

UPDATED NEWS RELEASE

Statement by Tony Silcock, Chief Officer of Youth Initiatives in response to historical allegations in Youth Initiatives West Belfast.

"In recent weeks we have become aware of disturbing allegations made against former Youth Initiatives Director, relating to a time following his employment at YI coming to an end in 2001.

We understand that these allegations are currently being dealt with through the appropriate authorities in the United States, and do not pertain to events connected with our organisation.

As soon as we became aware of these events, we followed our safeguarding procedures and also reported these to the relevant authorities to seek guidance and advice. To our knowledge and to date we have had no concerns raised about Jamie's conduct during his employment with YI.

We also feel that we should advise you that, in recent days, information relating to a former youth worker in West Belfast, was published online. In 1998 it came to light that this youth worker had been engaging in inappropriate behaviour and relationships. At the time, we followed our safeguarding procedures and he was dismissed. This was also reported to and dealt with the by the proper authorities and governmental bodies at the time.

Safeguarding is of paramount importance in all that we do as a youth organisation in interacting with children and adults, as demonstrated through our safeguarding processes. We take child protection extremely seriously and do our utmost to provide safe, secure environments for all children and young people.

We have made contact with social services and the Charity Commission in recent days to appraise them of these matters that have come to our attention and have received assurances that there is nothing more that we need to be doing as an organisation at this time.

We deeply regret any distress or concern these reports may have caused. If you have any concerns regarding the contents of this communication, please could we request that you contact Tony Silcock at tony@youthinitiatives.com or the appropriate authorities.

For further information please visit the Servant of the Word website
<https://servantsoftheword.org>

Ends

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