



Communication Policy

Reference	Approved	Ratified	For Review	Amended
Ref: CP0001	21 st March 2022		Sept 2023	



Foreword

The Kildare Public Participation Network (KPPN) is committed to having an effective communication policy to support both internal and external stakeholders and recognises the importance of this document in guiding effective and positive interactions between all parties.

Our Communications Objectives:

- To facilitate communication between community groups and the local authority.
- To facilitate internal and external communication to support building capacity, a core objective of the KPPN.
- To enable people, groups, and organisations, within the community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors, to give voice to a diverse range of views and interests within the local government system.
- To enable people, groups, and organisations, within the community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion sectors, to participate in policy making and oversight activities.
- To strengthen the ability of people, groups, and organisations to contribute in a positive way to their community.
- To act as an information hub for local community and voluntary, environmental, and social inclusion groups and organisations

General Principles

- All members of the KPPN are encouraged to communicate with other members of the KPPN in an open, transparent, and positive manner.
- The format for some communication may vary to suit the needs of the target groups or individuals.
- PPN's are apolitical organisations. KPPN Representatives and Secretariat members may not use membership to promote party political messages.
- In line with the [County Kildare Integration Strategy](#) KPPN is mindful that for some organisations and individuals, English is not their primary language of communication.
- In all communications, members should not disclose any personal or confidential information.
- In all communications, members should not share information or make comments that could be considered inappropriate, offensive, or defamatory.
- Email addresses and contact details of KPPN members should only be shared for the purpose of KPPN business.
- All formal correspondence must be sent to the Coordinator for recording and for distribution to the Secretariat, as appropriate.
- In all communications, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a key consideration. For further guidance please see KPPN Data Protection Policy.

Internal Communication

Stakeholders: Plenary – Secretariat – Representatives – KPPN Staff

Purpose: This section relates to communication between internal stakeholders within KPPN

Plenary

The Plenary is made up of all the registered member groups of the KPPN. The KPPN will communicate with all member groups through, but not limited to, the following methods:

- Plenary meetings
 - Direct mails
 - Monthly bulletins
 - Promotional videos
 - Formal consultation
 - Social media posts
 - The KPPN Website
(www.kildareppn.ie)
- In most cases, the Secretariat will communicate with the Plenary through the above-mentioned methods.
 - Member groups should communicate with the KPPN in the first instance by contacting the KPPN Coordinator.

Secretariat

- The KPPN Secretariat meets throughout the year, regularly, as agreed by Secretariat members.
- Documentation for Secretariat meetings is uploaded to the Secretariat SharePoint.
- All Secretariat meetings are documented and minutes, recording the decisions of the group, are posted to the KPPN website in a timely fashion.
- Members of the Secretariat should not use membership of the KPPN to make enquires or make observations on KPPN or County Council matters without the express permission of the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat operates as a flat structure.

Representatives

- Representatives are elected to act for KPPN and its member organisations.
- Representatives are required to communicate with each other and their respective linkage/thematic groups in advance of committee meetings and/or **strategic** policy committees (SPC's). The purpose of these communications is to agree the way to best pursue the objectives of KPPN and its members. Representatives should remain focused on the committee or SPC workplan and agenda. Disagreements, differences of opinions should be discussed in advance of committee / SPC meetings and must remain internal to the KPPN.
- Representatives are required to submit a short, written report following each committee meeting, which is then uploaded to the KPPN website. The format for this report is available through the Coordinator and the website.
- The Representative network meeting is a networking event held quarterly for Representatives to discuss their role, responsibilities and to share learnings they acquire and challenges they may experience.

- Representatives also take part in regular Linkage Group meetings and may agree on additional communication methods for example via email, WhatsApp etc. (Please note: as per the GDPR policy, written permission is sought from each member in WhatsApp groups)
- Linkage Group reports are published by the facilitator to the KPPN website.
- Kildare KPPN Coordinator is the primary contact for all Representatives

KPPN Staff – Coordinator and Support Worker

- The Facilitator and deputy Facilitator of the Secretariat are the day-to-day contact for the coordinator and Support Worker.
- The Staff Liaison Committee, comprising three Secretariat members, meet regularly with the Coordinator. The Support Worker is welcome to attend those meetings as required.
- The support worker reports directly into the coordinator. In the event of issues, concerns or conflicts, the support worker may wish to talk directly to the sitting Facilitator or staff liaison committee.
- The Coordinator is available by phone and email to all parties

External Communication

Stakeholders: The Department of Rural and Community Development – Kildare County Council – Count Kildare Leader Partnership – Media

Purpose: This section relates to communication between KPPN and external stakeholders

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), Kildare County Council (KCC), County Kildare Leader Partnership (CKLP)

- A Working Group consisting of the KPPN Coordinator, KPPN Secretariat Members, CKLP and KCC, meet at least twice a year.
- The KPPN Coordinator coordinates engagement between the KPPN, the DRCD, KCC and CKLP and any other host or funding organisations that may come on board in future.
- Correspondence between these parties must be recorded by the Coordinator in the KPPN Database.
- In the event of a confidential matter or complaint, the Secretariat may need to contact the DRCD, KCC or CKLP or another appropriate organisation directly.

The Media

- Before speaking to media on behalf of KPPN, Representatives or Secretariat members should seek approval from the Secretariat.
- In the course of day-to-day work, the coordinator will draft and release, press releases and other routine media communications.

Social Media

Social media can be used in a positive way to highlight the work that the PPN is doing, as well as being useful for supporting member group activities. In referring to the PPN via your own social media, the following points should be taken into consideration.

- Check the accuracy and sensitivity of what you are posting before pressing submit.
 - Confidential information relating to the PPN work must not be published online.
 - Be respectful of others' views and opinions.
 - Try to add value to the work and ethos of the PPN where appropriate, and reflect the inclusive ethos of the PPN.
 - Do not use ethnic, religious or discriminatory comments, remarks or slurs, insults or obscenities.
 - Do not engage in conduct that would be viewed as unacceptable online, e.g. cyberbullying.
 - Check the accuracy and sensitivity of what you are posting before pressing submit.
 - Confidential information relating to the PPN work must not be published online.
 - Be respectful of others' views and opinions.
 - Share information that you know to be true, be careful of fake news.
- KPPN Social media accounts are managed by the support worker and coordinator
 - Member organisations, KPPN Representatives and Secretariat Members may wish from time to time to use the KPPN social media accounts to highlight their work, as it relates to KPPN, and to support their position as influencers of public policy.
 - Requests to post content on social media can be submitted to admin@kildarePPN.ie for consideration.
 - All members are encouraged to follow and support Kildare KPPN's social media.
 - No member organisation, Representative, Secretariat member, staff member or other person or organisation associated with KPPN shall post negatively or irresponsibly about KPPN.

CONFIDENTIALITY

For the KPPN, openness, transparency and democratic processes are core values. During the course of their work with KPPN, Representatives, Secretariat Members, and staff may at times become privy to information that is confidential to the organisations they represent, or even personal in nature to the individuals engaged with KPPN. In such instances, all parties are required and expected to treat that information with the utmost respect, consideration, and confidentiality. Breaches in confidentiality, will be treated with seriousness and may be subject to complaint or grievance in line with the KPPN Grievance Policy.

Examples of confidential information, may include:

- Individual statements or opinions expressed during KPPN meetings. In minutes the group decision will be reported not the general discussion.
- Any issues concerning employment including salaries and / or salary scales.
- Information relating to groups or individuals in the area that is not in the public arena.
- Disciplinary, grievance and /or complaints issues.
- Personal difficulties that either voluntary members or staff may be experiencing.

- Any internal difficulties within the KPPN including disagreements or difficulties between individuals within the KPPN, Secretariat members, other volunteers, or staff.

Complaints and Grievance:

Any complaints or grievances arising from communications activities, either internal or external, involving any stakeholders operating under this document, will be dealt with in line with the KPPN Grievance Policy.

References:

- County Kildare Integration Strategy:
<https://kildare.ie/CountyCouncil/AllServices/Community/Integration/Kildare%20Integration%20Strategy20142019.pdf>
- Data Protection Policy – *insert link once ready*
- Grievance Policy – *insert link once ready*