



# THE HONOUR GUIDE

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION AND  
MANAGEMENT OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN  
YOUTH WITH A MISSION

A photograph of three young adults walking on a rooftop in Norway. On the left, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light green sweater and light blue jeans, is smiling and holding a white coffee cup. In the center, a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a blue button-down shirt and dark blue jeans, is also smiling and holding a black coffee cup. On the right, another man with long hair, wearing a maroon and grey striped sweater and blue jeans, is smiling. They are walking on a paved rooftop area with a white railing. In the background, there are multi-story buildings with red roofs and green spires under a cloudy sky.

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
YOUTH WITH A MISSION (YWAM, NORWAY)  
27 APRIL 2018

## **In Youth With A Mission:**

1. We believe that human beings are created by God, and therefore individual people have an inviolable value.
2. None of our co-workers is permitted to use their position of responsibility to cross other people's personal boundaries and violate the dignity of the individual.
3. We are conscious of our own role and the balance of power in the various relationships we have with others.
4. We demonstrate love, because, as followers of Christ, we are called to love one another. We are aware that we want to convey love in our fellowship in such a way that everyone can experience being loved for who they are - rather than for what they do.
5. We treat everyone with respect and refrain from all forms of communication, behaviour or treatment that could be considered abusive.
6. We take responsibility for spreading wholesome, biblical attitudes regarding sexuality, gender and appearance.
7. We avoid forms of touch that could be perceived as inappropriate.
8. We avoid all forms of verbal intimacy which could be interpreted as being sexually-charged.
9. We show respect for the private lives of others.
10. If we observe any violations of the guidelines for dealing with sexual abuse, we intervene and notify the relevant authorities.

In Youth with a Mission we consider the abuse of an individual as an act that affects the whole community.

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## INTRODUCTION

As an organisation, Youth With A Mission (YWAM) has zero-tolerance of sexual abuse, sexual behaviour that crosses another individual's personal boundaries, or any other form of harassment of another individual. Nevertheless, we know that sexual abuse happens even within church circles, but it should not happen. Behaviour that transgresses another individual's boundaries and actual physical abuse are violations of the ethical guidelines to which all YWAM coworkers should adhere.

This document has two intentions:

To contribute to increased competence and awareness in this area within our organization. By prevention and training we intend to create wholesome attitudes and thereby prevent the occurrence of sexual abuse.

To provide clear procedures and guidelines for dealing with any cases of sexual abuse that come to light within our organisation.





# 01:

VIEW OF HUMANITY



## 1. VIEW OF HUMANITY

### 1.1. Every human being is created in the image of God.

The Christian view of humanity is the foundation upon which we, as a church, understand and manage the problem of sexual abuse.

This view is based on the words of the creation narrative recorded in Genesis 1:

"And God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (NIV).

That human beings are created in the image of God implies they are the only created beings which are able to think about God and have a relationship with him. Human beings are also created to have relationships with each other. This means that every human being has equal worth and has a right to be respected as regards their body and their personal boundaries. The individual has an inherent right to define their own boundaries in relation to how close they will permit other people to get to them both physically and emotionally.

This respect is foundational. If two individuals are not in an equal relationship due to differences in age, or due to differing mental or physical capacity, the responsibility for exercising respect and not crossing the other individual's personal boundaries lies with the one who could be defined as being the stronger.

As fellow human beings, or as an organization, we have an obligation to respond if it becomes known that someone has been, or is being, sexually abused.

On no occasion should we fail to take the suspicion or a report of sexual abuse seriously – or, at worst, deny it on the basis of thinking that this kind of thing doesn't happen in our organization.



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DEFINITIONS



## 2. DEFINITIONS

### 2.1. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse pertains primarily to the abuse of power. Power implies having the opportunity to affect and exert influence over others so as to get one's own way. Power can be used both positively and negatively. Power can be used positively to support and empower another person, or negatively to gain control over them and abuse them.

The following definition is used as a basis to describe what is meant by a sexual abuse:

«Sexual abuse can be considered as occurring when a person with the greatest power in a relationship between [two] people in which asymmetric power is demonstrated uses the sexualization of the relationship in such a way that the boundaries the other person sets on their own intimacy are violated.» (Kleiven, 2008).

An imbalance of power can, for example, result from difference in age or maturity; from one individual having a position of trust which imbues them with influence, and hence greater power; or by one individual being particularly vulnerable due to a difficult life situation or similar. In this regard, a child has less power than an adult, and a student has less power than a member of staff. When a relationship with such an asymmetric balance of power is sexualised, roles and trust are abused in such a way that an individual person in a vulnerable position is abused instead of being protected. Sexuality is then used as a means of power to gain control over the 'weaker' individual to meet the offender's own need. Sexual abuse includes a spectrum of sexual behaviour, from the use of offensive language to forced penetrative sex and similar physical acts. In this document we use the term 'sexual abuse' as a common term for what in other contexts would be described as sexual behaviour that infringes another individual's personal boundaries.

### 2.1.1. Sexually offensive or indecent behaviour

Sexually offensive or other indecent behavior occurs in word or deed, either towards, or in the presence of another individual. Examples include indecent exposure, showing pornographic films, verbal abuse, abusive text messages or posting abusive images on social media. In other words, an individual, by means of their words or actions, displays sexually abusive or other indecent behaviour in a public place, or if those present have not consented or are children under sixteen years of age.

### 2.1.2. Sexual acts

Sexual acts involve physical contact with another individual, for example, touching or fondling the individual's genitalia or breasts, either under their clothing or through their clothing. Sexual acts are a form of assault and punishable by law if they take place with an individual who has not given their consent, or if they take place with children under sixteen years of age.

### 2.1.3. Serious sexual assault / assault by penetration

Sexual assault is an act which incurs serious legal penalty. This occurs when, for example, a sexual act involves forced penetration of the vagina, anal opening or mouth, or masturbation of the genitalia of the victim and/or the offender with a part of the body other than the penis (e.g. finger, tongue) or with an object without their consent

### 2.1.4. Rape

Rape is the intentional penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with the penis without consent by means of force or threatening behavior, or when the victim is unable to oppose the action, for example due to intoxication.

## 2.2. Terms used for the individuals involved

We use the term «the accused» for the individual who stands accused of sexual abuse, until the accusation is finally confirmed, at which point we use the term «the offender».

We use the term 'the complainant' for the individual who reports that he or she has been exposed to sexual abuse. If the accusation is confirmed, we then use the term 'the victim'.



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CONFIDENTIALITY



## CONFIDENTIALITY

### 3.1. Confidentiality in particular professional occupations

Public officials and members of some professional occupations, e.g. priests, lawyers and health professionals, have a legal obligation to maintain confidentiality. This means that they can be prosecuted if they break their oath of confidentiality without the consent of the individual who has confided in them. Nevertheless, there is a paragraph in [Norwegian] law that defines situations in which an oath of confidentiality can be broken without legal punishment (c.f. 'nødrett' (emergency clause) in Straffeloven (The Penal Code), §17). This means that an individual is required to report any information that some one confides to them if it means a serious crime can be averted or if there is a danger to life or health.

### 3.2. Confidentiality and secrecy for co-workers in YWAM

Voluntary workers in YWAM do not have a statutory duty of confidentiality which means they can be prosecuted for breaches of confidentiality. A counsellor always has an obligation to maintain confidentiality in regard to what they have been told in private conversations. If information about abusive acts is confided during a counselling session, and the individual who has confided the information is over 18 years of age, the counsellor must gain permission from that individual before reporting the incident to the organization. This permission must be obtained in writing.

YWAM counsellors should be in the habit of setting the framework for the conversation at the start of a counselling session or session of spiritual direction. To protect themselves and others, they should not promise 100% confidentiality or secrecy in such conversations. Breach of the guidelines regarding sexual abuse and the misuse of power, or situations in which life and health are at risk, must be acted upon immediately.



### 3.3. Issues pertaining to confidentiality

If permission to pass information further is not obtained from a complainant, a worker should ask for permission to report the issue to the Centre Leader, including the name of the accused, without mentioning who made the complaint. The complainant must be offered further counselling opportunities with a dedicated counsellor. The person who reports the incident to the organisation, and the counsellor who provides ongoing counselling to the complainant, have the right to support and guidance. Confidentiality is not breached, and permission is not needed from the individual concerned, to discuss confidential information with a superior, if all the people involved are kept anonymous. Staff members should have minimum impediment with regard to discussing such issues with their superiors in YWAM.

### 3.4. Confidences from children under 18 years of age

If information about abuse is obtained in the form of a confidence from a child under the age of 18 years of age, it is important not to promise to keep the matter confidential. You must listen to the child carefully, try to find out if they have already spoken about the matter with someone else, and, if possible, whom. You must explain to the child that it is extremely important that their parents / guardians are told of the matter. If the child is resistant to this, you must spend time explaining why it is important. The older the child, the more important it is to try and get the child to understand why you need to take the matter further. But whether the child gives their permission or not, the matter should normally be reported to the parents, provided there is no reason to believe the parents are involved in the abuse. The individual who has been confided the information must not contact the child's parents before the matter has been reported to the Center Leader.



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PREVENTION

## PREVENTION

### 4.1. Sexual abuse must be prevented

Prevention involves ensuring that sexual abuse does not take place. This is accomplished by means of targeted and systematic work in the areas of attitude and behaviour. By attitude, we mean the sum of how we understand and relate to a theme. This can be communicated through both words and body language. Every leader is a role model and responsible for cultivating healthy attitudes towards sexuality and gender. Prevention is important because increased knowledge provides a better basis for an individual to relate consciously with their own opinions. Focus on the theme of sexual abuse can act in itself act as a preventative for potential offenders. Prevention is also an important means of preventing leaders and counsellors finding themselves in situations in which they could be tempted, or falsely accused of having committed sexual abuse.

### 4.2. Language Use and Culture

We want to have a culture in which we respect and honour one another. Negative use of language can counteract the attitudes we want to characterize our fellowship in regards to sexuality. In this respect, proactive work needs to be done in relation to attitudes and in clarifying what is unacceptable in regard to discussing others or discussing matters pertaining to sexuality.

In YWAM we shall:

- not comment on another person's body or bodily parts
- not tell jokes about parts of the body nor of a sexual nature

### 4.3. Openness

Openness and willingness to allow others insight into our lives is in accord with the values of YWAM, and can prevent the occurrence of abuse. Therefore, it is very important for people in positions of power, such as staff and leaders in various areas, to have a confidential relationship with someone in which they experience mutual support, honesty, and humble and open communication. We cannot see our own behavior from the outside, so we need others to give us feedback. Being open about our vulnerabilities is a protection against abuse of power.

Every individual must decide for themselves how open they want to be about personal issues in a group setting. No one should feel obliged to share or do anything unless they so desire.

### 4.4. Teaching

Sexuality is one of God's good gifts and must be stewarded correctly, according to biblical principles. This tenet must be taught in our staff and student training sessions, especially in conjunction with topics related to sexual abuse. We must ensure our staff have the necessary competency and preparation in this area.

### 4.5. Prevention of the sexual abuse of children

All students, part-time and full-time staff, and staff at camps which children attend, must read and then sign that they recognise YWAM's guidelines regarding how one should behave when working with children, as outlined in Guidelines for Child Protection. Everyone should know the contents of this document. These guidelines require each worker to have a police certificate for working with under-16s and YWAM is responsible for ensuring these are in place.

#### 4.6 Prevention action plan

<b>WHAT?</b>	<b>WHO?</b>	<b>WHEN?</b>
Discussions focussing on sexual abuse, to raise awareness and increase knowledge	Personnel managers in YWAM Norway	Annually, at National Leadership Conference or other leadership conferences
Inform about guidelines and procedures at staff training	Centre leaders	Every autumn
Be familiar with Guidelines for Prevention and Management of Sexual Abuse.	All leaders	Always
Ensure these guidelines are available to all employees	Centre leaders	Always
Revision of Guidelines	Personnel Managers/National Leaders	Every five years



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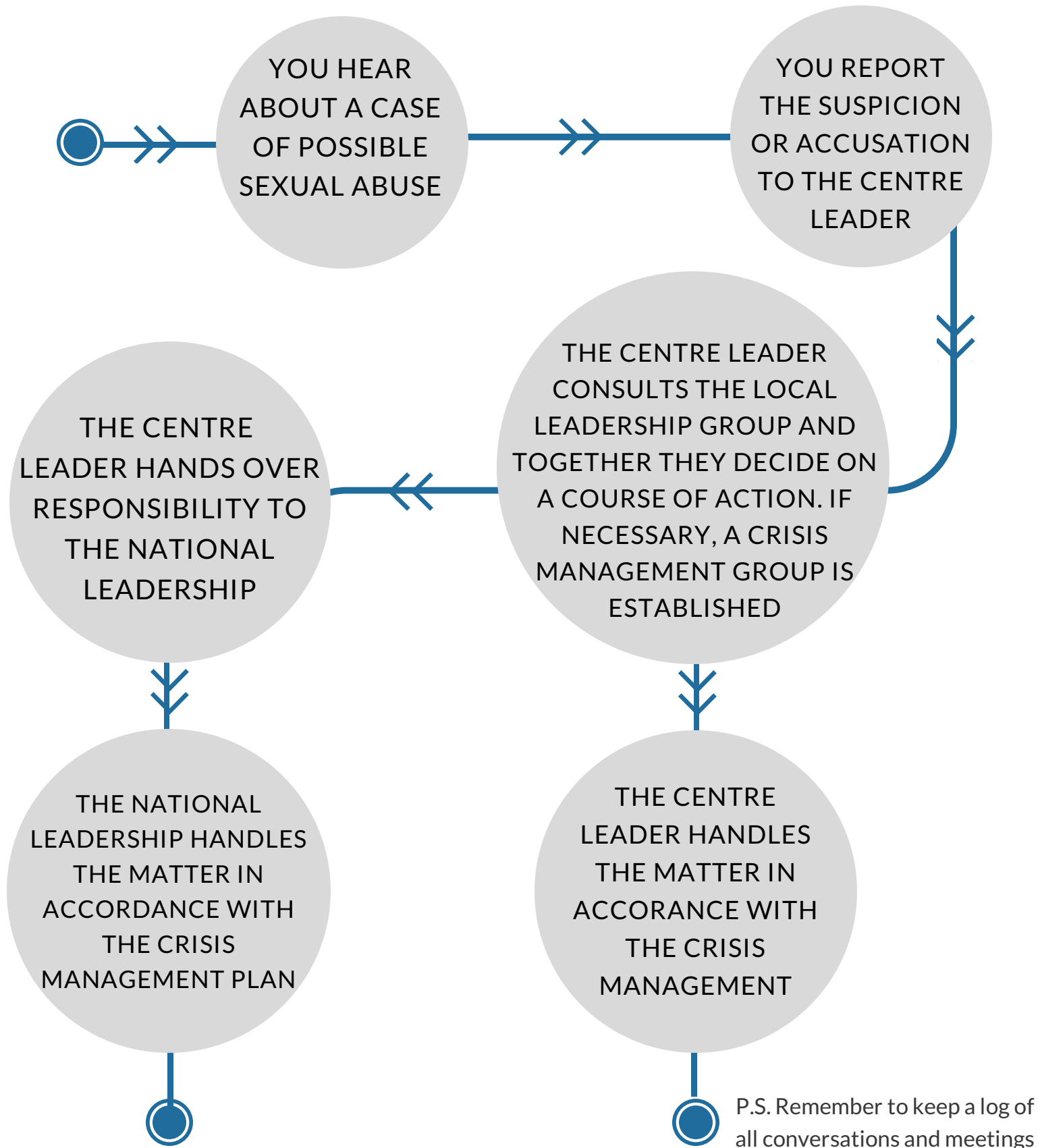
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MANAGING COMPLAINTS  
ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE



## 5. MANAGING COMPLAINTS ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

### 5.1. Flow chart representing the progression of a case



## 5.2. Explanation of the Progression of a Case

If you, as a leader or coworker in YWAM, become aware of a complaint of sexual abuse, the Centre Leader must be informed, because they are responsible for taking the case forward. If the Center Leader stands accused, or for one reason or another is not able to progress the case, the National Leadership will act in their place. When the Centre Leader receives a report concerning the suspicion of sexual abuse or a complaint about sexual abuse, they must confer with their co-leaders reagrding the case. It is important to emphasise that they should be a support to the Centre Leader and not be a party directly involved in the case. In major cases, the Centre Leader will put together a crisis management team to deal with the allegations of sexual abuse. In serious, large-scale cases, the National Leadership must be informed.

### 5.2.1. Practical and Executive Responsibility

All complaints or suspicion of sexual abuse must be reported t the Centre Leader. He is the first person who should be made aware of the complaint and has responsibility for assessing the case and taking it further. He must do this in cojunction with a local leadership group. Together they will make an immediate decision as to whether the seriousness of the case warrants notifying it to the police.

If the case is reported to the police, further proceedings will be coordinated with the police so that their investigation is not hindered. Written minutes should be taken of all formal conversations that take place between the parties concerned.

### 5.2.1 Practical and Executive Responsibility (cont.)

If the case is large-scale, a crisis management team should be put together and this will be responsible for progressing and managing the case.

Personel with expertise in such matters should be part of this team.

All cases in which a crisis management team is set up, and in which a complaint of sexual abuse is confirmed, must be reported to the Personnel Manager for YWAM Norway.

### 5.2.2. YWAM's National leadership

If a case is of such a nature that it is felt to be too large for the centre concerned to handle, the Centre Leader can delegate responsibility for dealing with the case to the National Leadership. This does not obviate the Centre Leader of formal responsibility for the case, but means the National Leadership has practical executive responsibility for the next phase. If the Centre Leader is party to the case, the responsibility for handling the case lies with the National Leadership. If National Leader is party to the case, decison-making responsibility is deferred to the Chairman of the Board of YWAM.

### 5.2.3. Ethical Advice

In assessing and dealing with allegations of sexual abuse, Centre Leaders, or other YWAM employees, are not expected to have sufficient competence in this complex area to handle the matter themselves. YWAM has panel of professional advisors, and some of its members should be included in the make up of the crisis management team in the handling of such cases. In serious cases, the Ethical Panel must be consulted.

### 5.2.3. Ethical Advice (cont.)

The Ethical Panel consists of a minimum of three people with in-depth knowledge of the theological / psychological, health and legal aspects of the issues surrounding sexual abuse. Both sexes must be represented. The Panel will also assess how new procedures work, as well as ensure that cases of abuse in the organization receive uniform treatment. The members of the panel are appointed by the Board of Directors of YWAM for four years at a time.

### 5.2.4. Formal and overall responsibility

The Personel Manager for YWAM Norway must, at all times, ensure that there are appropriate guidleines and procedures in place for the prevention and management of sexual abuse.

Centre Leaders are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines are available and accessible, and that they are implemented at their Centre.

## 5.3. What do you do if you suspect, or receive a report about, sexual abuse?

When sexual abuse occurs in Christian contexts, the accused tends to be accorded a degree of respect and trust, that is completely different from that accorded to the complainant. Those responsible for managing cases of suspected abuse must ensure they focus on the issue from the point of view of the complainant.

### 5.3.1. Action must always be taken

A individual who comes forward to report a case of abuse must be left knowing they have been heard and their complaint taken seriously. When a complaint is made, action must always be taken.

### 5.3.2 Responsibility for what has happened

An individual who has sexually abused another individual must bear the full and unequivocal responsibility for their actions. The victim is innocent and bears no part of the responsibility for the incident. The individual has been the victim of abuse by a person who had the responsibility to protect them. The difference in power between the two individuals could be expressed by differences in their age, vulnerability, position or authority.

### 5.3.3. Contact with the accused

The person who has been told about a suspected case of sexual abuse must not, under any circumstances, take up the matter with the person accused. Such contact could cause considerable damage, to the victim, to any potential police investigation, and to the progression of the case. Contact should be made according to the format for progressing a case as detailed in Guidelines for the Management of Sexual Abuse.

### 5.3.4. Suspension from duty

Coworkers who are accused or suspected of sexual abuse will, as a rule, be suspended from their position in YWAM until the case is settled. Suspension may also apply to positions held by the accused outside YWAM. Upon suspension of a co-worker, care must be taken to safeguard all those affected by the case in the best way possible. The fact that a staff member has been suspended must not be taken as an indication that the complaint brought against them is true.

### 5.3.5. Safeguarding of affected parties

A number of people will always be affected when there is suspicion of sexual abuse or a complaint is made. All those affected should be cared for accordingly, particularly the complainant and the accused.

### 5.3.5. Practical and Executive Responsibility (cont.)

Named personnel must be appointed so that the complainant, the accused, and their families have a personal point of contact within YWAM.

Specialist personnel can be appointed to support the individuals handling the complaint. Those acting as personal points of contact or as specialist personnel should not be connected in any way with, or have an interest in, the case to which they have been assigned. Specialist personnel can be appointed from YWAM Norway's Ethical Panel, or can be professionals on the YWAM emergency contact list. YWAM Norway's Personnel Manager can help with contacting these individuals.

### 5.3.6. Relationship with the police

The individual who has been sexually abused (or the parents / guardians if the matter concerns a child), has the freedom to decide whether the case should be reported to the police. As an organisation, YWAM will support a case being reported to the police and actively help the complainant make the charge. The organisation can, in consultation with the complainant, report the abuse on their behalf, if the incident he/she has described occurred while the complainant was in post as a voluntary worker with the organisation.

Reporting an incident to the police must always wait until the complainant indicates they are ready for that to happen, as only the complainant has the right to share their experience in this way. The only exception applies in cases which are so serious that the police have already instigated an investigation on the basis of information received from another source and intend to prosecute the case themselves. If a case is reported to the police,



### 5.3.6. Relationship with the police (cont.)

all the investigation will be left to them. The organisation must always ensure that the police are allowed to work unimpeded.

The organisation can contact the police and describe the case anonymously in order to get police guidance.

## 5.4. Consequences of sexual abuse

### 5.4.1. The offender must take responsibility

The guilty party must be held liable. Both God and the community hold us responsible for our actions. Someone who has abused a fellow human being must admit their sin and their guilt, own their responsibility, confess it to God and man, and put things right as far as is possible. Confessing one's sin to God is the first step in the right direction, but this must be followed by resolving the matter with the people they have affected and with society as a whole. Legally punishable acts should be reported and processed by the judicial system.

### 5.4.2. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not about forgetting or trivialising what has happened. It is often a long process in which the victim must be helped to work through what they have experienced without being put under pressure to forgive until they are ready.

The basis for forgiveness is that the victim gives back the responsibility and blame for the abuse to the offender, but only when they have reached a point of recovery which has made it possible for them to regain control over their life. YWAM cannot forgive the offender on behalf of the victim.

### 5.4.3. Consequences for the Christian Fellowship

If someone confesses their sin, they cannot be excluded from God's church on earth. Confession of sin, however, presupposes a real recognition of guilt and an owning of responsibility. Confession must never be used as an escape from the content and consequences of sin, or from the responsibility of putting things right with God and society. Nevertheless, regard for the victim must come first. God is especially close to those who have suffered due to no fault of their own, therefore there are grounds to maintain that, where it is impossible for two parties to attend the same church or live in the same community, the victim has the right for their interests to take priority.

### 5.4.4. Consequences for ministry

Ministry and leadership responsibilities in a Christian fellowship are not a right, but require a basic level of trust. A Christian fellowship should be a safe place for children and young people, and a safe place for everyone to ask for help or counselling.

The Bible clearly states that person who holds leadership responsibility must adhere to certain requirements regarding integrity and lifestyle and should set a good example for the people of God. Therefore the leadership of YWAM can make certain demands regarding the lifestyle of those who have a ministry that involves spiritual leadership.

#### 5.4.5 Restoration

The aim should exist to help someone who has abused someone else to reach a point of genuine acknowledgement of their actions and resolution with God and society, so they can live as forgiven and upright individuals. However, there is no automatic correlation between obtaining God's forgiveness and that of society, and being restored to ministry. The main duty of YWAM is to prevent the occurrence of new cases of abuse. If a member of staff is convicted of sexual abuse, he or she may not be reinstated or employed by YWAM.

#### 5.4.6. Consequences apply despite where the abuse occurred

If a person has committed a sexual offence, there will be consequences for their role within YWAM, even if the offence occurred outside their role in the organization. In such situations, the consequences will be evaluated as per the individual case.

