



# Code of Good Conduct

Each member of the Federation COC Netherlands – including all 20 local/regional COC organisations, the Federation office and the youth organisation Expresso – is subject to the same Code of Good Conduct. This Code includes a set of rules of conduct by means of which COC wants to promote good behaviour and provide a safe place for everyone. As part of our determined efforts to eliminate unwelcome behaviour, we also have an independent complaints committee (*klachtencommissie*) that serves the entire Federation. Anyone with questions regarding unwelcome behaviour within the organisation will also have the opportunity to discuss this with one of the Federation's confidential advisors.

## Rules of conduct at COC

COC offers a safe place to everyone who comes there: from occasional visitors or participants in COC activities to its volunteers and employees. The safe space means that people treat each other with respect, with integrity and with a cooperative spirit, so that everyone can work together in a positive and responsible way. To ensure such a safe space we have formulated the following rules for everyone in the form of personal statements:

1. I accept and respect everyone and I do not discriminate against anyone. Everyone counts within the organisation.
2. I do not make assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
3. I take into account any boundaries indicated by the other person.
4. I do not harass anyone.
5. I do not harm anyone.
6. I do not insult anyone or tell jokes or make comments about other people.
7. I treat any information I receive from other people as confidential.
8. I do not ignore anyone.
9. I do not participate in bullying or laughing or gossiping about people.
10. I do not fight, I do not use violence, and I do not threaten others.
11. I do not get too close to anyone and I do not touch anyone against their will.
12. I do not give anyone unwelcome sexual attention.
13. I do not ask inappropriate questions or make unwelcome comments about anyone's personal life or appearance.
14. I make it clear to others where my own personal boundaries lie, and I confront anyone who goes too far in relation to those.
15. I help others to keep to these rules, and I confront anyone who does not keep to them.
16. I do not abuse my position of power in any way.
17. I deal responsibly with the resources of the organisation.

### Confidential advisors

Would you like to have a confidential conversation in relation to any of these rules of conduct? If your local/regional COC organisation does not have a confidential adviser (*vertrouwenspersoon*) of its own, please feel free to contact one of the confidential advisors of the Federation COC Netherlands. You can do this by phone: (020) 623 4596 or by email:



[vertrouwenspersoon@coc.nl](mailto:vertrouwenspersoon@coc.nl). [Note: For a confidential discussion about sexual orientation and gender identity, you can contact [Switchboard](#).]

### **Independent Complaints Committee**

If you have a complaint, please contact COC's independent Complaints Committee via [klachtencommissie@coc.nl](mailto:klachtencommissie@coc.nl).

### Confidential advisors

Each member of the Federation COC Netherlands, including all 20 local/regional COC organisations, the Federation office and the youth organisation Expresso, is subject to the same Code of Good Conduct. This Code includes a set of rules of conduct by means of which COC wants to promote good behaviour and provide a safe place for everyone. Anyone with questions regarding unwelcome behaviour within the Federation will also have the opportunity to discuss this with one of the following confidential advisors.

- **Joyce van Solinge**
- **Meine Willem Dijkstra**
- **Johan Baas**

Joyce, Meine Willem and Johan are all certified confidential advisors, affiliated with the National Association of Confidential Advisors (LVVV). As former board members of COC Kennemerland and COC Amsterdam, respectively, both Joyce and Meine Willem are very familiar with the culture within COC. Johan is also well acquainted with COC, having played an active role for many years at COC'S Switchboard (information and help line). None of these advisors currently has any other active role within COC.

### **Contact**

If you want to get in touch with a confidential advisor (*vertrouwenspersoon*), please send an email with your phone number to [vertrouwenspersoon@coc.nl](mailto:vertrouwenspersoon@coc.nl). You can also call the Federation COC Netherlands at (020) 623 4596. You need only ask to speak to a confidential advisor. If you wish, you can even indicate your preference to speak to a man or a woman. Your name and phone number will be recorded and you will be called back as soon as possible. You do not need to tell us in the phone call or e-mail what you want to discuss with the confidential advisor. You will do that during the confidential conversation itself.

In order to fully eliminate unwelcome behaviour, COC also has an [independent Complaints Committee](#) (*klachtencommissie*) that serves the Federation as a whole.



## Complaints Committee

COC has an independent Complaints Committee (*klachtencommissie*) that serves all member organisations within the Federation. On this page you can read how you can make a complaint and how the Complaints Committee will deal with that.

### Making a complaint

- All complaints must be made in writing. How you do that is up to you (there is no set form to fill out). Please describe the event(s) as carefully as possible in your own words. You can find the address of the independent Complaints Committee at the bottom of this page.
- When the Complaints Committee has received your written complaint, they will notify you of that in writing and inform you of their next steps.
- The Complaints Committee will read your complaint and determine whether or not they can take it into consideration. The Committee will only consider complaints that can be judged against the [rules of conduct](#) that apply (since 1 January 2016) to all member organisations within the Federation. If that is not the case with your complaint, the Committee will refer you to a different body within the Federation. The Complaints Committee will not deal with complaints about membership records or about how a COC building is cleaned, for example.
- If the Complaints Committee does take your complaint into consideration, you will be invited to further explain your complaint to the Complaints Committee in person. In that case, you may ask a confidential advisor to be there with you.

### Fair hearing

- The person your complaint is about (the defendant) will be informed that the Committee has taken a complaint about him/her into consideration. He/she will also be told who made the complaint. In addition, he/she will be informed of the procedure and given an opportunity to explain his/her own position in writing.
- To allow for a fair hearing, the Complaints Committee will invite both you (as the plaintiff or person making the complaint) and the defendant to come explain your respective sides of the matter further in person. The defendant will also be allowed to bring a confidential advisor to assist him/her during the hearing.
- It is possible that the hearing before the Complaints Committee will result in a satisfactory solution for you (the plaintiff). If so, that will resolve the case. It is also possible that Complaints Committee will decide that the defendant's conduct must be penalised.

### Findings of the Complaints Committee

- The Complaints Committee will report its findings in writing to you (the plaintiff), to the defendant and to the board of the legal entity (i.e. member organisation) concerned. Their report will also contain recommendations for measures to be taken by that board. In effect, the report will notify the board that there is a problem with a particular individual (e.g. volunteer/employee/visitor) within their organisation.
- The involvement of the independent Complaints Committee is a serious step. It means that you are being taken seriously as a plaintiff. It also means there could be serious consequences for the defendant.



- The director of the Federation office (COC Netherlands) will receive a copy of the recommendations and will make sure that the board of the legal entity (i.e. the member organisation) concerned will follow up on those recommendations.

### **Duration of the procedure**

- Acknowledgement that the complaint has been received: within 2 working days.
- Notification of the plaintiff about whether or not the Complaints Committee will take his/her complaint into consideration: within 2 weeks.
- Notification of the defendant about the complaint and the defendant's opportunity to respond to the accusation in writing: within 2 weeks.
- Hearing of the Complaints Committee at which both parties can explain their respective position: 6 weeks, with a possible extension of 2 weeks if otherwise not technically possible.
- Submission of the final report on the Complaints Committee's decision and recommendations to the plaintiff, the defendant and the board of the legal entity concerned: within 2 weeks after the hearing.

### **Confidentiality**

The only people who will have access to information regarding the complaint are the members of the Complaints Committee, the official secretary of the Federation, the plaintiff and the defendant (and their respective confidential advisors, if any). The Complaints Committee will share its findings with the board of the legal entity concerned and with the director of the Federation (COC Netherlands).

### **Members of the Complaints Committee**

The Complaints Committee of the Federation COC Netherlands consists of the following individuals:

- Christine Linzel, head of volunteer support at De Zonnebloem (an organisation that pairs volunteers with people with a handicap), secretary of Stichting Tuchtrect Vrijwilligerswerk (an organisation concerned with disciplinary matters involving volunteers), board member of the Association of Dutch Voluntary Effort Organizations (NOV), and chair of the supervisory committee of Transport & Support Services of the Custodial Institutions Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security.
- Cor Petiet, a lecturer in criminal law at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, chair of the Complaints Committee of Schiphol Airport, and part-time judge with the Amsterdam District Court.
- Achmed Baayens, a criminal lawyer in Utrecht and member of the supervisory committee of Transport & Support Services of the Custodial Institutions Agency of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security.

In order to guarantee their impartiality, none of the members of the Complaints Committee holds any other active position within the Federation. The Committee receives official support from Jan-Willem de Bruin, staff member for Federation Affairs at COC Netherlands.



### **Annual report**

Each year, the Complaints Committee provides the General Assembly (i.e. the Federation's highest body) with a written report. Their report includes an anonymised list of all the complaints they dealt with in the previous year and their recommendations with regard to those complaints. This reporting to the highest level of the Federation underlines how important the Federation considers it to ensure a safe space for everyone, to stimulate a culture of good behaviour and to promote the self-cleansing capacity of the organisation.

### **Contact with the Complaints Committee**

You can contact the Complaints Committee either by e-mail ([klachtencommissie@coc.nl](mailto:klachtencommissie@coc.nl)) or by regular post to the following address:

COC Nederland  
Attn: Klachtencommissie  
Postbus 3836  
1001 AP Amsterdam