

Grievance Policy

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	

South Dublin County PPN Grievance Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Grievance Policy is to provide a clear, fair and accessible process for addressing work-related grievances raised by individuals involved in South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN).

This policy aims to:

- Support a respectful, safe and inclusive working environment
- Encourage early and informal resolution where appropriate
- Ensure grievances are handled fairly, consistently and confidentially
- Uphold the principles of natural justice and good governance

2. Scope

This policy applies to the following individuals in their role within SDC PPN:

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Secretariat members
- PPN Representatives

This policy applies to internal, work-related grievances only. It does not apply to complaints from member groups or members of the public, which are addressed under the SDC PPN Complaints Policy.

3. Definition of a Grievance

A grievance is a concern, problem or complaint raised by an individual about matters affecting them in their role within SDC PPN.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Interpersonal difficulties or conflict
- Concerns about treatment, behaviour or communication
- Issues relating to roles, responsibilities or expectations
- Alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct
- Concerns relating to dignity, respect, bullying or harassment

Where appropriate, grievances may be addressed alongside or with reference to:

- The Code of Conduct

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- The Dignity at Work Policy

4. Guiding Principles

Grievances will be handled in line with the following principles:

- Fairness and impartiality
- Confidentiality, subject to the requirements of fair process
- Timeliness and proportionality
- Respect for all parties involved
- Transparency of process

No individual will be penalised, victimised or treated adversely for raising a grievance in good faith.

5. Informal Resolution

SDC PPN encourages the informal resolution of grievances where this is appropriate, safe and agreed by those involved.

Informal resolution may include:

- Direct discussion between the parties
- Supported discussion facilitated by staff
- Informal mediation

Participation in informal resolution is voluntary and does not prevent an individual from progressing to the formal grievance process if the issue is not resolved.

6. Formal Grievance Procedure

6.1 Stage One – Raising a Grievance

A formal grievance should be raised in writing with the PPN Coordinator or designated staff member. The grievance should clearly outline:

- The nature of the concern
- Relevant dates or events
- Any steps already taken to resolve the issue

The grievance will normally be acknowledged within a reasonable timeframe.

6.2 Stage Two – Consideration by the Secretariat

Where a grievance cannot be resolved at Stage One, or where escalation is appropriate, it will be referred to the Secretariat for consideration.

Any individual with prior involvement in the matter will be excluded from this stage.

The Secretariat may:

- Review relevant information
- Meet with those involved
- Seek clarification or additional information
- Consider whether mediation or external support is appropriate

Indicative timeframes will be applied, recognising the voluntary nature of Secretariat roles and the complexity of individual cases.

6.3 Stage Three – Appeal

An individual may appeal the outcome of a grievance on the grounds of process or fairness.

Appeals will be considered by a person or panel not previously involved in the grievance.

The appeal process is intended to review the handling of the grievance rather than to re-investigate the matter in full.

7. Support and Accompaniment

An individual raising or responding to a grievance may be accompanied by a support person of their choice.

The role of the support person is to help and reassurance. They may not act as an advocate or speak on behalf of the individual.

Legal representation is not part of the grievance process.

8. Confidentiality

All grievances will be handled with due regard for confidentiality.

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Information will be shared only with those who need to know to address the grievance fairly and appropriately. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, as fair procedures require that individuals have an opportunity to respond to matters raised about them.

9. Mediation and External Support

Where appropriate, SDC PPN may facilitate mediation or seek external support to assist in resolving a grievance.

The use of mediation or external support will be:

- Proportionate to the issue
- Voluntary
- Agreed by the parties involved

Mediation does not replace the requirement for fair process.

10. Outcomes and Follow-Up

Possible outcomes of a grievance may include:

- Informal resolution
- Mediation or facilitated discussion
- Recommendations for future conduct or working arrangements
- Referral to another relevant policy, including the Code of Conduct

Outcomes will be proportionate and focused on resolving the issue and maintaining a respectful working environment.

11. Records and Data Protection

Confidential records of grievances will be maintained in line with SDC PPN's Data Protection and Records Retention policies.

Access to grievance records will be restricted and records will be retained only for as long as necessary.

12. Malicious or Vexatious Grievances

Grievances raised in good faith are always protected.

Where a grievance is found to be malicious, knowingly false or vexatious, this may be addressed under the Code of Conduct.

13. Accessibility and Reasonable Accommodations

SDC PPN is committed to ensuring that the grievance process is accessible.

Reasonable accommodations will be made where required, including:

- Alternative formats
- Support with communication
- Flexibility in meetings or timelines

14. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate, effective and in line with best practice.