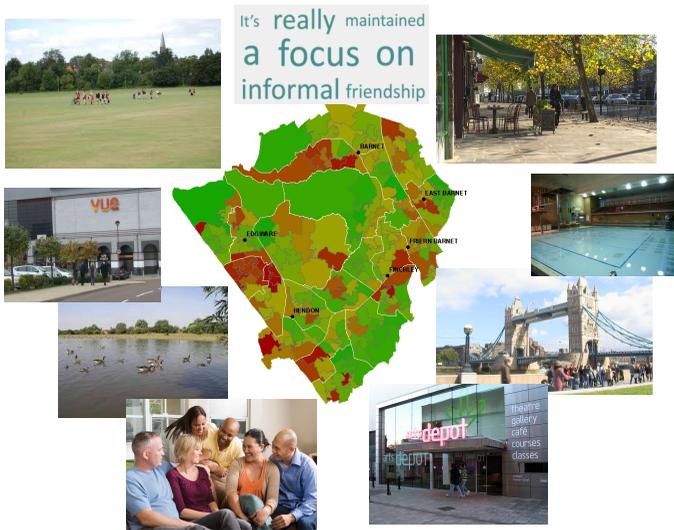


S2S

Staff-run to Self-run

How people using health and social care services can take over control of their groups from the staff who have run them in the past.



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Who should read this manual:-

- People attending social groups run by health or social services staff - to get ideas about running it yourself
- Staff who runs social support groups in health or social care settings - to see how you can hand over control to group members
- Advocacy groups - so you can support people in taking more control of their lives
- Managers and commissioners, so you can help to shape the overall pattern of support for individuals and communities

1. What this manual is about

Staff in health and social care run many different groups for people using their services¹. While some of these groups harness the professional knowledge of staff members to help people with specific problems, others provide more everyday but vital support and friendship opportunities to members.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that many such groups could be run by their members instead of the staff. This has the potential to accomplish four things:

1. Assist people to take on responsibilities, leading to enhanced self-confidence and skills in group participation
2. Contribute to community development and cohesion through the creation of informal, long-lasting relationships and social capital
3. Promote independence, thus releasing scarce resources for other people in more acute need
4. Reduce stigma and discrimination as group members are recognised as talented individuals with a great deal to offer.

While there is a wealth of help available to assist members of the public to start new community groups, little has been written that focuses specifically upon the journey from staff-run to *Independent Friendship Activities*² in the health and social care context. This manual bridges that gap by drawing on the pioneering work of the *Friends in Action* (FiA) programme at *The Network* in the London Borough of Barnet - where over 100 people are on the S2S journey. It was written in the summer of 2010 and arrangements continue to evolve as lessons are learnt.

¹ In this report, we try to follow the convention of using the terms 'person' and 'people' where other agencies might refer to service users, clients etc. Everyone else is designated as appropriate – staff, relatives etc. We may describe people as having 'lived experience' of mental health issues, rather than service users'. Sometimes we quote other agencies that refer to service users, clients or patients and sometimes these terms are adopted because it simply makes the sentence clearer.

² We shall explain this term in more detail shortly.

2. Create a pathway



Thinking Point: Groups run quite differently from one another. If you want people to move from one format to another, how will you help them to adopt a new way of relating, rather than rebuild the old, familiar patterns in a new setting?

The approach developed by *The Network* shows how *Friends in Action* groups take their place in the spectrum of social and community activities as shown in the following table.

Table 1: Different kinds of groups and how people might move between them

Therapy Group – is a staff-run group offering skilled interventions, such as anger management or cognitive behaviour therapy.	Staff-Run Support Group – is run by staff and offers social support, such as an opportunity to build friendship and utilise community leisure facilities together, or to share strategies for living with ongoing difficulties.
Friends in Action group - actively supported by staff to become largely self-run. Individuals can belong to a FiA group for up to twelve months.	Transitional Friendship Activities – these activities are initiated and run by small groups of people for themselves, with three months of support from staff to help the activity become established. After this time they become Independent Friendship Activities.
Independent Friendship Activities – After three months of support, Transitional Friendship Activities become fully independent of professional support.	Independent User-Led Group – is launched in the community by people who have used services, but the group as a whole has never been staff-run. This might be a local support or advocacy

	group.
User Led Organisation – this is a group of disabled people who run their own formal organisation, such as a Centre for Integrated Living.	Community Group – is formed by members of the public that appear to have not had anything to do with services and gather around a shared identity or interest.

A few observations may be made about this table, as follows:

- The descriptions in each box blend both the history and present status of each group, as these things are important in colouring the way the group works.
- Some groups do not fit neatly into these categories and the definitions may leave out some important features. In practice there might be ten or twenty options rather than these eight.
- Where *Independent Friendship Activities* choose to open their membership to the wider public, they will eventually become indistinguishable from a Community Group.

We can also trace pathways between the boxes that pertain to this in *The Network*:

- Individuals may take a variety of paths between these options. The table is not designed to shut off these individual routes, but simply to clarify the ideas that shape the system. We also note that people often belong to more than one group at a time, and these networks of group members may overlap in interesting and complex ways, making flow between the categories even more elaborate.
- A fixed pathway has not been designed to lead people into an Independent User Group or User Led Organisation, but this option has been included in the diagram for completeness.

- Individuals join a *Friends in Action* group for a limited time - up to a year. During that time they either work with the other group members to support the process of the *Friends in Action* group converting into a new *Transitional Friendship Activity* or they develop individual membership of another Community Group or *Independent Friendship Activity* and ultimately leave the *Friends in Action* group. Their vacated place in the *Friends in Action* group is then available for a new member.
- This means that the number of *Friends in Action* groups is fluid as new members arrive, others join existing *Independent Friendship Activities* or *Community* groups and some whole *Friends in Action* groups reinvent themselves as *Transitional Friendship Activities* and leave the pool. As with every other voluntary group, some people also lose interest after a time and drift away from the people or the activity. Staff at *The Network* re-populate the *Friends in Action* groups by marketing, offering Host Induction (see section 8) and working with people's ideas for new activities which would serve as the core for new *Friends in Action* groups.

The table also helps in describing changes that take place over time, as follows:

- The traditional journey was for people to progress from a Therapy group into a Staff-Run Support group and then get stuck, as little practical help was available to assist people to move on again.
- Introducing support for social inclusion at *The Network* from 2007 opened new options and so a new journey became routinely available: from a Therapy Group into a Staff-Run Support Group and then on to a Community Group.
- The *Friends in Action* concept was created to grow a number of *Friends in Action* groups and *Independent Friendship Activities*. Staff-Run Support Groups were symbolically closed at the end of September

2009, and each group was invited to reinvent itself as a *Friends in Action* group.

- Since October 2009, no Staff-Run Support Groups have existed at *The Network*, and so members generally join *Friends in Action* groups. Some will miss out the *Friends in Action* group altogether and move directly to *Independent Friendship Activities* or a *Community Group*.
- Individual members are supported throughout the year to participate in friendship and community activities and as a result when their membership expires they will have the skills to continue to access community activities. FiA groups have monthly long arm support from *The Network* Linkworkers, who visit the group once a month and welcome telephone contact from group members. The *Transitional Friendship Activities* are offered three months telephone support if needed. *Independent Friendship Activities* receive no formal support as they are independent of services, but some informal contact has often been maintained.

3. Understand the policy context



Thinking Point: Can you identify the most important elements of current policy that drive your development and stir your heart?

It is helpful to see how the development of *Transitional Friendship Activities* fits with the UK Government's policy initiatives in health and social care services³. Here are some of the links:

- The **personalisation** agenda⁴ increasingly gives people control over their own services; personal budgets are available in lieu of the service to which they are entitled. People receiving direct payments or personal budgets in this way may choose to pool their budgets to fund *Transitional Friendship Activities*.
- The **inclusion** agenda⁵ and the recent focus on building a **Big Society** advances the idea that people using health and social care services are firstly citizens and contributors to a wider community. *Independent Friendship Activities* contribute to **neighbourhood renewal**, **community cohesion**⁶ and **active citizenship**.
- The development of **re-ablement** services⁷ encourages health and social care providers to invest in brief interventions that assist people to become as **independent** as possible, so that after this period they take greater charge of their own lives and support needs. Ensuring **fair**

³ This manual was drafted within weeks of a new government taking office, and so there has been insufficient time to confirm or replace the policies of the previous administration.

⁴ <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/reports/report20.asp>

⁵ Social Exclusion Unit (2004) *Mental Health and Social Exclusion* London: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

⁶ Department of Culture and Local Government (2006) *Strong and Prosperous Communities* – see <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous>

⁷ HM Government (2009) *Shaping the future of care together* CM7673. See also http://www.dhcarenetworks.org.uk/_oldCSEDAssets/longit-study-bc.pdf

access to care services⁸, and the need to reduce the cost of public services has further encouraged people to move away from state-provided supports to informal, community-based arrangements.

- The acknowledgement that disabled people often have the best knowledge of their whole life, **recovery** journey and care needs is built into the **expert patient** approach⁹ and the development of Centres for Independent Living into **User-Led Organisations**¹⁰. *Independent Friendship Activities* can provide many of the skills and opportunities needed for the successful formation of fully constituted user-led organisations.
- The range of **mental health day services** provided in any local community should¹¹ include a component which is user-led.

In *The Network*, all these policy themes have been distilled into just three simple goals that all *Friends in Action* group must work towards: recovery, independence and inclusion. Once the local Centre for Independent Living (CIL) is established, the oversight of *Friends in Action* and the *Transitional Friendship Activities* is expected to pass from *The Network* to the CIL.

⁸ http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_113156.pdf

⁹ www.expertpatients.co.uk/

¹⁰ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Socialcarereform/Userledorganisations/index.htm>

¹¹ http://www.socialinclusion.org.uk/publications/Day_Services_web.pdf

4. Settle on the core values



Thinking Point: Are you aiming towards a rather formal group with meeting times, a chairperson and so on or an informal network of friends who casually choose to spend time with one another?

In addition to the links with national policy, it is helpful to spend some time thinking about the values that drive your plans. For example, in *The Network*, the following values add to the principles already drawn from the policy review:

- Personal development and mental health recovery involves engaging in purposeful activity with others and taking responsibility for making a contribution. To make this possible, the staff, relatives and others close to the person, along with the person themselves; need to focus on strengths and talents rather than deficits and problems.
- Groups which are run democratically with shared ownership and decision-making will create the best environment. Such distributed leadership¹² recognises that people are experts by experience, enables everyone to be involved, avoids placing undue pressure on one person, and strengthens the sense of ownership and commitment.

Glimpse #1: When one group needed to move from an isolated location to a place where there were more opportunities for interaction with the public, several members of the group visited possible venues and then everyone in the group had a clear vote.

- Hosting is a basic life skill that occurs every day, such as when people greet and welcome each other or make a newcomer a drink and ask

¹² Bolden R, Distributed Leadership **in** Marturano A & Gosling J (eds) (2007) *Leadership: The key concepts* Abingdon: Routledge.

how they are, and so it is helpful to develop and strengthen this social skill through the FiA groups. There is more information about the Host Induction programme in section 8.

- Language is very important. In Barnet, staff have replaced the term 'training' with 'induction'; 'hosting' has replaced 'leadership' as this suggests more of a party than a committee; and they consider the term 'group' to be loaded with notions of formality, structure and control, so prefer to talk about *Friendship Activities*. The ground rules for the *Friends in Action* groups use everyday language by asking members to be 'punctual, courteous and respectful to one another'.
- The strong vision held by the team helps staff to recognise their duties and highlights the small number of situations where one person's preference must be balanced against the needs of other people, safety of the service as a whole and the proper use of public funds. Staff aim to be clear, listen well and be transparent about the areas where they feel obliged to make certain decisions.

Glimpse #2: Discussions started with *Staff-Run Support* groups in 2007 with the aim of all these groups transitioning to FiA groups. A deadline was eventually set for the 1st October 2009 to close all these groups in their traditional form and re-start as *Friends in Action* groups. There was a lot of discussion with everyone, and the first self-run group began in 2007, with others taking a more gradual approach to support people in taking over their own group. All longstanding groups were obliged to opt into the new structure and were offered a year's FiA membership or individuals could choose to move on if they wished. This was because some groups had become highly dependent on the traditional arrangement and staff had a duty to encourage growth.

- The overall approach to the project is co-production – arrangements are most likely to succeed if they are designed, developed, delivered and evaluated by staff, members and other stakeholders acting in partnership.

5. Involve those affected



Thinking Point: How will you create real, ongoing involvement in decision-making, rather than a single listening event?

Any plans to turn current Staff-Run Support Groups into *Friendship Activities* need to be thoroughly discussed with everyone involved over a sustained period of time. The plans may be met with considerable apprehension, including fears that:

- Staff are simply being lazy or trying to avoid their responsibilities by providing ‘care on the cheap’.
- People who have used health or social care services are not sufficiently skilled to lead groups or prevent them from becoming unhealthy places where one member might abuse others or where nobody will do the right thing if a crisis happens.
- Vulnerable adults are ‘not allowed’ to meet one another without staff being present or the agency will be liable for anything that might go wrong.

At *The Network*, there was a three-month public consultation that started in July 2008 about the reshaped service, within which the *Friends in Action* group and *Friendship Activities* were to play a part. As *The Network* is managed by The London Borough of Barnet and Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust, this was part of the routine of democratic accountability that is expected when public services change their role and function, and so other agencies may need to make parallel arrangements to meet this standard.

During and after this period, newsletters were published containing information about the plans, evolving ideas, discussion forums and

training opportunities. This culminated in a second intensive period of activity in August and September 2009 when people were encouraged to try out groups. During this time members of the Staff-Run Support Groups received their membership cards and information packs for the *Friends in Action* group. Timetables of the various groups on offer were made readily available to advertise the groups and recruit new members, and the change gathered momentum until people felt they wanted to be part of a growing movement.

Host Induction sessions began in September 2009, have continued to be offered monthly and have been widely advertised in the newsletter and elsewhere.

Later on, a forum called *Onwards and Upwards* was established to support everyone in FiA but particularly the people who have used the service for a long time to move on. The meetings are open discussions in which participants may contribute and share ideas and concerns regarding moving on from services.

The Network has also set up a *Friends in Action* Committee with membership that is open to members of FiA. The aims of the committee are to:

- Give *The Network* a forum for 'service user involvement' and feedback consultations regarding the development of this new service
- Identify activities and social events that people would like to organize for themselves
- Solve problems and undertake action planning

Host Induction was established out of the needs identified by group members and covers:

- How to deal with topics such as dealing with difficult situations and communication skills

- *The Network's* aims and objectives
- How to structure a group
- Marketing your group
- Safeguarding and health and safety, particularly in those areas where a common approach is needed, rather than responses being tailored to individual groups.

Most recently, one of the active hosts of an *Independent Friendship Activities* has become a 'user representative' to advise the local Centre for Independent Living (CIL).

Glimpse #3. "FiA groups have helped me very well. I have watched people progress and this was extremely encouraging for me. It has helped to build my self esteem and confidence".

"I get quite a lot more post now from *The Network* about what's going on, I feel more involved now".

"Helping us to be more independent and independence is part of recovery, helping our self esteem, to feel more confident, none of us like change".

6. Agree on the destination



Thinking Point: In working with others, do you all really share the same vision for future arrangements, or are you using the same words but meaning different things by them?

What kind of group is envisaged? Here are some of the most important questions about that final destination, along with the answers that *The Network* chose.

Table 2: Frequently asked questions

Question	Answer chosen by <i>The Network's Friends in Action</i> programme
1. Are you aiming to create a single group offering <i>Friendship Activities</i> or a collection of linked groups?	The <i>Friends in Action</i> programme was designed to develop a network of <i>Independent Friendship Activities</i> that has the capacity to renew itself.
2. How long do you expect the transition to take?	The major transition from a number of Staff-Run Support Groups to FiA groups and <i>Transitional Friendship Activities</i> provides lots of time for everyone to learn what they need to know in order for the groups to be a success. The time period is negotiated with group members using clear objectives and a gradual approach to slowly withdrawing support.

Question	Answer chosen by <i>The Network's Friends in Action</i> programme
3. Who will be allowed to join a group?	Only people referred by the mental health service are eligible to join a <i>Friends in Action</i> group. <i>Independent Friendship Activities</i> are fully independent and so may choose to open to other citizens, whether or not they use health or social care services.
4. Is the <i>Independent Friendship Activity</i> a new service provider?	Once fully independent <i>Independent Friendship Activities</i> are friendship activities and are not commissioned to provide a health or social care service. <i>The Network</i> chose not to support groups to become providers. <i>Independent Friendship Activities</i> are not accountable to the service and do not take referrals or keep records.
5. At the end of the process, will the <i>Independent Friendship Activities</i> receive anything for free – accommodation or funding?	Once fully independent, groups find their own meeting spaces and running costs. Where necessary, groups are encouraged to find low cost or no cost solutions, and to seek financial support from elsewhere.

Question	Answer chosen by <i>The Network's Friends in Action</i> programme
6. What if anything goes wrong?	<p>During the transition time, <i>The Network</i> staff provide lots of support. Once fully independent, the group can call on the usual support arrangements available to the general public – emergency services and so on. Individual members may still be supported by a keyworker.</p> <p><i>Transitional Friendship Activities</i> are offered an initial three months telephone support by the Linkworker if needed.</p>
7. Are <i>Friendship Activities</i> expected to be a short-lived or long-lasting group?	<p>After receiving three months support, <i>Transitional Friendship Activities</i> become <i>Independent Friendship Activities</i>, which can be long-term. It is acknowledged that friendships and activities do not always last forever as interests grow, needs change and people move on.</p>

Other organisations may choose their own answers to these questions.

7. Clarify joining arrangements



Thinking Point: Staff members are accountable for their activities and so rely on a referral process, assessment and register of attendance. Informal groups have less of these things. What will you do?

It is necessary for *Friends in Action* group members to be eligible for social care under the Fair Access to Care Services arrangements as this provides support to people as they move away from dependence on the health and social care system. The *Independent Friendship Activities* can, of course, open their membership to anyone they choose to invite.

When a person joins they are introduced to the ground rules set by the existing members. People often want some individual time to clarify the practical arrangements, such as who pays for tea and coffee or what happens if someone is unwell. Anyone who wishes to join a *Friends in Action* group completes a Membership and Referral form and sends it to their keyworker. The three objectives of FiA are Social inclusion, Recovery and Independence and these are set out on this form and on membership cards to remind people of the potential benefits of involvement. People commit themselves to FiA by signing the terms and conditions set out on the membership referral form

The keyworker will then spend time with the person assisting them to reflect on their personal goals and consider how the group will support these. The individual's risk management plan will be updated prior to joining FiA. They consider together how membership of a *Friends in Action* group may help them and make plans for future involvement in mainstream social and leisure activities. This assessment will check that the person is appropriate for the group and develop a risk management plan, and the keyworker must be satisfied that membership of a *Friends in Action* group is a support for, rather than an alternative to, engaging with

the wider community. The application cannot proceed without the approval of the keyworker.

Although members do not control who joins the groups, they can raise concerns with the Linkworker about people who break the terms and conditions. In the event of a person turning up unannounced or without a valid membership card, we encourage members to contact the Linkworker or the person's keyworker. The Linkworker is then informed and will contact the person to explain that the *Friends in Action* group is not a drop-in group, and explain the formal membership process. With advance notice to the group the Linkworker may arrange for a newcomer to attend a group as a 'taster' before committing to membership.

The keyworker may bring their active work with the person to an end during the person's membership of the *Friends in Action* group; however, the keyworker will continue to monitor the individual with the Linkworker for the duration of their membership. People in this situation take ownership of their own goals and monitor their personal progress.

8. Host the group



Thinking Point: Everyone has experience of different leadership styles and a personal preference. Are you aiming for a particular style?

Whilst it up to the group to decide what they will do and how they will arrange their meetings, some idea of how this will work helps people to decide if they want to be a part of the group, and guides the development of appropriate skills and behaviour. Some traditional Staff-Run Support Groups rely heavily on the worker to initiate conversation and activity, so members rarely take any initiative. This, of course, is true of many *Community* Groups as well, and a group may make the transition from being a Staff-Run Support Group to a FiA group or *Friendship Activities* without making any changes to this hierarchical approach.

In *The Network*, the goal was a shared approach to developing commitment and drawing on everyone's ideas. All the groups are hosted by people who are experts by experience and have used *The Network* themselves. Many of the ideas for new groups come from people themselves. Groups have formed around drama, theatre trips, swimming, snooker and singing.

Sometimes the biggest barrier to the development of *Transitional Friendship Activities* is an absence of this fundamental belief in the ability of people who have used services to take control of their own lives and support arrangements.

At *The Network*, the positive belief in group members' potential is not confined to creative ideas for activities, and so the core value of distributed leadership led the workers to think about hosting. They realised that acting as a host to another person is a life skill that can be used every day and in every setting. It happens when people welcome newcomers, hang up a coat, make a drink and ask people how they are.

Some people do not develop these skills and others forget to use them.

Boosting this skill both creates a foundation for the *Transitional Friendship Activities* and is highly portable into other settings and relationships. We might think that many families would be refreshed if each member viewed themselves as a host!

As a result, everyone who wishes to join a group is offered two Host Induction sessions that are run each month. At first, the sessions were offered to existing groups in their own familiar meeting place, but subsequently the sessions have transferred to the local college of further education. Keyworkers at *The Network* can also refer to these sessions people who may not wish to join a group but will benefit from the focus on hosting skills.

The Host Induction Programme takes place at a local Further Education College. The course is not accredited and provides a very relaxed style of informal learning that may lead individuals on to more formal learning activities in the future, perhaps in the customer care or hospitality industry. Participants used an evaluation form at the end of the Host Induction sessions and rated it on ten dimensions using a five point scale. Eighty nine percent of participants rated the sessions as excellent or very good.

Table 3: Host Induction Sessions

Session 1	Session 2
<p>Housekeeping</p> <p>Introductions and icebreaker exercise: what do we want to get out of this?</p> <p>Brain storm as a group: What is a host? What is an appropriate and inappropriate way of acting as a host?</p> <p>Presentation: Communicating successfully</p> <p>Pairs role play: Listening exercise, paired conversation around personal interests</p> <p>Whole group discussion: responding to difficult situations.</p> <p>Health & Safety / Safeguarding</p> <p>Aims & Objectives of <i>The Network</i> and FiA groups</p> <p>Discussion - what are FiA groups?</p> <p>Questions and general feedback</p>	<p>Housekeeping</p> <p>Icebreaker exercise</p> <p>Memberships / referrals terms and conditions</p> <p>Difference between FiA and Friendship activities and future of FiA</p> <p>Brainstorm ways to begin a social and leisure activity with friends</p> <p>Small group discussion and feedback: How to recruit new members</p> <p>Revisit aims and objectives from session 1</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Award of certificates of achievement and presentation of FiA membership packs</p>

As Active Hosts may take a break from their responsibilities from time to time these roles are rotated. It is recognised that group members may miss sessions, although, in joining FiA, people are encouraged to commit to the group. This commitment is a way to support recovery and responsible participation.

After attending Host Induction, potential hosts will have a conversation with the keyworker to agree the next steps, and this discussion commonly includes:

1. One of the goals of the host induction process is to demystify the role and explore any misconceptions or concerns, such as thinking that the whole responsibility for leading the group falls to them. This process is particularly important for those who have become used to a traditional relationship with services and are not used to being proactively involved or taking on responsibilities.
2. Making sure that the person is ready to take on the proactive role in FiA.
3. Reassuring the person that they need only take on as little or as much as they feel able to handle.
4. The goal is that each group has several hosts who take turns, ensuring that no one has to carry the responsibility for a group on their own.
5. Active Hosts attend a support group every two to three months and discussion which is facilitated by the Linkworker so that they can ask questions and get an update on *The Network*. They discuss how their group is getting on, attendance patterns and how to attract new members to the group. Hosts often have to be reassured that it is normal for group attendance to fluctuate.
6. Groups to raise concerns, queries, problem solve and share ideas with other hosts.
7. Clarifying the level of support available to active hosts and *Friends in Action* groups. A host can phone the Linkworker when they have concerns, although independence in dealing with difficult situations is encouraged. In addition, the Linkworker visits the groups at least monthly to find out how they are getting on.
8. Information sharing. There is a clear expectation on all members of FiA to share information which affects safeguarding. Thus everyone is encouraged to inform *The Network* staff, police, social services or

appropriate professional services if they see or hear anything related to the health and well-being of others that may require action from *The Network* staff. Further comments on safeguarding appear in section 11.

Those who attend and complete the Host Induction programme are given a certificate of achievement. People who have used services and attended Host Induction are encouraged to be proactive in sharing the responsibility for the success of each meeting of the *Friends in Action* group. This enables people to take on some responsibility that is proportionate to their confidence and skill, to take a rest occasionally and to develop their skills over time. *Friends in Action* groups are hosted by people who have lived experience of mental health difficulties and who have completed a Host Induction programme. The Host Induction programme is advertised widely across *The Network* and in the “Reaching Out” newsletter.

The principle of distributed roles within the group means that it is hoped that every single group member will take on some responsibility and that these duties will informally rotate around members. Hosting is such a fundamental membership obligation that, after many opportunities, people who consistently refuse to engage in Host Induction will not be appropriate for FiA groups.

Glimpse #4: Staff are determined that groups will run on a democratic basis and everyone should take some responsibility for the success of the gathering. Everyone plays a part as a host, if only by passing someone a cup of tea. Responsibilities informally rotate around group members and those who do too little or too much are challenged. This was because staff were aware that some people with mental health issues struggle to cope with stress and this arrangement offered the most flexible way for the group to support all members.

9. Find help for the journey



Thinking Point: *The Network* supports people for up to one year to make the transition from FiA groups to Friendship Groups. How much support do you think is needed to give a high chance of success? Would too much support inhibit real growth?

Some people see FiA and *Friendship Activities* as a real opportunity to create a flexible and equal environment where people bear real responsibility for one another rather than always deferring to the staff member. Freedom from external control and bureaucracy is an attractive option and it has the potential to harness the interests and enthusiasms of all group members. For other people, and especially some who have made extensive use of health and social care services, the idea of running a group without staff is daunting. There are many practical problems to overcome and sometimes people are anxious about what to do if something bad happens.

Whilst a few people using services have formed *Independent Friendship Activities* through the sheer force of their initiative, charisma and persistence, it is unlikely to become a strong feature of local provision without the investment of real effort. People using services need to work together with support from others over time in order to build local experience, establish the positive reputation of *Friendship Activities* and develop a compendium of local experiences of how to make things work well. Such expert help might come from the health or social care services, from the local Council for Voluntary Service or from Community Development Workers.

NDTi has provided support to *The Network* since 2007 and ran a training event in July 2009 to help staff develop their vision and plans for *Friends in Action*.

Glimpse #5: At the beginning of the project it was hoped that the majority of people would apply to participate in the Host Induction programme. As some people lacked confidence or worried about taking on responsibility, for a time, Host Induction was taken to the groups themselves and delivered to everyone present. This was because staff believed strongly in the notion of hosting as a life skill that is relevant to everyone. Nowadays, people who have attended the sessions often invite others to participate.

In *The Network*, two mental health staff (1.5 whole time equivalent posts) are allocated to support the development of *Transitional* and *Independent Friendship Activities* giving a total of 45 hours a week that can be spent on the project. A useful feature of these posts has been that one worker is trained in social work and the other has a marketing rather than care background. This has helped with the ongoing and complex task of ensuring communication is clear and effective.

These appointments demonstrate that senior managers have also made a commitment to the development of *Friendship Activities*, and *The Network* has found that such management sponsorship is helpful in resolving some of the thorny issues associated with the transition from staff-run to self-run activities.

The two staff work on the following tasks:

- Advertise the *Friendship Activities* to possible members, referrers and other allies, such as the *Learning Revolution Transformation Fund*, who provided resources for the development of this manual.
- Gather information about people's interests and nurture any tentative ideas for new groups by negotiating introductions for people who share an interest. Groups can begin when someone has an idea and active hosts are identified for the group. Linkworkers then assist the hosts to market the group, sometimes acting as very public supporters of the idea until the group is established and the hosts feel

confident. For example, in the first round of advertising for a new group, people who were interested in joining were advised to contact their keyworker, even though hosts were already identified.

- Manage new referrals to the groups and support the groups on a day-to-day basis
- Visit the *Friends in Action* groups monthly to offer support and exchange information. Every three months, to check they are meeting their agreed objectives
- Produce the 'Reaching Out' newsletter which is focused on social inclusion and friendship and includes essential information needed for community life, such as safeguarding contact details and the details of community based organisations.
- Prepare and distribute the timetable that lists all of the *Friends in Action* groups, *Transitional* and *Independent Friendship Activities* and Community Groups, including their venues, activities and target participants.
- Seek community resources to support the group's inclusion in the wider community – a regular meeting place for the group and destinations for occasional or regular outings.
- Develop written materials in support of the *Friends in Action* group, such as the Host Induction and Member's Packs (see section 13).

Clear leadership has been vital for creating and growing the *Independent Friendship Activities*. *The Network* manager assists Linkworkers to set, record and monitor clear project objectives. Being part of a larger team with regular supervision and staff meetings provide a useful environment for Linkworkers to gain support, review progress and reflect on their learning. It has also formed a helpful environment for members of the larger staff team who have found it difficult to let go of their traditional role.

Whilst the Linkworkers have a substantial role in developing the FiA service, all *The Network* staff share a lively interest and many are involved in a variety of ways. This way the solution-focused attitude of the staff team helps with problem solving.

People who have used mental health services for a long period of time have had more difficulties with the time-limited one year membership and moving on than new referrals who are used to a fluid service where people move on, rather than assuming that 'services are for life'.

As a result of this investment of effort and energy, a large proportion of the people associated with *the Network* have joined a *Friends in Action* group or *Friendship Activities*., The number of *Friends in Action* groups fluctuates as established groups are depleted by people moving on to other activities and new groups emerge.

Glimpse #6: Towards the end of the twelve month support period, some *Friends in Action* group members have realised that they have not made the best possible use of their time. Instead of offering an extension, or allowing people to repeat the year, staff have generally encouraged people to make good use of the remaining time on their membership card. This was to help the whole group to understand that the process is a genuine one, and to ensure that scarce resources were shared fairly amongst people who need support.

10. Fit the group into a wider context



Thinking Point: What links do you have to specialist help for people who need extra support? How will people move on to wider participation in Community Groups?

Transitional and *Independent Friendship Activities* fit into two contexts, both equally important:

- It is part of the journey taken by the person who is using health or social care services. For example, in *The Network*, people with mental health difficulties are supported through the Enablement Programme and individual Support Planning before having an opportunity to join FiA. As a result, some people may need more time to access specialist support and learn problem-solving or coping strategies to participate in a group. Likewise, established group members who then experience difficulties can obtain extra support as they need it.
- It is also part of the patchwork of formal organisations, voluntary groups, and informal networks of friends. For example, the *Friendship Activities* where members read plays together will build positive links with local amateur and professional theatre groups.

Paying attention to both these relationships helps the *Friendship Activities* to meet its obligations toward individual members, who may need some specialist assistance from time to time, and to the social inclusion agenda, as members may wish to move on from the *Friendship Activity* into a *Community Group* that has never had anything to do with the service.

For individual members of FiA, membership is a time-limited commitment for up to one year but there are, of course, no time limits or memberships for Friendship activities. *The Network* supports people to develop a range of interests and social activities within wider circles; in the community and with people they have met whilst in mental health services. For others, the

Independent Friendship Activities are a long-term commitment. An honest conversation about these things will help group members to build a shared ethos and encourage people when they are ready to move on.

11. Manage tricky issues



Thinking Point: Challenging questions will arise from time to time and answers may evolve as different possible solutions are tested. What mechanisms do you have for airing these issues and drawing in ideas from other places?

By paying attention to safeguarding, risk management, health and safety and confidentiality, *The Network* protects group members and minimises its liability in the event of something going wrong. This section then goes on to consider the need to balance acceptance of the status quo with challenges in order to achieve gentle but persistent progress, and specific issues surrounding absence, money and venues.

Safeguarding

At *The Network*, participation in a *Friends in Action* group is a clear part of the individual's care plan and so is covered by the usual processes for assessing and managing risk, paying particular attention to

- The risk of exclusion and the protective consequences of inclusion
- How the work undertaken with *The Network* on promoting enablement and social inclusion has improved the person's resilience and resources to deal with risky situations.

Staff ensure that the group is not overburdened with undue responsibilities for an individual member and the person has access to suitable support from elsewhere as they need it.

Friendship Activities may decide to welcome the general public in the same way as any other *Community Group* or activity, and so little information may be known about newcomers.

A general statement reinforcing every citizen's personal responsibility for damage to property and offensive behaviour, along with the duty to safeguard each other appears on the registration form that prospective FiA members all sign. Groups decide how they want to identify and address these unacceptable behaviours, and have the authority to ask people to leave. Group members are encouraged to take responsibility both for themselves and for one another, especially if someone is in need. People learn how to use the *safeguarding adults*' procedure when needed¹³.

The Network has obligations towards the Criminal Records Bureau and the Vetting and Barring Scheme managed by the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). At present¹⁴, the nominated leaders of any formal group are considered to be counted as trustworthy by the group's members, and therefore anyone who might be considered to act on behalf of that group as a leader must be checked. *The Network* staff wrestled with the paradox of creating groups that were independent, but may be deemed to confer a trusted status on certain members. ISA have indicated that peer support groups, where there is a clear understanding that everyone, including leaders, may also have problems, do not need to be registered. FIA, as a network of groups in which all participants can act as hosts, therefore members are of equal status and do not need to be registered.

Glimpse #7: Safeguarding is a key concern within formal services and within the wider community. People may have become dependent on staff to keep them safe. We have encouraged people to take more responsibility for their own well being and safety –they can decide how much to share with others about their needs and negotiate with staff and other group members how issues of risk and safeguarding will be managed. *The Network* invited people to develop a training resource that would raise awareness of abuse.

¹³ Information is included in the host induction and appeared in the *Reaching Out* newsletter.

¹⁴ The new government has signalled its intention to review arrangements for vetting and barring.

Health and safety

The Network's health and safety representative developed a guidance document for hosts that showed what to do in case of fire, need for first aid, personal and food hygiene, unwelcome visitors to the group, loss and theft of property and mental health crisis. Hosts are required to identify the 'premises controller' in their venue, locate first aid resources and understand their obligations within the setting – the focus on environmental safety was to make responsible use of the community facility, its resources and procedures, rather than importing arrangements from the health and social care system.

Glimpse #8: Host Induction, assessments and care planning can prepare people for so much but it is often when things go wrong that lessons are learnt. We encourage people to think about their own safety and this includes keeping personal belongings safe. If someone from the group takes your wallet when you are not looking you will get angry and you have to face the consequences of your carelessness. The group may help you to get through the situation but ultimately you have to face it, find a solution for yourself and learn from it.

Confidentiality

What information will be gathered, recorded or shared about people who join the group? People involved in FiA are reminded of the importance of confidentiality within the groups, as this is a shared value. Acceptable grounds for breaching confidentiality occur when someone is a risk to themselves or others. This is also in the terms and conditions discussed in host induction.

Gentle, persistent progress

Some members want to move forward with their lives and perhaps engage with the wider community beyond the group, first by adding a Community Group alongside the *Friendship Activities* and eventually leaving the *Friendship Activities* entirely. Meanwhile others will look for emotional safety through long-term friendship within the Independent *Friendship Activities*.

In contrast to these positive options, it is possible for a group to get stuck by offering cloying support that holds members back from personal development and community participation, so that members engaged in the *Friendship Activities* discourage one another from re-connecting with life beyond the service. We cannot rely upon the mere fact that the group is self-run to counteract these damaging processes – just as groups run by staff or community organisations are not uniformly positive environments!

Indeed, some *Transitional Friendship Activities* are made up of people who have known one another for years, and so these deep relationships can be more attractive than the superficial acquaintances recently met in Community Groups. The result can be that group members are reluctant to build relationships with members of the public that have had no contact with health or social care services.

Transitional Friendship Activities therefore need to create a culture where people are warmly welcomed and supported, but encouraged to move on

when they are ready to do so. It is easiest to achieve this if each person has a clear plan for personal development and social inclusion, and if all health and social care staff share this commitment to the person's growth.

At *The Network*, staff offer up to one year of support for the *Friends in Action* group, and the Linkworkers visited each group on a monthly basis and met with the active hosts regularly to review the functioning of the group. This coaching for hosts and groups themselves has helped the groups to establish a positive culture.

Absence

Group members are expected to contact an active host or another group member if they are unable to attend, and there is, of course, recognition that everyone has a bad day sometimes. Some people express a strong interest in attending a group but then never or only rarely turn up. Others attend regularly for a time and then begin to attend sporadically or not at all.

In such circumstances, the keyworker and Linkworker will contact them and encourage them to recall the personal goals that FiA membership was designed to meet, and encourage them to return and show their commitment to the group.

For some, when it is clear that the person has abandoned the group, the keyworker and Linkworker will close the person's membership and wish them well. Even in these circumstances, the place may be held open for a time, perhaps to give an opportunity for the person to meet with their keyworker. It may be that the brief experience with FiA will trigger an alternative interest that can be supported.

Other people move on positively. There comes a point when people are discharged from *The Network* and are solely supported by the FiA group. The reality of no longer having a keyworker may cause some individuals some anxiety. Staff encourage people to celebrate progress and remind

them that they have spent a lot of time preparing for moving on – including the process of developing a crisis plan.

Money

The Network's Support Planning which works alongside the *Friends in Action* programme supports the individual to make good use of personal budgets (payments made to individuals eligible for social care in lieu of the direct provision of that care). Such arrangements also facilitate inclusion, since people can use their personal budgets across the whole range of community agencies.

Holding cash is symbolic of responsibility in our society and so collecting and handling money is a powerful indicator of independence, as is what happens when problems arise. The Linkworker advises groups to avoid risky transactions between members, but also makes it clear that anyone who does so bears the risks themselves. Group members manage petty cash themselves.

Glimpse #9: One person offered to pay admission charges in advance on behalf of others attending their *Transitional Friendship Activities*, without considering what would happen if some people dropped out and refunds were not available. The Linkworker strongly discouraged this course of action, but the person went ahead anyway and ended up out of pocket. The group decided that in future, their rule would be 'money in advance'.

Venue

Friends in Action group may meet at *The Network's* premises, but are encouraged to quickly find a meeting place in the community. Each *Friends in Action* group needs a secure place at their venue to store at least two copies of the Host Pack. Groups must either find a free venue (such as a coffee shop or a pub) or pay for the meeting place themselves.

Friends in Action groups are discouraged from meeting in one another's homes.

12. Learn new things



Thinking Point: How do you share your learning with others?

Living well involves constant learning, and there is much to learn about how to act as effective hosts and the project as a whole. Nobody expects everything to work, but operates on the basis of experimentation and learning.

Through engagement in the FiA group, people have learnt to take on responsibility for making sure tea and coffee are available, managing money on behalf of others, asking for help when they need it, and supporting others when they are having a hard time. Taking on these practical responsibilities has helped people develop in confidence and skills.

People who become Active Hosts learn to commit to a project with clear aims and then how to use their skills to support the group in moving towards their goal. They learn to reflect on how they are meeting the aims and to make changes. People learn how to cope with being challenged by Linkworkers and peers about the purpose of the group and their participation in the group.

Group members are also provided with regular information about free training courses run by other organisations that they may wish to attend.

Group work skills have transfer value into many formal and informal settings, ranging from educational and democratic to informal settings where people create friendship and social cohesion.

People who began by feeling apprehensive are now so used to running groups themselves that when the Linkworkers visit to see how things are going they joke “What are you doing here? We forgot that you were coming today.”

There is learning for the whole organisation too. Creating *Transitional Friendship Activities* has had an impact on the whole system. FiA has been created through a 'design and build' approach, rather than trying to resolve all the issues before starting. Deadlines have helped everyone to keep moving forward.

Glimpse #10: The "Out and About Extra" has been a very successful *Friendship Activities group which has* supported people to do things they might not otherwise have done. For example, some people did not have the confidence to go out in the evenings and through the support of the Group they now have the confidence to attend evening events such as the theatre or ten-pin bowling.

13. Document the work



Thinking Point: What needs to be recorded? How will it be analysed? What action will arise from the findings? Who needs to know?

One of the differences between a *Friends in Action* group and *Independent Friendship Activities* may be the nature and amount of recording that is undertaken by or on behalf of the group. Community Groups evolve over time and often establish strong customs, but these are usually unwritten rules of conduct. In contrast, health and social care services have substantial responsibilities to record their activities.

It can be helpful to record the decisions made by the group, and perhaps the reasons why, so that absent members can understand. Similarly, in the development of a network of *Independent Friendship Activities*, learning that is gleaned from one group may help another, and so it can be useful to make a record of the situation and solution.

Transitional Friendship Activities are self funded and if required participants source and pay for their own venue.

For FiA groups, staff provide a venue and so they need to gather evidence that they have achieved agreed attendance levels and that people have benefited from participation in the group. Outcomes for people involved in FiA groups are recorded. This is likely to mean attendance registers, narrative accounts of benefit and perhaps some summary data showing enhanced wellbeing, inclusion, recovery, and independence alongside reduced reliance on state-funded services.

At *The Network*, the following documents have been created:

Documentation for group members:

- A Membership Pack, including a registration document that includes an expiry date for the FiA group membership, a copy of the signed

membership and referral form, terms and conditions for the group, membership card, Reaching Out newsletter and FiA timetable.

- Host Pack contains details of the venue key holders, risk plans for the venue, register, membership forms, mobile phone, opening and locking up policy, health and safety information, costs for the group, group aims and objectives, terms and conditions, specific items for this group

Staff documentation:

- Job description for the Linkworkers
- Project Initiation Document
- Register of group members, include name, date of birth, home address and contact details.
- Review form for quarterly evaluation of the group. Completed pro-formas accumulate over time and give the group an opportunity to review their progress.
- Groups' timetable that includes FiA groups, *Transitional* and *Independent Friendship Activities* and *Community* Groups. Advertising the activities of these groups alongside each other reinforces the social inclusion agenda, and encourages connections between similar groups
- Risk Assessment Form
- Understanding health and safety for FiA groups
- All about you and your interests – *The Network's* initial assessment form
- Aims, objectives and outcomes of FiA

Independent Friendship Activities have no standard documentation or formal monitoring, as they have no formal connection, structured support or accountability to *The Network*. Groups are encouraged to be more informal, modelling on informal friendships in the community. There are opportunities for members to meet as sub groups of two or three people. Informal and friendly relationships with *The Network* tend to continue.

14. See lives change



**Thinking Point: What is the goal you are aiming for?
How will you know you have arrived?**

Many individual members have left the group because they have moved on to successful, busy and inclusive lives. For example, one person left the FiA group to spend more time on their self-employed business and to start a university degree in Fashion, possibly supported with an Individualised Budget.

Gathering evidence and comparing it with the FiA objectives has been important in motivating and focusing staff efforts. Such friendly challenges have helped staff to refocus attention on particular objectives and in their turn to support FiA members to compare their activities and outcomes with project objectives¹⁵. Here is a list of the ways in which evidence is gathered:

- Evaluation forms are completed after Host Induction sessions.
- The staff have adapted the Recovery Star materials into steps to evaluate personal progress. This asks participants to use a five point scale to rate themselves on six dimensions – managing mental wellbeing, identity and self esteem, support from *The Network*, responsibilities, hopefulness and relationships].
- A quarterly review of each group takes place, using a standard questionnaire for the group to complete as a whole, and a second form that individual group members can complete if they wish. The group as a whole score the group on a five point scale on the following questions:

¹⁵ These are written down in the *Aims, objectives and outcomes for FiA* groups

1. Do you feel the group is meeting the aims and objectives - Being Socially inclusive?
2. Do you feel the group is meeting the aims and objectives - Promoting Recovery?
3. Do you feel the group is meeting the aims and objectives - Promoting Independence?
4. Does the group encourage each other to take on an active role in its activities?
5. Does the group promote itself to other FiA members?
6. Does the group engage in activities outside of its regular venue?
7. Does the group receive the appropriate support from Linkworkers?
8. Overall, how satisfied are you with the group?

The form has been designed to be as accessible as possible, as an initial draft was found to be too text-based. People are asked:

- What has worked well?
- What hasn't worked well?
- Did anything happen that clashed with the FiA goals of recovery, independence and inclusion?
- What changes should be made to meet our aims for FiA, this group and individual members?

Group members also benefit from being in the group while the discussion takes place about its role, achievements and future.

15. Appendices

15.1 More about The Network

The Network provides support to people with mental health issues who live in the London Borough of Barnet, where they are ‘putting the community first’¹⁶. It is a partnership between Barnet Adult Social Services and Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust. The team is made up of assessment and enablement officers, health professionals including occupational therapists and a senior practitioner, Linkworker, community access workers, business support team, management. Staff come from a rich variety of backgrounds and experiences to make up the multi-disciplinary team, making this an unusually diverse and skilled team. *The Network* runs three programmes, called Enablement, Personal Support Planning and the *Friends in Action* development programme, comprising FiA groups and support from *Transitional Friendship Activities* that lead into *Independent Friendship Activities*. For more information, email the.network@barnet.gov.uk

15.2 More about NDTi

The National Development Team for Inclusion is a not for profit organisation concerned with promoting inclusion and equality for people who risk exclusion and who need support to lead a full life. NDTi has a particular interest in the issues surrounding age, disability and mental health. In 2007, *The Network* engaged NDTi to assist them in the redesign of their service to meet the three goals of recovery, independence and inclusion via the three mechanisms of enablement, support planning and the *Friends in Action* (FiA) programme. This manual describes some of the learning from the FiA programme.

¹⁶ This is the strap line that appears on all documents produced by the London Borough of Barnet.

15.3 More about this manual

This manual was commissioned by the Friends in Action project based at *The Network* in the London Borough of Barnet. It was written by Peter Bates and Kay Steven of the National Development Team for Inclusion, in collaboration with group members, hosts and staff at *The Network*. This edition was completed October / November 2010. For more information about FiA, email the.network@barnet.gov.uk.

15.4 The Network Host Induction (Only) Referral Form

The Network Host Induction (Only) Referral Form

Note: This form is for Host Induction referrals only. Please use FiA memberships / Referral form if clients are intending to participate in FiA groups.

Key Worker:

Referral Date:

Title:

First Name:

Surname:

Address:

Post Code:

Email:

Tel:

Mobile:

Please indicate which month's induction your client wants to participate in?

Host Induction Month:

Internal Document

15.5 The Network – All about you and your interests

The Network
Connecting you with your community



The Network - All about you and your interests

Social Inclusion projects work to build the positive social roles and relationships of people who have spent time receiving health and social care services. They can support people to obtain take up social and recreational activities, open wages employment and attend college.

These positive roles have a number of beneficial consequences in the life of the person, including:

- Improved self-esteem and well-being may arise from the adoption of positive roles in the community, along with a time structure and obligations towards others
- Improved health can be a consequence of participation in exercise or sports activities
- Improve standard of living can come from waged employment and educational achievement

In view of the above mentioned benefits, we would like to find out more about you and your interests. Please feel free to take some time in providing the information, as the answers you give will enable us to help you towards achieving your aspirations.

Your Details:

Title: **First Name:** **Surname:**

Telephone: **Mobile:** **Email:**

Address:

Date of Birth: **Key Worker:**

1. What is your preferred means of contact? (*Tick*)

Telephone

Mobile

Email

2. Do you wish to receive regular updates from The Network? (*Tick*)

Yes

No, I do not wish to receive updates

3. Do you currently attend any activities or group/s?: Yes No

• If yes, what do you attend?

4. Have you previously attended courses/activities relating to your interest/s? Yes No

• If yes, please list below what you can remember:-

Course / Activity Name	Where did you go for this?	When – give dates	
		From	To

Your Interests:

Please tell us what your interests are, these maybe things you have always wanted to try or would like to expand on the interests that you are currently doing?

Please list below in order of preference your interest/s: - (*use a separate sheet if necessary*)

Thank you for your participation, please give this form to your key-worker and we will be in touch with you regarding the interest/s you have given us.

If you have any queries regarding filling in this form, please speak to your key-worker for assistance. They can be contacted at **The Network** on **020 8359 3230**

Date:- _____

15.6 Friends in Action Group Quarterly Review

Putting the Community First



Friends in Action Group Quarterly Review

Overall Aims & Objectives of Friends in Action Groups:

1. Social inclusion:

Full participation as a member of a group, community, or society as a whole.

2. Promote Recovery:

Helping the individual in regaining something lost or taken away.

3. Promote Independence

Freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others. Expressive of a spirit of independence; self-confident; unconstrained: *a free and independent citizen.*

Name of group including day/time:

Date reviewed:

Reviewed by:

Please spend a few minutes as a group and complete this review. This review will also give the group an opportunity to suggest ideas of how we at The Network can further support you, and will help us to improve our service further.

Thinking about the three main objectives, please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *Tick the appropriate number on the scale of 1 to 5.*

1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Disagree	5 Strongly disagree

a. Do you feel the group is meeting the aims and objectives as mentioned above?

	1	2	3	4	5
1) Being socially inclusive	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2) Promoting recovery	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3) Promoting independence	<input type="checkbox"/>				

If yes, please list how the activities carried out in your group meet these aims and objectives? If not, what changes can be made to ensure that your group is meeting these aims and objective.

.....

.....

.....

b. Does the group encourage each other to take on an active role in its activities?

c. How does the group promote itself to other FiA members?

Give some examples:

.....

d. Does the group engage in activities outside of its regular venue?

- Where did the group go?

.....

- How often does this happen?

.....

- When was the last outing?

.....

e. Does the group receive the appropriate support from link workers?

What has worked well or has not?

.....
.....
.....

f. Overall, how satisfied are you with the group?

c. How does the group promote itself to other FiA members?

Give some examples:

.....

d. Does the group engage in activities outside of its regular venue?

• Where did the group go?

.....

• How often does this happen?

.....

• When was the last outing?

.....

e. Does the group receive the appropriate support from link workers?

What has worked well or has not?

.....
.....

f. Overall, how satisfied are you with the group?

15.7 The Network – Friends in Action Membership / Referral

Putting the Community First



The Network – Friends in Action Membership/Referral

Please complete this form (in block letters) to register as a full member of **The Network – Friends in Action**. Membership is valid for maximum of one year.

Member's Details: - To help us maintain up-to-date records, by contacting The Network if your details have changed during the period of your membership.

Swift No:-

Membership No.	Start date:-	Expiry date:-	Key Worker:-
-----------------------	---------------------	----------------------	---------------------

Title:		First Name:		Surname:	
Address:					
				Post code:	
Telephone:			Mobile:		
Email:			Date of Birth:		

Please refer to the FiA activities timetable and indicate below the groups you are joining:

Date of Starting Group	Groups	Date of Starting Group	Groups

Members will be expected to attend the host induction, prior to starting their chosen FIA group/s.

Is client attending enablement group in the same month? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Circle when: Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Frid	Please attend the following host inductions at Barnet College, Stanhope Road. Month of next induction: _____
Date of Risk Assessment:	1 st Session: time: 2 nd Session: time:

The Network’s Friends in Action Membership Terms and Conditions: Guidelines

Friends in Action groups are social and leisure groups in the community, which are affiliated to and supported by the Network. These groups are “hosted” by service users and are trained and supported by Network staff.

All Friends in Action groups and activities will meet the following 3 key objectives:-

- 1) To be Socially Inclusive** - to participate within the wider community.
- 2) To Promote independence** – having the confidence to carry out tasks for oneself.
- 3) To Promote recovery** – the ability to manage obstacles and encourage wellness.

A referral to group/s will be made by your key worker and a membership card will be issued for up to one year. During that time period you will be able to access any of the Friends in Action Groups.

Members should be aware that payment may be required to participate.

Rules and Regulations

To achieve a safe, enjoyable and successful FIA group, it is best for all members to observe certain rules and regulations including: -

- Be punctual when attending group/s.
- Be courteous, if you are running late or cannot make it on the day, call and let the host/s be aware of your situation.
- Be respectful of each other.
- Do not use offensive, provocative language.
- Group members are encouraged not to discuss personal issues in depth as the focus of the group is social and leisure interests.
- Members must not attend any group under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
- Observe all Health and Safety Rules and regulations relevant to the venue the group is held in.
- The Network is not responsible for any loss of personal belongings, money or financial arrangements.
- Under this Agreement, we may, in our sole discretion, immediately issue a warning, temporarily suspend, indefinitely suspend or terminate your 'FIA' membership. We reserve the right to refuse provision of services to you if you breach this Agreement or we believe that your actions may cause legal liability for you, FIA group members or The Network.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a term which covers the communities' responsibility to report when there is a concern for another person's welfare or wellbeing. In the event that a safeguarding concern is brought to your attention, it is your duty and responsibility to report it immediately and directly to an 'FIA' link worker/s, on 020 8359 3230.

Best Practice: - The Network encourages members to share the work and responsibilities of the group.

Please note that The Network is a continually evolving service, and reserves the right to change and update the terms and conditions as and when required.

I understand that by being a full member of The Network – Friends in Action, I have read and understood the terms and conditions provided.

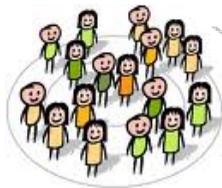
Signature: -

Date:-

Please return this form to your key worker, link worker or post to: - The Network, 27 Castle Road, North Finchley, London N12 9EE. If you have any queries regarding this form, please contact The Network on 020 8359 3230 or email the.network@barnet.gov.uk.

15.8 Host Induction. What is that about?

Putting the Community First



Host Induction. What is that about?

The Network provides a host induction programme which is recommended to anyone who wishes to take part in community based social, leisure and interests activities.

Host induction help people to better understand FIA groups and gain confidence in socialising in the community. There are lots of helpful information discussed in the sessions that may be relevant to daily life and events.

Friends in Action (FIA) groups are social activities groups which are long arm supported by The Network and their main focus is to promote social inclusion, independence and recovery, ultimately, helping people to enjoy their social lives in the community. For FIA groups to be effective, each member is encouraged to participate actively within their interests.

Active host said
"The groups are so much fun for everyone when there are more of us taking part".

Host induction is spread over 2 half days, and covers topics such as; communicating successfully with others, dealing with difficult situations, health and safety and how to have a proactive role in interest groups and friendships.

These sessions are fun and interactive, there are no tests involved and it is an opportunity to ask questions, contribute ideas and meet others people in a social setting.

A certificate of achievement will be awarded to you on completion of the programme. Link workers may continue to support you and your group to ensure an enjoyable experience.

Please contact The Network on 020 8359 3230 or email the.network@barnet.gov.uk and we will register you for the next available Host Induction!

Member said "Host induction and FIA groups have been positive; it has helped me to move on in a positive

15.9 The Network Personal FiA Review Tool

The Network Personal FiA Review Tool

The Network offers services that are aimed to improve lives and help promote social inclusion. This includes Friends in Action. In order to maintain the effectiveness of the Friends in Action service, please spend a few minutes completing this personal review. The feedback we receive from you will help us to develop our service further.

Thinking about your experience/s in FiA, where do you rate yourself in the following classifications:

Below are 5 steps numbered 1 to 5. With 1 scoring lowest and 5 highest, tick the appropriate box that you feel best match your current experience.

How has FiA helped you with:
[Identity and Self Esteem](#)

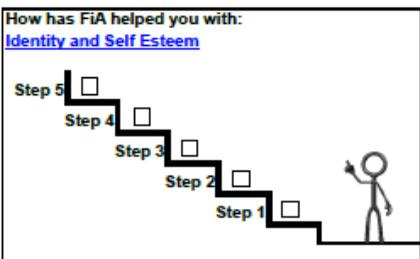
Step 5

Step 4

Step 3

Step 2

Step 1



How has FiA helped you with your:
[Relationships](#)

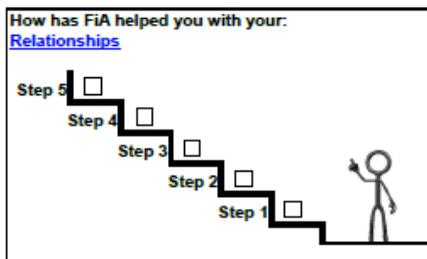
Step 5

Step 4

Step 3

Step 2

Step 1



How has FiA helped you with your:
[Social Networks](#)

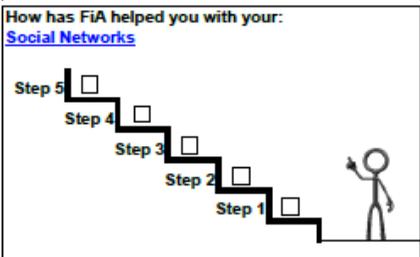
Step 5

Step 4

Step 3

Step 2

Step 1



How has FiA helped you with:
[Responsibilities](#)

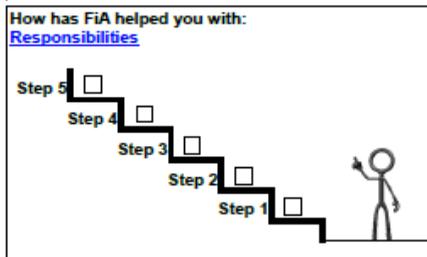
Step 5

Step 4

Step 3

Step 2

Step 1



How has FiA helped you to be more:
[Hopeful](#)

Step 5

Step 4

Step 3

Step 2

Step 1



How has FiA helped you with:
[Managing Mental Wellbeing](#)

Step 5

Step 4

Step 3

Step 2

Step 1



The information provided is confidential and will only serve the purpose mentioned above. Thank you!

Name: _____

Sign: _____

Date: _____

15.10 Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the people involved in *The Network* who have given their time and thoughtful answers to our questions to help in the production of this manual. It would not have been possible without you!

In addition, we are grateful to the Learning Revolution Transformation Fund for providing resources to enable this manual to be produced. The Transformation Fund encourages new partnerships between public, private and community organisations to create informal learning activities which, amongst other goals:

- encourage more and different people into informal learning, particularly people from disadvantaged groups;
- open up access to learning in new places, in new ways and at more flexible times;
- support people to set up self-organised groups and learning clubs;
- widen choice, by developing and sharing innovative content;
- build partnerships and strengthen the capacity of informal adult learning organisations; improve connections and progression between different kinds of learning.

This manual was commissioned by The Network in the London Borough of Barnet and written by Peter Bates and Kay Steven of the National Development Team for Inclusion

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Host Induction DVD is available to compliment this manual.

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