Refugee Support Europe: Volunteer Agreement

This Agreement sets out what you can expect from us, as well as what we and our partners expect from you. As a volunteer, you agree to uphold the Agreement in its entirety, including our Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy contained below.

What We Offer

Refugee Support Europe (hereafter described as RSE) relies heavily on volunteers to deliver our mission of dignified support in times of urgent need. RSE will provide:

- Information on our operational model, health and safety guidance, safeguarding, who we are supporting and current projects
- Coordinators, to organise daily tasks and workflow so your time volunteering has the greatest possible impact
- Pre-, during and post-volunteering support including answering questions, onsite briefings and an interview process to prepare you to volunteer and debrief you afterwards

Volunteer Obligations

By applying to volunteer with RSE you confirm you are:

- Aged 18 or over (21 or over for volunteering in Cyprus)
- Knowledgeable about what we do and have every reason to believe you would be able to undertake the tasks expected of volunteers
- Aware that all costs attributed to volunteering are yours alone
- Willing to supply a scan of your photo ID
- Responsible for providing RSE with complete and accurate information about yourself, including any conditions that might make you unable to perform or safely complete the placement
- Intending to work full shifts: at least half a day per week for four weeks (Dignity Centres in the UK), or five days a week for two weeks (Dignity Centres outside the UK).
- If volunteering outside your country of residence, you are obliged to:
    - Make your own travel and accommodation arrangements including any visas or permissions to volunteer.
    - Obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance to protect yourself against costs incurred by travel arrangement cancellation, loss or damage of baggage, and emergency medical expenses. RSE will not be liable for any costs or losses

While working as a volunteer you agree to fully uphold our **Code of Conduct**:

- **Avoid attachment:** Volunteers are expected to be warm and respectful while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Forming personal friendships can make it difficult to treat everyone equally and may cause harm when volunteers

move on. In practice, this means no socialising outside the Centre and no personal goodbyes.

- **Smile and be courteous:** Treat everyone with the same level of respect and consideration you would offer a valued colleague or customer. Courtesy and kindness are fundamental to creating a welcoming environment.
- **Phone use:** Checking messages or taking urgent calls may occasionally be necessary, but phone use should be kept to a minimum. Scrolling or non-essential use while volunteering is not appropriate.
- **Ask what you can do:** There may be quieter moments, but there is always work to be done. If you are unsure how to help, ask a Coordinator or staff member.
- **Follow policies and Coordinator instructions:** All volunteers must follow Refugee Support Europe policies and the guidance of the Coordinator on duty. Some instructions may feel challenging, but they are informed by extensive experience and safeguarding considerations.
- **Do not question policies in front of members:** Concerns or disagreements about policies must never be raised in front of the people we support. Public disagreement can be unsettling and undermines trust.
- **Do not offer legal, medical or political advice:** Volunteers must not provide legal or medical advice, or express opinions on political developments. Our role is to offer humanitarian support and to signpost people to qualified professionals.
- **Wear your ID:** Volunteers must wear their ID and Refugee Support Europe t-shirts while on duty to ensure they are clearly identifiable.
- **Dress appropriately:** The Centre is a professional working environment with cultural sensitivities. Clothing should be practical and respectful; shorts and skirts must be at least knee-length.
- **Respect confidentiality:** Do not speak publicly or post on social media about individuals you meet, and do not take photographs. Confidentiality must always be respected.
- **Look after wellbeing:** Monitor your own wellbeing and that of fellow volunteers. We have a shared responsibility to look after ourselves and one another.
- **Do not intervene in physical violence:** Volunteers must not intervene in any physical altercations. Notify the Coordinator immediately.
- **Report concerns:** Any abuse, safeguarding concerns, or situations that make you feel uncomfortable must be reported privately. In the first instance, speak to a Coordinator or follow the Safeguarding Policy.
- **Professional conduct:** Volunteering can be demanding at times, due to limited resources and pressures within the Centre. Volunteers are expected to approach all interactions with calmness, respect and dignity.
- **Share ideas:** We value continuous learning and improvement, and welcome feedback and suggestions. Please share them with a Coordinator or staff member.

Physical and Intellectual Property and Data Protection

You will replace any property that is lost or damaged through any careless or otherwise negligent behaviour.

All photographs, reports or documentation relating to RSE projects will remain the property of RSE. RSE may use and share such materials for promotional, informational and organisational purposes (including on its website, social media, and other communications), in line with safeguarding and data protection policies.

RSE may share volunteer contact information (primarily email address and WhatsApp number) with other volunteers to allow direct communication between volunteers to share information and experience. You agree that RSE may disclose your contact information (WhatsApp number and email address) to other volunteers or potential volunteers. You grant permission to receive our email newsletter. You can withdraw your consent at any time. Our Privacy Policy is available in full on the Professional Standards of our website.

Personal Risks
You acknowledge and accept the responsibilities and risks associated with volunteering

Some volunteer work can be hazardous and involves a certain degree of risk, inherently dangerous activities and personal perils to the volunteer, both foreseen and unforeseen, all of which you fully accept and solely assume.

Therefore, RSE and its partners, including any and all of its employees, managers, directors, trustees or partner organisations are not liable, to the maximum extent of the law, for any loss or harm you may suffer.

Indemnity
You agree to indemnify RSE and any of our partners against any and all liability which RSE incurs arising directly or indirectly out of, or in connection (in any way) with your travel to and/or volunteering.

Termination and Expulsion
RSE has the right to terminate or cancel your placement immediately if you are found to be in breach of any terms of this Agreement. If expelled from the project, you will not be entitled to any refund or reimbursement.

Anti-Racism and Discrimination Commitment
RSE has an obligation to all members, volunteers, staff and partners and will not accept any forms of discrimination, harassment or abuse under any circumstances. We have a formal process in our Safeguarding Policy (see below) but please report anything, at any time, as soon as you can to the Coordinator, Chief Executive or one of the Trustees.

Refugee Support Europe: Safeguarding Policy

Summary
Refugee Support Europe (RSE) recognises its members (predominantly refugees and people seeking asylum) as equal rights-holders with full entitlement to protection. The aim of this policy is to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of all members, volunteers and other stakeholders involved in our work and provide multiple options so the reporter can escalate

concerns quickly, efficiently and in full confidentiality. RSE works closely with other NGOs and actors in each location to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of all members.

RSE will:

- Treat all members 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

If there are concerns about the welfare of any member, raise it with the Centre Coordinator. If this is inappropriate for whatever reason, you can directly escalate to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or deputy. Every concern will be taken seriously.

Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

RSE's DSO for refugee safeguarding is Fiona Cameron, Chief Executive and The DSO deputy is Andy Tasker, Chair of Trustees. Contact details for both will be shared with you before you start volunteering are clearly displayed in all our Dignity Centres along with the safeguarding concerns and complaints pathway. Alternatively, anyone is free to contact us via info@refugeesupporteu.com having in mind that this is a shared inbox.

The DSO is responsible for:

- Monitoring and recording concerns
- Making referrals to relevant NGOs with responsibility for welfare, without delay
- Liaising with other agencies
- Ensuring all volunteer policies and procedures are reviewed and up to date to optimise safeguarding best practice

The DSO's 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. 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

We respect and uphold individual privacy and 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 Behaviour

Concerns about the behaviour of RSE volunteers should be referred without delay to the DSO who will contact the relevant personnel, 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 DSO. If neither are appropriate, 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. More on UNHCR safeguarding can be found at Safeguarding individuals | UNHCR.

Working with Other Organisations
RSE works alongside other organisations and service providers in the locations where it operates. We only engage with organisations that share our commitment to safeguarding, protection and the recognition of human rights. Only RSE volunteers who have been through our dedicated recruitment pathway, checks and training may volunteer in our Dignity Centres. Any safeguarding concerns involving external organisations are escalated through appropriate channels in line with the principles outlined in this document.

Safeguarding Members
Any individual registered to use facilities where RSE is working will be deemed a member. The vast majority of RSE members are people seeking asylum or refugees.
Safeguarding concerns arise when a member 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:

- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Proportionality
- Protection
- Partnership
- 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. The following sets out the definition, and possible signs and symptoms, of each type of abuse listed above.

- Physical: intentionally causing physical harm, e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, restraint, or misuse of medication. Signs include unexplained bruises or injuries, flinching at physical contact, reluctance to seek medical treatment, unexplained changes in behaviour.
- Domestic violence/abuse: any incident of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading or violent behaviour (including sexual violence) by a partner, ex-partner or family member; can include so-called 'honour'-based abuse. Signs include visible injuries, fearfulness around a particular person, controlling behaviour by a partner, isolation from friends or family.
- Sexual abuse: forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activity without their consent, or where they could not consent. Signs include bruising or injury to the genital area, withdrawal or distress, fear of a specific person, sexually transmitted infections, inappropriate sexualised behaviour.
- Psychological abuse: threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, isolation, verbal abuse. Signs include

low self-esteem, anxiety, sudden withdrawal, fearfulness, unexplained changes in mood or behaviour

- Financial or material abuse: theft, fraud, exploitation, or pressure in connection with money, property or possessions. Signs include unexplained lack of money, missing belongings, unusual bank withdrawals, sudden changes to financial or legal documents.
- Modern slavery: encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude, where a person is coerced, deceived or forced into exploitation. Signs include appearing malnourished or unkempt, lacking personal ID or documents, being accompanied/controlled by another person, reluctance to seek help, signs of physical or psychological abuse.
- Discriminatory abuse: abuse based on race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion, including harassment and discriminatory remarks. Signs include withdrawal or distress, exclusion from activities or services, reports of derogatory comments
- Organisational abuse: neglect or poor practice within an organisation, arising from poor structures, policies or routines, whether a one-off incident or ongoing. Signs include rigid routines, lack of individual choice, unsafe or unhygienic conditions, unaddressed repeated complaints
- Neglect and acts of omission: ignoring medical, care or emotional needs, or withholding the necessities of life. Signs include poor hygiene, malnutrition or dehydration, untreated injuries or illness, inappropriate clothing for conditions
- Self-neglect: a person neglecting their own personal hygiene, health, surroundings or safety, including hoarding. Signs include poor personal hygiene, unkempt or unsafe living conditions, hoarding, failure to seek help for health needs.

Mental Capacity

RSE fully recognises and upholds the five 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 members is in their best interests
- Making sure that anything RSE does is the least restrictive action for the individual

Respect and Dignity

RSE is committed to treating all members with respect and dignity. In addition to following international and national standards, RSE also recognises and seeks to redress some of the inherent power imbalances in working with displaced people through how it operates.

Safeguarding Risk Management

RSE takes a proactive approach to safeguarding by identifying and managing risks as part of its wider organisational risk framework. Safeguarding risks are reviewed periodically and in response to changes in context or delivery, with oversight from the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), our Trustee for Risk and Compliance and the broader Board of Trustees where

appropriate. This ensures safeguarding is embedded in planning and delivery, as well as in response to incidents.

Rigorous Recruitment
Before starting work all volunteers are required to:

- Agree to the terms of our Volunteer Agreement including this Safeguarding Policy
- Agree to abide by and uphold our Code of Conduct
- Send us a copy of their ID
- Have a video interview with one of our Volunteer Recruitment Team, where key aspects of the Agreement and Code of Conduct are emphasised.

In addition, RSE applies proportionate safer recruitment practices, including:

- Taking up references where appropriate
- Requesting criminal record checks (e.g. DBS, where required and appropriate to the role)
- A second interview, including understanding of boundaries and safeguarding

These measures are applied proportionately in line with the nature of each role.

Induction and Training
All volunteers and staff receive safeguarding information as part of induction, including this policy, the Code of Conduct, and how to report concerns. Safeguarding is reinforced through ongoing supervision, daily morning briefings and guidance from Coordinators. Additional support or refresher guidance is provided where needed to ensure individuals feel confident in responding to safeguarding concerns.

Disclosures
A disclosure may be communicated verbally, written text or behaviour by a member, volunteer, staff member or other stakeholder. If anyone is concerned about a member or volunteer it is important that this information is escalated as soon as possible.

They may become aware of suspected or likely abuse by:

- Their own observations
- Being told by a third party
- A member's disclosure
- The abuser's disclosure

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

The concerns and complaints procedure with the names and contacts of DSO and deputy are clearly displayed in each Dignity Centre and the Centre Coordinator is responsible for directing any concerned parties to the correct pathway and explaining it in full where necessary.

Serious Incidents and Reporting
RSE recognises its responsibility to report serious safeguarding incidents in line with Charity Commission rules.

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in, or risks, significant harm to beneficiaries (members), staff or volunteers, or which may have a significant impact on the organisation's operations or reputation. All serious safeguarding incidents will be reported promptly to the Charity Commission accordingly. Where required, incidents will also be reported to relevant funders and statutory authorities.

Responsibility for reporting lies with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), in consultation with the Board of Trustees.

Complaints / Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures
Where a complaint has been made with regards to any inappropriate or poor practice, RSE will discuss the situation with the relevant personnel, including external e.g. another 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 Board or Trustees, or the police if a crime has, or may have been, committed.

Whistleblowing
RSE is committed to creating an environment where staff, volunteers and stakeholders feel able to raise concerns about wrongdoing safely and without fear of reprisal. RSE is committed to creating an environment where staff, volunteers and stakeholders feel able to raise concerns about wrongdoing safely and without fear of reprisal.

Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure of information relating to suspected misconduct, illegal activity, safeguarding concerns, or other unethical behaviour within the organisation. RSE maintains a separate Whistleblowing Policy, available on our Professional Standards webpage, which outlines how concerns can be raised, how they will be handled, and the protections in place for individuals who speak up.

Where concerns cannot be appropriately raised through safeguarding, complaints or line management - or where these routes are implicated - individuals are encouraged to raise concerns through the whistleblowing process.

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 13 August 2026 and will be reviewed annually or when there are substantial organisational changes/changes in legislation.