

[group name] CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

Why is this important?

As a Community Sponsorship volunteer, you may be privy to sensitive and confidential information about the family you resettle.

Even before they arrive, some of you will be given access to very confidential medical records and interview transcripts, which could include information that family members might not even know about one another.

You will be involved in personal details of their everyday lives, helping them to access healthcare, education and other services. It is really important that you respect their privacy and maintain clear boundaries about what information and images you are sharing.

What can we say publicly about the family?

“A family of [number] will be resettling to [general area – name of town/city].

They are originally from [Country] and have been living in [country] for the last [x] years.”

You must not disclose any further information or images about the family unless:

- They have given you their express and informed consent to do so, *or*
- You need to disclose certain information to plan for their resettlement. For example, you need to liaise with a school to arrange school places.

In these circumstances, provide the least amount of information as possible, to the fewest number of people as necessary.

Media

- As part of the legal agreement that we sign with the Home Office, we must get the Home Office’s permission before we can do any publicity or media with or about the family.

Speaking about the Family

- It is very normal to want to tell stories about your experiences together with friends and family – but considerate and respectful about what you share. If you're unsure, ask for permission first.
- You may be asked speak about your experiences with the family – for example, at a public event or to mentor another group. Be considerate about what you say and ask for their permission to share these stories first.
- Check whether if they are happy for their names to be used outside of the group, or if they would prefer to be anonymised.

Address of the Family

- Under no circumstances should you share the address of the family beyond those who need to know – i.e., group members who are visiting the family, or tradespeople.
- When preparing the house, you will likely to be offered support from a larger group of people in the community. Be considerate about who you are involving at this stage, and make sure that they also agree not to share the address.

Photographs of the Family

- You should not share photographs of the family through any medium (email, whatsapp, social media) without their informed consent.
- Remember that photographs could be forwarded on without your knowledge or consent – so be careful about how you are sending photos and to whom.
- If the family consent, it is lovely to take photos of their arrival at the airport and the first few weeks, as a record of this special time. However, you should not share these until the family are feeling settled and can give genuinely informed consent.

What do we mean by informed consent?

- The family fully comprehend exactly how the information/images will be used and distributed, who could see it, and any potential consequences.

- There is no possibility that something has been lost in translation or misunderstood.
- They do not feel obliged or coerced, or believe that there would be adverse consequences if they say no.
- You have a written record of their permission – for example, by email, whatsapp, or consent form.