Complaint Policy

Policy Name	Complaint Policy	Policy Number	CI-02
Effective Date	27 September 2026	Owner	BOD
Related Policies	**CI01 - Critical / Serious Incident Policy and Procedure**		

Version History		
Version	**Description of Change(s)**	**Approval Date**
A	New policy	27 September 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, fair and accessible process for receiving, managing and responding to complaints about spunout's services, activities or conduct. It demonstrates our commitment to listening to feedback, resolving concerns promptly and respectfully, and using complaints as an opportunity to learn, improve and strengthen the quality of our services.

Scope

This policy applies to all complaints made about spunout's services, activities, published content or the conduct of staff and volunteers. It applies to anyone who interacts with spunout, including young people using our service, parents and guardians, partner organisations and members of the public.

This policy does not apply to:

- Staff complaints, which are handled under a separate internal policy
- Safeguarding concerns (covered by Safeguarding Policy and Procedures)
- Data protection concerns (covered by Data Protection Policy and procedures
- Issues already under consideration by a court, regulator or other statutory bodies

Our Commitment

At spunout, we are committed to providing trusted, evidence-informed information and supportive digital services that help young people make informed decisions about their mental health and wellbeing.

We want everyone who interacts with us to have a satisfactory experience. If we get something wrong, we want to know. We welcome feedback and complaints because they help us learn, improve our services and strengthen the support we provide to young people. Making a complaint will not affect your ability to access our services.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when someone tells us they are not satisfied about:

- a service they received from spunout;
- information published by spunout;
- the actions or behaviour of a member of staff or volunteer;
- a decision we have made;
- something we have done or failed to do

We also welcome compliments and suggestions for how we can improve.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint, including:

- young people who use our services;
- parents, guardians or family members (where appropriate);
- volunteers;
- professionals working with or referring to spunout;
- partner organisations; or
- members of the public.

Complaints made on behalf of another person:

Complaints should normally be made by the person directly affected. A complaint may be made on behalf of another person where:

- the complainant is the parent or legal guardian of a child or young person;
- the complainant has appropriate legal authority to act on the person's behalf; or
- the person has given their consent for another individual to act on their behalf.

Where consent or authority is required, spunout may ask for this to be provided before progressing the complaint. Where consent cannot be obtained, spunout will consider whether there are safeguarding, legal or other exceptional circumstances that require the matter to be considered.

What can I complain about?

You can make a complaint about any aspect of spunout's work, including:

- spunout services, such as Text About It, Youth Information Chat or other services provided by spunout;
- information, resources and other content published by spunout;
- our website or other digital platforms;
- youth participation, campaigns and advocacy activities;
- the conduct of a member of staff or volunteer; or
- any other interaction you have had with spunout.

What is not covered by this policy?

This policy does not cover:

- safeguarding concerns, which are managed under our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- requests relating to your personal data, which are managed under our Data Protection Policy and procedures;
- employment-related matters concerning employees, which are managed under spunout's HR policies and procedures (including the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures, where applicable);
- issues that are already being considered by a court, regulator or another statutory body.

If your concern falls into one of these areas, we will help direct you to the appropriate process wherever possible.

How to make a complaint

You can contact us in whichever way is easiest for you. This can be via email or post:

Email: complaints@spunout.ie

Post: Chief Executive Officer
spunout
11 Coke Lane
Smithfield
Dublin 7
D07 EN2Y

You can also submit feedback through our website contact form.

When making a complaint, it is helpful if you tell us:

- your name and contact details
- what happened;
- when it happened;
- which service was involved;
- what outcome you are hoping for.

Anonymous complaints

We understand that some people may prefer to remain anonymous. We will consider anonymous complaints where there is enough information for us to understand and investigate the issues raised. However, if you choose to remain anonymous, we may not be able to contact you to request further information or provide updates on the outcome of your complaint.

Where a complaint relates to one of our anonymous services, such as Text About It, you may be asked to provide information that helps us identify the interaction. This may include the

approximate date and time, the platform used (for example, SMS or WhatsApp), personal identification document or any other details that may assist us in locating the relevant records.

What happens after I make a complaint?

We aim to deal with every complaint fairly, respectfully and as quickly as possible.

Step 1 Acknowledgement

We will aim to acknowledge your complaint within five working days.

Step 2 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, and where such an outcome is acceptable to you, spunout will offer to resolve your issue informally, for instance through the speedy correction of incorrect information. Where this is not possible or acceptable to you, your complaint will be dealt with formally through steps 3 and 4 below.

Please note: Public holidays and office closure periods may affect this timescale.

Step 3 Review

We will then review the information you have provided and, where appropriate:

- seek additional information from you, if needed (i.e. ID or further information on your experience)
- speak with the relevant staff member or volunteer
- review available records
- consider whether any immediate action is required

Step 4 Outcome

We aim to provide a written response to you within 40 working days of the date the complaint was acknowledged or, when necessary, from the date your identity has been confirmed.

If we need more time because the complaint is particularly complex, requires additional resources, or is affected by key staff being indisposed, we will let you know why and provide an updated timeframe.

Possible outcomes

Depending on the circumstances, we may write to you and:

- explain what happened
- apologise where appropriate
- clarify our policies or decisions
- take steps to improve our services
- provide additional training or support to staff or volunteers
- review our procedures
- decide that no further action is required

While we will always consider the outcome you are seeking, we cannot guarantee that every complaint will result in the action requested.

If you are not satisfied

If we do not satisfactorily resolve your concerns or complaint, or you otherwise consider it necessary, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman for Children. Contact information for the Office of the Ombudsman is listed below.

Webpage: www.oco.ie/complaints
Online complaints form: https://www.oco.ie/complaints/online-complaint/
Telephone: 1800 20 20 40
Address: 52-56 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1, D01 F5P8

Withdrawing a complaint

At any point in the complaints process, you may choose to withdraw your complaint by contacting spunout directly. Please note that it may not always be possible for a complaint to be withdrawn, for instance where serious misconduct or illegal activity has been alleged.

Confidentiality

We will handle all complaints as confidentially as possible. Information will only be shared with those who need it to investigate and respond to the complaint.

We will process personal information in accordance with applicable data protection legislation. In some circumstances, such as where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or vulnerable person, or where required by law, we may need to share information with the relevant authorities.

Accessibility

We want our complaints process to be accessible to everyone. If you need support making a complaint or would like information in another format, please let us know. We will do our best to meet your needs.

Learning and Improvement

Every complaint is an opportunity for us to learn. We regularly review complaints to identify trends, improve the quality of our services and strengthen our information, digital supports, volunteer training and organisational practices.

Anonymised information about complaints and the improvements made as a result is reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board to support ongoing quality improvement and good governance.

Your Data

All personal information received by spunout in relation to a complaint shall be stored in accordance with GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

This process for lodging complaints does not apply to spunout staff, who have a separate policy for lodging any complaints.