

Dignity Policy for Workers & Volunteers

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 Dignity Policy for Workers & Volunteers

1. Purpose

South Dublin County Public Participation Network (SDC PPN) is committed to providing a working and participation environment that is respectful, inclusive and free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and disrespectful behaviour.

This policy aims to:

- Promote dignity and respect in all PPN-related activities
- Prevent bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Provide a clear framework for addressing concerns when they arise
- Support fair, transparent and proportionate resolution of issues

SDC PPN recognises that people engage with the network in a variety of roles and capacities, and that all individuals are entitled to be treated with dignity

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals engaged in SDC PPN activities, including:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Secretariat members
- Elected representatives and linkage group participants
- Contractors and consultants
- Individuals attending PPN meetings, training or events

The policy applies to conduct that occurs:

- In the workplace
- At meetings, events or training sessions
- During online meetings, email or digital communications
- At external locations where individuals are representing or participating in SDC PPN activities

3. Policy Statement

SDC PPN is committed to fostering a culture based on mutual respect, equality and inclusion. Behaviour that undermines an individual's dignity, whether intentional or unintentional, will not be tolerated.

All individuals have a responsibility to:

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- Treat others with courtesy and respect
- Contribute to a safe and inclusive environment
- Avoid behaviour that could reasonably be considered offensive, intimidating or humiliating

Breaches of this policy may result in action being taken in line with relevant procedures, including the Code of Conduct, Complaints Policy or disciplinary processes, as appropriate.

4. Definitions

4.1 Dignity and Respect

Dignity refers to the inherent value of every person and the right to be treated with respect. Respectful behaviour recognises individual differences and promotes positive, constructive engagement.

4.2 Discrimination

Discrimination occurs where a person is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic as defined under the Employment Equality Acts, including but not limited to gender, age, disability, race, family status, sexual orientation, religion or membership of the Traveller community.

4.3 Harassment

Harassment is any unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

4.4 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an offensive or intimidating environment.

4.5 Bullying

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another, which undermines a person's dignity or right to a respectful environment. Isolated incidents, while not bullying, may still be addressed under this policy.

4.6 Disrespectful Behaviour

Disrespectful behaviour includes actions or language that are dismissive, exclusionary, aggressive or demeaning, even where they may not meet the legal threshold for harassment or bullying.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 All Participants

All individuals involved in SDC PPN activities are expected to:

- Uphold the principles of this policy
- Behave in a respectful and professional manner
- Raise concerns where inappropriate behaviour occurs

5.2 Coordinator and Secretariat

The Coordinator and Secretariat have responsibility to:

- Promote awareness of this policy
- Model respectful behaviour
- Ensure concerns are handled fairly, promptly and sensitively
- Put appropriate supports in place where issues arise

6. Reporting and Addressing Concerns

SDC PPN recognises that concerns should be addressed as early and informally as possible where appropriate, while also providing a clear route for formal complaints.

6.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate, individuals may:

- Raise the issue directly with the person concerned
- Seek support from the Coordinator or a Secretariat member

Informal approaches aim to resolve issues quickly and proportionately.

6.2 Formal Complaint

Where informal resolution is not appropriate or has not resolved the issue, a formal complaint may be made in writing.

Formal complaints will:

- Be acknowledged within a reasonable timeframe
- Be considered in line with fair procedures
- Be handled confidentially insofar as possible
- Result in an outcome being communicated to the parties involved

The specific process for managing formal complaints is set out in the SDC PPN Complaints Policy.

7. Confidentiality

All concerns and complaints will be handled with due regard to confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with data protection requirements. Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where an investigation or legal obligation requires disclosure.

8. Protection from Retaliation

SDC PPN will not tolerate retaliation against any individual who raises a concern or participates in a complaint process in good faith. Any retaliatory behaviour will be treated as a serious breach of this policy.

9. Malicious Complaints

Where a complaint is found to be deliberately false or malicious, appropriate action may be taken. This does not apply where a complaint is made in good faith but is not upheld.

10. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Volunteer Policy

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- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection Policy