

Safeguarding and Safety

Unvetted Shared Arrangements

Parents with children cannot move into a property shared with adult hosts unless Garda vetting has been completed.

Violence or Safety Concerns

Any disclosure or evidence of violence, abuse, or threatening behavior towards staff, volunteers, children, or adults must be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Manager or Deputy Designated Liaison person, and placements will not proceed.

Wellbeing Concerns

Placements will not continue if there are concerns about the wellbeing of either host or guest, especially where hosts may be vulnerable and displaying signs of isolation and seeking companionship.

Shared Bedrooms with Hosts/Hosted Residents

Guests cannot be required to share a bedroom with hosts, host family members, or other residents.

Property Standards and Legal Compliance

No Inspection Conducted

No vacant property may be used for placement until a property inspection has been completed. Depending on the programme, properties must meet either the Minimum Dwelling Standards or RTB Minimum Standards for Rental Properties.

Unclear or Disputed Ownership

Pledgers must provide proof of legal ownership. If a third party pledges on behalf of the owner, written consent or legal authorisation (e.g. solicitor's letter) is required.

Risk of Exploitation

Romantic or Sexual Relationships

Where the host/pledger and guest are involved in a financial, business, or joint venture, which could compromise the independence and integrity of the arrangement.

Expectation of Services

Where the host or pledger conditions the guest's stay on an expectation of services to the pledger or their contacts including but not limited to:

- Childminding
- Caregiving
- Cooking
- Gardening
- Driving or errands

Financial Contributions and Tenancy Risk

Rent

Guests may not be asked to pay rent or a deposit in addition to the Accommodation Recognition Payment provided to hosts.

Top-Up Payments

Requests for additional payments beyond reasonable contributions to household utilities are prohibited. Such payments may create a tenancy under Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) regulations.

Bias or Discriminatory Attitudes

The Irish Red Cross prohibits any form of discrimination in its hosting programme. Hosts and guests may not express preferences based on any legally protected characteristic, including but not limited to gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or ethnicity including membership of the Traveller community.

In limited cases, gender requests may be considered only where there are specific safeguarding concerns, such as single women hosting or being hosted. Lifestyle compatibility, including factors such as age and household dynamics, may be considered solely to support safe and sustainable placements, provided they do not violate equality or safeguarding principles.

Requests based on physical appearance or other personal characteristics (for example, hair or eye colour) are not facilitated.

For full guidance on protected characteristics under Irish law, please refer to the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018 and relevant Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission resources.

Pledge Location

A key objective of the Irish Red Cross hosting programme is to support integration. The International Federation of the Red Cross defines integration as “the process through which migrants become active and engaged members of the host society.”

To enable successful integration, pledged housing can only be accepted if:

- It is located within 2 km of essential services (healthcare, education, employment supports, language classes) or
- It has access to public transport within reasonable walking distance, or the guest has access to a car.



Placement Ethics & Practice

While some arrangements are explicitly prohibited, other scenarios may require case-by-case consideration based on safeguarding, operational feasibility, and best practice.

Family Units with Children in Non-Owner-Occupied Shared Pledges

The placement of family units in shared properties with adult individuals other than the owner is discouraged due to the difficulty in maintaining up-to-date Garda vetting for all adult residents.

Opposite-Sex Host/Guest Pairing

Placement of a single guest of the opposite sex to the host in shared living arrangements is discouraged

Adolescents Sharing Bedrooms

Guest adolescents (ages 10–18) of opposite sexes should not be placed in the same bedroom, unless:

- Explicit written consent has been provided to the Irish Red Cross by parents/guardians
- The young person has been consulted, and their views are recorded (Housing Act 1966, Section 63a)