

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

EUROPE NORTH AREA PRESIDENCY

October 4, 2022

To all Area Seventies, Mission, Stake and District Presidents, and Bishops and Branch Presidents in the Europe North Area

Abuse Prevention and Response

Dear Brethren,

In a letter dated March 26, 2018, the First Presidency instructed, “that all leaders become familiar with the existing Church policies and guidelines on preventing and responding to abuse.”¹

The Church has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to abuse. “**The first and immediate responsibility** of Church leaders is to **help** those who have been abused and to **protect** vulnerable persons from future abuse. Leaders should not encourage a person to remain in a home or situation that is abusive or unsafe.”²

Abuse is the mistreatment or neglect of others in a way that causes physical, sexual, emotional, or financial harm. The Church’s position is that abuse cannot be tolerated in any form. Those who abuse their spouses, children, other family members, or anyone else violate the laws of God and man.³

Please carefully review the General Handbook and fully familiarize yourself with the Church’s policy and guidelines on abuse. As you encourage those impacted by abuse to look to and rely on the Savior, here are some additional ways you can provide support:

- **Show that you care:** Persons who have been abused often suffer serious trauma. Respond with heartfelt compassion and empathy even if the abuse happened many years ago. Healing can take considerable time (see *Life-help: Abuse/ how to help*).
- **Seek legal counsel:** The Church is committed to complying with the law in reporting abuse. Leaders should contact the Abuse Helpline (where available)⁴ when addressing situations involving any type of abuse. In countries that do not have a help line, a bishop who learns of abuse should contact his stake president. The stake president should promptly seek guidance from the Area Legal Counsel at the Area Office. Stake presidents also are encouraged to counsel with the Family Services staff or the Welfare and Self-Reliance Manager (see *General Handbook, 38.6.2 Abuse*).

¹ First Presidency letter, Mar. 26, 2018.

² General Handbook, 38.6.2 Abuse (emphasis added).

³ General Handbook, 38.6.2

⁴ Currently, a legal helpline manned by credentialed professionals is available in the UK, Ireland.

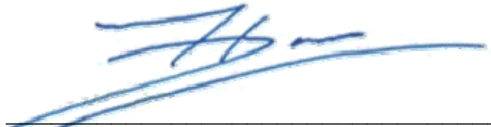
• **Help the victim connect with resources:** In addition to receiving the inspired help from Church leaders, persons who have suffered abuse may need professional counselling. Fast offering funds may be used to cover such expenses (See *General Handbook, 22.5.2.1 Medical or Other Health Care*) Leaders should consult with Family Services to learn more about available local resources⁵.

• **Protect children and youth:** All adults who work with children or youth are to complete the children and youth protection training (see *ProtectingChildren.ChurchofJesusChrist.org*). **The training should be repeated at least every three years.**

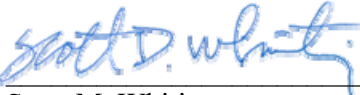
Members who have been abused need kind, caring attention from inspired Church leaders, family members, and others, including trained professionals, who can help them overcome the destructive effects of abuse. The healing power of the Savior Jesus Christ will ease burdens and provide strength to overcome adversity.¹

Sincerely,

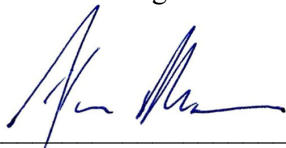
The Europe North Area Presidency



Hans T. Boom



Scott M. Whiting



Alan T. Phillips

⁵ Family Services has a sexual abuse healing program available in, English, Portuguese, Finnish, and Spanish.

⁶ ProtectingChildren.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

ADDENDUM

Church policies and guidelines on abuse

- General Handbook section 38.6.2
https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/general-handbook/38-church-policies-and-guidelines?lang=eng#title_number92
- Leaders in all **EUROPEAN COUNTRIES in the Europe North Area** first contact:
Rick Page (Office of General Counsel)
+49 69 5480 2223
+49 176 1449 2223 (mobile)
PageRH@churchofjesuschrist.org

Support to heal and recover from abuse

- Leaders in the **Europe North Area** can contact their local Family Services Advisor or **Rocío Gutiérrez (Family Services)**
+49 69 5480 2550
+49 176 1449 2550 (mobile)
GutierrezR@churchofjesuschrist.org

Other Resources :

- Abuse: Help, Healing and Protection
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/get-help/abuse?lang=eng>
- Life Help: Abuse
<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/life-help/abuse?lang=eng>
- Ministering to Survivors of Abuse
https://uk.churchofjesuschrist.org/acp/bc/cp/Europe/Area%20Images/W-SR/2021-05-Helping%20Children_eng.pdf

Healing from Sexual Abuse Program - Contact Family Services for more information