

Friends of In Touch Policy
Registered Charity: 1153013



Policy No: FOIT 03

TITLE: Volunteer policy

ISSUE No: 7

ISSUE DATE: August 2024

PREPARED BY: Policy Committee

Introduction

Friends of In Touch offers a facility where young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties can enjoy meeting other young people and developing their social skills in a safe and comfortable environment. In order to offer this service, volunteers are needed to:

- work alongside the *Friends of In Touch* staff to engage with group members who attend *Friends of In Touch* and their families.
- support staff in setting up and setting down rooms for groups as directed.
- support *Friends of In Touch* staff with general housekeeping duties in order to facilitate and run groups smoothly for the benefit of adults and children alike.
- work in accordance with the requirements of the *Friends of In Touch* aims and objectives.
- contribute to planning for the group with other volunteers and *Friends of In Touch* staff running the group.
- engage with group members whilst they attend the group and report any specific needs to *Friends of In Touch* staff.

1.0 Recruitment

- 1.1 We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equal Opportunities and Diversity Statement (FOIT 4). The applicant will have to complete an application form, but help can be given with this if necessary. Two references will be taken up and a DBS Check will be made for each volunteer.
- 1.2 A meeting will be arranged to introduce new volunteers to the work of *Friends of In Touch*. If the volunteer is still interested, there will be an informal interview by the Project Coordinator and/or group leader and, if successful, sessions will be offered.
- 1.3 The volunteer and charity representative will be required to sign a volunteer agreement.

APPROVED BY:

POSITION:

Chair

Review Date: August 2026

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2.0 Induction and Training

- 2.1 There will be an induction, organised by the Project Coordinator prior to the volunteer taking up duties (or as soon as practically possible). This will include:
- The role of the volunteer.
 - A list of all staff members and volunteers.
 - A list of Trustees and Management Committee members.
 - Essential procedures, i.e., timekeeping, session preparation and tidying-up, behaviour management protocols, etc.
 - Basic introduction to autism training.
 - All *Friends of In Touch* policies, relevant information and guidance, is required to be read by the volunteer and signed for to state that it has been read and understood. A folder will be provided to keep these in.
- 2.2 There will be a trial period of three sessions to give *Friends of In Touch* and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made at the end of the trial period. Successful volunteers will receive a letter from the Trustees welcoming them to the organisation.

3.0 Expenses

- 3.1 We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. Agreed out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed upon production of receipt or similar, which may include expenses for travel, meals, and childcare.
- 3.2 To claim expenses, a general expenses form (F007) or Mileage and Travel Claim Form (F008) must be completed and given to the Project Coordinator.
- 3.3 Refer to the *Friends of In Touch* Finance Policy (FOIT 09) for further details.

3.0 Hours per week

- 3.1 The amount of hours per week will vary and will depend upon the availability of the particular volunteer and as agreed with the project coordinator.
- 3.2 Additional time may be required for training and planning, this will be agreed separately.

4.0 Support

- 4.1 Support is available to all volunteers to ensure the safe and effective running of the groups.

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- 4.2 The Project Coordinator, staff and other volunteers will offer support to each other. There will be a briefing and de-briefing session at the beginning at the end of each session.
- 4.3 The Project Coordinator and/or group leader will support all volunteers and have regular meetings with the volunteers to discuss any problems or issues that may arise, this maybe within the session or through training.
- 4.4 Each volunteer will be allocated a named staff member who will act as mentor to support them in their role.

5.0 Insurance

- 5.1 *Friends of In Touch* has a valid insurance policy, which volunteers are advised to read.

6.0 Confidentiality

- 6.1 Working with vulnerable children, young people, adults, and their families, requires an explicit privacy policy, which all workers, including Trustees, volunteers and staff are obliged to observe. The Privacy Policy (FOIT 08) gives further information. However, information on how confidentiality applies to child or adult protection concerns and violent and threatening behaviour towards anyone involved with *Friends of In Touch* can be found in the Safeguarding Policy (FOIT 01).

7.0 Resolving Problems

- 7.1 The relationship between *Friends of In Touch* and its volunteer workers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract. However, it is important that *Friends of In Touch* is able to maintain its agreed standards of service to the children, young people, adults, families and referrers who use it, and it is also important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.
- 7.2 If a volunteer's work does not meet with *Friends of In Touch* standards, the following procedure will apply:
- The Project Coordinator will arrange a meeting with the volunteer to outline the concerns and to identify further training and/or support that might be required.
 - If the concern remains unresolved a meeting with the Chair of Trustees will be convened.
 - If the dissatisfaction or grievance remains unresolved, then it would be inappropriate for the person to continue as a volunteer with *Friends of In Touch*.
 - At all times the volunteer will be able to freely state their case and be accompanied by a friend.
- 7.3 If the volunteer is dissatisfied with any aspect of their work:

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- They should discuss their dissatisfaction with their mentor or Project Coordinator.
- If the concern remains unresolved, a meeting with the Chair of Trustees should follow within a three-month period.
- If the dissatisfaction or grievance remains unresolved, then it would be inappropriate for the person to continue as a volunteer with *Friends of In Touch*.
- At all times the volunteer will be able to freely state their case and be accompanied by a friend.

7.4 Refer to the *Friends of In Touch* Complaints and Compliments Procedure (FOIT 06) for further .

8.0 Review of this policy

8.1 This volunteer policy is freely accessible to all. It will be reviewed every two years and adapted as necessary.