

## **Complaints Policy of Friends - Play for Disabled Children**

Friends - Play for Disabled Children views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at Friends - Play for Disabled Children knows what to do if complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of Friends - Play for Disabled Children.

### **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from members of the group, the general public or representative of a venue that is used and can be received verbally or by email.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant GDPR requirements.

### **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation lies with The Trustees of Friends - Play for Disabled Children.

### **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Last Review – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Next Review Date – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026

## **Complaints Procedure of Friends - Play for Disabled Children**

### **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

Written complaints may be sent by email to Friends - Play for Disabled Children at [info@friendsplay.org.uk](mailto:info@friendsplay.org.uk)

Verbal complaints may be made in person to any of Friends - Play for Disabled Children Trustees at any of our events or activities.

### **Receiving Complaints**

Complaints may arrive through channels publicised for that purpose or through any other contact details or opportunities the complainant may have.

Complaints received in person need to be recorded.

The person who receives an in person complaint should:

- Write down the facts of the complaint
- Take the complainant's name, address and telephone number
- Note down the relationship of the complainant to Friends - Play for Disabled Children
- Tell the complainant that we have a complaints procedure
- Tell the complainant what will happen next and how long it will take
- Where appropriate, ask the complainant to send a written account by email so that the complaint is recorded in the complainant's own words.

### **Stage One**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to Paula Jones within one week.

On receiving the complaint, Paula Jones records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, they delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a fair opportunity to respond.

Complaints should be acknowledged by the person handling the complaint within one week and the acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### ***Stage Two***

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Trustee level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to the Chair of Trustees Melanie Battye.

The request for Trust level review should be acknowledged within one week of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

Melanie Battye may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Head of Trustees decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### ***External Stage***

The complainant can complain to the Charity Commission at any stage.

Information about the kind of complaints the Commission can involve itself in can be found on their website at: [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc47.aspx).

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The trustees may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints are reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.