

Safeguarding Policy

Summary

Refugee Support Europe (RSE) recognises that the welfare of refugees is paramount and that they have equal rights of protection.

RSE will:

- Treat all refugees with respect and uphold their dignity
- Carefully recruit and select all volunteers
- Respond to concerns and allegations appropriately
- Be guided by, where applicable, the best practice of leading organisations in this field such as UNHCR

While other NGOs may be the officially mandated organisations for safeguarding the refugees in different locations, RSE will work closely with them to ensure refugees are protected.

When there are concerns about the welfare of any refugee, first raise your concern with the Centre Coordinator. All volunteers are then expected to share their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). Every concern will be taken seriously.

Safeguarding refugees

RSE's DSO for refugee safeguarding is:

- Name: Rachel Ellis, Chief Executive
- Contact details: +44 7454515929; rachel.ellis@refugeesupporteu.com

The DSO deputy is:

- Name: Chris Goodson, Chair of Trustees
- Contact details +44 7815 922829; chris@limerecruit.co.uk

The DSO is responsible for:

- Monitoring and recording concerns
- Making referrals to relevant NGOs with responsibility for welfare without delay
- Liaison with other agencies
- Recruitment and training for all volunteers

Their role is also to oversee and ensure that RSE Safeguarding Policy is fully implemented. These details will be made available to all volunteers at recruitment stage, on the website and induction. This includes ensuring they and all volunteers receive adult safeguarding

training as appropriate. The deputy should be available to support or cover for the DSO. They will also handle any complaints or allegations against the DSO if appropriate.

Confidentiality

In cases of disclosure of abuse, Refugee Support Europe is obliged to share the information and will refer our concerns to the relevant NGO and/or the police in an emergency.

Volunteer allegations

Concerns about the behaviour of RSE volunteers will be referred without delay to the DSO who will contact the relevant NGO, or the police, if a crime may have been committed.

If the concerns are about the DSO, it is important to refer to the deputy person. This may not be appropriate, in which case any volunteer may personally refer direct to a UNHCR representative who will liaise with the relevant NGO, or the police, if a crime may have been committed.

Refugee safeguarding policy

Any individual registered to use facilities where RSE is working will be deemed a refugee.

Safeguarding concerns arise when a refugee is, or is at risk of, being abused or neglected and unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect or risk.

RSE is guided by the Care Act 2014 which has six key principles which should inform the way that volunteers should work. They are:

1. Empowerment
2. Prevention
3. Proportionality
4. Protection
5. Partnership
6. Accountability

Recognising abuse

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 outlines how abuse may take many forms and how individual circumstances should be considered:

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

Mental capacity

RSE fully recognises and upholds the 5 key principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in all aspects of its work by:

- Presuming each adult at risk has capacity
- Supporting individuals to make their own decisions
- Recognising the right for individuals to make their own decisions, even if they may seem eccentric
- Making sure what the RSE does for refugees is in their best interests
- Making sure that anything RSE does is the least restrictive action for the individual

Treating refugees with respect and dignity

RSE endeavours to treat all refugees with respect and dignity, regardless of ability or culture.

Rigorous recruitment

Before starting work all volunteers are required to

- Agree to the terms of our Volunteer Agreement
- Agree to abide by and uphold our Code of Conduct
- Agree to and uphold the Safeguarding Refugees Policy
- Participate in a video interview with one of our Volunteer Recruitment Team, during which key aspects of the Agreement and Code of Conduct are emphasised

Induction and training

All volunteers attend a morning briefing that makes clear each individual volunteer's responsibilities for the day. The morning meeting also provides space for feedback and training.

All volunteers are supervised by a designated Volunteer Coordinator

Disclosures

A disclosure may be communicated verbally or through behaviour by a refugee or volunteer.

If any volunteer is concerned about a refugee or volunteer it is important that this information is communicated to the DSO or deputy for safeguarding.

They may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Their own observations and concerns
- Being told by another person that they have concerns about a refugee
- The refugee tells them
- The abuser tells them

Responding to concerns

RSE ensures and emphasises that everyone in the organisation understands and knows how to share any concerns immediately with the DSO/deputy.

Complaints/ disciplinary & grievance procedures

Where a complaint has been made with regards to any inappropriate or poor practice, RSE will discuss the situation with the relevant NGO before making an open decision about the best way forward.

It is the responsibility of the DSO/deputy to ensure that these procedures are rigorously adhered to. In the case that the DSO is implicated, the deputy should be informed. In the exceptional circumstances that both are involved, it is the duty of the person concerned to contact the UNHCR representative directly, or the police if a crime has, or may have been, committed.

Record keeping

All records will be kept securely. Only the DSO and/or those with authority to do so will have access and records will only be kept as long as necessary.

Policy date

This policy was agreed on 4 July 2023 and will be reviewed annually or when there are substantial organisational changes/changes in legislation.

Policy review date: 4 July 2023