TAUNTON WELCOMES REFUGEES

charitable incorporated organisation number 1183921

3b. SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS

1. Introduction

TWR exists to support integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the local community, and to provide support, as long as it is appropriate. There is no automatic referral system for asylum seekers; they usually come to TWR by self-referral, word of mouth, or referral via other charitable agencies.

Unless under 18 years old, provision for asylum seekers is minimal and operated by the Home Office and administered via Migrant Help. Somerset Council have no statutory obligations other than related to fire safety regulations etc.

2. TWR Support at Coffee and Conversation Sessions

Most support for Asylum Seekers is offered via the Coffee and Conversation Sessions at Taunton and North Petherton. While the sessions are primarily focused on enabling people to practise their English, it also becomes a place to socialise, and to obtain help, advice and support.

- Some asylum seekers attending C&C may be offered support from one named befriender
- Other asylum seekers may receive support from the whole team of volunteers at C&C
- Volunteers in all these roles will be supported by regular sharing/reviews with each other, with Project Leaders. and with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- A more formal TWR review will be arranged every six months by the Volunteer Co-ordinator

3. TWR Support Outside of Coffee and Conversation Sessions

- C&C Volunteers who are fully trained and have DBS clearance may, from time to time, arrange to meet asylum seekers outside of the C&C context to offer a wider support, but this must only be done with the knowledge and consent of the Project Leader.
- Where asylum seekers choose not to attend C&C Sessions, TWR may appoint a volunteer to befriend that person independently. They will be supported by a Trustee Link.
- Any TWR volunteer operating outside of C&C should set up methods of arranging meetings/visits with the asylum seeker (preferably WhatsApp) within the terms of our Lone Working Policy (4c.). Records should also be kept of all meetings, including a summary of:

1. date, place and time of each visit
2. those present
3. activities undertaken
4. concerns expressed or requests made
5. agreed courses of action, including future visits

These records should be written in such a way that they would always stand up to public scrutiny.

3. TWR Support Alongside Other Agencies (e.g. At pre-dispersal hotels)

- Volunteers operating at other venues, in conjunction with other agencies, will be under the supervision of the TWR Project Leader or Leaders. They in turn will be liaising with the other responsible agencies.
- At the end of each session, any specific issues should be reported to the Project Leader to record/and or for discussion.
- In these settings TWR is operating only as a befriending organisation and all other issues must be addressed via the Project Leader to other relevant agencies. To maintain good working relationships with other supporting agencies, it is important for volunteers to be clear about the boundaries of their role and adhere to them.