



Safeguarding



L'ARCHE  
INTERNATIONAL

# Making a complaint in l'Arche

## Receiving feedback and responding to complaints

Receiving feedback and responding to complaints is an important part of improving l'Arche International's accountability and our commitment to keeping our members safe from harm. We want all our members and stakeholders to know they can speak up if they see things that are causing harm and we want them to know what they can expect if they do raise concerns. Ensuring our members and stakeholders can hold us to account will improve the quality of our work in all areas.

## How to make a complaint

If you wish to share a concern or if you need to report a safeguarding incident, please contact the person in charge of safeguarding at the local or national level. If there is no such a role please speak to your community leader, the national leader or the international envoy.

In some situations, when a complaint cannot be made at the local or national level, either because it is not safe or the case involves people in leadership roles, the complaint can be shared with l'Arche International Response Team.

### **You can contact the International Safeguarding Response team**

**by mail [ireport@larche.org](mailto:ireport@larche.org) or by telephone +33/(0)7 66 78 03 69**

## What is a complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about actions or lack of action that violates our code of conduct and/or about the standards of service provision. It is a criticism that expects a reply and a resolution.

For example:

- A concern about the behaviour of staff and others associated with l'Arche
- Physical, emotional and psychological abuse including bullying, harassment and wilful negligence
- Sexual exploitation and abuse (including gender-based violence)
- Fraud and corruption
- Child abuse/exploitation

A complaint is not:

- a general inquiry about l'Arche's work
- a request for information
- a contractual dispute
- a request to amend records
- issues regarding internal staff employment conditions, which are dealt exclusively through appropriate country legislation and HR policies and procedures.

The team will help you if you need clarification in this.

If you want to read more you can find the complete l'Arche International Complaints Policy and Procedure on the International website under number DI- 370-04



# The safeguarding response team for l'Arche International



The safeguarding response team is composed of at least two external and two internal persons to l'Arche, trained in safeguarding and investigation. The team works in English and French and will seek translation support to deal with complaints in other languages. The team reports to the International leaders and Stewardship board.

Members of the team, with experience in l'Arche, but no longer in a paid role or leadership role

## Members of the team external to l'Arche



Joelle Braeuner  
Lecturer-researcher Sociology and Gender Studies.  
Family Therapist based in France



Mary Hally-Witte  
Therapist, Director Institut for Prevention of sexualised violence,  
based in Germany



Christine Bruggeman  
Team chair. Former Trainer L'A Int. Systemic therapist .  
Trained in SG in Bond UK;  
Based in Belgium



Rick Hatem.  
Former Regional leader and Envoy in l'A Int.  
Trained in prevention of abuse for youth. Based in Ukraine



**Two members of the team, one external and one internal, receive your request at the same time.**  
They will react within 72 hours. You will be contacted to share all relevant information about the incident or situation

Do you/the victim/or other people need protective measures to be put in place?

If you need immediate medical assistance or counselling please call the local emergency number. The safety of the survivor is what matters the most.



### Review of the Complaint with the Safeguarding response team

If the report alleges a safeguarding violation, the Safeguarding Response Team will review them in a videoconference together with the Federation Representative of the country where the incident happened, unless s/he is involved in the situation

### Next steps to be taken

The Safeguarding Response Team develops a recommendation on the next steps to be taken. One member of the Response Team remains your contact person and informs you about what happens

### Investigation

An investigation is undertaken in order to find evidence to substantiate the allegation. Two investigation managers are appointed by the Safeguarding Response Team. The findings of the investigation will be presented at a case conference including the appropriate leader or Federation Representative as the disciplinary decision maker.

At all times you remain the owner of what will happen, we will not take any steps without having discussed this with you, in order to make it feel safe for you.

Before and throughout the investigations the Safeguarding Response Team ensures that safety measures are put in place to minimize the risk of retaliation of the victim.

## Possible actions following the Investigation

### Disciplinary Action

Allegations are substantiated and appropriate disciplinary action will be pursued according to the HR policies in place in the country of the incident or at the level of L'Arche International

### Allegations are not substantiated

Should the allegation/s be insufficiently established or unfounded, the subject of complaint will be officially notified that he/she has been cleared.

### Referral to competent legal authority

Based on the findings during the investigation the case can be referred to the law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution. This decision is only taken in accordance with the victim.