

**5th Meeting of the PPN National Advisory Group held in the East Room,
Custom House, Dublin on 7th June 2017.**

Attendance:

Stakeholder Group: PPN Volunteers:

- Charles Stanley-Smith (Tipperary PPN, Environment representative)
- Tess Murphy (Longford PPN, Social Inclusion representative)
- Siobhán O'Dowd (Cork City PPN – Social Inclusion representative)

Stakeholder Group: Pillar Representatives:

- Seán Healy (Community & Voluntary Pillar)
- Michael Ewing (Environmental Pillar)

Stakeholder Group: PPN Resource Workers:

- Helen Howes (Wicklow PPN)
- Geraldine Timlin (Sligo PPN)
- Annette Barr-Jordan (Westmeath PPN)

Stakeholder Group: Local Authorities:

- Bernie Doherty, (Dublin City, SEO Community Services)

Stakeholder Group: Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government:

- Officials - Deirdre Kearney (Chair), Jason Kearney, Ellie Corcoran

Apologies:

- Donal Brennan, (Laois County Council, Director of Services)

Opening and Introductions

The Chair welcomed all participants and explained that due to the unavoidable late attendance of some participants, the agenda sequence would be changed. The new Principal Officer for the Community and Voluntary Supports and Programmes Section, Jason Kearney, was introduced and welcomed

Advisory Group Nomination Process

The Chair advised that correspondence seeking nominees to the new Advisory Group issued to all relevant stakeholders (PPNs, the CCMA, representative bodies for the three sectors, (Community & Voluntary, Environmental and Social Inclusion) and the Resource Workers Network). Members advised that some PPNs are opening the nomination process to all PPN members, while others are seeking nominations from within the Secretariat. It was agreed that it was a matter for each PPN to decide how best to seek nominations.

The final meeting of the existing Advisory Group will take place in September with the first meeting of the new Advisory Group scheduled for early October. It was suggested that an induction event may be beneficial to the new appointees, particularly the PPN volunteers.

Communications and co-ordination

Representatives of the Resource Workers Network reiterated their request for a National Co-ordinator. Their view is that this post is required to provide support, advice and assistance, particularly to new Resource Workers while sharing intelligence gained and facilitating best practice, thereby acting as a central hub to support the Advisory Group and the PPNs. A further important role for this co-ordinator would be in anticipating future policy developments.

In response, the Department re-iterated its position that additional funding is not available to support this role in 2017. The Resource Workers also referred to the high work load of the Resource Workers and recommended that additional funding be provided for the engagement of an assistant to support the Resource Worker.

Action Point: The Resource Worker Network to consider this matter and make a submission to the Department.

Salesforce

There was general satisfaction expressed regarding the operation of the Salesforce system and the training provided. Some queries were raised regarding the provision of further training on the Salesforce system, particularly for Resource Workers and Volunteers in 2018 and the Department undertook to consider the matter and respond.

In response to data protection concerns raised by certain PPNs, representatives of the Resource Workers Network undertook to speak directly to these PPNs to address their concerns.

Action Point: Representatives of the Resource Workers Network to address data protection concerns raised by certain PPNs. Department to consider possibility of additional training in 2018

National PPN conference and seminar

Sligo PPN has offered to host a seminar/conference on October 19th, to coincide with Sligo's selection as European Volunteering Capital for 2017. Intended topics include policy development, lobbying and governance, with invited speakers, including a senior official from the Department and representatives from the other PPNs. Some funding sought from DHPCLG.

There was a general discussion in relation to the nature of the seminar, its content and the logistical arrangements. It was agreed that the seminar offers an ideal opportunity to launch the 2016 Annual PPN Report.

Action Point: Sligo PPN to consider issues raised and revert to Department with arrangements for conference, including financial implications

Expenditure

The Department raised some general concerns in relation to PPNs overestimating their expenditure for the final two months of the year which resulted in the resultant overpayments being recouped from the subsequent year's allocations. In response, some members clarified that such overestimating of expenses arose from the fact that all expenditure had to be accounted for within the calendar year, without the opportunity to carry over funding.

The Department stated that it intended to carry out an audit of the 2016 expenditure of a number of PPNs. Members recommended that the timing of this request be considered in the context of other requests from sections within the Department to ensure that it does not result in undue pressure on PPNs/LAs

Environmental Pillar

The Environmental Pillar representative outlined his submission to the Department for funding for the role of outreach officer to increase the membership of Environmental electoral colleges and ensure these groups are aware of the importance of engaging with the PPNs.

Capacity Building & Training

The C&V pillar representative summarised recent training events and seminars organised by Social Justice Ireland (SJI) for PPNs, including training for local authority members and staff. His experience was that engagement from groups is very positive and that the skills base is improving. There is encouraging commitment from PPN members, particularly in relation to policy and particular policy issues. Linkage groups are also working well.

A discussion was held regarding the joint training initiative between SJI and Waterford Institute of Technology. The Department to consider opportunities for linking PPN and LCDC training

Action Point: The Department to consider opportunities for linking PPN and LCDC training

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Department advised that a circular recently issued to all PPNs/DOS seeking the return of the data for the 2016 PPN Annual Report by the end of June. It was agreed that the returns received would be supplied to Social Justice Ireland to collate the results. A subgroup of the Advisory Group is to be established to review the results and make recommendations. It was agreed to launch the results of the Annual Report at the proposed PPN conference/seminar in Sligo in September.

Action Point: 2016 Annual Report returns to be provided to SJI for compilation. Subgroup to be established to consider results.

AOB

The Department outlined a proposed new public consultation process being developed by D/PER which may be relevant to PPNs. Further details to be provided when the process is advanced further

The Department also brought to members' attention correspondence received from Irish Water Safety in relation to a proposal to use the PPN structure to advance a proposal whereby local community groups would support a water safety initiative i.e. protection of ring buoys in their areas.

One of the representatives of the Resource Workers Network outlined the main issues at the Westmeath PPN plenary including the development of a national PPN logo, securing of insurance at a national level similar to the arrangements for LCDC insurance, and training.

Action Point: Department to discuss LCDC insurance with Libraries Development and Community Policy Section

The representatives of the Environmental and C&V pillars outlined work on the development of Sustainable Development Goals and work being undertaken for both Social Justice Ireland and the Environment Pillar by the EPA and the Clean

Technology Centre in Cork in connection with the overall development of a Wellbeing Statement.

Next Meeting. Thursday 7th September 2017. East Room, Custom House, Dublin.

Community and Voluntary Supports and Programmes

Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government