

CHARITY MATTERS



Last time we touched briefly upon Policies & Procedures and how they define what your organisation does and how you do it. Clear policies and procedures support effective decision making and delegation because they provide guidelines on what people can and cannot do, what decisions they can make and what activities are appropriate.

For many organisations, particularly smaller organisations, policies and procedures can be a nightmare and be seen as time spent on unnecessary activities that would be better channelled into the delivery of programmes and services. It is hard to argue against such a view but unfortunately, that is not the world we live in nor is it what the public expects of us.

From the time we leave our house to the time we return, our moves are governed. Laws dictate what side of the road we drive on and the speed we drive our cars. Business owners regulate the times we visit their stores or avail of their services. Government sets the taxes we pay and airlines decide when and where they want to fly irrespective of where you might want to go! Add that to regulation in the workplace and you begin to see that regulation plays a constant role in our lives.

The only way to manage regulation in the workplace is to have the underlying policies and procedures in place. The Governance Code for the community, voluntary and charity sector was created after much thought, deliberation and consultation. It is viewed as a means by which organisations can self-evaluate and self-govern through appropriate policies and procedures (in addition to adhering to legislative requirements). It is a powerful piece of work but why have so few organisations signed up?

Currently there are 234 organisations that fully comply with the code i.e. they meet the requirements of the code and have formally signed off their commitment to the code. In addition, there are 801 organisations that are on the road to complying with the code. However, these two figures added together represent a small fraction of the community, voluntary and charitable organisations that exist in this country.

Going back to the question as to why so few organisations have signed up....one reason could be that the code is a voluntary code and not mandatory. Is it seen as “good to have” but not so important as to divert attention and effort towards it? Are organisations fearful that they do not have the necessary resources to comply or do they feel that they are already well managed? Is it seen as cumbersome and unnecessary and “sure aren’t we grand as we are”?

Whatever the reasons, organisations are slow to sign up to what is after all a code that was created by the sector for the sector. We should be leading the way forward and contributing to the governance process by signing up to the Governance Code. We know that in general there is good governance across the community, voluntary and charitable sector but the Governance Code is the biggest opportunity we have to make the loudest statement possible. Sign up now at www.governancecode.ie and begin the journey!



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