**The Spring Charity: Complaints Policy and Procedures**

**THE SPRING CHARITY**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY and PROCEDURES**

**Reviewed and updated: February 2024**

**Review Date: February 2025**

**Introduction**

The Spring Charity welcomes both positive and challenging feedback. If you wish to raise a concern with us, you can do this in the first instance by emailing: **communityspringcharity@gmail.com**, by calling; **07465231663** or by post: The Spring Charity, Annes Community Centre, Spring Lane, Northampton NN1 2JW.

**Our Object**

The Charity’s Objects shall be to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Northampton and in particular Spring Boroughs and Caste Ward the provision of activities facilities for the daily care, recreation or other leisure time occupation of the beneficiaries who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, financial hardship or social, emotional and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interest of their social welfare with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.

**Our Aim**

We work within the Castle Ward and the wider Northampton town to ensure local families thrive and grow. We raise funds to allow us to set up projects to help remove the barriers that are facing young families due to financial constraints, mental and physical health, food poverty and developmental issues.

Complaints are a rich source of learning for us, whether it is a process we can improve, how we can communicate more clearly or in a timelier way, or how we can improve on our charitable activities. We take a learning approach to complaints and approach each complaint with an open mind.

**Common questions and concerns**

We have compiled some answers to frequently asked questions here.:

What do we mean by a complaint?

We define a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction that is or could be a direct result of activity undertaken by the charity. A complaint could be about:

* Services offered to service users
* Charity Policies or Procedures
* Data Handling (See our GDPR Policy)
* Staff, Trustee or Volunteer behaviour
* Behaviour of other service users

What you should expect If you complain to us, You should expect:

 • To be treated with respect

• That we will act promptly, follow the steps set out below and keep to the deadlines we set

 • That we will genuinely investigate your concern and if we have acted incorrectly, we will try to make it right

 • We will use the information you share discretely and we won’t reveal information to or about a complainant where it is personal data or where there is an agreement or reasonable expectation that we would keep the information confidential

• That we will take any safeguarding concerns seriously and follow sour relevant safeguarding best practice as set out in our Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policies

The Spring Charity will usually only investigate complaints where the identity of the complainant is known so that it is possible to go back and verify information if needed. When an anonymous complaint is received of a serious nature, we may consider investigating if there is enough information to guide further enquiries. The decision on whether to act on an anonymous complaint will be made by the Chair of Trustees, in consultation with the Board of Trustees as applicable.

**OUTLINE OF OUR FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND PROCEDURES**

**Complaint Process**

has a three stage formal complaints process. An expression of dissatisfaction may be dealt with informally and avoid becoming a formal complaint by being addressed quickly and fully. If this informal approach does not close the complaint, then it will follow the outlined process below:

**Stage 1: Formal Complaint**

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days. This will detail when you will receive a response, and who will respond to you. This would normally be the Charity Manager or Safeguarding Trustee who will investigate and respond.

We may ask you what you want as an outcome of your complaint and the format of response you would like. These may not always be possible but can help guide our response. A full response will be given within 20 working days. It will include a summary of the complaint and what was discovered in the investigating of the complaint. If the complaint has validity, i.e. The Spring Charity didn’t correctly follow its own policies and procedures, or mistakes were made which led to the complaint, the response will include an apology and describe what steps will be taken to avoid this happening again. In cases where the complainant has been significantly affected by the issue, we will try to make it right. If the investigation is unable to be concluded within 20 working days, we will contact you to explain why and provide a date on which a full response will be provided.

**Stage 2: Review**

We hope and expect that a Stage 1 response will resolve most complaints. However, if you aren’t satisfied with the response, you have 20 working days to take the complaint to Stage 2. We will again acknowledge this within three working days. Complaints at stage 2 will be investigated and responded to by a Trustee, appointed to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees. A full response must be given within 20 working days. You may submit new information if it is relevant to your original complaint. If the Stage 1 response was appropriate, a shorter response will be sent confirming the key points. If the investigator determines that the Stage 1 response was incorrect or missing elements, we will acknowledge that and make it right.

 **Stage 3: Final Review**

If you aren’t satisfied with the Stage 2 response, you have 20 working days to take the complaint to Stage 3. We will again acknowledge this within three working days and fully respond within 20 working days. A member of the Board of Trustees who has not been involved in the complaint previously will review the initial complaint and the subsequent responses. If they determine that the previous response was appropriate and correct, a shorter response will be sent confirming the key points. If they determine that the Stage 1 or 2 responses were incorrect or missing elements, they will acknowledge that and make it right. This is the final stage of The Spring Charity complaints process.

**External Referral**

We may refer you to an external body you can contact if you are still not satisfied. This may include, but is not limited to:

* The Charity Commission (England and Wales) if you are concerned The Spring Charity is not doing what it claims to do, is losing lots of money, is harming people, is being used for personal profit or gain, or involved in illegal activity
* The Fundraising Regulator if you are unhappy about the way, you have been asked for donations, or how fundraisers acting on behalf of our charity have behaved

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Trustees on:

The policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary: February 2025

Signed on behalf of the Trustees: …………………………………………………….

Name of signatory:

Designation of Signatory: