



## COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

*A clear, fair and accessible process for raising concerns*

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|--------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Organisation | New Spring Vista CIC | Version     | 2.0            |
| Approved     | 25 August 2026       | Review due  | 25 August 2027 |
| Policy owner | Board of Directors   | Company no. | 16335807       |

### 1. Purpose

New Spring Vista CIC is committed to providing safe, respectful and high-quality services. We welcome feedback and take complaints seriously. Complaints help us put matters right, learn from experience and improve our practice.

We will treat complainants fairly. Raising a concern or complaint will not, by itself, adversely affect a person's access to our services.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints from learners, parents or carers, clients, referrers, partners, visitors, volunteers and members of the community about New Spring Vista CIC's services, conduct, decisions or facilities.

It does not replace emergency, safeguarding, contractual, insurance, employment or regulatory procedures. Where another procedure is more appropriate, we will explain this and route the matter accordingly.

### 3. Our principles

- Accessible: concerns may be raised verbally or in writing, and reasonable adjustments will be offered.
- Child-centred: a child or young person may complain directly or with help from a parent, carer, advocate or trusted adult.
- Fair: the person handling the complaint will approach it with an open mind and will not investigate their own conduct.
- Timely: we will acknowledge, investigate and respond within the timescales set out below, or explain any unavoidable delay.
- Proportionate: the depth of the investigation will reflect the seriousness and complexity of the concern.
- Learning-focused: outcomes and themes will be used to improve services, policies, risk controls and training.

### Immediate danger or safeguarding concern

If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999. A concern that a child or adult at risk may have been harmed, is at risk of harm, or that an adult working with children may pose a risk will be dealt with immediately under our Safeguarding Policy. We may contact the police, children's or adults' social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or another relevant authority. The ordinary complaints timetable will not delay protective action.

## 4. How to raise a concern or complaint

A concern may be raised informally, but informal resolution is optional. A person may make a formal complaint immediately if they prefer or if the matter is serious.

Complaints may be made:

- by email to [newspringvista@gmail.com](mailto:newspringvista@gmail.com);
- through the contact form on our website;
- verbally to a Director, including during or after a session where appropriate; or
- through a parent, carer, advocate, referrer or trusted adult, with the complainant's agreement where appropriate.

Please provide, where possible, your name and contact details; what happened and when; who was involved; any relevant evidence; and what outcome you are seeking. We can help record a verbal complaint and will confirm our understanding with you.

Anonymous complaints will be considered where there is enough information to investigate, particularly where safety, safeguarding, animal welfare or serious misconduct may be involved. However, anonymity may limit our ability to investigate or provide an outcome.

## 5. Who will handle the complaint

A Director who is not the subject of the complaint will normally act as Complaints Lead. Ordinarily:

- a complaint about Miranda Fildes will be handled by Alain Fildes;
- a complaint about Alain Fildes will be handled by Miranda Fildes; and
- where both Directors are involved, or another conflict exists, New Spring Vista CIC will appoint a suitably independent person to investigate or review the complaint.

A complainant will be told who is handling their complaint. The Complaints Lead may seek specialist, safeguarding, legal, insurance or regulatory advice where necessary.

## 6. Complaints procedure

1. **Informal resolution (optional).** Where appropriate, we will listen to the concern, clarify the desired outcome and try to resolve it promptly. If it is not resolved, or the complainant wishes to proceed formally, it will move to Stage 1.
2. **Stage 1 - acknowledgement.** We will acknowledge a formal complaint within 5 working days. We will confirm the Complaints Lead, our understanding of the complaint, any further information needed and the expected response date.
3. **Stage 1 - investigation and response.** The Complaints Lead will review relevant records, speak to people involved where appropriate, consider the evidence impartially and keep a clear written record. We aim to send a written outcome within 15 working days of acknowledgement. The response will summarise the issues considered, findings, reasons, any action or remedy, and how to request a review.
4. **Delay or parallel process.** If the matter is complex or another safeguarding, police, insurance or regulatory process must take priority, we will explain what we can, provide a revised timescale and give reasonable progress updates. We will not promise information that cannot lawfully or safely be disclosed.

5. **Stage 2 - review.** If dissatisfied, the complainant may request a review in writing within 10 working days of the Stage 1 outcome, explaining why they believe the outcome or process was flawed. A Director not previously involved, or a suitably independent person, will review the handling, evidence and conclusions. Nobody will review their own decision.
6. **Final response.** We aim to provide the Stage 2 decision within 10 working days of receiving the review request. If more time is needed, we will explain why and provide a revised date. The Stage 2 response is New Spring Vista CIC's final internal decision.

## 7. Possible outcomes

Depending on the findings, outcomes may include:

- an explanation, clarification or acknowledgement of what happened;
- an apology where appropriate;
- corrective action or a change to practice, policy, communication, risk controls or training;
- reconsideration of a service decision or another proportionate remedy;
- a referral to a safeguarding, licensing, insurance, professional or regulatory process; or
- no further action where the complaint is not upheld, with reasons explained.

Any refund, credit or rescheduling decision will also take account of the applicable Terms and Conditions. This policy does not affect a person's statutory rights.

## 8. Confidentiality and information sharing

Complaints will be handled as privately as reasonably possible. Information will be shared only with those who need it to consider the complaint, protect a person or animal, obtain advice, meet insurance requirements, or comply with a legal or regulatory duty.

We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. In particular, safeguarding concerns may need to be shared without consent where this is necessary to protect a child or adult at risk. Personal information will be handled in accordance with our Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

## 9. Records, monitoring and learning

We will keep an appropriate record of the complaint, evidence considered, correspondence, decisions, actions and learning. Records will be stored securely, access will be restricted, and retention will follow our data-retention arrangements and Privacy Notice.

Directors will monitor complaints for themes, repeated concerns, safeguarding or animal-welfare indicators and opportunities for improvement. An anonymised summary may be used for governance, licence compliance, quality assurance or reporting where appropriate.

## 10. Unreasonable behaviour and withdrawn complaints

We will remain respectful and will not label a complaint unreasonable merely because it is persistent, strongly expressed or difficult. We may, however, set proportionate communication boundaries where behaviour is abusive, threatening, discriminatory, excessively repetitive or prevents a fair investigation. We will explain any restrictions in writing and keep them under review.

A complainant may withdraw a complaint. New Spring Vista CIC may still act where the information indicates a safeguarding, safety, animal-welfare, legal or regulatory concern.

## 11. External routes

Most service complaints should first complete this internal process. The following bodies have specific, limited roles:

- Data protection: concerns about the handling of personal information may be raised with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) at [ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/).

- Animal licensing or welfare: concerns within Somerset Council's licensing remit may be reported through [somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/licensing/complaints-about-a-licensed-person-vehicle-or-premises/](https://somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/licensing/complaints-about-a-licensed-person-vehicle-or-premises/).
- CIC governance: concerns that fall within the statutory remit of the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies may be raised through [gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-regulator-of-community-interest-companies/about/complaints-procedure](https://gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-the-regulator-of-community-interest-companies/about/complaints-procedure).
- Safeguarding or crime: a person may contact the police, children's or adults' social care, or another appropriate safeguarding authority directly. In an emergency, call 999.

These bodies are not general appeal services for every disagreement about a session or service. Their own eligibility rules and procedures apply.

## 12. Review and approval

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following a serious complaint, significant learning, a change in services, or relevant legal or regulatory change.

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| Approved by     | Board of Directors, New Spring Vista CIC |
| Approval date   | 25 August 2026                           |
| Next review due | 25 August 2027                           |