

HBTSR Practice Guidelines for Welcome Days

When children and vulnerable people (adult at risk) attend a welcome day, we are helping to look after and entertain them and we are responsible for their safety in the same way we would be when someone visits our home. We all need to abide by some basic safeguarding guidelines to protect our guests, the volunteers, the organisers and HBTSR.

These are helpful guidelines, not mandatory rules. They describe specific actions to consider in planning the event, during the day and afterwards. Most are common sense.

Where you cannot follow them be clear and explicit about your reasons.

DBS/CRB checks.

HBTSR is not required to obtain DBS (formerly known as CRB) checks for volunteers working with potentially vulnerable children and adults on Welcome Days, as our guests will not include any unaccompanied children. For any overnight stays, or work of any kind with unaccompanied children, separate guidelines will apply. A “child” for this purpose is anyone under the age of eighteen.

1. Policy & Code of Conduct:

The coordinator of a Welcome Day should read and sign copies of the safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. They will share the Code of Conduct and these Guidelines with all volunteers.

2. Safeguarding Officer:

HBTSR has a named Safeguarding Officer in charge of Safeguarding policies, codes and guidelines and receiving any notifications, complaints from the designated Listener/Lead/ Chair at any event.

The Officer is: Name: Aideen Naughton

Phone: 07989500864

3. Identification:

All volunteers should wear a name badge. HBTSR lanyards and badge holders will be provided. Visitors will be encouraged to write their names onto a label on arrival, if they wish.

4. Welcome Day Organisers, Group Leaders : HBTSR will designate one person as Welcome Day Organiser for the particular day. The agencies working with people seeking sanctuary in Swansea or other cities will be asked to designate people accompanying the visitors as Group Leaders for the day. These leaders should be introduced to volunteers on arrival at the venue.

5. The ‘Listener’: For each Respite Day, an experienced HBTSR person will be designated 'the Listener' and identified as such to all organisers, volunteers and visitors with the specific instruction: “If you have any problem or concern or feel you are not being treated properly and respectfully, please tell The Listener.” The Listener should wear a badge to identify themselves.

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6.Planning & Review meetings:

Before each Welcome Day there will be a meeting (or part of a meeting) specifically to review compliance with Safeguarding Policies, Code of Conduct, Practice Guidelines and a basic Health & Safety check (see point 5 below).

After the Day there will be a meeting (or part of a meeting) devoted to reviewing how things went in respect of Safeguarding and to identify any problems that arose.

7.Activity Plan:

the Welcome Day Organisers should make a plan that includes each separate room or space, place or route that will be used, which volunteers will be in charge of each, and at least one volunteer assistant who will be present to avoid 'lone working'.

8.‘Lone’ and unsupervised contact.

As far as possible, no volunteer should be alone with children (or any vulnerable adult) without the parent(s) or another adult volunteer being present. Children should be accompanied to the toilet by their parent(s) or, if that is not possible, by two volunteers of the appropriate gender.

9.Cultural sensitivity:

Make sure you adopt appropriate behaviour towards the adults and children attending the event, with respect for their different beliefs, cultures and practices. There are no hard and fast rules here. Use basic commonsense.

For example:

- Greeting: Muslim women usually do not shake hands with or touch men and Muslim men may prefer not to shake hands with women. Hugging or kissing children to greet or say goodbye is generally not appropriate
- Touching and comforting children: touching during guided or messy play, sport or for safety reasons, may be acceptable, but taking a child on your knee, hugging or kissing to comfort a crying child may not be. Ask the parent(s) or another visitor.
- Head covering: some of the visiting women may wear burka (full head veil with eye apertures), niqab (half-face), hijab (hair, neck and ears), or other head covering. This should be respected. HBTSR Volunteer women are not required to wear any head covering.
- Segregated space: the following should be provided where possible: gender-separate toilets; separate space for changing and feeding babies; a quiet room or cordoned space for prayer.
- Food and drink: No alcohol should be provided or served, and volunteers should not come to the event after drinking or visiting the pub. If any visitor brings alcohol, they should be politely asked to put it away.
- Dietary requirements: Group leaders in the cities should be consulted before the day about the dietary preferences/requirements of the visitors. Meat, if served, should be Halal. There should be full vegetarian option. Any gluten, nut or other allergies must be identified and catered for. Appropriate water and soft drinks must be provided.

10.Photography: visitors may be very reluctant to be photographed – many have

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experienced terrible things and have family members still in danger. Please don't take any photographs or videos of children on any kind of device, e.g. phone, camera or tablet, and don't give permission for anyone else (e.g. press) to do so. If visitors themselves have cameras or phones, they can[and probably will!] take photos if they want to.

Press photography will only be permitted by prior agreement with the HBTSR Committee, the welcome day organiser and the visitors themselves.

11. Inappropriate behaviour: if anyone (adult or child) behaves towards a child in a way which you feel is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable, you should make this known to the person concerned and inform the Listener. If the problem behaviour is that the child's own parent, do not intervene, but report your concern to the Listener.

12. Disputes: In the unlikely event of a dispute breaking out any intervention should be calm and supportive. Try to put space between the people involved; find someone who can help with communication and inform the Organiser, Group Leaders and the Listener. Try to move away any onlookers to ensure their safety and reduce the potential for escalation. If violence is used or threatened, it may be necessary to involve the police.

These Guidelines will be reviewed annually and amended as needed.

Please send in suggestions for improvements and corrections to the HBTSR Safeguarding Officer

Revised December 2021 reviewed November 2023