

Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme

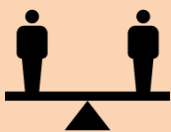
Good Practice Charter

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that the rights of refugee families to privacy and family life are upheld and that best practice is adhered to by everyone while supporting these families to integrate into NI. The guidance is designed to ensure that the refugee families coming to Northern Ireland have the same protections afforded to all vulnerable people and children in Northern Ireland.

Refugee families are arriving under the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme (formerly VPRS). They are by definition vulnerable people in need of assistance and many have significant needs. The scheme requires meticulous planning to get it right and the refugees will need the structured support of all who are willing to help.

Tremendous good will has been shown to the refugees by politicians, community organisations and individuals and this is appreciated, however the needs of the families are paramount in determining the pace of their integration and the level of their integration into Northern Ireland life. Traditionally, refugees are a very welcoming and hospitable people and this coupled with the fact that they feel “indebted” to us, as a society, means they are very reluctant to say no to requests or not welcome people into their homes. This is especially true when the requests come from people they view to be in “authority”.

This guidance upholds the commonly agreed principles which underpin a number of safeguarding policies, including: the regional ‘Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership’, the “SBNI Revised Regional Core Child Protection Procedures for Northern Ireland, Nov 2017” and the new “[Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland](#)” guidance published August 2017. All of which have been issued by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety.



A Rights-Based Approach: To promote and respect an individual’s right to be safe and secure; to freedom from harm and coercion; to equality of treatment; to the protection of the law; to privacy; to confidentiality; and freedom from discrimination.



An Empowering Approach: To empower individuals to make informed choices about their lives, to maximise their opportunities to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm and enabled to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk.



A Person-Centred Approach: To promote and facilitate full participation of individuals in all decisions affecting their lives taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings and, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in his or her safety and well-being.



A Consent-Driven Approach: To make a presumption that the individual has the ability to give or withhold consent; to make informed choices; to help inform choice through the provision of information, and the identification of options and alternatives; to have particular regard to the needs of individuals who require support with communication, advocacy or who lack the capacity to consent; and intervening in the life of an adult against his or her wishes only in particular circumstances, for very specific purposes and always in accordance with the law.



A Collaborative Approach: To acknowledge that individual safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and of safeguarding partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors working together and is delivered in a way where roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly defined and understood. Working in partnership and a person-centred approach will work hand-in-hand.

Creating a positive resettlement experience for both those seeking refuge and communities in NI

Guidance

Safeguarding vulnerable people is everyone's business; **in particular the welfare of the child is paramount.**



Do:

- Staff from the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium have very close contact with all the families, we ask that you respect their advice on these issues.
- Staff from this Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium cannot discuss individual families or their circumstances with anyone.
- If you have immediate concerns about a specific family's wellbeing then please contact the appropriate Gateway Service (where there are concerns about children).
- If you are contacting refugee families on behalf of an organisation then you must ensure that your organisation has the necessary Safeguarding Policies and procedures in place and that all staff have the required level of vetting.
- If you are interacting with an individual or a family then best practice dictates that you use a trained interpreter. Using friends or family members is bad practice and can cause unnecessary issues.
- We would advise that if you wish to invite families to an event where media may be present that you discuss this with the Consortium representatives in the first instance.



Don't:

- You should never call to a family home without advance notice. All families are receiving support from a consortium of community and voluntary sector organisations, in partnership with statutory organisations. If you feel your organisation could provide support to a family please contact the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium lead partner in the first instance
E: mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org
T: 028 9032 5835
- You should never photograph or publicly identify anyone in any medium (including Social Media) as a "refugee" without their Informed and explicit consent, expressed in writing.
- You should never photograph or publicly identify any child (under 18 years) in any medium (including Social Media) without the informed and explicit consent of their parent or guardian, expressed in writing.
- You should never ask any vulnerable adult or child (under 18 Years) to publicly participate in any event without their informed and explicit consent, or the informed and explicit consent of their parent or guardian, expressed in writing.



Legal Requirements:

- Best practice would mean that you have used a trained interpreter to obtain informed consent unless you are fluent in the relevant language or the vulnerable person or their Parent/Guardian is fluent in English. The form used to obtain written consent should be provided in Arabic.
- All consent must involve a specific, informed, unambiguous clear statement of the individuals' wishes in order to demonstrate explicit consent. Records must be maintained to demonstrate written consent and the right to withdraw consent easily at any time must be made clear and responded to, where possible.