



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Publication date: 14 December 2020

Last amended: March 2026

Refugees at Home (R@H) 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.

R@H 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, as laid out within the Children's Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014 (Adults).

This policy applies to all board members, volunteers, including hosts and home visitors, and employees of R@H.

Safeguarding Approach

We primarily place adults who have arrived in the UK seeking sanctuary with adults in the UK who are willing to host them. Both hosts and guests receive background checks from R@H, including the gathering of character references and a thorough assessment of their motivations, need and ability to host/be hosted. Safety is at the core of what we do but we are pragmatic in our approach.

We accept that there is no such thing as a perfect hosting placement, but we put our training, experience and knowledge into making placements that are as good as they can be, and we will never place guest and host together unless both sides are completely comfortable.

Support is available at all stages to guests, hosts, home visitors and referral partners. When we do work with referrers, we consider their experience, capacity and our prior working with them before we will accept a guest through them and we make our expectation on them clear in our referral agreements. In the event of a concern about a host or guest being raised, the placement will be investigated and ended.

Guests

R@H arranges hosting for adults who are, in the main, refugees and people seeking asylum. R@H'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.

R@H 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

R@H recognises that its employees and volunteers may also be vulnerable, and is committed to practice which protects them.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead at R@H is Carly Whyborn, Chief Operating Officer. Contact details; carly.whyborn@refugeesathome.org and 07512 302162.

In the absence of the Chief Operating Officer, please contact safeguarding@refugeesathome.org which is monitored by the CEO, Head of Placements and Partnerships and relevant Trustees in the absence of the COO.

Abuse

Abuse may include:

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse, including coercive control
- 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 R@H, directly or by delegation to the Executive Team, 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 R@H the Identified Individuals are the CEO, COO or the Safeguarding Trustee or the Chair of the Board. You can contact these individuals via safeguarding@refugeesathome.org
- Notifying the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.
- Ensuring that members of the R@H 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 R@H community.

The responsibilities of R@H 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 R@H.
- Their complaint or allegation will be treated confidentially, subject to R@H's responsibilities to notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected.

In particular, guests whose hosting is arranged through R@H 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 Placement Coordinator in the first instance (or with any other volunteer or employee of R@H). Any concerns or complaints raised must then be escalated as soon as possible to the 'identified individuals' noted above.

How a safeguarding concern is dealt with

Safeguarding concerns are reported to safeguarding@refugeesathome.org.

You will receive an acknowledgement of your email within 1 working day, outlining the immediate steps we will be taking. Following a safeguarding concern being raised, immediate reviews of the safety of all concerned will be carried out by one of the Identified Individuals, who will document their actions and responses

Following the conclusion of the review / investigation into the safeguarding concern, a review will be carried out with all parties and a case review will be written up and stored on a secure location on our IT system. The report will detail lessons learnt, and actions carried out. A copy of these findings will be made available to those raising concerns where appropriate. Headlines of the incident will be shared with the Trustee Board as appropriate, with no identifying information included.

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

Approved without change by the Board on 17 January 2023

Amended and approved without change by the Board on 17 January 2024

Amended and approved by the Board on 27 February 2025

Reviewed, amended and approved by the Board on 3 March 2026