**Emmaus Medway**

**Policy – Referral Process**

**Introduction**

The aim of this policy is to outline the referral process for the organisation. The referral process is in place in order to help ensure that any prospective Companion who submits a form or has a form submitted on their behalf has completed the form correctly but has also addressed all the issues which could exclude them from applying to join the Community. It also sets out the process staff undertake when managing the referral process.

**Emmaus Medway**

Emmaus Medway is a working Community which is often different to other accommodation which is available within the Medway area. Every resident (or Companion as they are known) are expected to volunteer within the Community Business or in the community for up to 40 hours per week. The normal working week for most will include Saturday. The is one the principles of Emmaus Medway and Companions will not be able to reside long term in the Community if they do not work to the best of their ability.

**Eligibility Criteria**

The following criteria apply to all referrals

* To be either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, or to have been referred by another project catering for the same
* To be over 18 and under 65
* To be applying as a single person
* To have no resident dependent children
* To have no pets which you would be looking to bring with you
* To not be dependent on illegal drugs or legal highs although support can be provided to address issues with addiction to soft drugs or legal highs
* To not have convictions for arson or offence(s) which result in being placed on the sexual offenders’ register
* To not be dependent on alcohol although support will be given to access other agency support if needed.
* To be able and willing to volunteer for 40 hours a week
* To be willing to come off benefits (except for housing benefit)
* To be able and willing to claim housing benefit
* To not have a serious mental health problem unless it is effectively managed through medication and/or ongoing counselling
* To be able to live in a Community and fit in with its current composition
* To have sufficient independence to cope with periods where there are no staff present
* To be willing to abide by the Community rules
* To want to make a contribution

The aim of the Community rules are to provide a safe and secure environment for all Companions (residents). These sets of rules have been developed over time for the explicit use of Emmaus Medway and it is important to note that other Communities within the Emmaus movement may implement these rules in a different way.

**Community Rules**

* **No alcohol on site**

It is recognised that some Companions will drink alcohol but in order to provide a safe environment on returning to the Community after consuming alcohol Companion are required to return to their room immediately. Any Companion found to have alcohol in their room may be asked to leave the Community immediately

* **No drug abuse; be it legal highs, class A, B or C drugs or the abuse of prescribed drugs or over the counter drugs**

The Community Management Team recognise that the use of Cannabis and Cannabis derivatives is common place as is the use of legal highs. However, the use of drugs of any kind is strictly prohibited. All new Companions are expected to be clean of all drugs within the first 28 days. The Management Team retain the right to test people for drug use at their own discretion. Failing a drug test will result in a Companion being asked to leave the Community. However, it is recognised that some Companions may need support to break the cycle of habitual use of Cannabis and derivatives of Cannabis. In exceptional circumstances support will be provided to Companions to address this kind of addition. This also extends to legal highs, but each failure of a drug test will be considered on an individual basis. A commitment and progress towards becoming clean of drug use in the Community is essential for a long term stay.

* **Threats of violence**

Threats of violence are strictly prohibited. Although it is recognised that there will be “banter” between Companions, any reported incidence of threats of violence will be investigated by the Community Management Team and if a Companion (or member of staff) feels threatened by the behaviour Companions can and will be asked to leave the Community

* **Acts of Violence**

Acts of violence are not tolerated in the Community and if allegations of violence are proven or witnessed by staff, Companions will be asked to leave immediately. If a physical fight takes place between Companions, then all those involved will be asked to leave with immediate effect

* **Contributing to the Community to the best of your ability**

As a working Community, it is essential that you work to the best of your ability. Within the first few weeks in residence a new Companion will have had access to a range of different activities. The Management Team will never ask a Companion to undertake a task which they do not have the skill set to undertake.

Drivers are in short supply so if a new Companion has a driving licence they will often be required to drive a Community vehicle within days of joining the Community.

It is also recognised that not all Companions are as able as others and this will be taken into account when allocating tasks. If a medical condition of long term health problem is a factor this should be declared as part of the referral process to ensure fair and reasonable steps are taken to accommodate additional needs.

Failure to work to the best of your ability whilst resident in the Community could result in a Companion being subject to the disciplinary process and in the end being asked to leave the Community.

Community life is not for everyone; licences are initially offered for a 28-day period and in that period a Companion’s suitability for Community life will be assessed. Companions for whom it is not suitable often make that decision themselves and leave the Community of their own accord.

**Disclosure of Criminal Convictions**

We require all prospective Companions to provide full disclosure of their spent and unspent convictions. Although Emmaus is a place for second chances we cannot and do not accept Companions with convictions for arson or for offences which result in individuals being placed on the sexual offenders’ register. If full disclosure is not provided, when convictions are identified that would have excluded a Companion from joining the Community, the Companion will be asked to leave with immediate effect. It is therefore vital that prospective Companions provide full disclosure when it comes to criminal convictions. A police check will be carried out at the point of interview to establish if convictions for arson or offence(s) which result in an individual being placed on the sexual offenders’ register exist. If they do an offer of a place at the Community will not be made

**The Referral Process**

Referrals will only be considered when a referral form is received. Referral forms are available on line, on request or through one of the shops.

The receipt of referrals will be acknowledged and timescales for a response agreed.

We are often full and do not currently manage a waiting list so a response may take the form of the Community being full. If a vacancy does exist the referral form will be reviewed and if it is considered to be appropriate an interview will be arranged which will normally be at the Rochester shop on Rochester High Street.

This will be an informal process and will provide an opportunity for discussion around Community life and what will be expected from both sides. An opportunity will also be provided to view the Community accommodation and to meet other Companions.

The decision which is final will be communicated at the earliest opportunity and a move in date agreed if the decision is made to offer a place.

All interviews will be carried out by two members of the Community Management Team.