



## **SPaCE (Specialist Provision and Cohesive Education)**

### **Complaints Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Owner:** Lucy Steere (Nominated Individual)

**Policy Lead:** Lucy Steere

**Applies To:** All SPaCE services

**Effective From:** May 2026

**Review Date:** May 2027

**Version:** 1.0

### **1. Purpose**

SPaCE is committed to providing safe, effective, compassionate and high-quality services. We recognise that concerns and complaints provide valuable opportunities to improve.

This document sets out SPaCE's policy and procedure for receiving, investigating and responding to complaints in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

This policy ensures compliance with:

- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
  - Regulation 16: Receiving and acting on complaints
  - Regulation 20: Duty of Candour
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Accessible Information Standard
- UK GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to:

- All employees (permanent, temporary, agency and volunteers)
- The Registered Manager
- The Nominated Individual
- Senior leadership and Board Members

It covers complaints made by:

- People who use our services
- Parents, carers or family members
- Advocates or representatives

- Professionals and partner agencies

### **3. Statement of Commitment**

SPaCE will:

- Treat all complaints seriously
- Respond in a timely and respectful manner
- Ensure complainants are not treated unfavourably
- Maintain confidentiality
- Learn from complaints to improve service quality
- Demonstrate openness and honesty in line with the Duty of Candour

### **4. Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about:

- Care, education or support
- Staff conduct or behaviour
- Communication
- Safety or quality of service
- Decisions made by the organisation

Complaints may be verbal, written, electronic, or raised through a representative.

Safeguarding concerns will be managed under the Safeguarding Policy alongside this procedure.

### **5. Accessibility and Equality**

SPaCE will ensure the complaints process is accessible by:

- Providing easy-read and alternative formats
- Offering translation or interpretation
- Providing large print or audio versions
- Supporting access to advocacy
- Making reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010

No person will be disadvantaged for raising concerns.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **6.1 All Staff**

- Listen respectfully
- Attempt informal resolution where appropriate
- Record concerns accurately
- Escalate formal complaints immediately
- Maintain confidentiality

### **6.2 Registered Manager**

- Acknowledge formal complaints
- Lead investigations (unless conflicted)
- Ensure Duty of Candour compliance
- Issue written outcomes
- Maintain the Complaints Log
- Identify learning and improvements

### **6.3 Nominated Individual (Lucy Steere)**

- Review appeals
- Investigate complaints about the Registered Manager
- Ensure independence and fairness

### **6.4 Senior Board Member / Independent Reviewer**

- Manage complaints where there is a conflict of interest
- Provide independent oversight

## **7. How to Make a Complaint**

Complaints may be made:

- In person
- By telephone
- In writing (post or email)
- Through a representative or advocate
- Using the SPaCE Complaints Form



## Contact Details

### Registered Manager

Paisley Radford  
8 Park Avenue, Plymouth. PL9 7BD

Telephone: 07480792757

Email: [paisley@spacealg.co.uk](mailto:paisley@spacealg.co.uk)

If the complaint concerns the Registered Manager:

### Nominated Individual – Lucy Steere

Telephone: 07805016019

Email: [admin@spacealg.co.uk](mailto:admin@spacealg.co.uk)

If both roles are held by the same person, complaints will be escalated to a Senior Board Member or independent external reviewer.

## 8. Complaints Procedure

SPaCE operates a four-stage process.

### Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

**Aim:** Early local resolution.

- Staff member listens and clarifies concerns
- Apologises where appropriate
- Attempts resolution within 3 working days
- Records concern in the Complaints Log (informal stage)

If resolved → complaint closed and monitored for learning.

If unresolved or serious → escalate to Stage 2.

### Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

#### Step 1: Logging the Complaint

- Complaint forwarded to Registered Manager immediately
- Assigned unique reference number
- Recorded in Complaints Log

#### Step 2: Acknowledgement

Within 3 working days:

- Written acknowledgement sent

- Confirmation of issues being investigated
- Explanation of process
- Timescale (response within 20 working days)

### **Step 3: Investigation**

The Registered Manager will:

- Review care records and documentation
- Interview relevant staff
- Speak with the complainant (if appropriate)
- Consider safeguarding implications
- Assess need for regulatory notifications
- Seek independent advice where necessary

If the investigation exceeds 20 working days:

- Complainant informed in writing
- Revised timescale provided

### **Step 4: Outcome Letter**

A written response will include:

- Summary of complaint
- Investigation findings
- Outcome (upheld / partially upheld / not upheld)
- Actions taken or planned
- Apology where appropriate
- Appeal information

### **Stage 3 – Appeal**

If dissatisfied, the complainant may request a review within 10 working days.

- Acknowledgement within 3 working days
- Review conducted by Nominated Individual or independent reviewer
- Response provided within 15 working days

The review will consider:

- Whether the process was followed



- Whether conclusions were reasonable
- Whether actions were proportionate

The Stage 3 decision is final within SPaCE.

#### **Stage 4 – External Escalation**

Complainants may contact:

##### **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

Website: <https://www.cqc.org.uk>

Telephone: 03000 616161

Email: [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

##### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman** (for publicly funded services)

Website: <https://www.lgo.org.uk>

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

##### **Ofsted** (for education-related concerns)

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

SPaCE will cooperate fully with external investigations.

#### **9. Duty of Candour**

Where a complaint relates to a notifiable safety incident:

SPaCE will:

- Inform the individual promptly
- Provide a truthful explanation
- Offer a written apology
- Explain actions taken to prevent recurrence
- Document all communications

#### **10. Safeguarding Considerations**

If a complaint involves potential abuse or neglect:

- Safeguarding procedures will be initiated immediately
- Relevant authorities notified
- CQC notified if required
- Complaint investigation may pause pending safeguarding outcome

Safeguarding takes priority.

## 11. Recording and Confidentiality

All complaints are:

- Logged in the Complaints Register
- Stored securely
- Shared only on a need-to-know basis
- Retained in line with data protection legislation

Records include:

- Date received
- Nature of complaint
- Investigation actions
- Outcome
- Learning identified
- Date closed

## 12. Learning and Governance

SPaCE will:

- Review complaints monthly at management meetings
- Analyse trends and themes quarterly
- Report findings to governance meetings
- Update training, policies or practice as required
- Share learning with staff and, where appropriate, service users

An annual complaints report will summarise:

- Number of complaints
- Types and themes
- Outcomes
- Improvements made

This supports continuous quality improvement and CQC inspection readiness.

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### 13. Unreasonable or Persistent Complaints

Where behaviour is abusive, repetitive or unreasonable:

- Clear boundaries will be set in writing
- Communication channels may be limited
- Independent advice may be sought

However, complaints will still be reviewed fairly.

### 14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually
- Reviewed sooner if regulation changes
- Audited annually for accessibility and effectiveness

### 15. Compliance Statement

This policy demonstrates SPaCE's compliance with:

- Regulation 16 – Receiving and acting on complaints
- Regulation 20 – Duty of Candour
- CQC Fundamental Standards
- Equality and accessibility legislation
- Data protection legislation

SPaCE is committed to openness, accountability and continuous improvement.

**Policy Lead:** Lucy Steere

**Next Review Date:** May 2027