



BATH WELCOMES REFUGEES

RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT POLICY

Introduction

The overall aim of resettlement support is to welcome and support both individuals and families in a manner which empowers and encourages independence and helps them feel connected to the local community. It can cover a broad range of activities and the type and level of support will vary greatly according to the different situations people are in. In general people who have recently arrived in the UK are likely to need a higher level of more wide-ranging support than those who have been in the country for a while. Some people may also be supported by other organisations whereas others may have little or no support other than from BWR. The needs of people who have legal refugee status will differ from those who are seeking asylum. The role of volunteers will therefore vary according to the needs of the individual person or family they are supporting and will change over time.

Whatever the type and level of support, the aim of BWR's involvement in people's lives remains the same, which is to empower them to make decisions for themselves and set their own goals that they will work towards. Ultimately, BWR hopes that they will progress with their lives which have been disrupted by the circumstances which caused them to flee their home country.

General principles:

- Resettlement support volunteers work "with" people not "for" them, with the aim of empowering the individual/family to lead their own lives.
- Resettlement support will be tailored to the specific needs, goals and circumstances of the individual/family.
- Support will evolve over time and will generally decrease as people grow in confidence and independence.
- Support should be reviewed regularly with the individual/family concerned.

Details of the role of resettlement support volunteer are outlined in Appendix 1



The process

When a family or individual is referred to BWR the process will include discussing and agreeing the support they need. Other needs may emerge later which were not apparent initially and these can also be addressed. The responsibilities BWR takes on will depend on the partner organisations involved, if any, and their roles. It is important to have clarity about roles and to maintain effective communication between the family or individual and others who may be involved. To this end BWR will seek written consent when necessary to share information with others on a strict need-to-know basis (please see Appendix 2 Consent Form for Third Party Sharing). The [Easy Read Privacy Information notice](#) will be shared with people we support to explain the collection and storage of data.

Matching volunteers

The Volunteer Coordinator will identify a suitable volunteer or, where needed, team of volunteers. Where a team is needed it may be helpful to identify key people or a smaller core team. Where possible volunteers will be matched with a family or individual taking account of factors such as age, gender, skills, interests and availability. All volunteers will be DBS checked before any contact with people. They are required to undertake BWR Induction training and Safeguarding training, abide by BWR policies and procedures and sign the volunteer agreement. Volunteers will also be required to follow agreed, secure, recording procedures which may vary according to the particular situation (please see Appendix 3).

Regular reviews

People's needs change over time and as they settle and become more independent it is likely that their support needs will lessen. Unless deemed impractical a support plan will be drawn up between the family or individual and BWR to define the support needed. This will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis to establish whether aims have been met and support can be discontinued in that area or whether the needs are ongoing or have changed, and to reassess the support needed. It is likely that some aims may be met fairly quickly whereas others will be more complex and require longer term support. It may not be practical to establish such an agreement when people first arrive as they are likely to be overwhelmed by new information, possibly traumatised and likely to be struggling with the language. It therefore may be best to wait six months before establishing such a formal basis for BWR involvement (please see Appendix 4).

Even though people may be growing in independence, new needs may emerge particularly at times of transition and when life events occur (e.g. birth of a baby, child starting school, a new job, bereavement) and review meetings can be a way to recognise such changing support needs.

Unforeseen issues may arise, including interpersonal difficulties between volunteers and people they are supporting, and reviews represent an opportunity to address these although issues can also be taken up as they arise. The Volunteer Coordinator should be involved, but if an issue cannot be resolved in this way other members of the Management Committee or trustees may be involved. It may be helpful to refer to the Complaints and Whistleblowing policies available from www.bathwelcomesrefugees.org.uk.

Boundaries and relationships

The role of resettlement volunteers can potentially cover a wide range of activities and ideally volunteers need to be flexible to respond to people's changing needs. Volunteers are likely to be seeing people at home and although they are there to provide agreed support, they are also a guest when they visit and it is important to be sensitive to this. For example, if hospitality is an important part of the culture the volunteer may wish to accept food and drink, as rejecting such offers might cause offence, whilst also being sensitive to likely financial restraints. However, it is not acceptable for



volunteers to accept gifts, other than very small, personal items such as food or something handmade. **Children remain the responsibility of their parents and it is not acceptable for volunteers to be left in charge of a child. BWR's insurance does not cover volunteers being alone with children. There may be very exceptional circumstances when a volunteer can be responsible for a child but this will only be by prior agreement, and on completion of a risk assessment, with either the Management Committee Chair, Language Support Coordinator or Safeguarding Lead, and informing the Volunteer Coordinator.** The role is likely to involve access to personal and private information about people. Volunteers must respect this and maintain confidentiality at all times.

What a resettlement volunteer is and is not

Whilst volunteers are friendly this is not the same as being friends of the people they support and this can be a difficult boundary to negotiate. The role is about enabling and empowerment, supporting people to access services and with social integration. It is not about counselling, mentoring, friendship or encouraging dependency. Empowering people can sometimes be a difficult process. It can require allowing people to make decisions that the volunteer may disagree with, and the freedom to fail at some tasks. This allows people to take ownership of decisions, try things for themselves and learn from mistakes.

It is essential that volunteers adhere to BWR policies such as the [Behaviour Code of Practice](#) and [Safeguarding Policy](#). The Volunteer Coordinator will provide support and guidance, with additional support available from members of the Management Committee.

When the volunteer relationship changes or ends

If volunteers have been involved with people for a long time, perhaps over a number of years, the relationship is likely to have changed considerably. As people become more independent it becomes a more equal relationship and more like a friendship. Regular reviews are also an opportunity to take stock of the nature of the relationship and there may be a point where, by mutual agreement, it is decided that the volunteer is no longer there as a BWR volunteer but wishes to maintain contact as a personal choice, as a friend. Such a transition should be discussed and agreed explicitly with the Volunteer Coordinator, rather than being masked by continuing volunteering and apparent dependency.

In many situations the relationships between volunteers and the people they are supporting will be less close and when the aims have been achieved contact will cease, but again this must be agreed with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Approved by the Management Committee and Trustees of BWR, April 2024



Appendix 1

Activities included in resettlement support

Newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in particular may need support to understand and access any or all of the following:

- Their tenancy agreement.
- Obtaining a laptop and setting up email accounts.
- Setting up utilities and other services.
- Registering with a GP, dentist and opticians and making appointments, and other health related services, including a pharmacy.
- Registering with a job centre and making appointments.
- Financial management, budgeting and applying for relevant benefits.
- Letters and messages.
- Local value-for-money shops and culturally specific shops.
- Local facilities including places of worship, libraries, parks.
- Local transport, routes and fares.
- Nurseries, schools and colleges, applying for places and ongoing liaison.
- Paths to employment, including voluntary work.
- Leisure and social activities.

Intensive support is likely to be needed over the first few weeks and months but the need for this is likely to decrease as people gain in confidence and independence. Timescales are difficult to predict and BWR needs to be responsive to individual circumstances. People may need support across a number of different areas or they may want help with something very specific, not included in the above list, such as how to access a particular sport or pursue a particular vocation.



Appendix 2



Consent Form for Third Party Sharing

Information provided will be shared, as set out under the Data Protection Act 2018, for the purpose of working together. By signing this form, you are agreeing to the following:

1. I have been informed about the reason for sharing information.
2. I have been given the opportunity to discuss what sharing and not sharing information will mean.
3. I understand that only relevant information will be shared.
4. I understand that this information will be held securely.

I give permission to Bath Welcomes Refugees to share my personal information.

Name of person sharing:

Signature: **Date:**

Organisation information will be shared with:

Name of organisation representative:

Signature: **Date:**

Name of BWR representative:

Purpose for sharing information

Signature: **Date:**



Appendix 3

Examples of types of recordings

1. Excel spreadsheet for a team to use to include the following headings: date, team member, summary of interaction / task / issue, follow-up action required, deadline and completion date.
2. Notes entered on CRM system, either by volunteer or Volunteer Coordinator, using template categories e.g. date of contact, volunteer, family members involved, details of action, next steps.



Appendix 4

Support planning and goal setting

Support planning provides an opportunity for a person to reflect on what they want to achieve in a certain timeframe, develop a clear plan with specific actions, and monitor progress. It is also driven by the overarching objectives of **integration** and **independence**. So, if family members want to develop e.g. gardening skills, we should explore ordinary community opportunities such as college courses as well as activities set up specifically by BWR or other refugee organisations.

Templates and paperwork are very helpful in terms of organising the information gathered and setting goals but the key to constructive, productive support planning is the relationship between the resettlement support volunteer and family. A positive relationship enables the family member to communicate their hopes and dreams and enables the management of expectations in a supportive way.

There are two phases to support planning: (i) information gathering re overall objectives / goals and (ii) developing a specific action plan. Each phase may take more than one discussion. The person leading the support planning may wish to consult with the rest of the team/wider BWR network between phases for advice on opportunities and services in order to write the specific actions. The person leading the support planning is not expected necessarily to take responsibility for the all the specific actions but would need to identify who will be doing what.

We have a template with a number of different headings - some will be of more interest / relevance than others depending on individual circumstances and structures that are already in place. It might feel appropriate to begin with a few sections and develop specific actions for these and return to the other sections later once plans are underway or it might feel better to consider the whole range from the outset.

It feels important that each family member is supported individually to develop their plan although they may wish to have a family plan too. For the children, a parent must be present at all discussions and it would be sensible to show parents ideas for possible actions before offering them to the children in case parents don't agree.

The plan is a living document. It should inform how we organise support but should be reviewed regularly to see if aims are still appropriate and actions feasible.

Things to consider:

- Expectations - be clear in your own mind what we can / can't offer; what is / isn't reasonable? Check back with the team if unsure.
- How structured do you want to make the conversation? A good starting point is asking about what's important to the person, their likes / dislikes, overall aspirations, existing skills. You want to get a sense of things like sociability, confidence, what makes them feel comfortable, how much they are up for a challenge (bearing in mind that they have already dealt with more challenges than most of the rest of us will ever have to).
- Do you want to have the form with you at information gathering stage or just have the headings as an aide memoire? Conversation may be more fluid/productive without a form but equally it may give more of a sense of purpose to the discussion if you have it.



- Will there be any issues of confidentiality if we provide a translation of the final plan to each person?
- Consider using photos / pictures / websites etc to facilitate communication and understanding of what you're suggesting.
- Be as prepared as possible with practical ideas for making the more integrated/independent activities less daunting when you suggest them (e.g. be sure that if needed, a befriender would be available to accompany someone to a class before you suggest it).
- How do you get the balance between being led by the family member and your idea about what's right in terms of independence and integration (e.g. what if you think a goal should be to manage their online banking independently and they say they're quite happy to have you checking statements etc long term?).

See form template overleaf

Approved by the Management Committee and Trustees of BWR, revised April 2024



Resettlement Support Planning and Goal Setting Template

Name:

Date:

Area	Goal	Actions to take	<name> Action	Action for group	Review date	Progress	Status
Health (to include emotional health)		▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪		▪ ▪	▪ Achieved ▪ Ongoing ▪ Changed
Money		▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪		▪ ▪	▪ Achieved ▪ Ongoing ▪ Changed
Language		▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪		▪ ▪	▪ Achieved ▪ Ongoing ▪ Changed
School/employment		▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪		▪ ▪	▪ Achieved ▪ Ongoing ▪ Changed
Activities/interests (e.g. social groups, exercise & sport, driving...)		▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪		▪ ▪	▪ Achieved ▪ Ongoing ▪ Changed
Household management		▪ ▪	▪ ▪	▪ ▪		▪ ▪	▪ Achieved ▪ Ongoing ▪ Changed