

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:

- i. undertake their role, as laid down by this Constitution, in an appropriate manner
- ii. consistently attend the relevant meetings
- iii. report back to the Membership or Linkage Group
- iv. represent the relevant Linkage Group members appropriately
- v. 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