

## 8. Grievance Procedure

- 1.1. Sligo PPN aims to ensure a harmonious working environment is maintained for the benefit of all and to resolve problems and grievances promptly and fairly.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The grievance procedure describes the process by which a PPN Worker or volunteer may formally forward a grievance regarding any condition of their work.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers all PPN Workers and volunteers within the organisation. There are also provisions for people from other agencies providing services to Sligo PPN for the time they are on the premises.

### 4. Glossary of Terms and Definitions

- 4.1. A grievance is defined as a complaint which any PPN Worker or volunteer of the PPN has concerning any aspect of their work on behalf of the PPN, working environment or professional working relationships.

### 5. Principles

- 5.1. All grievances should aim to be resolved in an informal basis with the person involved, if possible.
- 5.2. Any proceedings should be conducted honestly, fairly and without bias.
- 5.3. Proceedings should not be unduly delayed.
- 5.4. The person(s) against whom the grievance/complaint is made should have the opportunity, and be given a reasonable time to put forward their side of the event/s before resolution is attempted.

### 6. Process

- 6.1. Informal Grievance
  - 6.1.1. The affected individual should attempt to resolve the complaint as close to the source as possible.
  - 6.1.2. If the PPN Worker / Volunteer does not want to deal directly with the individual with whom they have the grievance, they should discuss this issue with their direct line manager, or the Secretariat Staff Liaison Committee (if in place).
- 6.2. Formal Grievances
  - 6.2.1. It is understood however that informal resolution is not always possible and that a formal procedure may be required to ensure the swift and fair resolution of matters. Any PPN Worker / Volunteer, who has a grievance or complaint related to the PPN that cannot be resolved through informal channels, should raise the matter with their direct line manager or the Staff Liaison Committee of the Secretariat (if in place) immediately in writing. If the matter relating to the PPN Worker itself concerns the PPN Worker's immediate line manager, then the grievance should be taken to the Staff Liaison Committee of the Secretariat (if in place) or the HR Department of the Local Authority (if employed by the Local Authority). Notification should include: the substance of the grievance; the remedy sought; and the fact that this is a formal grievance notification.
  - 6.2.2. A mediation process may be an appropriate intervention at this stage. Mediation can be

suggested and arranged by the Secretariat Staff Liaison Committee, where this is agreed to by all parties. In the case of mediation the outcomes and process will be confidential between the parties involved in the process. The mediator will be required to establish a mediation agreement at the onset of the session; this will need to be agreed by all involved parties.

- 6.2.3. If the issue is unable to be resolved to the PPN Worker's satisfaction at the time; then a formal written grievance hearing should be initiated.
- 6.3. Grievance Hearing
  - 6.3.1. The Rotating Chair / Facilitator will call a meeting as necessary.
  - 6.3.2. The PPN Worker taking the grievance has a right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.
  - 6.3.3. After the meeting the Rotating Chair / Facilitator will give a decision on the outcome of the grievance. If a PPN Worker is unhappy with the decision they can lodge an appeal.
  - 6.3.4. Where a grievance involves another PPN Worker. The person conducting the grievance hearing will meet with both PPN Workers separately. If the PPN Worker has specific questions for another member PPN Worker these should be put in writing. If both PPN Workers agree, a combined meeting with all parties can also be undertaken. The decision as to what method is most appropriate for the resolution of the grievance will be that of the Secretariat.
  - 6.3.5. If the grievance involves another PPN Worker they will be requested to attend a meeting to discuss the issues and will be given reasonable notification which facilitates them to bring a colleague or trade union representative.
  - 6.3.6. The meeting will be conducted to ensure that all parties have the right to explain their views and to respond to the other parties' comments and views.
  - 6.3.7. If no communally agreed resolution is reached throughout the meeting process then the Secretariat will make a decision on the outcome of the grievance.
  - 6.3.8. If the grievance lies between a PPN Worker and the Rotating Chair / Facilitator, the party with the grievance should take this up with the Staff Liaison Committee of the Secretariat.
  - 6.3.9. If the outcome of the process leads to a disciplinary action, this will be conducted according to the disciplinary procedure. This will be undertaken by someone else in management other than the person involved in the investigation or grievance hearing. Appeals to this will be managed through the disciplinary appeals process.

## **7. Appeal**

- 7.1. In most instances the organisation would expect the Secretariat's decision to be final and for the matter to come to a close. However the PPN Worker has the right to appeal the decision if he / she still feel aggrieved.
- 7.2. An employee who wishes to appeal against a grievance decision must do so within 5 working days from receipt of official correspondence. The appeal should contain the original formal grievance notification.
- 7.3. The appeal will be initiated by the PPN Worker sending, in writing, a request for an appeal. This should be addressed to the Rotating Chair / Facilitator who undertook the grievance hearing. The Rotating Chair / Facilitator must then contact the Staff Liaison Committee to instigate the establishment of an appeal committee and process.
- 7.4. At the request of a PPN Worker a grievance appeal committee will be established. This

committee can include members of the Secretariat other than the PPN Worker who was responsible for issuing the grievance outcome in question. The committee will have two or more members and no more than three members.

The process undertaken by the appeal committee, will be:

- 74.1. A meeting will be called; this may either involve both parties together or may be better arranged as separate meetings to encourage full and frank discussion. Both parties will be informed of the date and time of the hearing, as well as the membership of the committee. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that both parties can attend on the date/s. The two parties are; 1) the staff member who has requested the appeal, and 2) the Rotating Chair / Facilitator who was responsible for issuing the grievance decision.
- 74.2. The PPN Worker will be made aware that they are entitled to representation by a trade union representative, a professional organisation, or a colleague;
- 74.3. Both parties will be asked to provide a verbal and/or written account of the situation and the reasons for their decision or appeal of the decision;
- 74.4. The committee will discuss the matter in private and has the right to seek further information from either party.
- 74.5. The PPN Worker taking the appeal will be informed of the decision in writing.