



<b>Policy Title</b>	Complaints Policy
<b>Date of Approval</b>	
<b>Date of Review</b>	

Neurodiversity Ireland is committed to providing a high-quality support service to everyone that comes in contact with our charity and welcomes children's and parent's views. We understand that at times families may have a concern or feedback. We are committed to giving careful attention and a courteous, timely response to your suggestions, comments or complaints so that we can learn from them and continuously improve. Complaints will be accepted and investigated irrespective of the nature of the complaint or who the person making the complaint is.

**Principle:**

This policy is underpinned by the Child Care Act Consolidated, Children First Act 2015 and Tusla's Regulatory Framework.

**Neurodiversity Ireland's Sensory Centre** is an inclusive, child-led, neuro-affirmative space! In keeping with the vision of Neurodiversity Ireland, The Sensory Centre aims to provide a welcoming environment for children with a wide range of strengths and needs. Our activities, games, and experiences are designed specifically for neurodivergent minds to encourage exploration, growth, and self-discovery. Our Occupational Therapists design camps, classes and activities, using a number of evidence-based neuro-affirmative approaches which include sensory integration theory, DIR Floortime, Bundy's Model of Playfulness and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model of support. Applying a trauma informed lens, our OTs design supports which validate and nurture authentic neurodivergent preferences for communication, play and styles of social interaction, underpinned by the Person Environment Occupation (PEO) model of OT.

With a nurturing atmosphere, a safe and accommodating environment, personalised activities and experienced staff, we are committed to providing a unique and rewarding experience for every child. We want to build our children's confidence so that they can make genuine connections and participate in life as fully as possible!

We identify that many neurodivergent children experience high levels of demands within their daily lives from coping with a world built for neurotypical brain types. Therefore we strive to create opportunities for participation within a reduced-demands environment to encourage self directed and personally meaningful engagement in activities, at the child's pace. We want to help to build their autonomy and confidence, so that they can foster the connections upon which we all thrive.

Neurodiversity Ireland's group activities provide opportunities for neurodivergent children to meet other children who may think, play and communicate similarly to themselves. This is supportive of a child's sense of belonging, self esteem and in developing a positive neurodivergent self identity.

Neurodiversity Ireland is committed to providing a high-quality service to everyone we deal with. If you have any comments or complaints about our service, we would like to hear from you. We are committed to listening to your complaints and to treating them seriously so that we can learn from them and continuously improve our service. In the first instance, Neurodiversity Ireland hopes that complaints would be handled informally. In the event that a complaint cannot be handled informally within the service, we advise individuals to follow the procedure set out in this policy. All complaints made are treated confidentially.

Neurodiversity Ireland endeavours to fulfil the following values in all aspects of our work:

- Respectful partnership
- Focusing on the needs and well-being of the children attending our service
- Positive engagement with parents
- Openness and sharing of information
- Professional and efficient

#### **How to make a complaint:**

#### **Accessibility and Language Support**

We are committed to making our complaints process accessible to everyone. If you require assistance due to a disability, language barrier, literacy challenges, or other support needs, please let us know. We can provide help with completing forms, offer alternative formats (e.g. Easy Read, large print), or arrange for an interpreter or advocate where necessary.

## **Children Making Complaints**

Neurodiversity Ireland recognises that children have the right to express concerns and have their voices heard. We encourage children to share feedback in ways that feel comfortable to them.

- Children may speak directly to a trusted staff member.
- Children may draw a picture, use a story, or fill out a simple child-friendly form to express how they feel.
- Staff are trained to listen sensitively and support children in communicating their thoughts or concerns.

All complaints from children will be taken seriously and handled with care, with child protection procedures followed where necessary.

### **Informal**

In the first instance, Neurodiversity Ireland invites all parents/guardians to make a complaint informally. This should ideally be done in person and can be a conversation with the camp leader, manager or staff member. Where possible we endeavour to handle all complaints informally if possible. We aim to ensure making a complaint is as easy as possible and to deal with it promptly and politely. We endeavour to learn from complaints, use them to improve our service, and review annually our complaints policy and procedures. We aim to informally resolve a complaint as soon as possible but within a **maximum of 5 working days**.

If your complaint cannot be dealt with informally, we will direct you to our formal complaints procedure.

### **Formal**

There are certain times when a complaint cannot be handled informally. In these circumstances we direct parents/guardians to make a formal complaint in writing. If you wish to make a formal complaint we request that you follow the below steps:

You can make a formal complaint:

By Email: [nessa@neurodiversityireland.com](mailto:nessa@neurodiversityireland.com)

By Post addressed to Neurodiversity Ireland, 7 Claremont Park, Sandymount Dublin 4

If you have difficulty submitting a complaint in writing please contact us by phone or in person

and we can support you with making the complaint.

Please include the following information when making a complaint:

- Name, address, a daytime telephone number and an email address
- Full details of the complaint including relevant dates and times
- Names of those involved (including staff)
- Be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (apology, explanation etc.) -  
Copies of any relevant documentation
- State your preferred method of communication

See form in the appendix of this policy to complete if you wish.

### **Dealing with your formal complaint**

1. We will formally acknowledge your complaint **within 5 working days**.
2. We will assess the complaint and the level of risk posed. If a matter concerns an immediate risk to safety or security the response will be immediate and will be escalated appropriately.
3. Neurodiversity Ireland will confirm that the issue raised in the complaint is within the control of the service. If there is more than one issue raised in the complaint, Neurodiversity Ireland will determine whether each issue needs to be separately addressed.
4. Neurodiversity Ireland will look at addressing the complaint. We will let you know if this includes an investigation. If the complaint is straightforward, generally someone from the service will investigate. We will let you know who will be investigating your complaint.
5. If necessary, an investigation panel is formed to investigate the complaint. The persons investigating the complaint are in no way involved in the complaint, are not related to the complainant or any staff members involved in the complaint. Following the investigation of the complaint, a separate HR procedure may need to be invoked.
6. A full response to the complaint will be issued **within 30 working days**.
7. If there is a delay to the timeline of issuing a response we will notify the person making the complaint as soon as possible.
8. The person making the complaint will be kept informed of the progress of the complaint.

## **Investigation**

Depending on the nature of the complaint received, the Centre Manager/CEO or Board of Trustees will determine the type of investigation that will take place. All complaints are thoroughly and objectively investigated. The investigation is handled appropriately and sensitively. The person investigating the complaint will aim first to establish the facts related to the case. In complex cases, an investigation plan will be drawn up outlining how the complaint will be investigated. When investigating a complaint, all relevant evidence will be looked at. In the process of the investigation we may need to meet with the complainant to discuss your complaint further. Complainants can bring a person with them to any such meeting. All staff must participate in the investigation of a complaint, as required. Any staff member involved in the complaint will be supported throughout the process.

## **Outcome and Response**

Following the formal investigation of your complaint, we will let you know what we have found via your preferred form of communication. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions and outline any changes to policies/procedures, practice and risk management arising from the investigation. Where no grounds for the complaint are found, the person making the complaint will be notified and information detailing the next stage will be provided. We will share any recommendations from our investigation with the complainant and also all relevant staff. We will outline the appeals process as part of the complaint response.

## **Appeal**

### **Independent Review**

**If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the appeals process, you have the right to escalate the matter to an external body. For example, you may contact:**

- **The Ombudsman for Children ([www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie))**
- **The Office of the Ombudsman (for adult service users) ([www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie))**

**These organisations are independent and can review complaints about public services in Ireland.**

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response to the complaint, then there is the opportunity to appeal it. The appeal must be submitted within **5 working days**. The appeal is handled by someone who was not involved in the original complaint process.

### **Record of Complaints and Confidentiality**

An accurate and detailed record of each complaint is kept for a period of 2 years from the date the complaint has been dealt with. Complaint information is stored confidentially in the service and is only accessed by Neurodiversity Ireland and Sensory Centre Manager. The people who have access to complaint records are named at the bottom of this policy.

### **Complaint not within the scope of the service**

Any complaints not within the scope of the service to investigate, will be referred appropriately. For example:

- If there are child safeguarding concerns relating to a complaint, the designated liaison person is informed, and the child protection policy is followed.
- If a complaint involves a potential criminal offence, An Garda Síochána is notified.

In the event that a complaint relates to Neurodiversity Ireland and the complainant does not want to make the complaint to Neurodiversity Ireland, unsolicited information can be submitted to Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

### **What we expect from complainants**

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

### **Persons who have access to the record of complaints:**

**Tamara Lambert Sensory Centre Manager or Grace McRandal, Director of Operations**

**Person Responsible: Nessa Hill**

**This policy was adopted by Neurodiversity Ireland on Date: 04.07.2024**

**And reviewed on 10.10.2024**

And 15.04.2025

Signed by: *Nessa Hill*

Director (On behalf of Management )

Review Date October 2025





## Complaint Form

Name of person making complaint	
Address of person making complaint	
Phone number	
Email	
Preferred method of communication	
Date and time complaint was made	
Date and time of incident (if applicable)	
Name of person to whom complaint was first made	
Name of Neurodiversity Ireland representative:	

**Details of Complaint:**

Signature of Complainant:

Date:

Signature of manager/person receiving complaint:

Date: