

FRIENDS OF RESEARCHERS IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT (FRIS Charity UK)

The Trustees Annual Report: 2024-2025

This is the annual report covering the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025.

A. Purpose of FRIS Charity UK: The purpose of FRIS Charity UK as approved by the Charity Commission is as follows:

The educational advancement of the public in the subject of biomedicine in the UK, EU countries, and the Indian subcontinent by:

- a. developing and supporting collaborations between researchers based in the Indian subcontinent and those based in the UK/EU
- b. supporting the exchange of researchers, research materials and technologies between laboratories and institutions in the Indian subcontinent and the UK/EU
- c. providing a platform for lectures, seminars, webinars, conferences and training
- d. funding research in the UK/EU carried out by students from the Indian subcontinent (at PhD and above) that cannot be completed in their home country due to unavailability of equipment/resources
- e. publicly disseminating the useful knowledge resulting from research that is funded
- f. funding research positions in UK/EU institutions that will promote biomedical education in the Indian subcontinent

B. Publicity about FRIS Charity UK: There were two approaches we adopted to publicise FRIS Charity UK.

1. Through lectures:

- The FRISC Charity UK was introduced to the postgraduate research students registered for MPhil and PhD courses at the National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS), Rawalpindi by our Pakistan-based Trustee on 30 January 2025. This lecture was received very well by the students as reflected in the feedback at the end of the presentation.
- The chair of the Board of Trustees visited India in December 2024 and gave lectures at several Institutions including, Department of Pharmacology, Aligarh Muslim University (Aligarh), Ibn Sina Academy (Dodhpur, Aligarh) and Era University (Lucknow) introducing FRIS Charity UK. There was a large gathering at all the three places and anybody who wanted to attend was allowed in.
- Glossy pamphlets were printed and used for advertisement of FRIS Charity UK in different countries including, USA, India and Pakistan. These pamphlets were also distributed to those attending FRIS Charity UK lectures.
- We also used ceramic mugs and tote bags with printed FRIS logo to publicise FRIS Charity UK in India during our visit last December/January. Many of these items were distributed free to senior staff of different Institutes in India.

2. Social media:

- A LinkedIn page for FRIS Charity UK was created. It was decided by the Board of Trustees that any posting on these pages must be agreed by at least two trustees.
- Facebook page: A Facebook page for FRIS charity UK was set and populated with the objectives of the charity and pictures of trustees and advisors.
- You Tube channel: A You Tube Channel for FRIS Charity UK has also been created. These social media platforms will become populated in due course as we move towards our charitable goals.

C. New Board members:

- To have a quorum we needed 4/6 trustees but on one occasion we had to postpone the meeting as we could not have the quorum (4 trustees). The Board decided to have one more trustee to complete the quorum. This resolution was passed unanimously at the trustees meeting on 8 June 2025. Following the resolution a new trustee was appointed, and her details were entered on the Charity Commission website.
- The Board of Trustees also approved appointment of two advisors. One of them from California (USA) had extensive experience of working with Industry including Roche Diagnostics, Qiagen and Abott. The trustees unanimously approved his appointment on the board through email-based approval on 15 May 2025. Another person appointed on the Board of advisors was the Associate Dean of Army Medical & Dental College, National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS), Rawalpindi, one of the most prestigious Dental Schools in Pakistan. He was voted unanimously to join the Board on 14 September 202
- The MASS ACCOUNTANT AND CONSULTANT LTD, a professional accounting firm based on London, specialising in bookkeeping, financial reporting, tax compliance, payroll and advisory services was appointed to provide accounting services to FRIS Charity UK on pay you go basis.

D. Investment on behalf of FFRIS Charity UK: To ensure a regular income for FRIS Charity UK, the trustees authorised investment of charity's funds in collective investment vehicles approved by the Charity Commission and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Several Charity Authorised Investment Funds (CAIF) run by M&G, CCLA (Jupiter), Rathbones, BlackRock and BNY investment managers have been employed, and significant sums have been invested. Over the next few months, we will be able to evaluate their performances and adjust the investments to get the maximum returns.

E. Joint meeting of Trustees and Advisors: FRIS Charity UK held a pivotal strategic meeting on 2nd July 2025, bringing together its board of trustees, advisors, and non-executive director to review progress, strengthen governance, and align priorities for the year ahead.

The meeting, held virtually, underscored FRIS's continued commitment to delivering impactful support across community wellbeing initiatives throughout the Indian

Subcontinent. Trustees were joined by key advisors and a non-executive director to assess current programmes, financial performance, risk management, and opportunities for innovation and growth. The meeting provided a vital opportunity for leadership to reflect on the past six months of activity, discuss key achievements, and collaboratively plan priorities for the remainder of 2025 and beyond.

Chaired by Professor Ahmad Waseem, the session focused on strengthening the charity's impact, financial resilience, and long-term strategy. He said:

“This meeting marks an important moment for us to take stock, celebrate progress, and recommit to the ambitious goals we’ve set for FRIS. The combined insight of our trustees, advisors, and leadership team ensures that our next steps are bold, focused, and grounded in the needs of those we plan to serve.”

Key highlights of the meeting included:

- A review of programme delivery and community impact since January 2025.
- Financial and operational updates, including new funding streams and cost efficiencies.
- Strategic planning for 2026, with a focus on expanding outreach and innovation.
- Governance updates and strengthened frameworks for accountability and oversight

FRIS Charity UK remains focussed to its core mission “to promote and support advancement of biomedical education through collaboration between researchers of the UK and the countries of EU and those based in the 7 different countries of the subcontinent.” The organisation looks ahead with a clear plan, renewed purpose, and a deep commitment to positive, lasting change.

The collaboration between trustees, advisors, and leadership reaffirms FRIS Charity UK's mission-driven focus and dedication to transparency, accountability, and sustainable growth.

F. Keeping up to date with rules and regulation: A delegation of two trustees attended a meeting on ‘WORKING OVERSEAS: RISKS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEGAL DUTIES’ organised by the Charity Engagement Team of the Charity Commission. It was held at Millennium Point, Curzon Street, Birmingham on 11 February 2025.

G. Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy: An anti-corruption and bribery policy was drafted and approved by all trustees. A copy of this document has been circulated to those associated with FRIS Charity UK.

Authors: The Board of Trustees

Version: V1.0

Date Approved: 27 April 2025

1. Introduction:

In the UK, where the FRIS Charity UK is registered, the Bribery Act 2010 not only makes bribery and corruption illegal but will also hold us liable for failing to implement adequate procedures to prevent such acts by those working for the organisation or on its behalf, no matter where in the world the act takes place. Corrupt acts committed abroad, including those by partners, volunteers, advisors or consultants working directly on our behalf for example, may result in a prosecution.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this anti-corruption and bribery policy for FRIS Charity UK is to set out the responsibilities of all our staff and others working on our behalf in observing and upholding our position on corruption and bribery. It also provides information and guidance to all our staff and others working on our behalf on how to recognise and deal with bribery and corruption issues.

3. Scope and Applicability:

The anti-corruption and bribery policy at FRIS Charity UK applies to all its employees (staff, on contract and temporary), casual workers, interns, agency staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants, suppliers, partners, sponsors, potential donors, beneficiaries, advisors, trustees, government and public bodies, including their advisors, representatives and officials, politicians and political parties and extends to all our dealings and transactions in all countries in which we or our associates operate on behalf of the charity.

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time without notice.

4. Defining Corruption and Bribery:

Corruption

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power or position for private gain.

Bribery

Bribery is offering, promising, giving or accepting a financial or other advantages intended to coerce someone into acting illegally, unethically or unjustly, and rewarding them for doing so.

The advantages may include money, gifts, loans, fees, hospitality, services, award of a contract or anything of value.

5. Policy:

5.1 Due Diligence and Risk Assessment:

Due diligence process based on the reputation and past behaviour should be used for selecting partners, suppliers, and contractors.

A basic risk assessment should be used to identify potential areas where bribery or corruption may occur, and appropriate procedures must be developed accordingly to mitigate these risks.

5.2 Reporting and Investigation Procedures:

A clear procedure for reporting suspected bribery or corruption, including an accessible and confidential reporting channel will be established within the charity.

All whistleblowers must be protected from retaliation, and all reports will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.

The disciplinary actions that will be taken for violations of the policy will be outlined and communicated to all staff and others working for FRIS Charity UK.

5.3. Record keeping:

The FRIS Charity UK will keep accurate books, detailed financial records, and will have appropriate internal controls in place to evidence the business reasons for making payments to third parties.

All accounts, invoices and other records relating to dealings with third parties– including suppliers and customers – should be completely accurate and transparent. Accounts must not be kept 'off-book' to facilitate or conceal improper payments.

False, misleading or inaccurate records of any kind could potentially damage the reputation of FRIS Charity UK which is not acceptable.

5.4. Gifts and hospitality:

This policy allows reasonable and appropriate hospitality or entertainment given to, or received from third parties for the purposes of:

- establishing or maintaining good working relationships.
- improving or maintaining the image or reputation of FRIS Charity UK.
- marketing or presenting our products and/or services effectively.

The giving and accepting of gifts are allowed in certain circumstances.

1. The gift is not made with the intention of obtaining or retaining business, favours or benefits, or rewarding them.
2. The gift is given in the Trust's name, not in the individual's name.
3. The gift is appropriate in the circumstances, taking account of the reason for the gift, its timing and its value.
4. The gift is given openly rather than secretly.
5. The gift complies with applicable laws.

Promotional gifts of low value such as branded stationery to or from existing customers, suppliers and business partners is usually acceptable.

Reimbursing a third party's expenses or accepting an offer to reimburse our expenses (for example, the costs of attending a business meeting) would not usually amount to bribery. However, a payment in excess of genuine and reasonable business expenses (such as the cost of an extended hotel stay) is not acceptable.

We appreciate that practice varies between countries and regions and what may be normal and acceptable in one region may not be in another. The test to be applied is whether in all the circumstances the gift, hospitality or payment is reasonable and justifiable. The intention behind it should always be considered.

5.5. Unacceptable behaviour

It is unacceptable for an employee (or someone on their behalf) to:

- give, promise to give, or offer a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope of gaining a business advantage, or to reward a business advantage already given.
- give or accept a gift or hospitality during any commercial negotiations or tender process if this could be perceived as intended, or likely to influence the outcome.
- accept a payment, gift or hospitality from a third party that the individuals know is offered with the expectation that it will provide a business advantage for them or anyone else in return.
- accept hospitality from a third party that is unduly lavish or extravagant under the circumstances.
- offer or accept a gift to or from government officials or their representatives, politicians or political parties in breach of this policy.
- threaten or retaliate against another employee who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy
- engage in any other activity that might lead to a breach of this policy.

5.6. Charitable contributions:

We will only make charitable donations that are legal, ethical under local laws and practices, and they must be publicly disclosed. No donation must be offered or made without the prior approval of our Trustees.

Any charitable contribution should not be used to conceal bribery or corruption.

5.7. Facilitation payments and kickbacks

We do not make and will not accept facilitation payments or kickbacks of any kind.

What are facilitation payments?

Also known as 'back-handers' or 'grease payments', facilitation payments are typically small, unofficial payments made to secure or speed up a routine or necessary action (for example, by a government official). They are not common in the UK but are common in some other jurisdictions.

What are kickbacks?

Kickbacks are typically payments made in return for a business favour or advantage.

Employees must avoid any activity that might lead to a facilitation payment or kickback being made or accepted by the Charity or on our behalf, or that might suggest that such a

payment will be made or accepted. If someone is asked to make a payment on our behalf, they should always be mindful of what the payment is for and whether the amount requested is proportionate to the goods or services provided. They should always ask for a receipt which details the reason for the payment.

5.8. Zero Tolerance:

Any form of bribery, whether offering, promising, giving, requesting, receiving, or accepting, is strictly prohibited within our organisation. FRIS Charity UK has a "zero-tolerance" approach to bribery and corruption.

Any employees or person associated with our charity who is found guilty of corruption or bribery can face up to 10 years' imprisonment and/or a fine. As an employer, if we fail to prevent bribery, we can face an unlimited fine, and damage to our reputation.

6. Training and communication:

We will provide training to all staff and volunteers on the policy and its requirements.

We will ensure that the policy is readily available and accessible to everyone it applies to.

7. Financial controls:

Our organisation implements all the basic financial controls, such as separation of duties and regular financial audits, to prevent misuse of funds.

We also maintain detailed records of all financial transactions.

By implementing a comprehensive anti-corruption and bribery policy we can effectively protect ourselves against the risks associated with this type of criminal activities.

8. Ongoing monitoring and review:

We will regularly review this policy every 2-3 years to ensure it remains relevant and effective. We will update the policy as needed, reflecting changes in the charity's operations or applicable laws.

	FRIS Charity UK			
	Balance Sheet from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025			
	Unrestricted funds, £	Restricted funds, £	Endowment funds, £	Total funds, £
Balance			1682.35	-1682.35
Incoming resources	5012.14	0	0	
Resources expended	-523.60	0		
Cost of generating funds	0	0		
Investment costs	0	0		
Total	4488.54			0
Transfer to Endowment fund	0	0	4488.54	-6170.89
Charitable activities				
Research				
Education				

This year-2 annual report and accounts have been approved by all FRIS Charity UK trustees.