

Complaints/Compliments Policy/Procedure

Connect (North Yorkshire) Ltd aims to provide families and referrers with the best possible service. We value openness and honesty, and your opinions, comments and suggestions are always very welcome.

Sometimes, however, we may get things wrong, and you have a right to make a complaint. We view complaints as an opportunity to learn and to improve our services.

Before making a complaint, it is important to understand that reports of supervised child contact sessions have to be independent. This means that parents are unlikely to have input and may not agree with everything in a report. If a parent is concerned about anything in a report, they can raise their concerns at Court rather than with the service. Connect is not obliged to alter a report if asked to do so by a parent.

If you have a complaint about our service, we would like to sort it out as soon as possible. Many complaints can be resolved informally, if you feel able, speak to the member of staff who is working with you. If you wish to make a complaint you will need to be clear about what you are hoping to get from the complaint and what action they want the service to take. Where cases are in the court process, information relating to the case remains the property of the court and should not therefore be shared without the specific consent of the court.

There are three stages to Connect's complaints procedure:

Stage 1 – Frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly; it is most likely to be face to face or over the telephone. If you are unhappy with our response to your complaint at this stage, you can ask for your complaint to be considered at the next stage.

Stage 2 – Investigation:

Your complaint should be put in writing within three months of working with us and sent to the Manager via email to enquiries.connect@gmail.com. It is helpful if you clearly state

- what you are unhappy about, and
- give details about what has happened and when,
- why something has caused you concern and, if applicable,
- what you would like to happen.

We will acknowledge your complaint within one week and let you know when you can expect a reply.

Role of the Complainant: The complainant will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible.

- co-operate with the centre in seeking a solution to the complaint.
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint.
- ask for assistance as needed.
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect.
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Role of the Investigator: The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing an open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through
 - sensitive and thorough investigation to establish what has happened and who has been involved.
 - consideration of records and other relevant information.
 - analysing information.
 - liaising with the complainant as appropriate, to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

Stage 3 – Review:

If, after receiving our response to your complaint you remain unsatisfied, you can ask for the Complaints Officer to review your complaint.

If possible, you will receive a reply to your complaint within one month; this should

- describe the nature of your complaint,
- action taken to investigate it,
- the conclusions from the investigation and
- any action taken because of your complaint.

The investigator should:

- conduct investigations with an open mind.
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any further complaint.
- be mindful of the timescales to respond.
- prepare a response that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

At each stage in the procedure, Connect wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation.
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur.

- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
- an undertaking to review policies in light of the complaint.
- an apology.

The decision taken at this stage is final.

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Variations to the complaint's procedure

The procedure may vary for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest or to ensure an independent investigation, for example.

Monitoring and learning

Complaints will be recorded and reported. Complaints are reviewed annually to identify the need for further action to improve the service.

Written records of all complaints, including any written legal or insurance responses, will be held in a confidential file.

If you believe that Connect did not handle your complaint in accordance with the complaints procedure, you can contact NACCC, Connect (North Yorkshire) Ltd is an accredited member of the National Association of Child Contact Centres. You may write to: The Chief Executive, NACCC, 26-34 Friar Lane, Nottingham NG1 6DQ

However, it should be noted that the role of NACCC in such cases will be to consider only whether Connect has adhered to the procedure. As a membership organisation NACCC has no responsibility for the staffing or day to day running of member centres, however they do advise, support, and accredit centres and require member centres to work to the highest standards.

If the complainant decides to escalate their concern to NACCC and the above stages are complete, they should complete the form available directly from NACCC and submit this to: contact@naccc.org.uk The form must only be submitted to NACCC after the enquiry has been fully exhausted and/or concluded by the centre and within a twelve-week timescale of the conclusion of stage 2. Additional information relating NACCC's role in complaints handling and oversight can be located here: <https://naccc.org.uk/for-parents/making-a-complaint/>

Alternatively, the complainant might choose to complain to the organisation that made the referral to that service (Eg Cafcass, FPAS, & The Family Court Welfare Service, Local Authorities, Courts, or other referring bodies and/or LADO and the ICO, whichever is applicable). They may also wish to seek legal advice.