# Pledge verification programme

## Information for volunteers

***Thank you*** for joining the Irish Red Cross volunteer teams to verify pledges made to the charity on behalf of migrants arriving in Ireland. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Below are some guidelines to help you when you speak and meet with Pledgers.

If you have any **questions** please contact the Irish Red Cross migration team:

migrationcrisis@redcross.ie or 01 642 4600.

For assistance with **media** enquiries and approaches, please contact Rebecca Dunne rdunne@redcross.ie or 087 743 3275.

## Background

The Irish Red Cross has been tasked by the Government to coordinate all goodwill pledges made by members of the public to migrants arriving in Ireland as part of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP).

The Irish Red Cross is doing this through an online Register of Pledges, [www.redcross.ie/register](http://www.redcross.ie/register). To date there has been more than 800 pledges of accommodation, services and goods.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Pledge Verification Programme are to:

* **Confirm** existence and condition of pledged property
* **Record additional details** of property not captured by online register
* Offer the Pledgers the opportunity to **amend their pledge** and **ask questions**
* **Document impressions** gained of the Pledger, accommodation and locality
* **Raise awareness** of Irish Red Cross role in response to the migration crisis

## Key Messages

* The Irish Red Cross is **grateful** to the Pledger for their pledge
* The purpose of the Pledge Verification Programme is to **follow-up on pledges made online**
* It is a **face-to-face** courtesy call
* It allows a Pledger **amend their pledge** and **ask questions**

## Pledge Verification Programme Process

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Action | Completed | Responsibility |
| * Email sent out to all volunteers informing them of the oncoming verification programme
 | 🗹 | * Irish Red Cross Migration Team
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| * Pledgers of Accommodation contacted by phone. Permission sought for volunteers to pay a visit.
 | 🗹 | * Irish Red Cross Migration Team
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| * Two volunteers will visit at a pre-arranged time, and verify the information given.
 |  | * Volunteers
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| * Volunteers will complete a paper record of each pledge they visit, and return it to head office.
 |  | * Volunteers
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## Completing the Form

When filling the form with Pledgers, it allows an opportunity for them to discuss their pledge and expectations of the process, as well as for the Irish Red Cross to learn more about the pledge itself. At all times, Pledgers should be reminded that this is a voluntary process, and they can withdraw their offer at any time (by emailing migrationcrisis@redcross.ie).

The ‘Additional Details’ section of the form allows for your **observations** regarding the overall pledge to be captured.

In addition, we would ask you to note:

* The **location of the pledge** e.g. is it close to a large town? If so, how close?
* **The availability** and **frequency** of any **public transport services**
* Are there **children** in the accommodation? If so, how old?
* Details on **local services** e.g. schools, medical, religious services etc.

## Guidelines for Pledger Visits

1. Be courteous:Your manner and how you interact with others gives an impression about the Irish Red Cross. Basic courtesy means you are professional. Small details can have a dramatic effect, and a simple “***thank you*** ***for your support”*** will be remembered later on in the relationship.

2. Listen: It is important to listen carefully and respectfully to the Pledger during the meeting. Avoid interrupting them, or preparing a response whilst they speak. Do not try to predict what the speaker is going to say next. Remember to give the Pledger your undivided attention, listen more than talk.

3. Restate what you hear: Rephrasing what the person is saying gives both parties a chance to clarify if there is any confusion or misunderstanding.

4. Consider your tone and body language:Make sure your language is clear, adopt a neutral, non-judgmental tone. Give positive reinforcement as the Pledger speaks (nodding, affirmative words) avoiding comment or body language that may be taken as negative.

5. Avoid being too casual: Professionalism is the hallmark of the Irish Red Cross. In this context, jokes or informality should be avoided if possible however if the Pledger adopts this tone a simple smile is good courtesy. Never, use slang or disparaging remarks about refugees or migrants.

6. Avoid opinions: Pledgers may be sensitive to what you think about them or the accommodation they are offering. Ensure your comments and manner are non-judgmental.

7. Be observant: Please make observations on the verification form you have been given *after* the verification meeting is completed. Although we are not stating it publicly or to Pledgers face-to-face, your assessment of the standard of the property and suitability of the Pledger to receive people is a key objective. Assessing the property may be done before knocking on the door. Assessing the Pledger may be best formed by general impression or instinct.

### 8. Never carry out a verification alone: Please always ensure that there are two volunteers attending each meeting.

### 9. Remember the Red Cross Principles: The 7 fundamental principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement apply to everything we do. Including the verification process and our role in the migration crisis response.

10. Take note: You may find that the Pledger has questions which you do not feel you can answer. Please take a note of these questions, and the Migration Team will email them with the required information.

### 11. Be discreet: You will receive personal information pertaining to Pledgers in your area. Please treat this information with the upmost discretion and adhere to data protection guidelines.

## FAQs and additional information

Please note that the Red Cross uses the following specific terms and phrases.

### Refugee vs Migrant/ Migration crisis not Refugee crisis

The Irish Red Cross (and international movement) uses the phrase ‘Migrant(s)’ instead of refugee when referring to those on the migration crisis. This includes those arriving in Ireland.

The term ‘migrant’ is a wider term than ‘refugee’ or ‘asylum seeker’, and it includes both these categories. Not all migrants arriving in Ireland (or other countries) will have been declared with ‘refugee’ status. Many may be ‘asylum seekers’, waiting for their case to be finalised. Alternatively, they may not have claimed protection/asylum e.g. while travelling along the migration trail.

### When are the migrants arriving?

This information is currently with the Government. The Irish Red Cross has no foreknowledge of when migrants will be joining Irish communities or where they will be located.

### What happens next?

After all information from the pledge verification programme has been received from across the country, we will be in touch with all those who have made generous offers of accommodation to update regarding the next steps. Once information has been verified, we will be in a position to provide to Government a mapping of accommodation offers and services throughout the country.

What financial support will I receive for providing the accommodation? Will I be receive rent, money for, utility bills, etc?

This is not in our remit and will be decided by the Government. As soon as we have information, we will pass it on to each Pledger.