

NIGHTLINE

Constitution

Nightline - Southampton University Students'
Union

November 2013

DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Note: A decision of the nightline committee on the 4th June 2014 actioned Emily Shepherd to change the constitution to allow the publishing of minutes. This document is the current constitution, but it is going through the process of being rewritten into a SUSU By-Law and a set of policies.

History

Guidance and backbone for this document was taken from Sheffield and Lancaster Nightline.

Initial Draft February 2006

1st version complete August 2007

2nd version complete May 2008

3rd version complete November 2011

4th version complete May 2012

5th Version complete October 2013

Further change history should be noted here with details of exact changes entered in the table below.

STORAGE

This document should be stored in three places:

- In the nightline documents on the university computer network
- On the office computer
- In the filestore or three rings

DETAILED CHANGES

Date	Details
May 2000 – Feb 2006	Framework of document provided by Sheffield and Lancaster Nightline
Feb 2006	Initial draft of Southampton Nightline Constitution by Tom Bandy
July 2006	Draft revised by Edwin Ambrose
July/August 2006	Discussed and revised by the Committee
September 2006	Made available on the Nightline website
October 2006	Officially passed by the committee
March 2008	Constitution reviewed and edited by the Committee
May 2008	Reviewed Constitution was officially passed by the Committee
November 2011	1.2.6 – Deleted Updated requirements to become experienced Addition of 3.3.4 Addition of 3.4.4 Edited 4.12.6 so parent isn't obliged to complete Sunday shift Minor corrections to document control information Changes passed by nightline committee and union welfare committee

May 2012-Oct 2012

2.1.4 and 5 altered
Sections 4.9 and 4.10 combined as
Nightline Representative now created from
National and Union Representative
2.4.1 SUIAC changed to The Advice Centre
4.9.1 e) needs reviewing!
4.13.1 – not achieving

October 2013

Throughout VP Welfare and communities
or societies changed to VP Welfare
Sections 1.2.4, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3.5, 2.4.2,
2.4.6, 2.6.5, 2.6.6, 2.3, 2.9.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.4,
3.1.5, 3.2.1. b and c, 3.2.2 a, 3.3.3, 3.6.2 all
had minor edits made.
Section 2.2 Selection process was added
Section 4 treasurer removed
External Co-ordinator, New Media officer
and Rota Manager added.
Section 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.7 changed
Section 5 Handling information added
Section 6 Finances changed
Sections 9.1.1 and 9.2.6 added
Sections 10 and 11 changed

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1 PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF NIGHTLINE

1.1 NIGHTLINE MISSION STATEMENT

- 1.1.1 Southampton University Students' Union Nightline (from here-on referred to as "Nightline") is a telephone-based information and listening service that exists to provide a confidential and anonymous service open to all students and run by trained student volunteers.
- 1.1.2 The service will follow 4 principles of non-judgmentality, non-directness, anonymity and confidentiality.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NIGHTLINE

- 1.2.1 The primary aim of Nightline is to be available to the students of Southampton, between 8.00pm and 8.00am during term time to listen, and to provide a wide range of information.
- 1.2.2 The caller does not lose the freedom to make their own decisions, and is free to break contact at any point. Nightline volunteers will not influence a caller's decisions.
- 1.2.3 Everything a caller says is completely confidential within the organisation, except in certain circumstances as specified in our confidentiality policy.
- 1.2.4 In some circumstances, calls may be discussed within the organisation, but not outside except in exceptional circumstances (See Confidentiality Policy).
- 1.2.5 A volunteer taking a call will be guided and supported by the other Volunteers, both during and after the call.
- 1.2.6 Volunteers are forbidden to impose their own beliefs (e.g. political, religious, moral etc) on callers.
- 1.2.7 All members of Southampton Nightline will abide by its constitution and policies.

1.3 AFFILIATION

- 1.3.1 Southampton Nightline is affiliated to the Nightline association and will abide by its constitution. Southampton Nightline will also pay the annual Membership fee when requested. This will ensure that Southampton Nightline is authorised to vote at the Nightline Association AGM.

2 MEMBERSHIP

2.1 NEW MEMBERS

In order to become a member of Nightline a volunteer must:

- 2.1.1 Be a current undergraduate or postgraduate student at the University of Southampton or one of the Union Sabbatical Officers.
- 2.1.2 Satisfy the committee that they possess the qualities and skills to be a reliable and competent member. (See selection process section 2.2).
- 2.1.3 Complete a training programme as defined by the current committee.

In order for a new volunteer to be able to take calls he/she must:

- 2.1.4 Satisfy the committee that they are capable of running a shift and taking calls without an experienced member present by completing training and taking a practise call with the Training Officers.
- 2.1.5 Have completed at least 1 shift and taken a call in that shift with an experienced member.

2.2 SELECTION PROCESS

- 2.2.1 Selection process is carried out by committee members. Each prospective Nightline volunteer is interview by a committee member to check:
 - a) Their ability to speak English fluently.
 - b) That they satisfy the committee they do not exhibit or allude to any inappropriate , harmful or negative attitudes towards Nightline.
 - c) That they have a good understanding of what their role in Nightline would be.

The committee may also conduct role plays to assess prospective students

- 2.2.2 If a candidate is unsuccessful in meeting the above criteria they may be recommended to wait another year to join Nightline or to volunteer elsewhere.
- 2.2.3 If a candidate disagrees with the Committee members' decision, this will be considered under the external complaint procedure. (See section 9.2).

2.3 CONTINUING MEMBERSHIP AFTER FINISHING UNIVERSITY

- 2.3.1 An individual who is leaving, or has left, University may continue to be a member of Nightline.
- 2.3.2 Non-student members are not allowed a committee position.
- 2.3.3 Non-student members are not allowed to take calls.
- 2.3.4 Non-student members must not exceed 10% of the total Southampton Nightline membership.
- 2.3.5 Non student members must provide an active contribution to Nightline if they wish to remain a member.

2.4 LEAVING

- 2.4.1 A member may resign from Nightline at any time by submitting two weeks written notice to the Committee, unless membership is reviewed as in Section 2.7 when members may be asked to leave.
- 2.4.2 Upon leaving, a member must surrender any property belonging to Nightline to a committee member. The member's details must be removed from all current member listings. Access to 3rings website, Facebook groups and the key list must end.
- 2.4.3 At the end of the year a leaving or recently left member will be presented with a certificate marking their service to Nightline at a General Meeting, providing they adhere to the responsibilities laid out in Section 3.1. The ex-Volunteer will also be eligible to receive an Excellence in Volunteering Award at the ball in the Summer Term. The recipients will be selected by the Committee.

2.5 HONORARY MEMBERS

- 2.5.1 The Nightline Contact at The Advice Centre, the Counselling Service and the Union Vice-President for Welfare are considered to be honorary members of Nightline and must abide by its constitution and its policies, particularly in the case of any confidential material they are made aware of.

2.6 OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST ANOTHER MEMBER

Should there be any doubt as to the suitability of an individual, or a group of individuals, to continue as members of Nightline then:

- 2.6.1 One of the Coordinators should be informed of the reason for these doubts in **writing**. (If the individual in question is a coordinator you may go to another member of the committee, this follows through for 2.5.2 as well.)
- 2.6.2 One of the Coordinators will then endeavour to substantiate the facts as discreetly as possible, by consulting:
- a) the member(s) in question
 - b) the member(s) making the allegation
 - c) any other relevant persons
- 2.6.3 The individual, or individuals, in question should then have their membership brought up for review under Section 2.6.
- 2.6.4 All members of the committee will endeavour to be objective in any complaint situation. Where impartiality is under question, another member of Nightline will be asked to act as a mediator.
- 2.6.5 Complaints will be dealt with within 10 working days.
- 2.6.6 Any complaint from a caller will be dealt with according to the external complaint procedure. (See section 9.2).

2.7 REVIEW OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S MEMBERSHIP

The Coordinators will call a meeting of the whole committee, excluding any member whose membership is under review, in order to discuss what action needs to be taken. This action can take three forms:

- 2.7.1 No further action
- 2.7.2 One of the coordinators be delegated to caution the member in question
- 2.7.3 Review of the individual's membership at the next suitable Committee Meeting, subject to the following procedure:
- a) The meeting will be opened.
 - b) The Chair will inform the meeting of the need to review a named individual's membership.
 - c) The reasons for review must be stated to all present, including the individual in question.
 - d) The individual concerned will then be allowed to state their position.
 - e) The member in question will then be asked to leave the room with a

member of the committee.

- f) Further discussion may take place in the person's absence but no new facts revealed.
- g) A vote will then be taken on whether the person should be allowed to remain a member of Nightline. Any decision requiring the person to leave must carry a two-third majority.
- h) If it is decided that the individual should leave then they will be excluded from the rest of the meeting and must surrender all property belonging to Nightline to one of the coordinators as soon as possible.
- i) A decision requiring an individual to leave Nightline will take effect immediately.

2.8 REJOINING

2.8.1 If an ex-member, who left Nightline for any reason, wishes to rejoin after more than 6 months from the time that they left the organisation, then they must reapply as a new member under Section 2.1. This will be at the discretion of the committee.

2.9 TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER NIGHTLINE.

2.9.1 A former member of another Nightline may become a member of Southampton Nightline by applying as a new member under Section 2.1.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

3.1 DUTIES

- 3.1.1 Every member is expected to carry out a minimum of 3 shifts a term.
- 3.1.2 If a member fails to carry out sufficient shifts for two terms (in a twelve month period) without good reason, then they can have their membership reviewed under Section 2.6.
- 3.1.3 If a member cannot make a duty that they have signed up for then it is their responsibility to find someone to replace them, and to immediately inform the Parent and their duty partner of that change.
- 3.1.4 If a member fails to turn up for two shifts without good explanation in the same semester it will result in a formal warning issued by a member of the committee.
- 3.1.5 If a member fails to turn up for three duties without good explanation in the same Semester they will have their membership reviewed under Section 2.6.
- 3.1.6 On arriving at the office members on duty are expected to sign-in in the relevant book.
- 3.1.7 In the morning following a duty members are expected to:
 - a) Secure all confidential information e.g. Sign-in book
 - b) Check that the doors are locked on leaving
 - c) Return the keys

3.2 COMPULSORY MEETINGS

3.2.1 Compulsory meetings are:

- a) any specified training meetings or events including on-going training sessions
- b) committee meetings (for members of the committee only. Other members may attend but do not have to)
- c) the A.G.M (See section 7)

3.2.2 If no written apologies are given to the Secretary in advance, then failure to attend:

- a) three meetings in the period of one year will result in a formal warning issued by a member of the committee
- b) four meetings will result in the person in question's membership being reviewed under section 2.6

3.3 ANONYMITY

- 3.3.1 Volunteers shall keep information about their involvement in Nightline restricted to as few people as possible outside of Nightline.
- 3.3.2 Volunteers shall not disclose details of other Volunteers to anyone outside Nightline, nor shall they disclose the location of the Nightline office to anyone.
- 3.3.3 Caller/Volunteer contact must only be through the service of Nightline.
- 3.3.4 Volunteers should not give out their own name whilst taking calls, but instead use "nightline".

3.4 NON-DIRECTNESS

- 3.4.1 Callers have responsibility at all times for their own decisions.
- 3.4.2 Volunteers shall not give direct advice to callers, nor seek to influence callers' decisions. If appropriate, possible alternatives of action may be suggested, but no preference offered by the Volunteer.

3.5 NON-JUDGEMENTALITY

- 3.5.1 Nightline accepts callers as individual human beings of equal value. Volunteers shall not do or say anything to imply disapproval, nor shall they seek to apply their own moral, religious or political outlook to a caller's situation.
- 3.5.2 Members should not categorise or judge callers. Every call is to be treated on an individual basis.

4 DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NIGHTLINE COMMITTEE

4.1 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 4.1.1 An Annual General Meeting of all Volunteers shall elect a committee, at the AGM under section 6. The Committee will serve from April 1st to March 31st, a period of 12 months. This committee shall be known as the Nightline Committee, and shall consist of the following positions :
 - a) Coordinators – (one External One internal)
 - b) Secretary
 - c) 2 x Training Officers

- d) 2 x Publicity Officers
- e) Social Secretary
- f) National Nightline Representative
- g) New Media Officer
- h) Rota Manager

4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.2.1 To run for a position on committee the Nightline volunteer must have completed at least one term as a member of Nightline and completed at least two duties, except where deemed acceptable by the current coordinator(s).
- 4.2.2 Each committee position is to be held by one person, unless stated otherwise, but each committee member may hold more than one position.
- 4.2.3 Each committee position can be held by any member of Nightline unless stated otherwise.
- 4.2.4 Parenting (see section 4.14).
- 4.2.5 Following are the duties and responsibilities of the Nightline Committee members listed in 4.1.1.
 - a) Produce a written report for the Nightline AGM.
 - b) Where more than one person holds a position, only one report is necessary.
 - c) Check and reply to all e-mails relevant to the member's role on the committee.

4.3 STUDENT LEADER (EXTERNAL COORDINATOR)

- 4.3.1 The Student Leader is to act as the public face for the organisation and be the first point of contact for Nightline within the Student's Union, and to work closely with the Students' Union Vice-President Welfare and the Students' Union Advice Centre Manager.
- 4.3.2 This position will be voted for in a campus wide election.
- 4.3.3 If the Student Leader selected is not a Nightliner they must attend October's initial training.
- 4.3.4 If the Nightline committee do not feel that the student leader selected is appropriate for the role they may put a formal complaint into the Student's Union.
- 4.3.5 As the public face of Nightline the Student Leader must not receive calls.

Responsibilities include:

- a) To Coordinate the operation of Southampton Nightline
- b) Support and Deliver the work of the Student Life Zone by attending the zone meetings
- c) Chair all committee meetings and the AGM, and shall ensure that such meetings are conducted fairly and in good order, according to the Constitution of Nightline
- d) Be responsible for internal discipline.
- e) Handle external complaints according to the complaint procedure.
- f) Establish links with and promote Nightline to other Union and University groups.
- g) Attend at least one Nightline conference per semester as the Southampton Nightline representative, where such conferences are run and where they are felt to be relevant to Nightline, and encourage other members to attend.
- h) Attend the Nightline Association AGM.
- i) Retain and promote links with Nightline Association, and other external organisations.
- j) collecting any post relevant to Nightline, checking the e-mail account regularly, and

dealing with any general correspondence pertaining to the organisation

4.4 INTERNAL COORDINATOR

4.4.1 The Coordinator is responsible for volunteer welfare. The responsibilities include:

- a) Overseeing volunteer welfare.
- b) Being the first point of contact for volunteers with any welfare issues.
- c) Assist with day to day running of Nightline.
- d) Oversee Parent of the week
- e) Check the Office is up to standard
- f) Check volunteers are meeting their responsibilities.
- g) Maintaining up-to-date membership records
- h) Ensuring the list of volunteers to collect the keys is kept up to date

4.5 SECRETARY

4.5.1 The Secretary shall be responsible for:

- a) Organising dates and times for committee meetings
- b) Keeping minutes of all meetings
- c) Minuting any finances that have been passed by the committee and sending them to the Advice Centre (advice@susu.org).
- d) Keeping a record of attendance at meetings
- e) Booking rooms and facilities for Nightline use
- f) Checking the filestore on 3rings is up to date every 3 months.
- g) Backing up the information on the filestore onto Dropbox.
- h) Information stored on volunteers (see section 5)

4.6 TRAINING OFFICER(S)

4.6.1 There can be up to two training officers.

4.6.2 The Training Officer(s) shall be responsible for:

- a) Arranging, organising and supervising the initial training sessions, the on-going monthly trainings and the in-office training.
- b) Running, and arranging for others to run training throughout the year.
- c) Producing new ideas - both topics for and ways of training.
- d) Ensuring that speakers respect Nightline's anonymity.

4.7 PUBLICITY OFFICER(S):

4.7.1 There can be up to two publicity officers.

4.7.2 The Publicity Officer(s) shall be responsible for:

- a) Publicising the service to such persons as the organisation aims to help and in order to recruit new volunteers, and raising the general awareness of Nightline as an organisation.
- b) Arranging the printing and regular supply and distribution of publicity material, such as posters, stickers, leaflets etc.
- c) Coming up with new ideas for and improving the current publicity as far as possible.
- d) Creating a plan, co-ordinating and preparing for Freshers' Week, Refreshers' Week, exam weeks and awareness week.

4.8 SOCIAL SECRETARY

4.8.1 The social secretary shall be responsible for:

- a) The organisation of at least two Nightline social events per term.
- b) Taking into account the views and wishes of all Nightline members when deciding on social activities.

4.9 NATIONAL NIGHTLINE REPRESENTATIVE

4.9.1 The Nightline Representative shall be responsible for:

- a) Communicating with the Nightline Association and other local Nightlines, including checking the association's bulletin board regularly.
- b) Informing the committee of any decisions made by the Nightline association, and reviewing the minutes of meetings and bi-monthly reports provided by members of the Nightline Association Executive Committee.
- c) Attend the Nightline association AGM and Regional conferences.
- d) Ensure contact details with the Nightline association are kept up to date.
- e) Preparing statistical feedback on calls as required by the union.

4.10 NEW MEDIA OFFICER

4.10.1 The Nightline Representative shall be responsible for:

- a) Checking the website up to date every 3 months, the information on it and the links.
- b) Making sure the phone works and has an up to date message.

4.11 ROTA MANAGER

4.11.1 To keep the rota and Parent of the week positions filled.

4.11.2 To autofill the rota when few people have signed up to shift.

4.11.3 Inform volunteers the rota has been autofilled and get them to confirm their shifts

4.12 ANONYMITY

4.12.1 Committee members may discard their anonymity in the capacity of their role and only when absolutely necessary and with the permission of the Coordinator(s).

4.13 PARENTING

4.13.1 Every week (Sunday – Saturday) during term-time (including Freshers' Week) there will be one Parent. This shall be a member of the committee. Unless numbers are insufficient, no committee member should be Parent more than once per term.

4.13.2 The duties of the Parent are as follows:

4.13.3 The Parent is responsible for providing food and drink in the office for volunteers.

4.13.4 Money for this can be claimed back from the Advice Centre in SUSU (see Section 6.1).

- 4.13.5 The Parent is responsible for cleaning all sets of bedding during their week on duty.
- 4.13.6 They should ensure there are clean duvet covers, pillow cases and sheets on beds for Sunday night's duty. Clean sheets should be put on the beds during the week at the Parent's discretion.
- 4.13.7 The Parent is responsible for the general condition of the office and should ensure that it is in an acceptable condition for duties.
- 4.13.8 In order to help achieve points 1-4, it is recommended that the Parent shall be on duty on the Sunday night at the beginning of their week.
- 4.13.9 The Parent shall be the primary support contact for volunteers for that week. If the Parent is unable to help, the parent or volunteer should contact a coordinator.
- 4.13.10 The assignment of Parents shall, initially, be done by the Coordinators.

4.14 ADDING EXTRA MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE

- 4.14.1 If the Committee decides to add extra Officers to the Committee or to fill vacant posts, nominations should be collected, and a vote taken at a suitable Committee Meeting following the procedures in section 6.1.4
- 4.14.2 Committee positions must be advertised to all members no less than one month before voting.

4.15 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 4.15.1 Committee Meetings should be held fortnightly.
- 4.15.2 All Committee Members must attend all Committee Meetings, as specified in section 3.2.
- 4.15.3 All members are entitled to attend Committee Meetings, and it is the coordinator's job to inform everyone in advance of where and when the meeting is to be held and any major topics that are to be discussed.
- 4.15.4 Any votes taken are to be carried by a simple majority, unless otherwise stated.
- 4.15.5 No decisions may be made unless there is a minimum of half the members of the committee present, and at least one coordinator.

4.16 RESIGNATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

- 4.16.1 A member may resign from the Committee by submitting 2 weeks written notice to one of the Coordinators.
- 4.16.2 Upon resignation all items belonging to that position must be surrendered to a coordinator.
- 4.16.3 A vacant Committee post may be filled at the Committee's discretion, the election to be ratified by a simple majority at the next Committee meeting.

5 HANDLING INFORMATION

5.1 INFORMATION STORAGE

5.1.1 Information on calls and volunteers both on paper will be shredded after 5 years and will be removed from online storage on 3Rings.

5.1.2 Information will be held at the Advice Centre and processed with accordance to the Data Protection Act.

5.1.3 Volunteers may see information stored on them by emailing a request to nline@soton.ac.uk

6 FINANCES

6.1 FINANCES

6.1.1 Day to day running costs are funded by the Student's Union.

The process is:

- a) Approval of items to be purchased at a committee meeting .
- b) Minutes sent to the Advice Centre.
- c) Item purchased by the committee member.
- d) Receipts/proof of purchase to be taken to the Advice Centre.
- e) Once processed the money can then be collected from the Student's Union accounts Office by the committee member making the claim.

7 THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.1 AGM

7.1.1 The A.G.M must be held during the second semester of the academic year; no fewer than 11 months and no more than 13 months after the previous AGM.

7.1.2 All members must be given no less than 2 months' notice of the date and time of the AGM.

7.1.3 All members are expected to attend the A.G.M, unless they have submitted written notice to the Secretary. Non-attendance may result in membership being reviewed under section 2.6.

7.1.4 The A.G.M should incorporate the following items:

- a) Minutes of the last A.G.M
- b) Coordinator(s) report
- d) Elections for the new Committee Officers
- e) Opportunity for all members of Nightline to ask questions of the committee about the running of the organisation.

7.1.5 The process for electing new Committee Officers is:

- a) All committee positions should be advertised to all members no less than one month before voting.
- b) All nominations should be in the Nightline email account 1 week before voting. Late nominations will be considered by the Coordinators.
- c) Voting is to be by way of a secret paper ballot.
- d) A simple majority secures election.
- e) Proxy votes are not permissible.

8 AMENDING THIS CONSTITUTION

8.1 AMENDING

- 8.1.1 This constitution may be amended by a majority at a committee meeting. If the committee deem the matter sufficiently important, a General Meeting of all Nightline volunteers will be called to vote.

9 POLICY DOCUMENTS

9.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 9.1.1 Nightline will follow SUSU's Valuing Diversity Policy.
- 9.1.2 Nightline will endeavour not to discriminate against potential volunteers and callers for any reason. The selection of Nightline volunteers will be based purely on their ability to carry out their responsibilities as a member of Nightline.

9.2 EXTERNAL COMPLAINTS

- 9.2.1 Any complaints from callers should be taken seriously and used as a tool for improving the service of our organisation. The following procedure should be adhered to in the event of a complaint:
- 9.2.2 Potential caller should be made aware that if that if they feel they have reason to complain, they may do so by either:
- a) Emailing the coordinators via. the Nightline email account
 - b) Contacting Nightline direct. The Volunteer receiving the complaint should take down details from the caller over the phone.
 - c) Following SUSU's complaints procedure
- 9.2.3 The Coordinators will investigate the complaint, and if necessary, the person who took the call may have their membership reviewed under section 2.7 of the constitution.
- 9.2.4 The issue that the complaint raises will be brought up in training to remind all members of what to do in that situation in the future.
- 9.2.5 A Coordinator will write a letter of reply to the person who complained, to inform them of the action taken. This may be passed on by the Union Vice-President Welfare.
- 9.2.6 Complaints will be acted upon within 10 working days.

9.3 CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- 9.3.1 See our separate Confidentiality Policy

10 OFFICE PROCEDURES

- 10.1.1 The phone must not be answered during the day, i.e., between 8 am and 8pm.
- 10.1.2 When on duty, alcohol may not be consumed. .

10.1.3 A caller may be on the phone as long as is required.

10.1.4 Reverse charge calls should not be accepted under any circumstances.

10.1.5 A Volunteer should never hang up the phone before a caller unless the caller is deemed to be abusing the service or the volunteer.

11 ABUSE OF THE SERVICE

8.4.1 Nightline is a non-judgemental service and Volunteers should treat every call equally. However, there are times when a call can become obscene, abusive or manipulative. Such calls are not tolerated by Nightline and if a call of such a nature is taken, the call may be refused by a volunteer, and details of the call may be shared with other Nightline organisations.