

Plenary Standing Orders (P1)

“The Plenary” is all the PPN Member Groups together and this is the main decision-making body of the PPN. The purpose of these standing orders is to ensure the orderly and effective conduct of Plenary meetings of the Cork County Public Participation Network.

1. Frequency of Meetings

The Plenary shall meet twice a year or as requested in accordance with the Constitution.

2. Quorum

To be legitimate, a Plenary meeting must be quorate. The quorum for a Plenary meeting is fifteen separate persons representing fifteen Full Member Groups. For an MD Plenary meeting the quorum is six separate persons representing six Full Member Groups

3. Voting Rights and Decisions

- 3.1 Only items on the Agenda shall be the business of the meeting in accordance with the Constitution.
- 3.2 All decisions taken shall be in accordance with procedures set out in the Constitution.
- 3.3 Each Full PPN Member Group shall have one vote.
- 3.4 Voting shall be by show of voting paddles/ Member Group ID (1 per Member Organisation) or secret ballot where requested and in accordance with the constitution.
- 3.5 Consensus will be sought, but final decisions shall be by simple majority vote where this is necessary.
- 3.6 Voting for election to the Secretariat and Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) shall be by secret ballot. This will usually have been completed online before the Plenary, with the results presented for ratification at the meeting.
- 3.7 An objection in relation to the qualification of any voter must be raised prior to ballot being taken. Any such objection made in due time shall be referred to Rotating Chair / Facilitator of the meeting whose decision shall be final and conclusive.
- 3.8 A clear record of voting result shall be signed by tellers and countersigned by Rotating Chair / Facilitator of the meeting.
- 3.9 Tellers shall be appointed by the Rotating Chair / Facilitator to count votes. Anyone seeking to be elected to a position shall be disqualified from being appointed a teller.

4. Attendance at Plenaries

- 4.1 All of the PPN Member Groups are entitled to attend the Plenary. Associate Member Groups are welcome to attend and have speaking rights but do not have voting rights.
- 4.2 Full PPN Member Groups can send more than one representative to the Plenary. All representatives shall have speaking rights but only one shall have voting rights.
- 4.3 The Secretariat may invite guest speakers to attend the Plenary.

- 4.4 The Secretariat may invite strategic partner organisations to attend the Plenary as observers.
- 4.5 Members of the Secretariat and PPN representatives attending Plenary and other meetings do so in that capacity. Other, additional, member(s) of their own Member Group should participate to put forth the views of that Group.

5. Agenda

- 5.1 The Agenda shall be prepared by the Secretariat. The order of business shall be:
- i. Welcome address by Rotating Chair / Facilitator
 - ii. Housekeeping Duties, Health and Safety
 - iii. Adopting Plenary Standing Orders
 - iv. Approval of Minutes of last Plenary and Matters Arising
 - v. PPN Activity Report by Secretariat Member
 - vi. Finance and Budget Update
 - vii. Ratification of Linkage Group Elections.
 - viii. Linkage Group reports by Facilitators
 - ix. Election to fill any Vacancies arising on the Secretariat and Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) at the Annual General Meeting only (see 2.6 above)
 - x. Items and Motions submitted for Discussion and Decision.
 - xi. Workshop / Information Session / Guest Speaker as requested by previous Plenary and or as organised by the Secretariat.
 - xii. Date of Next Meeting
- 5.2 Items that Member Groups want included on the Agenda shall be submitted to the Secretariat at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting. Similar items shall be taken as a composite item or motion as directed by Secretariat.
- 5.3 The Plenary meeting shall be facilitated by the Rotating Chair/ Facilitator or the Secretariat or an alternative member of the Secretariat.

6. Minutes of the Plenary

- 6.1 The minutes of the Plenary shall be taken by a member of the Secretariat or PPN Staff.
- 6.2 The minutes shall include a record of those attending, actions arising, and decisions made.

7. Conduct at Plenary and other meetings of PPN members

- 7.1 Representatives of Member Group attending Plenary or other meetings internal to or external to the PPN shall remember that their conduct reflects on the integrity of the PPN and the sector. They shall observe accepted practice and shall at all times comply with the PPN Code of Conduct (P5, p.??) and specifically shall:
- i. be courteous at all times and speak by addressing the Chair / Facilitator
 - ii. only address the meeting in order and as directed by Chair / Facilitator
 - iii. comply immediately with directions of Chair / Facilitator
 - iv. not talk across or interrupt any speaker addressing the meeting
 - v. following the agenda and strive to work collaboratively to reach effective decisions
 - vi. represent the views of the member organisation for whom they are attending
 - vii. turn off, or to silent, all mobile phones on entering the meeting room. (In the event of an emergency call, leave the room to take the call.)
 - viii. be prepared for the Plenary by reading relevant documents etc. received before the meeting
 - ix. understand that business shall be conducted by the Chair / Facilitator of the Plenary in keeping with Standing Orders

The Chair/ Facilitator will introduce the above rules of conduct at the beginning of meeting, and ask those present to commit to abide by these. The Chair/ Facilitator will also ask if there is any other rule of conduct that people present wish to add to assist the running of that event e.g. no attribution of comments on social media posts. These meeting conduct rules will be made available on the PPN website and in meeting notifications.

- 7.2 Discrimination will not be tolerated. All members attending the Plenary have the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, nationality, gender, age, sexuality, religion or any other matter which causes people to be treated with injustice. In keeping with the PPN [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) (P6, p.41). The Chair/ Facilitator will uphold this Policy during the meeting and may ask any person speaking or behaving inappropriately to leave the meeting. The Chair may also initiate a complaint against a person who does not desist from behaviour when asked, using the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50)

8. Process of Motions and Resolutions

- 8.1 Any motion proposed and seconded at the meeting becomes a resolution and shall take precedence in the discussion and shall be immediately placed before the meeting for discussion and decision.
- 8.2 The Rotating Chair / Facilitator shall put the resolution to a vote when of the view that such is the appropriate procedure at that point. The decision taken by Rotating Chair / Facilitator shall be final and the resolution shall then be placed before the meeting for decision by simple majority – a ballot or show of voting paddles/ Member Group ID.
- 8.3 Where a Member Group proposes that the “Resolution be now put before the meeting” and such a proposal is seconded then that resolution takes precedence at that point of the meeting and such resolution placed before the meeting for decision by simple majority – a ballot or show of voting paddles/ Member Group ID.
- 8.4 Should the resolution be carried by simple majority either by show of voting paddles or ballot then the original resolution or as amended by the meeting shall be placed before the meeting for decision by simple majority without any further debate – a ballot or show of voting paddles/ Member Group ID.
- 8.5 Should a secret ballot (poll) be called for by three or more Member Groups then a ballot shall proceed with tellers being appointed with the process being overseen by the Secretariat, or where the Secretariat is not available, through the election of a Standing Orders Committee for that meeting only.
- 8.6 In the event of equality of votes the Rotating Chair / Facilitator shall have a second or casting vote (should that person choose to use such a vote).
- 8.7 Where a resolution is not carried due to an equality of votes or is lost, the same resolution shall not be placed before the membership for a period of six (6) months.
- 8.8 A demand for a secret ballot may be withdrawn by the person or persons who made the demand.

9. Adjournment of Meeting

- 9.1 Where a proposal is made by a member to adjourn the meeting and such proposal is seconded then that proposal shall be taken forthwith without further debate and placed before the meeting for resolution by simple majority.
- 9.2 Where such a proposal is carried, the meeting shall by simple majority decide when (date, time and place) the meeting as adjourned is reconvened.

10. Suspension of Standing Orders

10.1 Standing orders as regards any meeting may be suspended by simple majority of members present to address urgent item of business.

Date approved by Plenary: _____ ***23/04/2026*** _____

Cork County Public Participation Network

Secretariat Standing Orders (P2)

1.0 What this document is for

This document sets out the rules governing how the Secretariat operates.

The Secretariat is the elected administrative arm of the PPN and takes direction from the Plenary (made up of all of the Member Groups). There are 22 seats on the Cork County PPN Secretariat including :

- **6 countywide representatives, 2 from each of the 3 Electoral Colleges** comprised of:
 - Community & Voluntary College - 2 representatives
 - Social Inclusion College – 2 representatives
 - Environmental College – 2 representatives
- **16 representatives from Municipal Districts, 2 from each of the 8 Municipal District**
 - Bandon/Kinsale – 2 representatives
 - Carrigaline – 2 representatives
 - Cobh – 2 representatives
 - East Cork – 2 representatives
 - Fermoy – 2 representatives
 - Kanturk/Mallow – 2 representatives
 - Macroom – 2 representatives
 - West Cork – 2 representatives

(see 5.3 of the Constitution, p.?? for further details about how Secretariat members are)

2.0 Rights of Secretariat Members

Secretariat members are entitled to the following:

- 1.1. to receive correct information – agendas, minutes etc.
- 1.2. to be heard
- 1.3. to be consulted and included in decision making
- 1.4. to respect from colleagues
- 1.5. to confidentiality around sensitive issues
- 1.6. not to participate in any discussion or vote on grounds of conflict of interest
- 1.7. to make a valid claim for reimbursement for expenses incurred in the work of the Secretariat

3.0 Responsibilities of Secretariat Members

Secretariat members agree to the following responsibilities:

- 1.1. to attend all meetings or to send an apology to the Secretariat
- 1.2. to elect a Rotating Chair/ Facilitator for a period of up to 1 year
- 1.3. to participate in at least one sub group of the Secretariat
- 1.4. to adhere to the standing orders and abide by the constitution
- 1.5. to participate actively in decision making
- 1.6. to carry out any tasks agreed
- 1.7. to contribute their skills to the projects of the Secretariat
- 1.8. to be loyal to the Secretariat and its members
- 1.9. to comply with the PPN Code of Conduct and respect the Secretariat and its work at all times
- 1.10. to respect the confidentiality of the business of the Secretariat

- 1.11. to be accountable to other members of the Secretariat and to the PPN membership as a whole
- 1.12. to ensure that all expense claims are correct and relate to the work of the Secretariat.

More details on the responsibilities of the Secretariat can be found in Section 5 of the Constitution.)

4.0 Attendance at meetings

Members should make every effort to attend all Secretariat meetings and to that end:

- 4.1 the Secretariat shall produce a schedule of meetings once per year of all secretariat meetings. Additional meetings may be called (see 5.3.vi of the PPN Constitution for more details).
- 4.2 any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Secretariat, without good reason in the opinion of the rest of the Secretariat, shall automatically be considered to have removed themselves from their position on the Secretariat. Such a decision may be appealed through the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50) If no appeal is made, or an appeal is unsuccessful, a vacancy arising between PPN annual general meetings shall be filled as soon as possible by the next available member on the panel as set out above.

In the event that there is no panel from which to invite a new member to join the Secretariat when a vacancy occurs, the Secretariat may agree to co-opt an individual from a full Member Group that meets the criteria for the position.

The Secretariat shall have authority to fill any temporary vacancy being 3 months or more arising from a member being absent on Leave of Absence, Study Leave, Maternity Leave, etc. for the duration of that leave period.

5.0 Quorum

The quorum for Secretariat meetings shall be one third of the present membership plus one.

6.0 Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest can be described as any form of personal interest, which may affect, or might reasonably be thought to affect, on an individual's impartiality in decision-making. Personal interest includes an interest of a relative or connected person or organisation.

In accordance with the Ethics Act 2005, a member must disclose any pecuniary or other beneficial interest in, or material to, any matter which is to be considered by the organisation and in such case he or she shall;

- disclose to the Secretariat the nature of the interest in advance of any consideration of the matter
- neither influence nor seek to influence a decision relating to the matter
- take no part in any consideration of the matter
- take no part in any vote on the matter to influence the decision of the Secretariat or be considered part of the quorum for that matter

If a disclosure is made at a meeting of the Secretariat, particulars of the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned, and for so long as the matter to which the disclosure relates is being dealt with by the meeting, the person by whom the disclosure is made shall not be counted in the quorum for the meeting.

In addition in such cases the Secretary to the Secretariat shall maintain a separate record of the discussion (to which the member shall not have access).

Where a question arises as to whether or not a matter for consideration by the Secretariat relates to the interests of a member or a person or body connected with that Secretariat member, the Facilitator / Chairperson of the meeting should determine the question.

7.0 Breaches of the PPN Code of Conduct

The Secretariat reserves the right to uphold the conditions of the PPN [Code of Conduct](#) (P5, p.36).

All matters relating to the Code of Conduct that arise during meetings, are matters of order and are the responsibility of the Chairperson. In such cases the Chairperson has the right to the following courses of action:

- deem a matter or proposal “Out Of Order”
- deem the behaviour or conduct of a member to be in breach of the code of conduct. In this circumstance the member can be warned about their conduct and can be asked to leave the meeting either temporarily or permanently
- suspend or adjourn a meeting or part of a meeting

In other instances where a breach of the Code of Conduct is suspected or asserted, the matter will be handled as set out in the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50). The Secretariat will be kept informed at the appropriate stages in the Grievance Procedure and notified of any action recommended for them to take. The Secretariat will provide a summary statement to the Plenary regarding any action taken arising from the Grievance Procedure.

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

CORK COUNTY PPN REGISTRATION for MEMBERSHIP (P3)

CONTACT DETAILS

Organisation*: _____

First Name*: _____

Last Name*: _____

Role in Organisation: _____

Mobile Phone*: _____ Email*: _____

Website: _____

Address*: _____

Area/Town*: _____ City/County*: _____

Eircode*: _____

Please submit details of two alternate contacts person below.

Please tick the box to confirm you have permission to supply their information to us.

Permission Declaration: I have permission to submit the contact details below

First Alternate Contact

Alternate Contact First Name*: _____

Alternate Contact Last Name*: _____

Alternate Contact Mobile*: _____

Alternate Contact Email*: _____

Alternate Contact Role in organisation*: _____

Second Alternate Contact

Alternate Contact 2 First Name*: _____

Alternate Contact 2 Last Name*: _____

Alternate Contact 2 Mobile*: _____

Alternate Contact 2 Email*: _____

Alternate Contact2 Role in organisation*: _____

ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

Tell us more about the work of your organisation*: _____

What is the main cause of your group*: (Please select ONE from the list at the end of this form)

Date your group was established*: _____

(This must be a dd/mm/yyyy)

What Pillar is most appropriate for your organisation?* *(Please select ONE)*

Community Environment Social Inclusion

Is your group Governed by rules or a constitution?* *(Please select ONE)*

Yes No

What is your group's structure?* *(Please select ONE)*

Affiliated Association Charity Committee
Co-operative Limited Company Other Set of Rules Trust

Is Membership open to everyone?* (Please select ONE): Yes No

What Municipal District does your group operate in?* (Please select ALL that apply):

Carrigaline Bandon-Kinsale Macroom Cobh
East Cork Fermoy Kanturk-Mallow West Cork

Number of members in your group?*: _____

Note : You must have at least 5 member to be eligible to register

Number of paid staff your group has (if any)?*: _____

Number of other staff your group has (if any)?*: _____

Number of volunteers in your group?*: _____

THE LEGAL STUFF

What will Cork County PPN do with your information?

Groups joining Cork County PPN are providing us with their contact details in order to enable them to be fully consulted and included in the local democratic processes as well as in the national network of PPNs.

Groups joining the PPN are entering an agreement that the details they supply may be shared with other members of the network, with the elected representatives of the PPN, with members of Cork County PPN's secretariat, with the Environmental Pillar, with Cork County Council and with other bodies or persons who require access in order to facilitate the ongoing work of the PPN.

When you join Cork County PPN you are also agreeing to receive emails and newsletters from us.

Cork County PPN will not supply the information provided to it to any person or organisation not engaged in PPN work or activities or in the community and voluntary sector in Cork County.

In the future Cork County PPN may display the names and locations of member groups on its website. Individuals or member groups may request to have their personal data supplied to them and/or removed from or updated on the register by giving 30 days' notice to Cork County PPN

GDPR Consent

I consent for my data to be processed as described above (tick to consent):

Purpose of Group (select one)

- Addictions and Recovery
- Animals
- Arts, Culture and Media
- Carers
- Children
- Community Centre
- Community Development
- Crime/ Safety
- Education/ Literacy
- Emergency/ Ambulance Services
- Environment/ Conservation
- Families/ Parenting
- Health/ Hospitals/ Hospices
- Heritage/ Museums/ Galleries
- Homelessness/ Housing
- Human and Civil Rights/ Equality
- Intellectual/ Learning Disabilities
- Law/ Legal Support/ Justice
- LGBT
- Mens Groups
- Mental Health
- Minority Groups
- Older People/ Active Retired
- Overseas Aid/Development
- Physical Disability
- Politics
- Prisoners/ Offenders/ Ex-offenders
- Refugees/ Asylum Seekers
- Religion/ Faith based
- Residents Association
- Sensory Impairment
- Social Inclusion
- Sports/ Outdoor activities
- Unemployment
- Volunteering/ Active Citizenship
- Womens Groups
- Youth

Date form approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026

Re-Registering your group with Cork County Public Participation Network (PPN) (P4)

Why re-register with the PPN?

We would like to stay in touch with you and hope that you will continue your membership of Cork County PPN.

Membership and contact information will change over time. All PPNs need to re-register groups every 2 years. This ensures the accuracy of membership records in accordance with good governance.

What is the process for re-registration?

We will be making contact with the primary contact that we have on file for each group registered with Cork County PPN before <INSERT DATE>.

Emails will be sent during the week commencing <INSERT DATE>. The email will contain links to an online form.

The online form will show the current information on your group and corrections can be recorded on this form.

The primary contact we have on file will also choose from the following options:

- I am the primary contact and I confirm re-registration – re-registration process completed
- I am not the primary contact and cannot confirm re-registration– you will then be asked to confirm you have permission to give new contact details. If not, we will follow up by phone.
- I am the primary contact and I confirm that the organisation no longer wishes to be a PPN Member –Your group will be removed from the Cork County PPN database.

The primary contact could be the secretary, chairperson etc. (If no reply is received from the primary contact within 10 days, the 2 alternate contacts given for the organisation will be contacted.)

Groups are encouraged to change the contact email from a private one to a general group email account if available. This is so that even if the contact person changes the group's email will hopefully be transferred and managed by the new officer/primary contact.

The strength of the PPN relies on the diversity of its membership across community and voluntary groups in Cork County. We hope that groups will re-confirm their engagement with the PPN and help to fulfil its potential for all Member Groups.

What happens next?

You will receive a link to the online re-registration form in an email sent to you during the week beginning <INSERT DATE>. Please complete the form as soon as possible.

If you have any queries regarding your group's membership of the PPN or any aspect of our work, please contact the PPN staff.

Tel: 021 4285340

Email: ppn@corkcoco.ie

Address: Cork County PPN, County Hall, Cork.

Date approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026

Cork County PPN

Code of Conduct (P5)

1.0 What is this Code of Conduct for

- 1.1 The PPN exists for the benefit of community and voluntary organisations in County Cork. As a volunteer-led structure, the PPN relies on its Member Groups and those that take on roles both externally and within the PPN itself, as well as its staff, working well to be effective and successful. To achieve this, it is essential that all those involved in the PPN can work together in a respectful and safe manner.
- 1.2 This Code sets out standards of behaviour expected from all PPN Member Groups, individuals with a representative role, and staff. It gives guidance to ensure that all dealings with fellow members, colleagues, staff and external individuals and agencies are honest, transparent and respectful.
- 1.3 This Code should be read alongside the PPN Constitution which sets out the roles, structure and operation of the PPN, with which all the PPN Member Groups, individuals with a representative role, and staff are required to comply.
- 1.4 This Code of Conduct is supplemented by section 12.0 of the PPN [Vulnerable **AVULNERABLE ADULTS** Policy](#) (P7, p.45), which is seen as part of this overall Code of Conduct.

2.0 What and who does this Code of Conduct apply to

- 2.1 This Code applies to all the PPN Member Groups, individuals with a representative role internally or externally, Secretariat members, members of PPN Linkage Groups, Sub-committees or any internal PPN structures, as well as PPN staff.
- 2.2 All Member Groups are sent a copy of this Code on joining the PPN. In addition, every member of the PPN elected to represent the PPN on any committee or board and all the members of the Secretariat shall be required to sign a copy of this Code.
- 2.3 The Code applies to all actions, interactions and communications, whether in person or not, including social media or Internet posts.

3.0 General requirements

All those engaged in the PPN are to maintain the highest standards of behaviour by;

- 3.1 acting honestly, responsibly and with integrity
- 3.2 treating others with fairness, equality, dignity and respect
- 3.3 communicating respectfully and honestly at all times
- 3.4 following the charity's policies and procedures, as well as any instructions or directions reasonably given to them
- 3.5 acting in a way that is in line with the purpose and values of the charity and that enhances the work of the charity (see Note 1 at the end of this Code for further details of what this involves)
- 3.6 meeting time and task commitments and providing sufficient notice when they will not be available so that alternative arrangements can be made

- 3.7 keeping confidential matters confidential
- 3.8 exercising caution and care with any documents, material or devices, containing confidential information and at the end of their involvement with the PPN, returning any such documents, material in their possession
- 3.9 use PPN resources responsibly, when authorised and in accordance with policy and procedures
- 3.10 directing any questions regarding the PPN's policies, procedures, or activities to the Secretariat or PPN staff
- 3.11 seeking authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of the PPN
- 3.12 maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene
- 3.13 raising concerns about possible wrongdoing witnessed with the Secretariat or PPN staff
- 3.14 observing safety procedures, including any obligations concerning the safety, health and welfare of other people in line with training provided to volunteers
- 3.15 reporting any health and safety concerns
- 3.16 declaring any interests that may conflict with their role or the work of the charity (e.g. business interests or employment). (see Note 2 at the end of this Code for further guidance on conflicts of interest) If any doubt arises as to what constitutes a conflict of interest, volunteers may seek guidance from the Secretariat or PPN staff
- 3.17 disclosing the fact that they have been charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence by prosecuting authorities (or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended) to the PPN Co-ordinator.¹ For the avoidance of doubt, volunteers are not required to disclose the fact or details of 'spent convictions' under the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended) to the PPN

4.0 Requirements for individuals with specific volunteer roles

Where individuals have been elected to, or allocated, specific volunteer roles, they will:

- 4.1 fulfill their role as outlined in their written role description to a satisfactory standard
- 4.2 perform their volunteer role to the best of their ability in a safe, efficient and competent way
- 4.3 address any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their role in line with the PPN's grievance procedures
- 4.4 document expenses and seek reimbursement according to agreed procedure

¹ In seeking information from volunteers about criminal convictions (or the fact that they have been charged with an offence or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 (as amended)) charities should comply with data protection law and be aware of the limitations on the circumstances in which it is possible to process such information (e.g. see section 55 of the Data Protection Act 2018). It is also important that charities have due regard to the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended). If a charity has any doubt about its rights and responsibilities in this regard, it should obtain legal advice.

5.0 Unacceptable activities

All volunteers engaged with the PPN must NOT:

- 5.1 bring the PPN into disrepute (including through the use of email, social media and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.)
- 5.2 gain personally from their involvement with the PPN, or permit others to do so, as a result of actions or negligence
- 5.3 seek or accept any gifts, rewards, benefits or hospitality in the course of their role without the consent of the Secretariat
- 5.4 engage in any activity that may cause physical or mental harm or distress to another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, bullying, or discrimination or harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community)
- 5.5 be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medication which will affect their abilities participate in PPN activities
- 5.6 provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, document, record or claim in respect of the PPN, its volunteers, employees
- 5.7 engage in any activity that may damage property
- 5.8 take unauthorised possession of property that does not belong to them
- 5.9 engage in illegal activity while involved in PPN activities
- 5.10 improperly disclose, during or after their involvement with the PPN ends, confidential information gained in the course of their involvement with the PPN
- 5.11 behaviour that breaches the PPN [Equality and Diversity Policy](#) (P6, p.41) or the PPN [Email and Internet Use Policy](#) (11, p.67) are considered unacceptable under this Code of Conduct.

6.0 Breaches of this Code of Conduct

The PPN reserves the right to uphold the conditions of this Code of Conduct.

6.1 Breaches in meetings

If a breach of this Code is alleged during a PPN meeting, the Chair/ Facilitator will determine the course of action to be taken. The following are the options available to the Chair/ Facilitator:

- 6.1.1 note but dismiss the allegation as unfounded
- 6.1.2 deem a matter or proposal “Out of Order” and so not for further discussion in the session
- 6.1.3 deem the behaviour or conduct of a member to be in breach of the code of conduct. In this circumstance the member can be warned of their conduct and can be asked to leave the meeting either temporarily or permanently
- 6.1.4 suspend or adjourn a meeting or part of a meeting and refer the particular dispute to a Secretariat Conduct Sub-Committee*

6.2 Breaches outside meetings

6.2.1 For all other occasions where a breach of this Code is suspected, the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50) will be used to address this.

Note 1. Complying with PPN Values (3.5 of this Code of Conduct)

As indicated in 3.5 above, all members must commit to complying with the fundamental values that underpin all PPN activities. Details below illustrate what that means in practice.

Inclusive

All members will seek to actively include volunteer-led groups in Cork County that might not otherwise be included or who might not often have their voice heard.

Participatory

All members will encourage participation of Member Groups in all areas of PPN work, ensuring there are a range of methods used for clear communication with Member Groups. It is important that members are welcoming, respectful and willing to work together and support one another, and particularly Member Groups that may be new or have limited experience.

Valuing of Diversity

All members must take account of the whole range of views from across the many Member Groups and Colleges with different experiences and opinions.

Independent

Members are required to support the independent representation of the views of Member Groups and Colleges. It is important that any member representing the PPN in whatever capacity must represent the views of the PPN and not their own or those of their own Member Group.

Transparency

Members shall promote an atmosphere of openness throughout the PPN in order to promote confidence to members of the public, Cork County Council Elected Members and staff, beneficiaries and regulators and to promote strategic and operational effectiveness.

Accountability

As a member everything you do and every interaction you are involved in shall be able to stand the test of scrutiny by members of the public, the media, members, beneficiaries, stakeholders and the regulatory authorities.

Accountability will be delivered through having good governance policies and procedures in place. Members shall always support the ethos and values of PPN and ensure compliance with good governance and shall:

- Commit to supporting and advocating compliance with good governance for the Community and Voluntary Sector and the many diverse groups and organisations within the sector;
- Participate in appropriate induction, training and development programmes;
- Support the PPN staff in their executive role and the Rotating Chair / Facilitator in their leadership role.

Note 2. Handling Conflicts of Interest (3.15 of this Code of Conduct)

A conflict of interest can be described as any form of personal interest, which may affect, or might reasonably be thought to affect, on an individual’s impartiality in decision-making. Personal interest includes an interest of a relative or connected person or organisation.

In accordance with the Ethics Act 2005, a member must disclose any pecuniary or other beneficial interest in, or material to, any matter which is to be considered by the organisation, whether the Secretariat, Plenary or a Committee or Board on which they sit as a representative. and in such case he or she shall;

- disclose to the Secretariat, Plenary or Committee or Board on which they sit the nature of the interest in advance of any consideration of the matter
- neither influence nor seek to influence a decision relating to the matter
- take no part in any consideration of the matter
- not take part in any vote on the matter to influence the decision of the Secretariat, Plenary or Committee or Board on which they sit or be considered part of the quorum for that matter

All members shall always:

- act in the best interests of the PPN
- declare any potential ‘Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Loyalty’ or any such circumstance as may be viewed by others as conflicting as soon as it arises
- abide by decisions of the Secretariat, Plenary or Committee or Board on which they sit and comply with any requirements it makes regarding potential conflicts of interest or loyalty

Signed

Name

Date

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Equality and Diversity Policy (P6): *underpinning dignity in the PPN for staff, volunteers and others*

1.0 What is this policy for

1.1 The purpose of the policy is to demonstrate the PPN's commitment to implementing and promoting measures to protect the dignity of PPN staff and volunteers, and to encourage respect for others at work (whether paid or voluntary). This is done by;

- creating an environment free from discrimination, harassment, racism, sexual harassment, bullying and disrespectful behaviour
- by dealing effectively with any complaints of such conduct, and
- by welcoming diversity and promoting equality.

1.2 This policy is to give practical guidance to PPN Workers and volunteers on:

- what is meant by discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and disrespectful behaviour;
- how this unacceptable behaviour may be deterred;
- how to raise the awareness of all involved with the PPN to identify the potential for this form of unacceptable behaviour;
- what steps to take, if it does occur, to ensure that adequate procedures are readily available to deal with the problem, to ensure that all parties, complainant and respondent, are treated fairly in resolving the problem and to prevent any recurrence.

1.3 This document sets out the PPN's policy and procedures in relation to discrimination, harassment, racism, sexual harassment and bullying and outlines the procedure to be followed if any PPN staff member or volunteer feels that they have been subjected to any of these abuses.

2. What or who does this policy apply to

This policy applies to the conduct of all staff, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and visitors whether in the PPN workplace, at activities and events organised by the PPN at other locations, or in communications connected with the PPN. This policy applies during normal working hours and at any other time when engaged in PPN-related activities. It encompasses all unacceptable behaviours set out below, which are subject to the PPN [Code of Conduct](#) (P5, p.36) and which will be addressed through the PPN [Grievance Procedure](#) (P8, p.50).

3. The PPN's commitment to equality and diversity

3.1 The PPN promotes and supports the right to dignity at work, whether paid or voluntary. ALL who work in the PPN are to be treated equally and respected for their individuality and diversity. The PPN promotes a workplace culture of dignity, respect and openness to diversity which should be reflected in the actions and behaviour of all staff and volunteers. The PPN will not tolerate discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, harassment or disrespectful behaviour by one or more staff or volunteers against another or others for any reason. Unacceptable behaviour may be in words, conduct, acts or demeanour. Where disrespect occurs, it is regarded as contravening the values of the PPN (see Section 1.3.i of our Constitution) and as such will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

3.2 The PPN is committed to equal opportunity of employment (for paid and unpaid work) and all employment policies, procedures and practices will be based on merit, qualifications and abilities. Employment and recruitment practices will not be influenced or affected by an applicant's race, colour, religion, sex, marital status, nationality, family status, sexual orientation, disability, age or membership of the Traveller community. Implied in the PPN's contracts of employment is a commitment to equal pay for equal work. Likewise, in selecting service providers, none of the grounds listed above will be used as the basis for any decision.

4.0 Types of unacceptable behaviour

Behaviour that is not respectful, is hostile, or disadvantages any person is seen as unacceptable. Broad categories of unacceptable behaviour are described below.

4.1 Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has or would have been treated, on any of the nine grounds listed below. Discrimination is also taken to have occurred where one of the nine grounds is imputed to a person, or where a person who is associated with another is treated less favourably than another person would have been by virtue of that association.

The PPN values the contribution of all staff and volunteers, and requires all staff and volunteers to refrain from any type of behaviour which may be interpreted as offending, harassing or discriminating against another/others. While not restricted to the grounds listed below, the policy prevents any form of discrimination based on the following:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religious belief or lack of religious belief
- Age (16+)
- Disability or the nature of disability
- Race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins
- Traveller status

4.2 Harassment

The Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004 expressly prohibits harassment. Harassment is defined as any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds, being conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment may be explicit or implicit; it may be a single incident or occur over a period of time. It may be directed at an individual or at a group. In defining and identifying harassment it is the effect of the behaviour that is relevant not the intent. It is the impact of the behaviour on the person affected that determines whether harassment has occurred.

Such conduct may include spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, if the action or conduct is unwelcome to the staff member or volunteer and is deemed to be offensive, humiliating or intimidating. Examples of harassment include the following:

- Verbal Harassment - jokes, comments, ridicule or songs
- Written Harassment - faxes, text messages, emails or notices
- Non-Verbal/Visual Harassment - jostling, shoving or any form of assault; gestures, posturing or threatening poses; visual displays such as posters, emblems or badges; isolation or exclusion from workplace social activities; pressure to behave in a manner that the staff member or volunteer thinks is inappropriate, e.g. being required to dress in a manner unsuited or a person's ethnic or religious background.

4.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is prohibited by the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004. Sexual harassment is defined as conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Many forms of behaviour can constitute sexual harassment and a single incident may constitute sexual harassment. The following is a listing of potential forms of sexual harassment, which is not exhaustive:

- Verbal Harassment - unwelcome sexual advances, propositions, or pressure for sexual activity; unwelcome pressure for social contact; sexually suggestive jokes, remarks or innuendoes.
- Physical Harassment - unwelcome physical contact such as groping, pinching, patting, unnecessary touching or brushing against another person's body; indecent exposure; unwelcome fondling or kissing; sexual assault or rape.
- Non-Verbal/Visual Harassment - the display of sexually suggestive or pornographic pictures and calendars, objects, written materials, emails, text messages or faxes; leering, offensive gestures, whistling.

4.4 Bullying

All forms of bullying are prohibited. Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying.

4.4.i Forms of Bullying

Bullying occurs in many guises and reveals itself through obvious and direct methods as well as in less direct and subtle forms. Bullying may manifest itself across the organisational and management structure. It can occur within peer groups, from line management or the Secretariat to staff and from staff to management or the Secretariat. Bullying may be categorised in a number of forms including behaviour that may:

- Humiliate: Preventing a colleague from speaking by using aggressive and/or obscene language, sneering or ridicule including horseplay or practical jokes, and criticising their efforts often in front of others;
- Intimidate: physical abuse or threats of abuse, open aggression, threats, staring, shouting abuse or obscenities;
- Verbal abuse: persistent unwarranted criticism;
- Victimise: manipulation of a colleagues reputation by rumour, gossip ridicule and/or innuendo;
- Exclude and isolate: social exclusion and isolation;
- Intrude: through pestering, spying or stalking;
- Manipulate the nature of work by withholding information, setting meaningless tasks, giving repeated unreasonable assignments or duties that are obviously unfavourable to one individual, giving repeated impossible deadlines or impossible tasks, or regularly taking the credit for somebody's work, but never taking the blame when things go wrong;
- Undermine a person's authority.

4.5 Lack of Respect

Lack of respect is prohibited by the PPN. It can be shown by direct comments, sarcasm, snide remarks, inappropriate jokes or banter towards a colleague. It can arise where colleagues are ignored, overlooked, avoided or shunned without good reason and in a manner likely to be hurtful or disrespectful. Jokes or comments directed at, or referred to, a colleague could be thought amusing by others but may be unpleasant, uncomfortable or hurtful to that colleague.

Respect should be shown to all colleagues. Respect is also earned. By showing respect to others and honouring their personal dignity, a person will earn their respect.

4.6 Intent

It is the effect of the treatment on the harassed or bullied individual, and not the intent of the alleged perpetrator, that will be taken into consideration when determining whether or not the treatment constitutes harassment, sexual harassment or bullying.

5.0 Effects of unacceptable behaviour

Harassment, sexual harassment and bullying exact a high price from staff, volunteers and the PPN alike. Staff and volunteers can be subject to fear, stress and anxiety, which may put great strains on personal and

family life. Individuals working in a climate of fear and resentment do not perform to their capabilities. The result is not just poor morale but increased absenteeism, reduced volunteers and higher staff turnover, reduced productivity, reduced efficiency and unhappy and divided workplace.

6.0 Responsibility of management and the PPN staff

All individuals, whether directly employed, contracted by, or volunteering with the PPN, have a duty and responsibility to uphold the principles of this policy. While each staff member and volunteer has a responsibility to ensure that unacceptable behaviour is prevented, line managers and the Secretariat have a specific responsibility to promote the provisions of this policy.

7.0 Rights of those involved, in the event of a complaint of unacceptable behaviour

All complaints will be treated seriously. Current nationally-agreed PPN procedures for dealing with complaints of bullying or harassment/sexual harassment or other types of unacceptable behaviour will be followed. Where these are not available, the PPN's Complaints Procedure will be used.

Any individual is free to make a complaint. They will not be victimised for making a complaint. However, if a complaint is found to be false or malicious, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate, up to and including dismissal or exclusion from the PPN. Complaints will be handled according to the PPN [Grievance Policy](#) (P8, p.50).

All parties involved will be treated with respect. The alleged perpetrator is entitled to representation, a fair and impartial hearing and the right to challenge the claim made against them. An allegation remains an allegation until it is found, following investigation, to be proven.

Where a staff member or volunteer is found to have engaged in unacceptable behaviour, they will be subject to the disciplinary procedure and disciplinary action, as appropriate, up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the PPN. (Expulsion from the PPN may affect individuals or their member groups or both.)

It is important to note that while the PPN cannot guarantee confidentiality, it will make every effort to ensure that everyone involved observes confidentiality while a complaint is being investigated.

Where it is necessary to interview witnesses as part of an investigation they will be expected to respect the privacy of the parties involved by refraining from discussing the allegations with other work colleagues or persons outside of the organisation.

7.1 Protection against retaliation

Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately. Any PPN staff member or volunteer found to have retaliated against another for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action.

Nothing in this policy overrules a person's legal and statutory rights.

Date approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026

Cork County Public Participation Network (PPN)

Vulnerable Adults Policy (P7)

1.0 What is this policy for

The PPN is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all those who participate in PPN events in any locations. This policy is intended to ensure that vulnerable adults involved with the PPN are kept safe. It sets out the requirements for working with vulnerable adults in the PPN, in accordance with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse: National Policy and Procedures, published by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

2.0 What and who does the policy apply to

All PPN staff and volunteers have a responsibility to adhere to this policy as part of the organisation's educational programmes and activities. The policy is relevant to all the activities of the PPN.

There is a Designated Liaison Person (DLP), responsible for dealing with any concerns or reports regarding the safeguarding of PPN participants. If you have any concerns regarding the safety of any individual involved with the PPN, please contact the DLP who is **<INSERT NAME, PHOTO & CONTACT DETAILS>**. (Training will be provided to the DLP on their role.)

3.0 Definition of a vulnerable adult

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may require assistance to care for themselves, or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. This may be because they have a disability (either intellectual or physical, or relating to mental health), a sensory impairment, are older and frail, or have some other form of illness.

Abuse of vulnerable adults can constitute the physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time, it may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse.

Incidents of physical and sexual assault, fraud and financial exploitation are crimes and should be reported to the Gardaí. In the case of Sexual Offences involving people with disabilities, specific provision is contained in Section 5 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993. Ireland is also a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

4.0 Key principles in vulnerable adult protection and welfare:

Citizenship* confers a status on an individual whereby their fundamental right to dignity and respect and other basic human rights as well as their rights to participation in society are upheld and supported by the Constitution, by Ireland's human rights treaty commitments and by the laws of the State. Person centeredness is that principle which places the person as an individual at the heart and centre of any exchange requiring the provision or delivery of a service. Services are organised around what is important to the person from his / her perspective. – Empowerment is that principle which recognises the right of the individual to lead as independent a life as possible and that supports the individual in every practical way to realise that right. Self-direction recognises the right of the individual to self-determination to the greatest extent possible including where this entails risk. Abiding by this principle means ensuring that risks are recognized, understood and minimised as far as possible, while supporting the person to pursue their goals and preferences.

* citizenship is understood to include all inhabitants of the State.

5.0 Identifying Abuse:

Vulnerable adult abuse is any mistreatment that violates a person's human and civil rights. The abuse can vary from treating someone with disrespect in a way which significantly affects the person's quality of life, to

causing actual physical suffering. A vulnerable adult may be subjected to more than one form of abuse at any given time: Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing, pinching, shaking, misusing medication, scalding, restraint, hair pulling. Sexual abuse such as rape, sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not or could not have consented, or to which they were pressurised into consenting. Psychological or emotional abuse such as threats of harm or abandonment, being deprived of social or any other form of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, being prevented from receiving services or support. Financial or material abuse such as theft, fraud or exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property, or inheritance, misuse of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect such as ignoring medical or physical care needs and preventing access to health, social care or educational services or withholding the necessities of life such as food, drink and heating. Discriminatory abuse such as that based on race or sexuality or a person's disability and other forms of harassment or slurs. Institutional abuse can sometimes happen in residential homes, nursing homes, hostels, holiday centres or hospitals when people are mistreated because of poor or inadequate care, neglect and poor practice that affects the whole of that service. Domestic abuse refers to the use of physical or emotional force or threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships. This includes violence perpetrated by a spouse, partner, son or daughter or any other person who has a close or blood relationship with the victim. The term 'domestic violence' goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve emotional abuse; the destruction of property; isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support; threats to others, including children; stalking; and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone. Elder Abuse is defined as "A single or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person or violates their human and civil rights." 65 years of age is taken as the point beyond which abuse may be considered to be elder abuse. Concerns in relation to elder abuse should be reported to the relevant Public Health Nurse or to the HSE Senior Case Worker for the Protection of Older People.

6.0 Responding to and reporting vulnerable adult protection concerns:

If you are concerned about the protection or welfare of a vulnerable adult, contact the Designated Liaison Person. It is recognised that adults have the right to self-determination and to make decisions, even if this means that they remain at risk. Where there are concerns regarding diminished capacity, consideration should be given to requesting a specialist assessment of the person's decision-making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person. When the Designated Liaison Person receives a report about suspected or actual abuse, they should consider the wishes of the vulnerable adult and if there are reasonable grounds for reporting to the Statutory Authorities. This will mean: - Clarifying or getting more information about the matter; - Consulting with the vulnerable adult to hear his/her wishes etc.; - Where there is any doubt or uncertainty, consulting with the Statutory Authorities to obtain their advice on the situation; - Where there are concerns about the diminished capacity of the vulnerable adult, considering assessment of decision making capacity in the context of the abuse allegations and the risk posed to the person; - Making a formal referral to the Statutory Authorities (Protecting Our Future: Report of the working Group on Elder Abuse, September 2002) A suspicion, which is not supported by any objective indication of abuse or neglect, would not constitute a reasonable suspicion or reasonable grounds for concern. However, these suspicions will be recorded or noted internally by the Designated Liaison Person as future suspicions may lead to the decision to make a report and earlier suspicions may provide important information for Statutory Authorities. A full written record of all decisions will be maintained by the Designated Liaison Person. In an emergency, where a person is at immediate risk, you should contact the Garda Síochána or Emergency Services on 999 or 112.

Confidentiality: All information concerned with the identification and reporting of vulnerable adult abuse is subject to best practice guidance on confidentiality. Where a vulnerable adult has capacity, their consent should be sought prior to disclosing information to another agency / Statutory Authorities.

7.0 Mandatory Reporting

Beyond the scope of this guidance document on reporting, all citizens should be aware that it is a legal requirement throughout Ireland for any person who knows or believes that a serious offence has been committed including an offence relating to Rape, Sexual Assault and False Imprisonment to report such

information to An Garda Síochána and it is an offence not to do so where that failure cannot be reasonably excused. In current criminal legislation in Ireland (Section 4 Criminal Justice (Withholding of Information of Offences against Children and Vulnerable Persons Act 2012” it should be noted that complicated provisions appear within the context of defences available to persons charged with an offence relating to non-reporting of serious personal abuse. These warrant more detailed consideration in developing in detail the implementation process of any guidance adopted.”

8.0 Consent

The consent of the vulnerable adult should be sought prior to reporting any matter to the civil authorities and onto family and care service providers. Sometimes adults do not want civil authorities to take action to investigate or protect them from harm; People have a right to make such choices about reporting; however, if a criminal act is suspected, it must be reported to the civil authorities. If upon receipt of the concern, where the vulnerable adult does not give consent to reporting, and it is not clear that a criminal act has taken place, and where the designated person believes that others may also be at risk of harm, consultation should take place with the civil authorities as to the best course of action, in the absence of consent from the alleged victim. In considering the capacity of the vulnerable adult to give consent, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The adult has the capacity to understand what is being asked of him/her
- Sufficient information is given, in a way that the person understands, to enable him/her to make an informed decision
- Consent is not received through any form of coercion. If the vulnerable adult is unable to give informed consent, discussions should take place with their carer/guardian/close family about reporting concerns/allegations and, where appropriate, discussions should also take place with any medical or social work personnel. There may need to be a determination as to who can give consent on behalf of the vulnerable adult; in some instances, there may already be provision in place; consultation may be required with legal advisers and statutory personnel. Please note the designated liaison person should not make determinations around capacity to give consent, without consultation with appropriately trained and skilled personnel.

9.0 Record Keeping:

It is essential the designated liaison person keep contemporaneous records of all safeguarding concerns – this will include contacts, consultations and any actions taken. All records relating to vulnerable adult protection and welfare such as records of concerns, allegations or disclosures or reports to statutory authorities should be kept in a safe and confidential manner. Paper records should be stored in locked filing cabinets with restricted access. Records held on PCs, servers or mobile devices should be encrypted and password protected. As regards the retention of records normally all protection reporting records are held in perpetuity.

10.0 Recruitment and Selection

Safe recruitment is an integral part of good safeguarding practice. In addition to standard good HR practice, it should include:

- Seeking Garda vetting, and police clearance for other jurisdictions, and developing criteria on decision making regarding suitability in the event of disclosures
- Specific factors which would exclude applicants from working in the organisation
- Contracts agreed by management and workers (including that workers will comply with the organisation’s protection and welfare policies
- All workers will receive induction in the vulnerable adult safeguarding policy and regular refresher or updating training will be provided as required.
- All staff whose roles include or could potentially include contact with vulnerable adults will receive appropriate safeguarding training, approved to national standards.

11.0 Management and Supervision:

All staff and volunteers whose roles or duties include or may include contact with vulnerable adults will receive appropriate support and supervision from their line manager or other appointed manager.

Allegations against Cork County PPN personnel and volunteers: Should an allegation of abuse or inappropriate conduct in relation to a vulnerable adult be made against a Cork County PPN employee, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The standard reporting procedure as above will be initiated on notification of the allegation, by the Designated Liaison Person, or by the Chairperson, as appropriate. The safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the foremost consideration and any necessary protective measures, proportionate to the risk will be taken (e.g. staff member removed from duties that involve contact with the vulnerable adult up to and including possible suspension with pay pending a full investigation). Parents / carers (including service providers) will be kept informed of steps taken as above.
2. The Resource Worker (or member of the Secretariat) will be appointed to advise the staff member or volunteer that an allegation has been made against them and the nature of the allegation. The person will be afforded an opportunity to respond.
3. The person will be informed that a report will be made to the statutory authorities and that Cork County PPN will cooperate fully with any assessment or investigation that ensues. This should be undertaken without delay.
4. The Designated Liaison Person/ Rotating Chair will liaise closely with investigating bodies (HSE / An Garda Síochána) to ensure that actions taken by the organisation do not undermine or frustrate any investigations.
5. These steps will be followed with due regard for privacy and fair procedure of the individual involved.

Following advice from the statutory authorities an internal investigation under Cork County PPN's Grievance Policies or Cork County Council's disciplinary procedures may be undertaken

12.0 Cork County PPN Code of Conduct when working with Vulnerable Adults

The Cork County PPN Code of Conduct when Working with Vulnerable adults must be adhered to by all staff (whether full-time or part-time) or volunteers (whether full-time or part-time) at all times during events and activities. This can help to minimise the risk of harm or abuse to vulnerable adults, as well as help protect all staff and volunteers from unfounded accusation.

This Code of Conduct sets out that:

- The safety of all participants is paramount and must be our first consideration in any contact with them.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every participant, and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnic origin, cultural background or religion.
- Physical or verbal interactions with participants should never be punitive, aggressive, embarrassing or humiliating.
- When meeting vulnerable adults for the first time, introduce yourself and explain in appropriate language, who you are and why you are visiting them.
- Respect the ethos and practices of any service you visit.

Staff/Volunteers must NOT:

- Spend excessive amounts of time alone with vulnerable adults and should, conversely, endeavour to avoid situations where this may arise.

- Engage in games of a physical nature unless as vital elements of drama/art workshops or structured outdoor activities. (In the planning of drama/art workshops and outdoor activities, staff/volunteers should attempt, where possible, to avoid activities which require such physical contact.)
- Engage or allow inappropriate physical contact with, or make sexually suggestive comments to, vulnerable adults.
- Spend time or meet with vulnerable adults outside of services
- Take vulnerable adults in your car or to other locations or premises
- Perform tasks, involving physical contact, for vulnerable adults which they are capable of doing themselves, at all times respecting the dignity of the person.
- Take or publish photographs of participants involved in activities without explicit consent (and also in keeping with policies of partner services and organisations)

Staff/Volunteers must ensure that:

- Any necessary meetings with vulnerable adults should be conducted as openly as possible with the awareness of other staff, volunteers and/or other adults present.
- Should any meetings be deemed to require privacy, doors to the rooms where the meetings are conducted must remain open.

All the above apply whether activities or events are conducted in any premises or venues both indoor and outdoor, as well as during travel to and from any other premises/venues, as part of Cork County PPN's activities or events.

If you think you may have caused offence, however unintentionally, acknowledge and offer an apology or explanation as soon as possible.

Should you observe or witness any action, behaviour or symptoms that indicate a concern in relation to a vulnerable person's safety or welfare, report the matter, in the first instance to the service manager and advise her/him of your obligations under this policy. Note the concern and report to the [designated liaison person](#) at the first opportunity.

Provided that all Cork County PPN policies and procedures are adhered to, it is the wish of Cork County PPN staff members that staff and volunteers encourage vulnerable adults to participate in activities and encourage all participants to develop their own ideas and skills as well, as experience the many other positive outcomes, both personally and socially, acquired by participation in such activities.

This policy fulfils the requirements of the legislation and embraces the principles of best practice in relation to [Vulnerable Adult Policies](#) and procedures in the Republic of Ireland.

Date approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026

Cork County PPN

Grievance Procedure (P8)

1. What is this procedure for

This document sets out the ways in which the PPN handles grievances from:

- staff or volunteers, and
- external parties e.g. PPN Member Groups, members of the public or separate organisations

The PPN is committed to ensuring a safe and happy work environment for volunteers and staff., and to providing the best possible service in line with our Constitution. This Procedure aims to resolve grievances that arise in a fair, prompt and impartial manner.

2. What and who does it apply to

Part I of this Procedure applies to all PPN staff and volunteers who have a grievance about any condition of their work.

It is important to note that PPN staff are employed by Cork County Council (the Council) and are subject to Council policies and procedures. This Procedure is intended to complement these policies and not to contradict them.

Part II of the Procedure is for any individual or organisation not qualifying as PPN staff or volunteer to raise a complaint about the operation the PPN.

If the PPN receives a complaint about something that is not within its control (e.g. issues relating to grant applications or appeals to the Council), it will inform the complainant and advise them to the best of our ability how to make their concerns known.

3. What is a grievance

A grievance is considered to be any complaint about something believed to be wrong or unfair.

4. Principles for addressing grievances

- All grievances should aim to be resolved in an informal basis with the person involved, if possible.
- Any proceedings should be conducted honestly, fairly and without bias.
- Proceedings should not be unduly delayed.
- Any person(s) against whom a complaint is made should have the opportunity, and be given a reasonable time, to put forward their side of the event/s before resolution is attempted.

5. Grievances Log

The Secretariat Staff Liaison Committee (or, if not in place, the Secretariat) will ensure a log of grievances is kept in order to enable periodic assessment of whether these are being handled successfully and, if not, to undertake a process to address this.

In addition, this Log will provide data about any trends emerging in relation to complaints that may require to be addressed such as increasing numbers or types of grievances. This Log will be kept confidential and be updated by the Secretariat Staff Liaison Committee who will also compile a summary of data for the Secretariat periodically as requested (e.g. number of complaints, outcomes, etc.). Personal data relating to individual grievances will not be reported and all information will be held subject to data protection regulations.

PART I –Grievances of Staff or Volunteers

5.0 Informal Resolution

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. The staff member/ volunteer should attempt to resolve the complaint with the individual(s) with whom they have the grievance.

If the staff member/ volunteer does not want to deal directly with the individual(s) with whom they have the grievance, they should discuss it with their direct line manager, or the Secretariat Staff Liaison Committee.

6.0 Formal procedure

If informal resolution is not possible, the PPN Staff member/ volunteer should raise the matter with their direct line manager or the Staff Liaison Committee of the Secretariat immediately in writing. If the matter relates to a staff member's immediate line manager, the grievance should be taken to the Staff Liaison Committee of the Secretariat or the HR Department of the Council.

The written notification of the complaint should include:

- the substance of the grievance
- the remedy sought
- a clear statement that this is a formal grievance notification

The individual making the complaint must keep a copy of the complaint.

6.1 Mediation

If the Staff Liaison Subcommittee consider it an appropriate intervention at this stage, they may offer mediation.

- 6.1.i Mediation is a confidential, neutral and voluntary approach to conflict resolution in which parties can engage without prejudice. If a PPN Worker/ Volunteer wishes to take up the offer of mediation as a means to resolve a situation, then the mediator must have declared any connection with any of the parties and be acceptable to all parties involved. The mediator must be fully trained, accredited and insured. The PPN will cover reasonable costs for provision of mediation. [The Secretariat Committee handling the grievance can sanction mediation costs to a limit of €500.00 beyond which it must seek approval from the full Secretariat.]
- 6.1.ii If the parties involved agree to mediation, the Staff Liaison Subcommittee will make the necessary arrangements. The mediation itself will be governed by an agreement to mediate that will be by all involved parties before the mediation proceeds. It is understood that the outcomes and process of mediation will be confidential between the parties involved in the process, unless they agree otherwise (for example, in making recommendations for changes in PPN procedures, or requesting agreement to elements of the agreement by the Secretariat).
- 6.1.iii If the issues(s) cannot be resolved through mediation, the mediator will notify the Secretariat Staff Liaison Committee only that the mediation has not been successful and that Committee will then initiate-a formal grievance hearing.

6.2 Grievance Hearing

If the grievance cannot be resolved through mediation, or the parties are not willing to go engage in mediation, then a grievance hearing will be initiated.

- 6.2.i The Staff Liaison Committee will request the formation of a Complaint Committee to hold the grievance hearing. A Secretariat Complaint Committee is formed as required to consider complaints. It is made up of 3 Secretariat members, ideally one from each PPN College but never all from one College. Once it has completed its deliberations on the allegation which it was created to consider, the Complaint Committee will disband. Members of the Complaint Committee cannot also be members of the Staff Liaison Committee, must be without a conflict of interest, and cannot be involved in the complaint in any way.
- 6.2.ii The Complaint Committee will gather all available evidence, and arrange a meeting with the PPN staff member or volunteer who has raised the grievance.
- 6.2.iii If the grievance involves another PPN staff member or volunteer, then the grievance hearing will meeting with the parties separately.
- 6.2.iv If the individual raising the grievance has questions for another PPN staff member or volunteer, these should be put in writing and will be notified to the party concerned in advance of the hearing.
- 6.2.v If both/all parties (PPN staff workers or volunteers) agree, a combined meeting may also be undertaken.
- 6.2.vi The decision as to what method is most appropriate for the resolution of the grievance will be that of the Complaint Committee.
- 6.2.vii The individual taking the grievance has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
- 6.2.viii Where the grievance involves another PPN staff member or volunteer, they will be requested to attend the grievance hearing and advised that they may bring a colleague or trade union representative.
- 6.2.ix The grievance hearing will be arranged at a time that facilitates attendance by all the parties involved and held in a timely manner but with sufficient notice to allow them to arrange to be accompanied where they wish this.
- 6.2.x All parties will be given time in the grievance hearing to explain their views and to respond to those of the other party/ies.
- 6.2.xi If no consensus can be reached on a resolution through the grievance hearing process, then the Complaint Committee will make a decision as to the outcome of the grievance. They will notify all parties involved of their decision and of the process for appeal.
- 6.2.xii The following sanctions are available:
 - a) a written warning, to a party or parties involved
 - b) removal of a Representative from their role (where relevant)
 - c) request to the Member Group to which the individual belongs, for an alternative representative to attend and participate in PPN activities, making clear that the individual concerned can no longer engage with the PPN (for volunteers)

- d) referral to Council staff disciplinary procedure (for staff). In the event of this sanction being applied, the procedure and any appeal will be managed by the Council under their disciplinary procedure

6.2.viii In most instances, the PPN would expect the Secretariat's Complaint Committee's decision to be final and to being a close to the grievance. However, the PPN staff member or volunteer who raised the complaint, has the right to appeal the decision if they still feel aggrieved.

7.0 Appeals

- 7.3.i If a PPN staff worker or volunteer wishes to appeal against a grievance decision they must request an appeal in writing within 5 working days from receipt of official correspondence. The appeal should contain the original formal grievance notification.
- 7.3.ii The written request for an appeal should be addressed to the Complaint Committee who issued the grievance decision. The Complaint Committee will then notify the Staff Liaison Committee who will establish an Appeal Committee.
- 7.3.iii The PPN staff member or volunteer who appeals a grievance decision is entitled to representation by a colleague, trade union representative or professional body. Other parties to the appeal are entitled to be accompanied in the same manner.
- 7.3.iv The Appeal Committee is made up of 3 Secretariat members, ideally one from each PPN College but never all from one College. Members of the Appeal Committee cannot also be members of the Staff Liaison Committee or the Complaint Committee that has considered the grievance, they must be without a conflict of interest, and cannot be involved in the complaint in any way. (If there are insufficient Secretariat members, PPN Representatives and/ or Linkage Group Facilitators may serve on the Appeal Committee.) Once it has completed its deliberations on the allegation which it was created to consider, the Complaint Committee will disband.
- 7.3.v The Appeal Committee will call an appeal meeting that may involve the parties involved, including the Complaint Committee, meeting together or in separate sessions as the Appeal Committee considers most appropriate. All parties will be informed of the date and time of the appeal meeting, with reasonable effort made for them all to attend and for the PPN staff workers or volunteers involved to bring a colleague or trade union representative.
- 7.3.vi The party bringing the appeal will be asked to provide verbal and/or written reason(s) for the appeal. The Complaint Committee will be asked to provide reasons for their decision. Any other party involved may be asked to contribute by the Appeal Committee if needed.
- 7.3.vii The Appeal Committee will discuss the matter in private and has the right to seek further information from either party.
- 7.3.viii The Appeal Committee will reach a decision and inform the party making the appeal of this decision in writing.
- 7.3.ix The decision of the Appeal Committee is final.

PART II: Grievances of External Parties²

The PPN aims to deal effectively with any complaints about our operation. If we get something wrong, we will apologise and, where possible, we will try to put things right. We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain to improve.

8.0 Informal Resolution

If possible, we believe it is best to deal with things as soon as possible and in the easiest and most direct way. If you have a complaint, raise it with the person you are dealing with as soon as possible. He or she will try to resolve it for you there and then. However, they may need time to look into it, which can take up to five (5) working days.

If there are any lessons to learn from addressing your complaint, we will bring them to the Secretariat and the Plenary. If the person you dealt with can't help, they will explain why and you can then ask for your complaint to be formally investigated.

9.0 How to complain formally

You can complain in any of the ways below:

- you can ask for a copy of our complaint form from the person with whom you are in contact
- you can get in touch with our Resource Worker on telephone 021 4285340 if you want to make your complaint over the phone
- you can use the form on our website at <https://corkcountypn.com/>
- you can e mail us at ppn@corkcoco.ie
- you can write a letter to us at the following address:

Cork County PPN, County Hall, Cork, T12 R2NC

Copies of this procedure and the complaint form are available on our website <https://corkcountypn.com/>
Physical copies of this procedure and the complaint form are available upon request from ppn@corkcoco.ie, including in large print.

10.0 What you should include in your complaint

Remember to state your name, address and telephone number (and email, if applicable) and whether you are acting on behalf of someone else. In addition, you should include the following information:

- briefly describe what your complaint is about stating relevant dates and times, if applicable
- list your specific concerns starting with the most important concern
- be clear about what you are hoping to achieve (for example an apology, explanation, etc.)
- state your preferred method of communication

It will assist the PPN staff if you include extra information and/or copies of relevant documents.

11.0 Dealing with your complaint

We will formally acknowledge your complaint within a maximum of five (5) working days and let you know how we intend to deal with it. We will ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any particular requirements for example, if you have language difficulties.

² External parties may include PPN Member Groups, members of the public or separate organisations, that do not qualify as PPN staff members or volunteers.

We will deal with your complaint in an open and honest way.

We will make sure that your interactions with us in the future do not suffer just because you have made a complaint.

If you are making a complaint on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement to you acting on their behalf.

12.0 Investigation

We will tell you who will be investigate your complaint. If your complaint is straightforward, we will usually ask a member of staff to look into it on behalf of the PPN and get back to you. In more complex or serious cases, a Secretariat Complaint Committee will be established to look into it and respond to you on our behalf. In some cases, if the complaint is serious, we may ask someone from outside the PPN to investigate.

We will set out to you our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we have got it right.

The person looking at your complaint will usually need to see the files we hold relevant to your complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it is important that you tell us.

If there is a simple solution to your problem, we may ask you if you are happy to accept this.

We will aim to resolve concerns as quickly as possible and expect to deal with the vast majority within 30 working days of the Secretariat meeting that directly follows the receipt of the complaint.

If your complaint is more complex we will:

- let you know within this time why we think it may take longer to investigate
- tell you how long we expect it to take
- give you regular updates every 21 days on any progress made

The person or Committee that is investigating your concerns will aim first to establish the facts. The extent of this investigation will depend on how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet you to discuss your complaint. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes. If we do this, we will provide you with all the information to decide whether you wish to follow that option.

When investigating your complaint, we will look at relevant evidence. This could include files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever may be relevant to your complaint. If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies and any guidance.

13.0 Outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know what we have found in keeping with your preferred form of communication, for example by letter or email. If necessary, we will produce a longer report. We will explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened. If we find there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

If we got it wrong, we will always apologise.

14.0 Putting Things Right

If we didn't do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have lost out as a result of a mistake on our part we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had got it right.

15.0 Appeal

If we formally investigate your complaint and you are not satisfied with the outcome you may lodge an appeal. A request for an appeal must be made in writing and received by the PPN within 5 working days of the outcome being received. The request for an appeal should contain details of the reason why you are not satisfied with the outcome of the formal investigation.

An Appeal Committee will be established to consider your submission on the reasons for the appeal, and the original outcome of the investigation. The Appeal Committee will not include any persons involved in the original handling of your grievance.

The Appeal Committee will decide on whether to uphold the original investigation outcome or propose a different outcome. Their decision will be communicated to you promptly using your preferred form of communication.

The decision of the Appeal Committee is final.

16.0 Learning Lessons

We take your complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we have made. The Secretariat considers a summary of all complaints on a regular basis as well as details of any serious complaints.

Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we have promised have been made.

17.0 What if you need help

Our staff will aim to help you make your complaint known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact your local Citizens Information Centre who may be able to assist you.

18.0 What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood and respected. However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We, therefore, expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us. We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands or unreasonable persistence.

Everyone involved in a process under this procedure are expected to respect the confidentiality of the matter and of everyone involved throughout the process.

19.0 Confidentiality

We will deal with your complaint in the strictest confidence and in accordance with data protection legislation.

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Complaints Form (P8a)

A: YOUR DETAILS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Evening Number: _____

Please let us know how you prefer to be contacted: _____

Your requirements

If our usual way of dealing with complaints is difficult for you, please tell us so that we can discuss how we might help you.

The person who experienced the problem should normally fill in this form. If you are filling this in on behalf of someone else, please fill in section B. Please note that before taking forward the complaint we will need to satisfy ourselves that you have the authority to act on behalf of the person concerned.

B: MAKING A COMPLAINT ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE

Their Name: _____

Their Address: _____

What is your relationship to them? _____

Why are you making the complaint on their behalf? *(they will need to sign below that they are willing for you to make this complaint on their behalf)* _____

C: YOUR COMPLAINT (Please use the Notes pages if needed)

What do you think we did wrong, or failed to do? _____

Describe how you, or the person you are representing, suffered or has been affected

What do you think should be done to put things right?

Have you already put your concern to the person responsible for delivering the service? If so, please give brief details of how and when you did so.

If you have any documents to support your concern/complaint, please attach them with this form.

Signature: _____

Signature of person on whose behalf you are making this complaint: _____

When you have completed this form, please send it to:

Co-ordinator
Cork County PPN
County Hall
Cork
T12 R2NC

Or send a scanned copy to ppn@corkcoco.ie

NOTES: _____

Date approved by Plenary: _____ 23/04/2026 _____

Cork County PPN

Conflict of Interest Policy (P9)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist PPN staff and volunteers engaging with the PPN to effectively identify, record and manage any conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of the PPN and to ensure that volunteers act in the best interest of the PPN.

2. Objective

The PPN Secretariat aims to ensure that all staff and volunteers engaged with the PPN (themselves included) are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of the PPN.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all PPN staff and volunteers. Member group representatives that participate in Plenary or other decision-making meetings should be reminded by the Chairperson or Facilitator of the need to consider whether they have any conflicts of interest and to declare these if they do.

4. Definition of conflicts of interests

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a individual's personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent the them from making a decision in the best interests of the PPN. This personal interest may be direct or indirect, and can include interests of a person connected to the individual. These situations present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of the charity and therefore must be managed accordingly.

More information about identifying and handling conflicts of interest can be found following the Record of Interest sheet (P9a) below.

5. Policy

This policy has been developed because conflicts of interest commonly arise, and do not need to present a problem to the PPN if they are openly and effectively managed. It is the policy of the PPN as well as a responsibility of its staff and volunteers, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided and that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with their obligations to the PPN.

The PPN will manage conflicts of interest by requiring staff and volunteers to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and record any conflicts of interest
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches

5.1 Responsibility of the Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest across the charity

- monitoring compliance with this policy
- reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively

The PPN staff and volunteers should ensure they are aware of their obligations in the management and control of the PPN which is set out in the PPN Constitution and other governance documentation.

5.2 Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into the PPN's Register of Interests, as well as being raised with the Secretariat. The Register of Interests will be maintained by the PPN Co-ordinator, and will record all information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and any steps taken to address it).

Confidentiality of disclosures

In order to support PPN staff members and volunteers to disclose their conflicts of interest, information disclosed will be kept confidential and only members of the Secretariat and the PPN Co-ordinator will have access to it.

Where an individual requires additional restrictions on information relating to a conflict of interest, the Secretariat will be asked to consider an alternative disclosure mechanism.

6. Action required for management of conflicts of interest

6.1 Conflicts of interest of Secretariat members

Once the conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the Secretariat (excluding the member making a disclosure and any other conflicted persons) must decide whether or not a conflicted individual should:

- vote on the matter
- participate in any debate
- or be present in the room during the debate and the voting

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent an individual from regularly participating in discussions, it may be worth the Secretariat considering whether it is appropriate for the person with the relevant conflict to resign from their position.

6.2 What should be considered when deciding what action to take

In deciding what approach to take, the Secretariat will consider:

- whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- the PPN's objects and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, the PPN

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the Secretariat who are present (excluding any conflicted member) and voting (if applicable) at the meeting. All details regarding the conflict

of interest, including the action arising, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and subsequently entered into the Register of Interests.

7. Compliance with this policy

If the Secretariat has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Secretariat may take action against the person according to the PPN Grievance Policy. This may include seeking the person's resignation from the PPN.

If a person becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest affecting another staff member or volunteer, or that they have failed to disclose a conflict of interest, they should raise this with the individual concerned in the first instance. If the individual themselves does not agree that such a conflict of interest exists and takes no action but the person identifying the risk continues to believe a conflict of interest exists, they should bring the matter to the attention of the Chairperson of the Secretariat or PPN Co-ordinator.

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Register of Interests (P9a)

Name of Individual (Member Gp & role, if relevant)	Date of appointment	Description of interest	Has the Secretariat been notified of the interest? (incl. date notified)	Date of disclosure

Signed: _____ Date : _____

(to be signed by individual declaring the interest, separate sheets to be used for different individuals)

Date form approved by Plenary: _____ **23/04/2026** _____

Information about Conflicts of Interest and how to handle them

(adapted from the Charities Regulator, Managing Conflicts of Interest Guidance, 2018)

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest is any situation in which someone's personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent them making a decision in the best interests of the organisation. A personal interest may be direct or indirect, and can include the interests of someone connected to the person. *(See below for more on who a connected person is.)*

How can you identify a conflict of interest?

The Charities Regulator advises people to take the 'conflict-of-interest test', and ask themselves: "Would a reasonable person (who was aware of your personal interest) believe that you might be influenced by your personal interest when making a decision on behalf on the organisation?"

If the answer is 'yes', then you have a potential conflict of interest.

Types of conflict of interest

A conflict of interest exists when the interests of an organisation conflicts with:

- the interest of a person or organisation that appointed you to your role (an appointment conflict), or
- your own personal or business interest in relation to that matter (a personal conflict)

Who is a "connected person"?

The Charities Act 2009 explains what is meant by a 'personal connection'. Persons who may be classed as a 'connected person' in respect of an individual include:

- a parent, brother, sister, spouse, grandparent or grandchild of the individual, or a child of the spouse of the individual;
- any person the individual is in a partnership with;
- any person the individual is employed by under a contract of service;
- a body corporate if the individual has control of it, or if the individual and any of the above mentioned connected persons together have control over it.

Why managing conflicts of interest is important

Conflicts of interest do arise but they need not be a problem if they are managed appropriately.

Failing to effectively manage conflicts of interest can negatively impact on the organisation in terms of governance and associated reputational risk, where a conflict interferes with a person's actual or perceived ability to comply with his or her duty to act in the best interests of the organisation.

Handling conflicts of interest

There are three key stages in dealing with a conflict of interest:

1 - IDENTIFY

- ✓ Adopt a conflicts of interest policy
- ✓ Know what your governing document says about conflicts of interest
- ✓ Create and maintain a register of interests Include 'conflicts of interest' as an agenda item at the beginning of all meetings
- ✓ Declare any potential conflict of interest as soon as you become aware of it

2 - MANAGE

- ✓ Put clear procedures in place that state what should happen when a conflict of interest is identified
- ✓ Ensure that decisions are taken in the organisation's best interests
- ✓ Apply the conflict of interest policy in all situations where there is a conflict or potential conflict
- ✓ Decide if any person with a conflict of interest should be involved in any discussions or decisions about the situation
- ✓ Ask yourself: Would a reasonable person, who was aware of the individual's personal interest, believe that the individual might be influenced by that personal interest when making a decision on behalf on the organisation? If the answer is "yes", then there is a conflict of interest.
- ✓ Ensure that your organisation can still carry on its business and form a quorum, even if a number of individuals have to withdraw due to a conflict arising

3 - RECORD

- ✓ Document any conflicts of interest and how you and the other persons involved have managed them

Each organisation is responsible for developing policy and procedures to identify, manage and record conflicts of interest, and all individuals involved with the organisation have a duty to declare any conflict of interest.

For more information on handling conflicts of interest is available from: www.charitiesregulator.ie

And their *Managing Conflicts of Interest Guidance* includes

- a sample conflict of interest policy
- a sample Template Register of Interests
- several case studies

While specifically targeted at charities, this guidance conforms with best practice.

Date approved by Plenary: _____ 23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Travel and Expenses Policy (P10)

1. What is this policy for

The PPN is committed to ensuring clear and fair provision for travel and expenses of PPN volunteers undertaking their work for the PPN. This policy sets out details of the travel and expenses which qualify for reimbursement by the PPN, how claims can be made and the rates that are to be used.

2. What and Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all PPN members who are approved by the PPN Plenary or Secretariat to travel on PPN business including PPN representatives, Secretariat members, and others, who may request payment of legitimate expenses. (Note: staff expenses are not addressed here.)

3.0 Travel

Travel expenses that qualify for reimbursement include:

- travel by PPN representatives to meetings that they are mandated to attend, such as Committee meetings and Secretariat meetings. Travel to attend other events, organised by the PPN or external organisations, may be reimbursed if approval is given in advance for this by the Plenary or Secretariat
- travel by standard class public transport, or alternatively by private car where public transport is not possible or practicable
- PPN Representatives who do not have access to other means of transport may claim the cost of using taxis but *only* with the prior approval of the PPN Secretariat
- where a PPN representative seeks mileage payments, they must indemnify the Council

4.0 Mileage Expenses Rates

Where private vehicle is used and a mileage claim is made, the current civil service expenses rates apply, consistent with Cork County Council policy.

Motor travel rates valid @ 1st January 2026

Distance band	Engine capacity up to 1200cc	Engine capacity 1201cc - 1500cc	Engine capacity 1501cc and over
Up to 1,500 km (Band 1)	41.80 cent	43.40 cent	51.82 cent
1,501 - 5,500 km (Band 2)	72.64 cent	79.18 cent	90.63 cent
5,501 - 25,000 km (Band 3)	31.78 cent	31.79 cent	39.22 cent
25,001 km and over (Band 4)	20.56 cent	23.85 cent	25.87 cent

Motorcycle rates (from 5 March 2009)

Distance	Engine capacity up to 150cc	Engine capacity 151cc - 250 cc	Engine capacity 251 cc - 600 cc	Engine capacity 601cc and over
Up to 6,437 km	14.48 cent	20.10 cent	23.72 cent	28.59 cent
6,438 km and over	9.37 cent	13.31 cent	15.29 cent	17.60 cent

Bicycle Rates (from 1st February 2007)

Rate per km 8c

5.0 Other Expenses

5.1 Should representatives need to pay other out-of-pocket expenses to enable them to carry out their PPN duties (such as for *additional* childcare or for missed meals for those living in direct provision), they must seek approval for these by contacting the Resource Worker (ppn@corkcoco.ie) **before** incurring those expenses.

5.2 Any additional childcare expenses payable will be limited to a maximum of €15.00 per hour and may only be charged for the duration of the event plus the travel time to and from the venue.

5.3 If agreed, a domestic day subsistence rate of €19.25 may be paid for meals missed. (civil service rate)

5.2 The PPN will not pay overnight expenses unless an overnight stay has been approved in advance by the Secretariat. In these cases, representatives should contact PPN staff well in advance about arranging transport, accommodation and subsistence.

6.0 Making Travel and Expenses Claims

6.1 A request for travel expenses can only be made when these costs cannot be covered by another source, e.g. is not paid by the Board or Committee being attended by the Representative.

6.2 Members must give the following details about *each* journey they are claiming expenses for:

- the purpose of the journey
- the date
- the start and end point of the journey
- the form(s) of transport.

6.3 Receipts must be submitted for all expenses (e-mailed photos, scans or originals are acceptable), except for mileage and pre-agreed standard expenses payments.

6.4 Claims for travel and other expenses will be processed through online banking only.

6.5 As the PPN runs on an annual budget, claims must be made within the year they are incurred.

6.6 Claims must be made using the Travel and Expenses Claim Form which can be obtained from the PPN office or downloaded from the website (www.corkcountypn.com)

6.7 Claims will be processed by the PPN Co-ordinator and authorised by a member of the Staff Liaison Sub-Committee of the Secretariat.

7.0 Reimbursement of Expenses:

Expenses will only be reimbursed if they are:

- submitted on a PPN Travel and Expenses Claim Form, and are fully completed in line with this policy
- accompanied by original receipts or e-mail photos/scans of receipts where appropriate. Receipts are not necessary for reasonable, agreed mileage and subsistence rates
- appropriately authorized as above.

Date approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Email and Internet Use Policy (P11)

1. What this Policy is for

The PPN is committed to ensuring Internet, email and social media usage that protects all individuals' right to privacy, ensures dignity at work for all employees, and protects the organisation and its interests, including Cork County Council as its host.

Specifically, this purpose is intended to:

- 1.1. ensure that the PPN has clear policies outlining its Internet, email and social media use
- 1.2. set out practical guidelines for transferring person-identifiable information (information which could be used to establish the identity of an individual)
- 1.3. outline procedures in relation to social networking

2. What and who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all email, internet and social media use through the PPN's internet system or on any work hardware used in or out of work premises. It applies to all staff, visitors and volunteers within the PPN.

3. General security

- 3.1. Staff members must not leave their work computer without securing it by password or signing off.
- 3.2. If a staff member thinks that someone knows their password, they must ask for it to be changed as soon as possible. Maintaining the privacy of passwords is individual staff members' responsibility and consequently they are responsible for any abuse taking place using their name and password.

4. Using email, the Internet and social media channels

- 4.1. The PPN email system is to be used solely for the purposes of the PPN and not for personal purposes.
- 4.2. Staff are permitted to use the Internet for personal purposes at work during their breaks and must abide by the Council's Internet policies at all times.
- 4.3. If staff use the PPN or the Council's communications facilities for private purposes, they must accept that those private communications may be subject to surveillance, for example, to ensure adequate virus checking.
- 4.4 All communications must comply with current GDPR regulations (see separate policy)

5. Sending PPN Emails

- 5.1. Email is effectively a communication on official headed paper and can be traced back to place, date and time of sending. Staff, or any person with access to PPN email(s), need to ensure they are satisfied with email content and that it has been approved at the appropriate level. Important email correspondence should use the 'confirm receipt' function.
- 5.2. Staff, or any person with access to PPN email(s), are not to instigate or forward unofficial mail to any users which may be offensive or disruptive to others, or may be construed as harassment.
- 5.3. Staff are not to use another's email account or allow another employee to send from their email account. If sharing computers in an office, then staff are to log off when leaving the computer.

6. Opening Emails

- 6.1. Staff, or any person with access to PPN email(s) must not;
 - open any files that look suspicious or are from an unknown sender
 - reply to any "spam" mail

6.2. If staff, visitors or volunteers receive material which they find offensive or abusive or time-wasting, they should respond to it as to an offensive letter: complain directly to the sender and bring it to the attention of the sender's employing organisation in an appropriate way.

7. Inappropriate Email and Internet Use

7.1. Emails and social media posts may not contain statements or content that is libellous, offensive, harassing, illegal, derogatory, or discriminatory. Inappropriate or offensive messages such as racial, sexual, or religious slurs or jokes and sexually explicit messages or images, cartoons or jokes are prohibited.

7.2. Staff, or any person with access to PPN email(s) or social media, are not to use communal email systems to disseminate non-PPN-related information, except with the prior approval of the Secretariat.

7.3. Staff, or any person with access to PPN email(s) or social media, must not make derogatory comments regarding gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling community.

7.4. The Internet and social media must be used in a way that complies with current legislation, is acceptable to and does not create unnecessary risk to the PPN. In particular, the following is considered unacceptable:

7.4.1. visiting Internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or otherwise illegal material

7.4.2. carrying out any form of fraud, or software, film or music piracy

7.4.3. using the Internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users

7.4.4. downloading commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless this download is permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licences

7.4.5. hacking into unauthorised areas

7.4.6. sending defamatory and/or knowingly false material, including about the PPN, its staff or volunteers

7.4.7. undertaking deliberate activities that waste staff effort or networked resources

7.4.8. introducing any form of malicious software into the organisation's network.

7.5 Social Media Posts

Appropriate posts would cover some or all of the following:

- Information on PPN events, news updates and elections
- Information on public consultations
- Information on funding opportunities from Cork County Council and others
- Press releases on the Department of Rural and Community Development activities
- Event information and occasional live coverage of events
- Important updates from Cork County Council and government departments
- Alerts about new content on the PPN website
- Practical information on services available through government departments
- Emergency updates (i.e. updates & advice relating to Covid-19 or weather warnings)
- Information about PPN Member Groups and their activities

Only posts from official sources relevant to the PPN should be shared/ retweeted e.g. the Council, DRCDG, government departments and agencies, local development companies, etc. Posts from PPN Member Groups may be shared or liked providing they are acceptable (see 7.4 above) and comply with this policy.

All posts and 'shared posts' should reflect the values and vision of the PPN.

If in any doubt, posts should not be posted/ shared.

8. Monitoring of Email and Internet Systems

8.1. The PPN will not at any time access private email accounts.

8.2. Monitoring of sites accessed on PPN or Council computers may be undertaken by the PPN or the Council to ensure adherence to this Policy or other relevant policies.

8.3. Records of Internet sites visited may be referred to where a breach of this Policy or other PPN policies is suspected. If illegal activity is suspected in relation to private email use the Gardaí will be contacted, in certain circumstances they will be entitled to access private email.

8.4. The Secretariat and the Council may access work email accounts and emails. If this occurs, staff will be informed prior to the accessing of email correspondence *if possible*. In relation to the privacy of emails received from people not in the organisation, all content will be treated confidentially.

The PPN email and website is part of the domain hosted by the Council., therefore this policy is intended to be in accordance with that of the Council.

8.5. Cork County Council may use software to monitor any inappropriate websites visited. Staff will be made aware if any misuse of PPN or Council technology is detected.

9. Sanctions

Where it is believed that staff, or any person with access to PPN email(s), have failed to comply with this policy, disciplinary action will be taken.

10. Privacy for PPN staff in the Workplace

10.1. Staff in Ireland have a right to a certain degree of privacy in the workplace. However, their right to privacy must be balanced with the legitimate rights and interests of their employer.

10.2 Cork County Council, as the employer, is required to put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure that any personal data it holds is secure and safe from outside intrusion.

11. Social Media

11.1 The PPN does not discriminate against staff or volunteers who use social media sites (Facebook, twitter etc.) for personal use on their own time. However:

11.1.1. bloggers are personally responsible for their commentary.

11.1.2. staff cannot use the Internet to harass, threaten, discriminate against, or disparage other employees or anyone associated with the PPN. Negative statements about the PPN, its services, its staff, PPN Member Groups, PPN representatives, Secretariat members team members, or any other related entity may lead to disciplinary action

11.1.3. staff cannot post photographs or videos of other staff members or volunteers, without their expressed consent

11.1.4. staff cannot write anything that breaches confidentiality, or negatively reflects on the PPN

11.2. Staff may use all social media platforms approved by the Secretariat but must at all times comply with this policy, GDPR requirements and all engagements must be respectful.

11.3. Staff must conduct social media exchanges with the same level of professionalism that they would conduct a face-to-face conversation. Staff should also be aware that comments left can be viewed by others, and therefore that they should be careful about sharing any information which should be kept confidential.

11.4 In the event that unacceptable feedback, engagement or mention of the PPN is received on social media, staff must not engage in any exchange with the author(s). Unacceptable material received in comments on the PPN's own platforms should be removed. The matter should be raised and discussed with the Secretariat and advice sought on how to limit any damage that may result.

11.5 If the organisation uses video clips on a media format such as YouTube, permission for their use must be received from all people who are featured. Where permission is withheld, the clip may not be used.

11.6 Staff members' personal social media profiles may state that they are involved with the PPN. In this regard, staff are asked to avoid any confusion by stating that:

- they are not representing the PPN in any official capacity
- all views, comments and opinions are strictly personal (i.e. the staff member's own, not those of the PPN)

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County Public Participation Network (PPN)

Financial Governance Policy: Controls and Systems (P12)

1.0 What this policy is for

This document sets out the financial procedures used in Cork County PPN to ensure robust financial controls.

This document is in line with best practice for small not-for-profit companies and is partly based on the guidelines produced by the Charities Regulator under section 14 (1) (i) of the Charities Act 2009.

The overall aims of this policy are as follows:

- 1.1. Define clear roles and responsibilities
- 1.2. Set clear limits of authority
- 1.3. Safeguard assets
- 1.4. Administer the organisation's financial affairs in a way that proactively identifies and manages risk
- 1.5. Help prevent and detect potential fraudulent activity
- 1.6. Monitor and act upon financial reporting, by ensuring that proper books of account are maintained so that timely and relevant financial information can be obtained.

2.0 What and who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all decisions about and practical management of PPN's finances, and all persons involved in these.

3.0 Annual Budget

The Secretariat will draw up an annual budget to deliver its [annual Work Plan](#) within available resources. This is subject to ratification or amendment by the Plenary. The annual budget will guide expenditure through the year and may be subject to change in light of developments over time. All changes must be sanctioned by the Secretariat and reported to the Plenary.

4.0 Finance Sub Committee

For the implementation of this policy, the Secretariat shall appoint a Finance Sub-Committee made up of 3 members of the Secretariat. This Sub-Committee shall meet as required to consider and approve expenditure under this Policy. Meetings may be in person or online. The Subcommittee shall be made up of 3 members of the Secretariat, each serving 18 months, with a rolling turnover of members so that one member is replaced each 6 months to ensure continuity and transfer of learning. Decisions on approval may be taken by a simple majority and the quorum shall be 2 members. Decisions will be minuted and a report of these given at each Secretariat meeting.

5.0 Income

The PPN receives its core funding from Government. It may from time to time seek funding from other sources besides its core government funding, providing this is agreed by the Secretariat and submitted for approval at Plenary.

6.0 Maintenance of accounts

The Co-ordinator and Support Worker will together ensure accurate keeping of PPN accounts detailing all income and expenditure and will liaise with the County Council to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the PPN's financial position.

The Co-ordinator will provide a monthly report to the Secretariat providing details of balance, income, and expenditure, circulated in advance. They will also maintain a cash flow projection that forecasts when income will arrive in and leave the PPN account. A financial report will also be made annually to the Plenary.

7.0 Expenditure

All PPN expenditure must be:

- 1.1. authorised in the appropriate manner (see below) and represent a valid expense of the PPN (refer to PPN Constitution and DRCDG guidance on what constitutes a valid expense)
- 1.2. for goods or services that have been ordered and have actually been received, or for which an ongoing contract to supply is in place
- 1.3. paid from funds within approved budget limits, where these are set or with specific agreement of the Secretariat
- 1.4. supported by sufficient documentation to verify the expenditure, accurately recorded in the company's accounting system

8.0 PPN Secretariat authorisation of expenditure

All items of expenditure for payment must be supported by an invoice for goods or services or receipts for valid expenses incurred accompanied by a completed expense form.

All items of expenditure are to be allocated to the correct budget heading or code prior to payment.

In compliance with government requirements, the following procedures will apply at the thresholds set out overleaf:

Value	Type of Contract	Procedure
Quotations (limited to firms selected by the buyer on behalf of PPN)		
Less than €500	Supplies/ services	Authorised by Resource Worker
Between €500 and €5,000	Supplies/ services	Invite at least 3 verbal quotes
Between €5,000 and €25,000	Supplies/ services	Invite at least 3 written quotations with brief specification
Tenders (for the award of contracts)		
Between €25,000 and €144,000	Supplies. Services	eTenders using NON-OJEU notice. Use OPEN procedure per Circular 10/14)

Purchases / expenditure may not be approved where there are insufficient funds available to meet the costs involved.

9.0 Personally incurred expenses

Secretariat members and Representatives who incur expenses in the pursuit of their duties must complete a signed expenses form detailing the nature of the duties, the date they were incurred, details of the expenses incurred, and the budget code they should be allocated to. They should be accompanied by receipts. (Note: While staff expenses are handled through internal Council procedures, these need to be entered into the PPN accounts and monthly financial report.)

All expenses must be authorized for payment in advance by the Co-ordinator and Secretariat Finance Sub-Committee and reported in the monthly financial report to the Secretariat.

10.0 Financial management

Financial accounting for the PPN will be conducted by Cork County Council as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

11.0 Reviewing and updating this policy

This policy should be regularly reviewed by the Secretariat to ensure it is appropriate, workable, and in line with good practice and the legal and fiduciary duties of the Secretariat. At the very least it should be reviewed each year after the annual accounts have been submitted and any proposed amendments duly agreed by the Plenary.

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Safe Driving Policy (P13)

1.0 What is this policy for

The PPN wants to promote a safe driving culture, avoid vehicle incidents, and at-fault work-related road collision injuries and costs. It aims to:

1. make drivers aware of the main risks they face or create when driving for work
2. make sure that staff and volunteers who drive vehicles for PPN work or to voluntary activities demonstrate safe, efficient driving skills and good road safety habits at all times
3. maintain all personal vehicles used in a safe, clean and roadworthy condition to ensure the maximum safety of the drivers, occupants and other road users

2.0 What and who does this policy apply to

This policy is primarily relevant to staff but the principles of safe driving are equally relevant to volunteers driving to PPN-related events and elsewhere.

3.0 Code of Conduct for Driving:

While driving any vehicle for work purposes or to volunteering activities, drivers must comply with road traffic legislation, be conscious of road safety and demonstrate safe driving.

The following actions are serious breaches of conduct and dismissal may be a consequence for staff:

- drinking or being under the influence of drugs while driving
- driving while disqualified or not correctly licensed
- reckless or dangerous driving causing death or injury
- failing to stop after a collision
- acquiring penalty points leading to suspension of licence
- any actions that warrant the suspension of a licence

4.0 Responsibilities of All Drivers

Every driver must:

- make sure they hold a current driver's licence for the category of vehicle they are driving and this licence is carried when driving
- be responsible and accountable for their actions when operating a vehicle
- display the highest level of professional conduct when driving a company vehicle
- regularly check the oil, tyre pressures, radiator and battery levels of vehicles they use
- comply with the Rules of The Road and the safe Driving for Work Handbook at all times
- assess hazards while driving and anticipate 'what if' scenarios
- drive within the legal speed limits, and drive to the conditions
- wear a seat belt and make sure all occupants wear their seat belt at all times
- only drive when fit to do so – never drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription and over the counter medication if they cause drowsiness
- avoid distraction when driving – if necessary, adjust or set sat-navs / car stereos / mirrors before setting off. If it's necessary to re-adjust whilst driving, pull over safely to do so
- stop when tired, take regular and adequate rest breaks, at least every two hours
- plan journeys, considering pre-journey duties, length of the trip, post-journey commitments
- stay overnight if driving time and non-driving duties exceed 10 hours in one day

Date approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026

Cork County Public Participation Network

Gathering Signatures Policy (P14)

PPN Members who wish to gather signatures of other PPN members can do so through:

- Attendance at PPN Activities such as Linkage Groups, training, and other open meeting types
- Making use of the online directory of PPN members, available: <http://corkcountypn.com/ppn-members/>
- Submitting a news item for the PPN Newsletter with relevant contact information
- Using the contact emails for all PPN Representatives, Rotating Chair / Facilitators and Linkage Groups on the PPN <http://corkcountypn.com>
- Cooperating with other PPN members in their local area

Templates for gathering signatures are available on the PPN website, available at: <http://corkcountypn.com>

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County Public Participation Network (PPN) Representatives Charter (P15)

1.0 What this policy is for

This policy sets out information for PPN Representatives to help them to be clear about their role and responsibilities, and the expectations that they should have of the PPN, its Secretariat and Linkage Groups, as well as of the body on to which they are elected. The PPN realises that all those who represent the PPN need to be supported, respected and informed in order to fulfil their role.

All community and voluntary sector representatives on decision and policy making bodies of external agencies must come through the PPN Electoral Process. The PPN shall actively seek compliance on this with relevant agencies and bodies.

A PPN Representative is any member of the PPN elected to office on behalf of the PPN, including but not limited to: the Secretariat, a Representative to an external Committee, a Linkage Group Facilitator and any other PPN Representative role.

2.0 Recognising the importance of Representatives' experience

The PPN is appreciative of the experience and knowledge that Representatives bring to their roles, and the time that Representatives give, which helps to make the PPN a stronger and more effective voice on behalf of community and voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups in Cork County.

PPNs have Representatives sitting on a wide range of communities across multiple thematic areas. Many of these are Local Authority based, but as the PPN develops this will widen to local agencies, forums and boards also. Representation structures include; the PPN Secretariat, Strategic Policy Committees (SPC), the Community Safety Partnership, and Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) – 3 in Cork County.

The term of office held by a PPN Representative varies according to the structure.

4.0 Responsibilities of the PPN to the Representatives

Representatives are Cork County PPN's most valuable resource and our organisation aims to encourage and support them in their role by:

- ensuring that Representatives are provided with an induction to the PPN
- providing ongoing relevant training for representatives to enable them to participate effectively on the board or committee to which they are elected
- being familiar with the Representatives and the role of the Committees and Groups that they have representation on
- listening to the issues raised by Representatives, ensuring they are respected, and responding promptly to these issues, with an appreciation that they are a volunteer
- taking the time to read, understand and respond to communications that are received in relation to the PPN
- consulting directly with the Representative(s), or through the Linkage group/Thematic Network, to discuss any matters to be raised at meetings
- ensuring that Representatives are advised directly, or through the Linkage Groups/Thematic Network, of any consultations or issues the PPN or Secretariat is undertaking
- treating all Representatives in accordance with the PPN's Policies and adhere to the PPN's Charter
- providing the Representative with a clear indication of decisions made that might impact on their work on behalf of the PPN

- ensuring feedback from Representatives is shared with PPN member groups
- ensuring that Representatives receive out of pocket/travel expenses to enable them to participate in committees they were elected to as per the Cork County PPN Travel and Expenses Policy
- ensure at least some PPN meetings are held at times and locations that facilitate Representatives attendance

5.0 Responsibilities of the Linkage Group/Thematic Network to the PPN Representatives.

Where they are in place, Linkage Groups (or Thematic Networks) will:

- elect and support Representatives to sit on the relevant committees and boards
- recognise that the Linkage Group/Thematic Network is representative of the PPN and part of this larger Network
- recognise that Linkage Groups/Thematic Network can operate quite informally and that each Linkage Group may operate differently
- take the time to read, understand and respond to communications that are received in relation to the Linkage Group/Thematic Network
- listen to the issues raised by Representatives and respond promptly to these issues
- engage directly with the Representative to discuss any matters to be raised at meetings
- feed back to their own member groups on the work of the Linkage Group and Committee
- adhere to the PPN's Charter and policies

6.0 Responsibilities of Committees to the PPN Representatives*

Where a committee or board has sought representation from the PPN, it will:

- recognise that PPN Representatives are there to represent a diverse range of community and voluntary, social inclusion and environmental groups in the Local Authority area
- provide a briefing to all members of the committee or board on the role of the PPN and its Representatives
- have meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation, open discussion and transparent decision making. Allow PPN Representative(s) to be heard and respected, with an appreciation that they are a volunteer
- be supported by both Linkage treat PPN Representatives with respect and equally involve them in the work and decision-making of the committee or group
- hold at least some meetings at times, dates and locations that facilitate the participation of volunteers. Ideally these dates should be set annually
- provide the PPN Representatives with an induction to the Committee or Group clearly outlining the Terms of Reference for the Committee, Committee Standing Orders, how to have issues put on the agenda etc.
 - Terms of Reference
 - Standing Orders and procedures
 - meeting schedules, locations and times
 - contact details for all Board or Committee members
 - access to technical support where required
 - protocols for how to have issues put on the agenda, etc.
- provide as much notice as possible of meetings (dates and venues) and associated documentation (agenda, documents, and reports to be read) as far in advance as permitted by the relevant standing orders of the committee or board
- provide minutes and agendas for meetings at least two weeks in advance of meetings to allow the PPN Representative an opportunity to gain input from the PPN/Linkage Group

- work collaboratively with PPN Representatives to ensure that they have an opportunity to input on matters and issues that they are there to represent
- offer relevant training to PPN Representatives and to provide support to them in interpreting technical documents
- ensure that any conflict of interest are clearly stated and dealt with appropriately
- produce an agreed meeting outcome document at the end of each meeting which can be shared with the PPN membership
- be familiar with and adhere to the PPN's Charter and Policies with regard to Representatives
- reimburse reasonable expenses incurred by the Representative in the course of their participation at the relevant committee or board
- provide an agreed outcome statement from meetings which can be circulated immediately afterwards

(* The PPN cannot commit external organisations to recognising or upholding these responsibilities, but will seek commitment from bodies with PPN representation to fulfil the above responsibilities.)

7.0 Responsibilities of Representatives

Any individual who becomes a representative of the PPN, undertakes the following:

- to be committed to the aims, objectives and principles of the PPN
- portray the PPN and its Linkage Group(s) in a positive and constructive way
- to be willing to be representative of the PPN as a whole and to advocate for the PPN, Secretariat and Linkage Group/Thematic Network
- to recognise that the Linkage Group/Thematic Network or PPN plenary is the decision-making body and that decisions may conflict with their own opinion. **To participate in meetings solely on behalf of PPN, leaving any personal, business or political interests outside**
- to ask for support or backup when needed
- to be open and honest in dealings with all stakeholders
- to be willing and able to attend meetings of the relevant committee, board or group that they sit on and any associated sub-groups to which they are appointed
- to take the time to read, understand and respond to communications that are received in relation to the PPN and the committee or group
- prepare thoroughly for, attend and participate actively in Linkage Group and board or committee
- be able to use basic electronic communications effectively (i.e. email and internet browsing)
- to be willing and able to engage fully with the PPN/Linkage group/Thematic Network for consultation and identification of issues either through meetings, electronic or other means, ensuring that there is an agreed record of relevant discussion and all decisions. To work openly and collaboratively with Linkage Group(s) to identify issues, research, policy proposals etc., respecting the diversity of views expressed
- assist in the organisation of and preparation of Linkage Group Meetings and effective two-way communications with Linkage Group members (with the support of the Resource Worker)
- to bring forward the issues of the Linkage Group to the board or committee for their consideration, including placing items on the Agenda, and feedback using plain English to the Linkage Group
- communicate regularly (at least as frequently as meetings are held) with the Linkage Group on matters such as:
 - dates of Board or Committee meetings
 - agendas for Board or Committee meetings
 - reports and Feedback from Board or Committee meetings
 - items which require their input or are of interest

- to build positive relationships, network and work strategically with other board or committee members for the benefit of the PPN and the Linkage Group, including being able to compromise while retaining the core objective
 - to ensure that any conflict of interest is clearly stated in relation to discussions and decision making on committees
 - to clearly indicate whether feedback provided reflects a factual view of the meeting or a personal view
 - to provide a brief written report from each committee meeting they attend on the PPN's behalf. The report should provide a brief synopsis of any discussions at the meeting and the resulting decision using the [PPN Reporting Template \(P11, p.??\)](#)
 - to make a commitment, where there are multiple PPN Reps on one committee, to meet prior to the meeting whenever possible, to rotate the reporting responsibility and to ensure that the report is approved by all Reps prior to further circulation*
 - to have due regard to issues of confidentiality when reporting from meetings
 - to ensure that the Co-ordinator is kept informed of all meetings attended and reports issued
 - to be readily contactable by members of the PPN, through the Co-ordinator
 - to attend and participate fully in the Plenary, Representatives Forum and Representative training and training organised by the relevant committee or board
 - to adhere to the PPN's Constitution and all governance documentation, including the Code of Conduct
- (*consultation between Representatives and Linkage Group(s) may be via email, phone or other means)

8.0 Vacancies

Representatives are commonly elected to the Local Authority and other external structures on a three-year basis or for a term determined by the relevant committee/ board. In the event of vacancies arising, these shall be filled in line with the [PPN Electoral Process \(P9, p.??\)](#)

9.0 Removal of Representatives

Any Member Group or the Secretariat may make a complaint about a PPN Representative on any of the committees or boards if they believe that they fail or otherwise omit to:

- undertake their role, as laid down by this Constitution, in an appropriate manner
- consistently attend the relevant meetings
- report back to the Membership or Linkage Group
- represent the relevant Linkage Group members appropriately
- comply with any written instruction

or where they believe a Representative represents their own interests or views or lobbies on behalf of their own organisation. Complaints will be addressed through the PPN [Grievance Procedure \(P8, p.??\)](#). A relevant Linkage Group, or Member Group of the Linkage Group, may submit a complaint about that Representative.

Separately, if the Secretariat identifies through normal monitoring of PPN activity, that a Representative may not be fulfilling their role as outlined above, it may refer the matter to the relevant Linkage Group for discussion, or (in the absence of a Linkage Group) consider appropriate action to be taken.

11.0 Code of Conduct for PPN Representatives

All Representatives shall conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the PPN [Code of Conduct \(P5, p.??\)](#) at all times. Elected PPN Representatives are required to indicate their commitment to the PPN Code of Conduct by signing a copy of this document once elected.

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County PPN Representatives Reporting Template (P16)

PPN Rep Name	
Committee Name	
Date of Meeting	

Other Reps who fed into this Report <i>(if applicable)</i>

Agenda Item	Notes	Outcome/Decisions Made	Actions Required - by Who & When
Other Comments/Actions required from PPN			

Date of next meeting		Signed (PPN Representative)	
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Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Nomination Form for PPN Elections (P17)

Cork County Public Participation Network Nomination form for

<INSERT NAME OF COMMITTEE>

Note: any person who wants to be considered as a PPN Representative, member of the Secretariat, or for another PPN role; must

1. Ensure that they understand the time commitment, required attendance, and responsibilities relating to the position applied for
2. Complete the appropriate nomination form in full
3. Be proposed and seconded by 2 members of their own PPN Member Group
4. **<INSERT ANY SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BOARD / COMMITTEE>**
5. Include a **short Biography (max 200 words) of the nominee** which will be included on the Ballot Sheet
6. Ensure nomination form is returned to Cork County PPN by closing date for applications by <INSERT DATE>

Nominating Group: _____ Membership No.: _____

College (please tick 1): **Social Inclusion** **Community & Voluntary** **Environment**

1. Nominee Name: _____

Nominee address: _____

Nominee Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Signed by nominee: _____ Date: _____

2. Proposed by: _____ Position in Group: _____

Signed by Proposer: _____ Date: _____

3. Seconded by: _____ Position in Group: _____

Signed by Seconder: _____ Date: _____

This form collects your name, email & phone number only for the purpose of Cork County PPN elections and related communications; it will not be used for any other purpose.

Notes:

- In the event of more nominations than vacancies available; an election will be held
- A panel will be created following election process to fill any current or future vacant positions
- PPN Representatives are expected to gather and present the views and opinions of member organisations (including, but not limited to, their own group) of the PPN body which elected them

- All PPN Reps are required to sign the Representatives Charter and to adhere to Cork County PPN reporting mechanisms, Constitution, Policies etc.
- PPN representative expenses will be paid in accordance with the PPN Travel and Expenses Policy
- The PPN is non-political, non-sectarian and adheres to CVSP 8/2018 re PPNs and Engagement in the Political Process

Brief biography of Candidate (max. 200 words):

Date approved by Plenary: 23/04/2026

Cork County Public Participation Network

Electoral Process (P18)

1.0 What is this policy for

This policy explains the process that the PPN uses to carry out elections for both internal positions (such as membership of the Secretariat) or external positions (such as representatives on Council committees). It is an important part of the transparency about how the PPN operates.

The PPN elections use Proportional Representation Single Transferable Vote (PRSTV).

2.0 What or who does this policy apply to

This policy applies to all elections held by the PPN.

3.0 Process prior to an election:

- 3.1 A minimum of **28 days'** notice of an election must be circulated to all relevant Member Groups. This should include
 - an invitation for nominations of eligible candidates for vacancies
 - an explanation of the eligibility criteria for each position to be elected
 - an attachment or a link to the election nomination form
 - an outline of the key dates in the election process such as
 - the deadline for receipt of nominations
 - deadline for circulation of candidates' details
 - election date
 - a link to this policy to explain the election process.
- 3.2 The closing date for receipt of nominations shall **not be less than 14 days prior to the election**. Nominations must be accompanied by a brief biography and supporting statement for circulation to all Member Groups.
- 3.3 Verification of nominees must take place in advance of their acceptance to ensure they meet the criteria.
- 3.4 Details of all nominees, and ballot papers or the link to election site, should be circulated to all Member Groups and to Linkage **Groups at least 7 days** prior to the election to allow them time to consider the candidates, unless unavoidable external circumstances require a shorter timeframe.

If the number of persons nominated is less than or equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, then a vote shall not be necessary and those nominees shall be declared elected.

If the number of persons nominated exceeds the number of vacancies or positions then an election shall be held.

The Secretariat shall decide (where a panel does not exist) whether to hold a postal or online vote to fill positions arising during the term of appointment.

4.0 Different electorates

PPN Representatives on external bodies and Council committees (EXCLUDING the Local Community Development Committee, LCDC) are elected by the Full Member Groups participating in the relevant Linkage Group(s) for that body. If no Linkage Group exists, these positions are voted on by the all Full Member Groups of the PPN.

In the event that there are additional eligibility criteria, this will determine the subset of the Linkage Group membership or the Plenary members that may vote, e.g. where the position is to be filled by a Social Inclusion College member, when only Full Member Groups in that College may vote.

PPN Representatives on the three Local Community Development Committees (LCDC) are elected by all Full Member Groups within that LCDC area.

For PPN positions on committees and bodies which have not had PPN representation previously, the Secretariat shall determine the most appropriate Linkage Group to nominate that representation responsibility to. In the absence of such a Linkage Group, the electorate will be all Full Member Groups subject to eligibility criteria set by the body itself e.g. an Environmental College position will be elected from amongst all Environmental College members.

5.0 Voting:

- 4 All elections shall be by secret ballot.
- 5 Full Member Group shall be entitled to one vote and a single individual shall vote only on behalf of the group.
- 6 The PPN holds elections for Secretariat members and PPN representatives using an online voting platform.
- 7 If a postal ballot is held, a minimum of 10 days will be provided for return of ballot papers, unless circumstances require that voting is cast in a shorter timeframe and the Secretariat has made all reasonable effort to make sure that voting is accessible to all Full Member Groups.

6.0 Results:

- 8 The county is conducted by the Secretariat and candidates are invited to attend and observe
- 9 The candidate receiving the highest number of votes is elected.
- 10 In the event of a “tie” then a draw by “lot” determines the winner
(Note: Where the process by deciding by “lot” (Lottery) occurs, those responsible must first decide which Candidate shall be declared elected following such process. Is it the Candidate first drawn out of the “hat” (traditional expression) or the candidate remaining in the “hat”?).

here an election takes place, candidates who do not attain a high enough number of votes to attain a seat are transferred to a panel.

Any vacancy arising on a board or committee during the term of the appointment shall be filled by the next highest candidate willing to serve that particular role.

7.0 Following the election:

- 11 Records of each election must be maintained including details of each count
- 12 Results of each election are notified to all Member Groups through the PPN Newsletter
- 13 PPN staff will thank all candidates and contact the winner(s) to discuss induction, training, responsibilities and supports

Date approved by Plenary:

23/04/2026