

Forming Connections

Complaints Policy



Last reviewed: 25/09/2025

Next review due: 25/09/2026

Policy owner: Education Director

Applies to: All staff, contractors, volunteers, participants, parents/carers, and external partners

1. Policy Statement

At **Forming Connections**, we are committed to delivering high-quality education, training, and support services. We value feedback and take all concerns and complaints seriously.

We believe that most concerns can be resolved quickly and informally, but where this is not possible, we have a clear complaints procedure to ensure matters are addressed fairly, consistently, and transparently.

Complaints are seen as opportunities to **learn, improve, and strengthen trust** with our participants, staff, and partners.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to:

- Provide a clear and fair process for raising and resolving complaints.
 - Ensure complaints are handled promptly, respectfully, and without discrimination.
 - Distinguish between general complaints and safeguarding concerns.
 - Promote learning and service improvement through feedback.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to complaints made by:

- Participants, learners, or their parents/carers
- Staff, volunteers, or contractors
- Partner organisations or members of the public

It covers all areas of our work, including:

- Training and workshop delivery
- Consultancy services

- Behaviour of staff, contractors, or volunteers
- Administrative issues and communications

Safeguarding concerns are not dealt with under this policy, they should be reported immediately to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** following the Safeguarding Policy.

4. Definitions

- A **concern** is a matter that can usually be resolved quickly and informally.
 - A **complaint** is a formal expression of dissatisfaction that requires investigation and response under this policy.
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5. Principles

Our complaints process is based on the following principles:

- **Respect & sensitivity:** all complaints are handled with care and confidentiality.
 - **Accessibility:** anyone can raise a complaint verbally or in writing.
 - **Fairness & impartiality:** complaints are investigated objectively and without bias.
 - **Timeliness:** we aim to resolve complaints promptly at the appropriate level.
 - **Right to appeal:** complainants can appeal decisions if they are not satisfied.
 - **Learning & improvement:** we use complaints to strengthen our services.
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6. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made in any of the following ways:

- **Verbally** to a staff member or the Director
- **By email** to brenda@formingconnections.co.uk
- **In writing** to:
Brenda Keirnan (Complaints)
Forming Connections, Office 403, The Old Courthouse, 18-22 St Peters Courtyard,
Derby, DE11NN

If you need support to make a complaint (e.g. due to disability or language needs), please let us know and we will make reasonable adjustments.

7. Complaints Procedure

7.1 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Where possible, complaints should be raised directly with the relevant staff member or team as soon as the issue arises.

Most complaints can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion.

We aim to respond to informal complaints within **5 working days**.

7.2 Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a formal complaint in writing.

The complaint should include:

- The details of the issue
- What has been done to resolve it so far
- The desired outcome

Acknowledgement: We will acknowledge receipt within **5 working days**.

Investigation: The Complaints Lead or Director will investigate the issue, which may include speaking to those involved and reviewing records.

Response: A written response will be provided within **20 working days** of acknowledgement. If more time is needed, the complainant will be informed.

7.3 Stage 3 – Appeal

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 outcome, they may request an appeal in writing within **10 working days** of the decision.

The appeal will be reviewed by someone not previously involved in the complaint, such as a senior manager or external advisor.

A final written decision will be issued within **20 working days** of the appeal being lodged. This decision is final.

8. Safeguarding and Serious Concerns

Any complaint that involves an allegation of abuse, harm, or risk to a child or vulnerable adult will be referred **immediately** to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** and handled under safeguarding procedures.

We will follow statutory guidance and share information with external agencies (e.g. local authority, police) where required.

9. Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled with discretion and shared only with those who need to know to investigate and resolve the matter.

Records will be kept securely and in line with our **Data Protection Policy**.

10. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be reviewed and investigated where sufficient information is provided, but we may be limited in our ability to respond or act without further details.

11. Recording and Monitoring

All complaints are recorded, including:

- The nature of the complaint
- Actions taken
- Outcomes and learning points

We regularly review complaints data to identify patterns, inform staff training, and improve services.

12. Unreasonable Behaviour

We are committed to treating all complainants with respect. We expect the same in return.

If a complainant behaves in a threatening, abusive, or unreasonable manner, we may set limits on communications or, in extreme cases, terminate contact. This will not affect the substance of any legitimate complaint.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, regulatory requirements, or organisational practice.

Brenda Keirnan 29/09/2025

Approved by:

Name: Brenda Keirnan
Role: Education Director
Date: 29/09/2025