

Cork County Public Participation Network

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 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