Volunteer Coordinator to discuss this. It might be that you are more suited to being a friend rather than a volunteer, in which case, we would agree to end your volunteering position with us. You'll still be able to assist refugees as a friend, but EERN will no longer be responsible for any support or contact you give.

## **CAR USE**

Volunteers may occasionally use their car to give an individual or family a lift on EERN's behalf, and the question of car insurance is sometimes raised.

When volunteers use their car for their voluntary duties their personal car insurance should provide cover and it should not be necessary to take out additional cover for business use. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) accepts that being a volunteer is a social act and is covered by the 'social, domestic and recreational' use of a car included in comprehensive insurance. You should, however, check with your insurance company to ensure that you are covered to use your car in such a volunteer role. If you are interested we can provide you with appropriate wording to use in a communication to your insurance company.

If you are transporting a child you must ensure you have the necessary car seats correctly fitted to your vehicle. EERN has spare car seats you can use. You must ensure a parent is with the child at all times.

## **EXPENSES**

EERN values its volunteers and recognises that volunteers may incur expenses while assisting refugees and asylum seekers. We know that some volunteers will need to cover such expenses and are happy to reimburse agreed expenses swiftly and simply whilst also maintaining adequate control. Below are details of our Volunteer Expenses Policy and Procedures.

### **VOLUNTEER EXPENSES POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

EERN relies entirely on donations and grants. We have a responsibility to our funders and to the refugees we support, to make sure the funds stretch as far as possible. To help us do this, please follow these simple guidelines:

- If using public transport, where possible travel off-peak and purchase the cheapest ticket in order to complete the journey, e.g. travel cards and / or family tickets.

- For sightseeing and orientation trips, where possible, please visit free attractions and consider taking packed lunches (the cost of which can be claimed back) instead of eating in cafes or restaurants
- When driving / accompanying a refugee to a hospital or other appointment, please check whether there is free parking nearby and use this where possible. In some cases, mileage may be claimed (at the rate of 40p per mile) for essential trips transporting families and individuals we support (the beneficiaries).
- If in doubt as to whether an expense can be claimed, please discuss fully with you're the admin team when you seek pre-approval.

Full details on how to claim expenses will be issued if needed.

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These guidelines will be issued alongside our Code of Conduct; Volunteer Role (describing the role you are volunteering for) and you can access our full Safeguarding Policy, Ethos Values and Practices, Transport Policy and Complaints Procedure via the links below. (Also Available at: <https://epsomrefugeenetwork.org/policies-and-minutes>) We ask all volunteers to review the Safeguarding policy so that they understand our commitment to safeguard the people we support.

[Ethos, Values and Practices](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Transport Policy](#)

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

You will be asked to sign to acknowledge receipt of these documents.

If you are ever in doubt about an action or boundary issue, ask the admin team.

## UPDATES TO THIS POLICY

This is a living document and will be updated and added to as we gain more experience and insight into working with refugees. If you have any suggestions on things to add, based on your direct experience, please let us know.

## HOW TO MAKE A SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL RELATING TO CHILDREN OR ADULTS

### You have a Safeguarding concern

This could be a suspicion, an allegation, an observation or a disclosure of abuse or risk of abuse.

### Is there immediate risk of harm?

#### YES

Call **Emergency services on 999** and following the call to Emergency Services, report the concern to one of the designated safeguarding contacts :

Designated Safeguarding Lead : Joanna Sherring 07775 798 047

Admin team : Nina Kaye 07778 406834

You may be asked to send a report about what you have witnessed, if you do this you will be provided with a secure e mail address to send the report to.

#### NO

If there is no immediate risk or harm but you have concerns please make contact with the safeguarding leads listed above at the earliest opportunity. You will be asked to explain your concerns and must do so in a fact based way without giving your opinions. You may be asked to do a written report and will be given a secure e mail address to send this to.

Once the report has been made the ERN Admin Team will discuss the concerns and decide if a referral needs to be made to the Surrey Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 479 9100.

You may not find out the outcome of the alert as information is only provided on a need to know basis.

### Contacts :

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jo Sherring [sherringjoanna@gmail.com](mailto:sherringjoanna@gmail.com), tel 07775 798 047

Admin Team contact : Nina Kaye, 07778 406834 [ninakaye01@gmail.com](mailto:ninakaye01@gmail.com), tel 07712 136 980