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**Open Call for voluntary ‘Community Support’ for refugees in Northern Ireland**

**Would your organisation like to offer a positive welcome to refugees coming to Northern Ireland or specifically to your region?**

**What is this form about?**

This form is for organisations to fill in if they would like to register with Bryson Care – lead coordinating partner of the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium - to offer a voluntary / ‘in kind’ community support service to the refugees who have arrived or who will be arriving here under either the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS) or the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme (NIRRS). The Consortium of partner organisations working with the refugees locally would love to hear from community groups, charities, faith-based groups, businesses, sports clubs, schools, etc. with any relevant offers. If you think your organisation can help make refugees feel welcome here, please fill in the form.

The Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme (NIRRS / formerly Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (VPRS)) is based on need. It prioritises refugees who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin: women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care and survivors of torture and violence. Those accepted through the Scheme are granted five years refugee status; they will have access to employment and public funds and rights to family reunion comparable to other refugees. At the end of five years, if not able to return to their region of origin, they may be eligible to apply for indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK.

**Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium:** The Consortium is a Voluntary and Community Sector response designed to meet the objectives set out in the Department for Communities (DfC) delivery plan for refugees under the VPRS/NIRRS. The Consortium’s design and delivery of their services is underpinned by a collaborative approach so as to ensure:

* That refugees coming to Northern Ireland are treated with respect and dignity upon arrival.
* That within two weeks of arrival, essential services from the voluntary and community sector and their statutory partners are provided to the refugees in an efficient, effective and sensitive manner.
* That the refugees are assisted to settle into their new lives in Northern Ireland and successfully integrate into Northern Ireland society.
* In conjunction with central and local government, that the general public and in particular those communities that will be called upon to host refugees are prepared and kept informed of the process.

**Consortium partner organisations:**

* Bryson Care (lead coordinating organisation)
* Barnardo’s NI
* British Red Cross
* Extern
* Law Centre (NI)
* South Belfast Roundtable

Many individuals and community groups have asked how they can help or have offered help. This form is to help us keep a clear record of offers of community support and to ensure appropriate safeguarding mechanisms are in place. This is not an appeal for money and anyone wishing to make financial donations can contact us directly at – [mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org](mailto:mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org) on 02890 325 835. Please note, this is also not an offer of funding – your offer of community support is entirely voluntary.

**Can individuals register?**

We are keen that individuals can volunteer but it is important to understand that because refugees are a vulnerable group of people, we can only accept offers of community support from constituted or recognised organisations. If you are an individual wishing to volunteer you need to:

1. Find an established organisation who are happy to have you volunteer through them.
2. Follow any vetted or safeguarding procedures put in place by the organisation.

**Why is the Community Support programme needed?**

The aim of ‘Community Support’ is to provide relevant ways for refugees to feel welcome, understand the local area and find out about local services.  It is also for local communities to understand issues around migration and refugees and to have the opportunity to explain their services to refugees.

**What type of voluntary Community Support is needed?**

* **Starter Pack supplies** –detailed list of needed items can be provided by request.
* **Vouchers** – for locally accessible supermarket, chemists, etc. They will be allocated by staff working with the families and in accordance to needs.
* **Awareness of Local Services** – It is important refugees understand how society and its services work. This could be a statutory or community service. Your organisation could come to speak to the refugees about your service or offer to host them to come and see your service, e.g. Library, community centre, advice services, health and wellbeing, etc.
* **Socialising / Networking** –Refugees need places and opportunities to interact in safe settings with each other and with the wider community.  Does your organisation have an existing space and/or small group of people who meet regularly: a coffee morning, a book club, a women’s/men’s group, a cooking demonstration or another type of social project?
* **Local Cultural Awareness** – It is important that refugees understand local culture. Could your group offer a free cultural experience or a free visit to a local tourist attraction?
* **Apprenticeships / Volunteering** - Refugees will come with particular skills, interests and ambitions but may need support to access opportunities. Would your organisation be able to offer a supportive apprenticeship, volunteering or employment experience?
* **Recreation and Creativity: Sport, Music, Dance** -Is your organisation experienced in this field?  Could you offer an hour or two’s activity for adults and/or youth?
* **Facilities** - Do you have a community space that you could offer for free for a day or an evening or weekend to host any of the support/community integration activities mentioned above?
* **Transport** – Could you offer a bus, buses or mini-buses to help with transportation needs (having disability access would be useful), e.g. to and from events, to accommodation arrangements and in order to help distribute donations, etc.

This list is not an exhaustive or definitive list so please feel free to offer any additional form of support or sponsorship that you may be able to provide.

**What happens after my organisation registers?**

Your registration form will be acknowledged by email. The Consortium co-ordinator will compile a list of the offers of Community Support individually tailored to each group of refugees arriving through the VPR scheme. Once the refugees have settled in, the Consortium will liaise with them and their designated Key workers to show them the community support offers. The interests and needs of the refugees will then be foremost in deciding which offers of community support will be followed up on.

**The Consortium cannot offer any guarantee that all offers of community support will be accepted.  It is vital that the needs of refugees are paramount in work developed with them.**

## A note about safeguarding and insurance

When you complete [below Registration Form](https://www.brysonintercultural.org/images/uploads/general/2020_Open_Call_Community_Support_for_Refugees_-_NIRR_Consortium.docx) you will see that you are asked to answer key questions about safeguarding (protection of children and vulnerable adults). It is important that you answer these questions carefully. You must have the relevant insurance and safeguarding systems in place within your organisation before you offer Community Support.

It is essential that you read and adhere to the official [Safeguarding Guidance document on the VPR scheme](https://www.brysonintercultural.org/images/uploads/general/NIRRC_volunteer_safeguarding_guidance_-_May_20.pdf) also included below.

## Who do I contact if I have further queries?

Please contact Mary Hegarty at Bryson Care (lead coordinating partner of the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium). Telephone: 028 9032 5835. Email: [mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org](mailto:mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org)

**How do I register?**

**Please complete and return the following form to:**

Email: [mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org](mailto:mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org)

Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium

Bryson Care,

2 Rivers Edge,

13-15 Ravenhill Road,

Belfast.

BT6 8DN.

**\*Adapted from the original form produced by the Derry City and Strabane District CouncilRegistration Form: Open Call for Community Support for Refugees in Northern Ireland**

**Organisation Contact Details (This is who we will contact if we wish to take up your offer):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please tick to confirm that you understand the importance of safeguarding and insurance for the offer of community support that you are making:**

⃞ I confirm that the above organisation is a constituted group, charity, business or similar

⃞ I confirm that the committee / key staff within the organisation are aware of this offer of community support

⃞ I confirm that we have appropriate public and/or professional liability insurance in place for this offer

⃞ I confirm that our organisation has a Safeguarding / Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults policy

⃞ I understand that there is no payment for this offer and that I am offering the service for free

⃞ I confirm that appropriate ACCESS NI checks are in place for key people who would be in contact with or supervising any activities volunteered under this offer of community support and that these people have undertaken Safeguarding / Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults training

**Please answer all questions:**

1. **What type of community support are you offering? (Please tick)**

⃞ **Starter Pack supplies** ⃞ **Vouchers**

⃞ **Awareness of Local Services** ⃞ **Socialising / Networking**

⃞ **Local Cultural Awareness** ⃞ **Apprenticeships/Volunteering**

⃞ **Recreation and creativity** ⃞ **Facilities**

⃞ **Transport** ⃞ **Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

1. **Please briefly describe the offer that you are making:**

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1. **Is there a specific age group/gender/identity this activity is most relevant to?**

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**Appendix 01**

**Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme**

**Good Practice Charter**

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

Resettled refugee individuals and families arrive to NI under the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme (formerly Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme). 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 individuals and families are paramount in determining the pace of their integration and the level of their integration into NI life. Traditionally, Syrian and other refugees are a very welcoming and hospitable people but 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 and include: 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**](https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland)**”** guidance published August 2017 all of which have been issued by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety.

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|  | **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. |

**Safeguarding Guidance**

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

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|  | **Do:**   * Staff from the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium have close contact with the resettled refugees, we ask that you respect their advice on these issues. * Staff from the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium cannot discuss individual cases or families or their circumstances with anyone. * If you have immediate concerns about a specific individual’s or family’s well-being then please contact the appropriate Social Services teams or Gateway Service (where there are concerns about children). * If you are contacting refugee individuals or 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 language interpreter. Using friends or family members is bad practice and can cause unnecessary issues. * We would advise that if you wish to invite refugee individuals or families to an event where media may be present that you seek advice from the Consortium representatives, in the first instance. |
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|  | **Don’t:**   * You should never call to an individual’s family’s home without advance notice. All resettled refugees will have received or continue to receive 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 resettled refugees please contact the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Consortium lead partner, in the first instance at:   **E:** [mary.hegarty@brysongroup.org](mailto: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. |
|  |  |
| Image result for clipboard icon | **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 spoken by the refugee or the vulnerable person or their Parent/Guardian is fluent in your language. The form used to obtain written consent should be provided in relevant language of the refugee. * 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. |