

# Friends of In Touch Policy

Registered Charity: 1153013



<b>Policy No: FOIT 06</b>	<b>TITLE: Complaints &amp; Compliments Policy</b>
<b>ISSUE No: 4</b>	<b>ISSUE DATE: August 2022</b>
<b>PREPARED BY: Policy Committee</b>	

## 1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 *Friends of In Touch* aim to provide autistic children and adults, their families and referrers with the best possible service. However, from time to time there are occasions when users of our service may feel that the quality or level of service provided falls short of what can reasonably be expected.
- 1.2 Continued involvement and goodwill is of great value to us. If there are complaints or compliments about the service that *Friends of In Touch* provide, the Trustees would like to be informed.

### 1.3 Complimenting our Service

- 1.3.1 Compliments are valuable, welcomed and important and when they are received, either verbally or in writing, they will be recorded. Compliments enable us to:
- understand that we are providing a satisfactory service;
  - provide positive feedback to our staff;
  - influence our organisational and service development;
  - inform our quality assurance procedures.

### 1.4 Complaining about our Service

- 1.4.1 *Friends of In Touch* recognises that there will be times when our Trustees, staff and volunteers make mistakes or get things wrong. In order to learn from such mistakes, we need to know about them and encourage people to comment or complain. Such comments or complaints will always be taken seriously, recorded and responded to as detailed in the procedure below for resolving complaints
- 1.4.2 If, as a result of a complaint made to *Friends of In Touch*, any of the parties involved think it would be helpful to consult with the Chair of *Friends of In Touch*, prior to formal complaint being submitted, then they can do so. However, the role of the Chair in such cases will be to facilitate a satisfactory conclusion to the complaint rather than to conduct a formal investigation.

## 2 Complaints Procedure

- 2.1 All complaints will be dealt with as speedily as possible. This procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal with the matter fairly. All written notes about complaints are to be stored in the Dropbox complaints folder.
- 2.2 Complaints should be made initially to the Project Coordinator. If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved there and then, brief written notes of the complaint and the circumstances that led to it should be made. If the complaint can be immediately resolved, notes are taken but then the complaint is closed off.
- 2.3 If the Project Coordinator was not on duty at the time of the complaint, these notes should be given to them as soon as possible. The Project Coordinator will then investigate the circumstances, in so far as *Friends of In Touch* is concerned, recording details, including what outcome is sought by the complainant. All investigations will be recorded in writing and signed and dated by the project coordinator and the complainant will be asked to do the same and their response duly noted.

<b>APPROVED BY:</b> 	<b>POSITION:</b> Chair <b><u>Review date August 2025</u></b>
<b>DATE: August 2022</b>	<b>PAGE 1 OF 2</b>

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- 2.4 The Project Coordinator will then discuss the matter with the complainant, and will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all concerned, with reference to a minimum of three trustees.
- 2.5 If this is not possible, the complainant will be invited to submit details in writing, within 7 days, to the Chair who will acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
- 2.6 The Chair, with reference to a minimum of three trustees, will investigate the complaint and send a full written reply within 30 days, or explain why further time to investigate the issue is required. The reply will:
- 2.6.1 Set out the complaint so that the complainant can be sure it has been understood.
  - 2.6.2 Describe the event and circumstances surrounding the complaint.
  - 2.6.3 Say whether or not the complaint is deemed to be fair, giving reasons for the decision. It should be noted that if such an admission could have legal insurance implications, the Chair will have taken legal advice or contacted the insurers before writing.
  - 2.6.4 Apologise on behalf of *Friends of In Touch* (if the complaint is deemed to be fair) and explain the steps *Friends of In Touch* have taken to resolve the issue and/or avoid it happening again.
  - 2.6.5 Notify the complainant that, if they are not happy with this decision, they must notify the Chair within 14 days of receiving the reply if they wish to take the complaint further.
- 2.7 If the complaint is about the Project Coordinator and/or Chair, it will be referred to another Trustee.
- 2.8 If the complainant wants to have their complaint heard at a *Friends of In Touch* Trustees' meeting, they will be entitled to bring a friend who can speak for the complainant, as can the person from *Friends of In Touch* who is subject of the complaint (if appropriate).
- 2.9 A minimum of three trustees (excluding the Chair) shall hear the complaint. Both the complainant and the person who the complaint has been made about shall be allowed to have their say and all previous written notes/documentation and the Chair's investigations shall be taken into account within 30 days.
- 2.10 The written decision of the majority of the Trustees hearing the complaint will be sent to all involved. All efforts will be made to ensure this outcome is proportionate, appropriate and fair.
- 2.11 The decision will be final.

NB: For a simplified visual illustration of the complaint's procedure, please see the appendices below.

### **3 Recording Complaints**

- 3.1 All complaints shall be reported at the next *Friends of In Touch* Trustees' meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting.
- 3.2 The written records of all complaints will be held in Dropbox, including any written legal or insurance responses.

### **4 Recording Compliments**

- 4.1 All compliments shall be reported at the next *Friends of In Touch* Trustee's meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting.
- 4.2 The written records of all compliments will be held in Dropbox.

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### **5 Continuous improvement**

- 5.1 Every 6 months, complaints and compliments will be reviewed to consider any trends that are evident to ensure continuous improvement.

### **6 Review of this policy**

- 6.1 This will take place every 3 years unless Trustees determine there is a specific need to review earlier.

### **7 Related Documents**

FOIT 01 Safeguarding Policy

FOIT 03 Volunteer Policy

FOIT 05 Health and Safety Policy

FOIT 08 Privacy Policy

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