

CHILD HELPLINE INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

INTRODUCTION, GENERAL GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

ABOUT CHILD HELPLINE INTERNATIONAL

Who are we?

We are a **collective impact organisation**, with member child helplines operating all over the world. Since our **foundation in 2003**, we have brought together existing child helplines and supported the creation and scaling-up of new child helplines. We have strengthened our network by sharing what we have learned from the best of our child helpline members with all of our child helpline members.

We also collect and analyse data from our members on the contacts they receive from children and young people every year. This data, and the millions of individual stories that support it, tell us how and where in the world children and young people are suffering injustice, abuse and danger, or are in need of support, advice, help or comfort. We then present these stories to policy and decision makers and other influencers and help **effect the changes that improve conditions for children in meaningful ways**, both globally and locally.

What do we do?

We coordinate **information, viewpoints, knowledge and data** from our child helpline members, partners and other external sources. This exceptional resource can **effect profound change in child protection systems** globally, regionally and nationally. We collect, compile and analyse information from our members and use the data to **advocate for children and young people around the world**. The information comes directly from the children and young people, and the data represents their voices and provides them all with the opportunity to be heard.

We play a **key role in fostering collaboration between our members**, and our network is an **essential element in achieving global and regional impact for children and young people around the world**. We focus on developing **thematic knowledge and expertise**, and on developing the capacity of our members according to their needs. Together, we work on defining **clear, representative and transparent core quality standards for child helplines**, and the monitoring tools necessary to fulfil these standards.



Our **strength comes through our members**, working together, and this is also reflected in our governance structure where the highest mandated power is the Assembly of Child Helplines itself. Each and every full member of the network has an equal voice, and the Assembly of Child Helplines meets every three years to give final approval on overall strategy and to appoint **Regional Representatives** to our **Supervisory Board**. These five Regional Representatives ensure that the needs of child helplines will always be reflected in our work.

How are we structured?

Our structure comprises:

- **Assembly of Child Helplines**
- **Supervisory Board** (with five Regional Representatives appointed by the Assembly of Child Helplines, and a Supervisory Committee working more closely with the Management Board)
- **Management Board** with an Executive Directive
- Our **team**, both staff and volunteers.

The Assembly of Child Helplines

Our Assembly of Child Helplines — or “**General Assembly**” — comprises all of our full member helplines (*please see the document “Membership Criteria” for further information about the different types of membership we offer*).

The General Assembly convenes at least every three years. It nominates the **Regional Representatives**, together with their **Deputies**, who support the coordination of regional and thematic activities and the organisation of **Regional and International Consultations** and facilitate regional advocacy activities.

The General Assembly also ratifies our strategy, usually for multi-annual periods.

Supervisory Board

Our **Supervisory Board** consists of the five Regional Representatives appointed by the General Assembly, and at least three members who are child protection or child rights experts and professionals who are appointed by the Supervisory Board and who act as its Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

The Supervisory Board does not have day-to-day management responsibility but assists the Management Board by providing it with expert guidance and support. The Supervisory Board approves our strategy (for final approval by the General Assembly), our annual plan of activities based upon this strategy, our annual budget and our final audited accounts.

A **Supervisory Committee**, made up of members of our Supervisory Board, works on a closer and more regular basis with our Management Board, and performs an appraisal of our Executive Director on an annual basis.



Management Board

Our **Management Board** is responsible for the day-to-day management of our organisation. More specifically, it oversees our daily activities in line our strategic plan, and in accordance with our annual plan and budget as approved by our Supervisory Board. Our Management Board comprises our Executive Director, our Director of Operations and our Director of Programmes.

#Youth Advisory Council

Our youth advisory council, known as **#Youth**, is an empowering collective of young individuals from all over the world. They are here to speak on behalf of their peers and we make sure we listen.

Other Advisory Councils and Taskforces

From time to time our Supervisory Board and our Management Board may also jointly convene Advisory Councils and Taskforces, to provide advice based on specific expertise.

Our Statutes and the Bylaws of our organisation are available upon request.

ABOUT OUR MEMBERS

What is a child helpline?

A child helpline is a civil society organization, governmental body or social enterprise that provides help, support and counselling services to children (18 years and under) and/or young people (25 years and under) through online and offline means of communication.

Child helplines base their work on the principles of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. The UNCRC spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to their fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The UNCRC also specifically gives children the right to be heard and to express their views without fear of harm or reprisal. **Child helplines help to ensure that all children have the opportunity to be heard.**

Often, child helplines are a child or young person's first point of contact with child protection services, and the most trusted and accessible gateway for them to find much needed further support.



To make access easier and simple for children and young people to contact them, many child helplines offering telephone services endeavour to obtain short, easy-to-remember, toll-free phone numbers. These ensure that all children and young people can pick up a phone and call a child helpline at any time, without worrying about costs.

Similarly, child helplines strive to constantly keep up with the changing needs and preferred communication methods of children and young people. In some cases, this means incorporating new online technologies to reach children and young people well-versed in and accustomed to online communication, and in other cases this involves implementing creative outreach programmes to contact marginalized children and young people, be it in remote communities or those living outside of existing formal systems.

Child helplines raise awareness of their services and of the issues faced by children and young people. Importantly, child helplines also reach out to those children and young people who may not be able to access their services on their own. Child helpline counsellors actively listen to children and young people who wish to express their concerns, and when necessary, link them to resources and emergency assistance. Child helplines can also intervene directly, providing shelter, education and legal support.

What is a Child Helpline International Member?

A member of Child Helpline International is an organization offering counselling and listening services to children (18 years and under) and/or young people (25 years and under) for the majority of its operations. Members adhere to the **four core principles of the UNCRC**: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. Members also comply with **core quality standards** as jointly set by the network and commits to **our mission and objectives** as outlined in our Statutes.

Every year, members submit their data on contacts from children and young people. They strive to actively participate in International and Regional Consultations and knowledge-exchange events, and to contribute towards publications, learning tools and surveys and other research activities. Members actively promote the network's activities.



What are the benefits of being a Child Helpline International Member?

Access to policy and decision-making platforms

We work closely with, and advocate on behalf of, our members before influential bodies, including:

- **National governments** — advocating for the importance of channelling resources to child helplines and their role in national child protection systems.
- **United Nations** bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
- **Influential child protection networks** — partnering with other organisations to advocate for child helplines as a key player in child protection, such as the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), ECPAT International, Plan International and many others.

Sense of community

As a member of Child Helpline International, you can gain knowledge without having to reinvent the wheel. Child helplines can look to each other for ideas and content. Being a member of the network provides a **sense of community** on a regional and global level. Through **International and Regional Consultations**, our members can interact, exchange ideas and, more importantly, work towards a common goal: improving the lives of children and young people.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building

Our network brings child helplines from all around the world closer together, enabling them to share knowledge and best practice on the different ways they operate child helplines. We organise **International and Regional Consultations** where members come to meet, discuss emerging trends in child protection, and share experience on specific topics such as approaches to counselling, data collection, monitoring and evaluating services, assessing impact, and so on, and we convene **Communities of Practice** on specific, thematic aspects concerning child helplines' work.

In addition, we assess our members' needs and support them regularly with publications, toolkits, manuals and guidelines, webinars and eLearnings on topics that can support their work and help them to build their capacity.



Added value for members

- Invitations to International and Regional Consultations.
- Voting rights at the General Assembly of Child Helplines that takes place every three years.
- Eligibility for positions on our Supervisory Board, or in our Advisory Councils or Taskforces.
- Access to our network of child helpline members all around the world.
- Access to the data provided by our child helpline members.
- Opportunity for exchanges with other child helplines within the network, capacity-building training for staff members, and joint advocacy with our partners.
- Support in advocacy activities and influence in policy making.
- Networking opportunities and contact with high-level officials in the child protection sector.
- Use of the Child Helpline International brand, signifying quality of services.

Types of membership

There are currently two types of membership:

- **Full Membership** — for existing, established child helplines who meet our membership criteria and requirements.
- **Provisional Membership** — for organisations in the process of starting up a child helpline, or aiming to do so in the near future.

For more detailed information, please see the document “Membership Criteria”.

How to become a Child Helpline International member

Fill in the **Application Form** and sent it to the **Membership Manager, Steve Erwood, at steve@childhelplineinternational.org**, together with the applicable supporting documents.