**Friends of the Elderly Ireland (Little Brothers) Limited**

**1. Statement of Policy**

Friends of the Elderly Ireland (‘FOTE’) welcomes comments, suggestions and complaints about its performance and conduct in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities. This feedback may come from or members, volunteers, service providers, the general public and other charities. FOTE welcomes all feedback and regards complaints as opportunities to review practices, procedures and identify areas for improvement.

FOTE acknowledges that both the complainant and FOTE as a service provider have an equal voice and are of equal importance in our complaints process. The emphasis will be on a positive resolution of complaints where possible.

FOTE is committed to a complaints process that operates in a professional manner in the spirit of natural justice and is fair, transparent, not prejudiced and impartial.

FOTE is committed to safeguarding the rights of complainants and of FOTE staff and volunteers in an impartial investigation of the complaint and no parties to the complaint will be prejudiced in any future dealings with FOTE

FOTE is committed to resolving complaints in an effective and timely manner and uses an early resolution approach to complaints wherever possible. When addressing a complaint, we will keep the complainant informed of how we are doing with your complaint within the timeframes stated below.

FOTE will acknowledge any mistakes, provide an explanation, and put matters right whenever possible. We also aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve our services.

**2. Scope**

**2.1 What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about an organisation’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation.

**2.2 Who can complain?**

Anyone directly affected by the way in which FOTE has carried out its functions, or anyone acting directly on such a person's behalf, may make a complaint under this policy and procedure for the management and handling of complaints.

Subject to the nature and perceived severity of the allegation, anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated, as there is always the possibility that they are vexatious or malicious and the anonymity of the complainant would not enable the principle of natural justice and procedural fairness to be upheld. In all cases, anonymous complaints will be brought to the attention of the Chairperson to determine whether further investigation is warranted.

**3. How to make a complaint**

FOTE will resolve issues as quickly as possible to everyone’s satisfaction. We recommend that, where possible, you talk to the relevant person in FOTE in the first instance to see if your complaint can be resolved immediately. If that is not possible, then please set out your complaint in writing.

If you have a complaint regarding any aspect of our fundraising, please contact **Deborah Costello Fundraising and Communications Manager,** copying the **General Manager** (details below):

* In person at 25 Bolton Street, Dublin 1
* By phone: 01 873 1855/086 466 8391
* By email: deborah@friendsoftheelderly.ie

All other complaints can be discussed with the **Manager, Bernie Curran**

* In person at 25 Bolton Street. Dublin 1
* By phone: 01 873 1855/086 065 6544
* By email: bernie@friendsoftheelderly.ie

**Please mark all correspondence ‘Strictly private and confidential’**

When making a complaint please remember to provide your name, address and contact phone number (and email if possible) and advise if you are acting on behalf of someone else. Briefly describe your complaint, providing dates and times where possible, tell us what your concern is and what you hope to achieve (for example receive an apology). Please let us know your preferred method of communication.

To facilitate you in making your complaint, we recommend you request a copy of FOTE’s **Complaint Form,** a sample of which is attached as an **Appendix** to this Policy. Our staff can give you guidance on completing the form and the procedures to follow.

A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the action giving rise to it.

All complaints will be handled in the strictest of confidence.

A complainant has a right to appoint an advocate to assist them in making their complaint and to support them during the complaint process.

**4. The Complaints Process**

FOTE wishes to make it as easy as possible for you to make a complaint so we can address the specifics of your complaint and, in so doing, continue to make improvements to our service delivery. We aim to resolve most complaints received through an early resolution process. We will acknowledge your complaint within **five working days** and tell you who will be dealing with it.

We may need to follow up with you to get further information to help with our enquiries or we may offer to meet with you to discuss your complaint.

Once we fully understand your complaint and how you would like to see it resolved, we will respond to you within **30 working days** of your complaint being acknowledged (using your preferred method of communication).

We will tell you what we have done and how we reached our conclusions and, where appropriate, how we intend to resolve the issue for you. If there is a reason that we cannot resolve your complaint within this timeframe we will notify you of this and the reason for it.

**HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT**

**STEP 1 -** Please raise any complaint in the first instance with the General Manager or the Fundraising and Communications Manager, as appropriate, using the communications channels provided above.

You can expect to receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days and a full response within 30 working days, or if some matters require more detailed investigation, a timescale for a full response will be given to you.

If you feel your complaint has still not been satisfactorily resolved, continue to step 2.

**STEP 2 -** You have the right to appeal to Friends of the Elderly Appeals Sub Committee, which consists of three members of the Board of Directors.

All appeals will receive either a full response or an acknowledgement giving a timescale for a full response within 10 working days. You will be invited to attend the meeting of the Sub Committee and you may bring someone with you. The Sub Committee will endeavour to resolve the matter in a timely manner with your valued input.

The Appeals Sub Committee’s decision will be final.

**5. Recording and reporting of complaints**

It is important to identify areas of learning from complaints so that we can improve performance and reduce the likelihood of any recurrence of the issues giving rise to the complaint. As a result, we keep a confidential record of all complaints received and we may share the learning anonymously within the organisation.

The Manager formally reports to the Board in relation to the management of complaints received.

**6. Data Protection and Freedom of Information**

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