

Resolving Concerns & Complaints Guidance

A guide for volunteers, young people, parents and collaborative organisations

Scope of guidance: Relevant to YLI volunteers, YLI young people or their parents/guardians, and collaborative organisations.

1. We Take Our Integrity Seriously – Please Help Us to Maintain it.

We exist because of the grace of God and because of the deep support of our local communities. As followers of Christ, we expect ourselves to operate at the highest Biblical, legal and moral standards. Unfortunately, things don't always hit the mark and can sometimes go wrong. We want to know when this happens, so please tell us so that we can keep improving. Your help is invaluable.

2. How Do I Raise a Complaint or Concern?

Have a chat. We have found that having an informal conversation with the person directly involved or responsible (e.g. your local staff person) as soon as possible is often the best way for us to address an issue swiftly, fully and sensitively. You may find the principles of our *Conflict Resolution Guidance* helpful in understanding how you could go about this.

Take it further. Alternatively, feel free to contact SpeakUp@ylinternational.org as soon as you feel able to do so; we are often best placed to look into a concern or complaint if it is raised promptly. We will seek to establish the facts, understand your intentions, investigate the matter and keep you appropriately updated. We will take appropriate action to remedy the situation and may follow alternative or additional procedures if we consider this to be suitable (for example, we would follow our *Disciplinary Policy* for any incidents relating to staff or volunteer misconduct). We will conclude the process by providing you with an outcome and signposting you to our appeals process, the decision of which is final.

Contact a regulator. We are regulated by the [Charity Commission for England and Wales](#), [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator](#) (OSCR), and the [Charities Regulator](#) in the Republic of Ireland, and you can contact them at any point, using the links above.

If a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm, instead of following the above process, please contact any YLI volunteer or member of staff, who will escalate according to our Child Protection Procedure, or you can [contact our Safeguarding Team](#) directly.

3. Our Promises

3.1. We seek to treat everyone fairly, including the person bringing a concern or complaint, anyone who may be at risk within the situation that's raised, and anyone who may be implicated. Although we may need to follow certain procedures based on what we're told, we aim to treat all involved with dignity and respect.

3.2. We take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, harassment or mistreatment of any kind that has been found to have occurred. Not only will we take any concerns of this nature extremely seriously, but if you feel that you have been mistreated because of coming to us with your concern, let us know straight away so that we can take immediate steps to put it right.

3.3. We will handle your identity and all information you provide to us with care and sensitivity, in accordance with data protection legislation (see our [Privacy Notice](#) for more information). We will only disclose to others

on a need-to-know basis (although bear in mind that sometimes the identity of a complainant would be obvious, for instance if they were the only witness to an incident).

3.4. We respect people's preference for anonymity, and recognise that sometimes this is a proviso on which concerns are raised. However, we encourage that as far as possible, you make yourself known so that we can engage with you over the details of your concern and provide you with any appropriate feedback. We are unable to disclose information to anonymous complainants.

3.5. The health, safety and welfare of our young people, volunteers and staff are of paramount importance to us. This Guidance is designed to help us maintain this level of care, but should we feel that this Guidance is being manipulated to unnecessarily distract or disrupt the attention of our staff or volunteers, we will respond in a manner we consider to be in the best interests of our beneficiaries.

4. Circulation

This Guidance is available in the following places:

- On our website (ylinternational.org/safeguarding)
- Within our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- As a link in our Parent Consent Forms (web based versions)
- Area offices may print hard copies.

5. Related Policies and Documents

- *Child Protection Procedure, Conflict Resolution Guidance, Disciplinary Policy.*
- *URLs of links embedded in this document:*
 - *Contact details of the Safeguarding Team:* ylinternational.org/safeguarding
 - *Privacy Notice:* <https://younglife.org/privacy-policy/>
 - *Charity Commission of England & Wales:*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission>
 - *Office of the Charity Regulator (OSCR):* <https://www.oscr.org.uk/>
 - *Charities Regulator in the Republic of Ireland:* <https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/>

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