

Accessibility Policy (digital and participation)

Version history

| Version | Date Adopted | Facilitator | Note |
|---------|--------------|-------------|------|
| 1.0 | | | |

Document controls

| Action | Responsibility |
|----------------------|--|
| Approval of document | Secretariat and Plenary |
| Implementation | Secretariat, Plenary, Staff and Supervisory Working Group, Members |
| Review | Secretariat |
| Date of next review | |

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Accessibility Policy is to set out how South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN) works to ensure that its information, activities and participation opportunities are accessible to as many people as possible.

This policy supports inclusive participation, removes unnecessary barriers, and ensures that accessibility is considered in both digital delivery and participation in PPN activities.

This policy is linked to, and should be read alongside, the SDC PPN Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, which sets out the PPN's values and commitments in relation to inclusion and equality.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- digital information and communications provided by SDC PPN
- meetings, events and activities organised or facilitated by SDC PPN
- participation in PPN structures, including Plenary and representation roles

This policy applies to staff, Secretariat members, representatives, facilitators and participants engaged in SDC PPN activity.

2. Principles of Accessibility

SDC PPN is committed to promoting accessibility based on the following principles:

- **Universal design**, so that information and activities are usable by as many people as possible without the need for adaptation
- **Reasonable accommodation**, recognising that individual needs may differ and may require tailored supports
- **Dignity and respect**, ensuring that people are supported in a way that respects autonomy and privacy
- **Independence**, enabling people to participate as fully as possible
- **Participation**, ensuring that accessibility supports meaningful engagement, not just attendance

Accessibility is approached in a practical and proportionate way, taking account of resources while striving to remove barriers wherever possible.

3. Digital Accessibility

SDC PPN is committed to making its digital content accessible and usable.

3.1 Website

The SDC PPN website is designed and maintained in line with WCAG 2.1 AA, or successor standards, where reasonably practicable.

This includes consideration of:

- clear navigation and structure
- readable text and colour contrast
- compatibility with assistive technologies
- accessible forms and online content

3.2 Documents and Digital Communications

SDC PPN aims to ensure that documents and digital communications are accessible by:

- using clear, plain language
- using accessible document formats where possible
- avoiding unnecessary jargon
- providing alternative formats on request, where reasonably practicable

Accessibility is considered when preparing reports, policies, presentations, emails and online materials.

4. Participation Accessibility

(Meetings, Events and Representation)

SDC PPN aims to ensure that participation in its activities is accessible and inclusive.

This may include, where appropriate:

- choosing venues that are accessible
- providing online or hybrid participation options
- sharing agendas and papers in advance
- using clear and plain language during meetings
- considering timing and duration of meetings
- supporting PPN representatives to participate effectively

Not all measures will be appropriate or possible in all circumstances. Accessibility considerations are applied proportionately and based on the nature of the activity.

5. Reasonable Accommodations and Supports

SDC PPN will consider reasonable accommodation requests on a case-by-case basis, taking account of:

- the nature of the request
- the needs of the individual
- the practicality of the support
- available resources

Requests for accessibility supports should be made to PPN staff, who act as the initial point of contact.

SDC PPN will engage in a constructive and respectful way to identify reasonable solutions where possible.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Staff

PPN staff are responsible for:

- considering accessibility in day-to-day work
- responding to accessibility and accommodation requests
- applying this policy in a practical and proportionate way
- escalating complex or significant issues where appropriate

6.2 Secretariat

The Secretariat:

- has oversight of accessibility arrangements
- supports a culture of inclusion and accessibility
- considers accessibility as part of governance and planning

6.3 Host Organisation

The host organisation is responsible for:

- employment-related accommodations for PPN staff

The host organisation does not have responsibility for accessibility decisions relating to PPN activities, participation or governance.

7. Feedback, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

SDC PPN welcomes feedback on accessibility and participation.

Feedback may be used to:

- identify barriers
- improve future practice
- inform planning and delivery of activities

Accessibility is reviewed as part of ongoing reflection and improvement, rather than as a one-off exercise.

8. Review and Amendments

This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

The policy may be reviewed or updated:

- in response to changes in guidance or standards
- following feedback or experience
- where organisational practices change

Any amendments are approved in line with SDC PPN governance procedures.