



Complaints Policy

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

We try very hard to provide a good service to children, young people, and their families. We recognise that we might sometimes get things wrong. We take all concerns and complaints seriously. Your feedback will help us to resolve mistakes faster and learn how we can do things better another time. It helps us maintain and improve the high standards we always try to achieve.

We will treat all complaints seriously, discreetly and in a timely manner.

2 WHO CAN RAISE A COMPLAINT?

Our Complaints Policy is available to anyone who uses Lifespace services including young people, families, referrers, suppliers and those affected by our fundraising activities. Please share your concerns and make a complaint when you are dissatisfied with any aspect of Lifespace' services or activities.

Note. Volunteer staff should use this Policy. Paid staff (employees) should refer to the Grievance Policy.

3 MAKING IT EASY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO COMPLAIN

We are committed to empowering children and young people to have a voice. This includes telling us when they are not happy with the services we provide.

To make complaining as easy as possible we provide all young people accessing mentoring with a small "how to tell us if you're unhappy with Lifespace" card. This has been designed by members of our Youth Advisory Panel and is also made available on our website.

4 WHEN SHOULD YOU MAKE A COMPLAINT?

If you have a problem with the way we provide a service and it can't be put right at the time, you should make a complaint. Also, if you'd like action taken about something, and to know what action we have taken, please follow this guide. If you are unhappy about anything else we do, such as the way we run the charity, how we raise funds, deal with money or something one of our partner suppliers does, please also follow this Complaints Policy.

If you have a serious concern about child safety, please follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. If you would like to make a complaint in confidence, please refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

5 HOW DO YOU COMPLAIN?

Each child, young person and family has a specific practitioner/mentor at Lifespace. This is the first person you should contact about your any complaint. If you are not happy with an individual, it is usually best to tell him or her directly. If you are not able to do this, or you feel it is inappropriate you should contact the CEO (or, if the complaint relates to them, to the Chair of Trustees).

If your initial contact fails to resolve the issue, then we want you to be free to escalate the matter by contacting us at a higher level. We will take your complaint seriously and see it as an opportunity to develop. We welcome feedback from people who are willing to take the time to tell us where they feel we have let them down. Please feel free to write to us with your comments and your concerns.

If you wanted to post your complaint, please send it to:

Lifespace
Tyler Houe
Tyler Street
Stratford Upon Avon
Warwickshire
CV37 6TY

If you can't contact your mentor / Lead Mentor, or are unhappy with their support, please contact our Chief Executive Officer: Lisa Carroll at lisa.carroll@lifespace.org.uk. If your complaint is about the Chief Executive Officer, please address it to the Chair of Trustees.

6 FURTHER HELP MAKING YOUR COMPLAINT

If you would like any help to make your complaint, please contact your practitioner as given above.

7 WHAT WE WILL DO

We will work hard to find out what went wrong and, where appropriate, we will fix the problem and address your concerns. When you contact us, please feel free to offer your suggestions on how you feel it can be resolved. We will always treat you with courtesy and respect, listen to what you say, and keep you informed of progress. We will advise you of your options if you want to take it to the next stage.

8 WHAT WE WILL NOT OR CANNOT DO

We cannot engage in lengthy debates on issues that are not directly related to our work. We will not reply to complaints that are abusive, prejudiced, offensive or illegible. Where a complaint is made anonymously, clearly we cannot reply to it, but we will investigate the complaint to see what lessons can be learned.

9 STAGE ONE: INITIAL COMPLAINT

We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within **two** working days, will tell you who will be dealing with the matter and when you can expect a full answer from us; normally, we would work to a resolution within 10 working days.

Wherever possible, the charity will respect your confidentiality and keep your complaint confidential as far as possible. Any information about the complaint will usually only be shared with those who need to know to help us resolve it. Sometimes, there may be occasions when we cannot provide absolute confidentiality, especially where a young person may be at risk of harm. In these circumstances, our safeguarding procedures will take precedence over this procedure. We will need to share any relevant information with others concerned in the safety and welfare of the people we work with. We will keep records of your complaint and what we do to resolve it.

We handle all personal information in line with the Data Protection Act.

10 STAGE TWO: ESCALATION PROCESS

If you feel that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, or the complaint relates to the CEO, you can request that the complaint is reviewed at Trustee level.

The request for Trustee level review will be acknowledged and it will be confirmed who will deal with the case and when you can expect a reply. The Trustees' investigation may involve reviewing the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One. If the complaint relates to a specific person, they will be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

Stage 2 complaints will receive a definitive reply within 10 working days. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report will be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

The decision at this stage is final.

11 OUR PLEDGE

We treat all complaints seriously and see them as an opportunity to improve what we do and the way we do it. We are happy to acknowledge mistakes that we make, sincerely apologise for them and try to prevent them happening again.

12 DATA PROTECTION

Lifespace processes personal data collected during the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of disciplinary action in accordance with our *Data Protection and GDPR Policy*. In particular, data collected as part of the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of the complaint is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the investigation procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of sensitive data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the *Data Protection and GDPR Policy* immediately. It may also constitute a breach of Policies and Procedures and will be dealt with accordingly.

13 RELATED LIFESPACE DOCUMENTS

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Grievance Policy
- How to tell us if you're unhappy with Lifespace (designed for children and young people)
- Staff Behaviour "Code of Conduct" Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

This Policy is communicated to all staff, trustees suppliers and sub-contractors. It will be published on our website and made available to interested parties.

Date of Issue: February 2024	Signed: Tracey Reinecke	Youth Programme Manager
	Signed: Mark Beardmore	Trustee (Governance and Compliance Lead)
Date of Next Review: February 2027		
Policy Owner	Youth Programme Manager	