Thread CIC – Complaints Procedure Policy

📍 Thread CIC, Nidderdale, North Yorkshire

Version: 2.0
Effective Date: 1/9/2025
Review Date: 1/9/2026
Approved by: Kerry Thorpe, Founder & Director

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1. Policy Statement

Thread Nidderdale Community CIC is committed to providing high-quality services for children, young people, families, and partners. We welcome feedback, both positive and negative, as it helps us improve and ensure that our provision remains safe, effective, and supportive for all.

We recognise that, despite our best efforts, concerns or complaints may sometimes arise. This policy explains how we handle complaints in a fair, transparent, and timely manner.

In addition, it is important to note that any complaint or allegation relating to safeguarding — including those made against staff, volunteers, the owner, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL Kerry Thorpe) will follow a separate process in line with statutory safeguarding guidance. Such matters will be referred immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

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2. Principles

- Complaints are taken seriously and dealt with promptly, fairly, and without bias.
- All complaints will be handled with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- We will ensure that no one is treated less favourably because they have raised a concern.
- Complaints and their outcomes will be recorded and reviewed to improve practice

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2. Who Can Complain

Anyone who has contact with Thread CIC—including children and young people, parents or carers, volunteers, partner organisations, or visitors—has the right to raise a concern or make a complaint.

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3. What You Can Complain About

Complaints may relate to (but are not limited to):

- A programme or activity that did not meet expectations
- Staff or volunteer behaviour or conduct
- Health and safety concerns
- Issues around communication or inclusion
- Concerns about safeguarding practice
- Access, facilities, or fairness of treatment

If the concern relates to child safety or wellbeing, it will be dealt with under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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4. How to Make a Complaint

Step 1: Informal Discussion

We encourage anyone with a concern to speak directly to a staff member or the session lead at the earliest opportunity. Many issues can be resolved quickly with a conversation. In many cases, concerns can be resolved quickly and informally. We aim to resolve most issues at this stage within 5 working days**.**

Step 2: Formal Complaint

If the concern is not resolved informally, or you would prefer to raise it more formally, you can contact the Director of Thread CIC:

- **Email:** kerry@threadnidd.co.uk
- **Write to:** Thread CIC, King Street, Pateley Bridge, North Yorkshire, HG3 5HL
- **Request a meeting** with the Director or Safeguarding Lead

Please include:

- Your name and contact information
- The nature of the complaint
- Any steps already taken to resolve it
- What outcome you hope for

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5. What Happens Next

Stage 1 – Acknowledgement and Investigation

- A written complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

- An investigation will be carried out by a senior member of staff or board representative not directly involved in the matter.
- A written response, outlining findings and any actions to be taken, will be provided within 20 working days.

Stage 2 – Appeal

- If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may appeal in writing to the owner.
- A final written response will be provided within 20 working days**.**
- What we found
- What action (if any) will be taken
- How to appeal if you are not satisfied

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6. Appeals Process

If you are not satisfied with the outcome:

- You may request a review of the complaint by the Chair of the Board or an independent reviewer
- You will receive a final written response within **15 working days**

This decision is final.

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7. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be considered where there is sufficient information to enable an investigation. However, anonymity may limit the actions that can be taken.

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8. Allegations Against the Owner, Manager or DSL

If a complaint or allegation is made against the owner, manager, or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) — including concerns relating to safeguarding, conduct, or behaviour — the following procedure must be followed immediately and without exception:

1. Cease Direct Involvement: The individual concerned must withdraw from any contact with children, families, or ongoing provision while the matter is investigated.
2. Record Details: A written record of the allegation must be made as soon as possible, including dates, times, names, and factual details of the incident. This record must be signed, dated, and stored securely.
3. Contact the LADO:

    - A referral must be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours.
    - Do not investigate the allegation internally before contacting the LADO.
    - LADO Contact (North Yorkshire):
      0300 131 2 131
      lado@northyorks.gov.uk
      (For out-of-hours concerns, call the same number and follow the prompts to contact the Emergency Duty Team.)
4. Notify Governance: The Chair of the Board (or equivalent oversight body) must be informed immediately and will liaise with the LADO and relevant agencies.
5. Cooperate Fully: All subsequent action will follow the guidance of the LADO, police, or social services. Internal investigations must not proceed until authorised.
6. Contingency Planning: Alternative leadership arrangements will be put in place while the investigation is ongoing.

All documentation, correspondence, and outcomes related to the allegation must be securely stored and retained for a minimum of 7 years.

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9. Learning and Improvement

All complaints are logged and reviewed termly by the leadership team. We use complaint outcomes to:

- Reflect on and improve our practice
- Update policies and training
- Maintain a culture of openness and accountability

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10. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

- All complaints are treated in confidence
- Complaint records are kept securely and only accessible to relevant personnel
- We comply with GDPR and all relevant data protection laws

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11. Contact Details

For complaints, concerns, or feedback, contact:

Kerry Thorpe

Thread CIC C/O St Cuthberts Primary School
King Street
Pateley Bridge
HG3 5HL

Approved by: K Thorpe **Signed:** *Kerry Thorpe*
Date: 2/9/25

For further guidance or to raise a concern, contact:

Kerry Thorpe
kerry@threadnidd.co.uk