

THE WORKING MANUAL FOR CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

A community of 150,000 does not hold *because it is large.*

It holds because someone in every city answers the message. That person is you. This handbook sets out what the role asks of you, how a chapter runs day to day, what belongs in the group and what does not, what to do when something goes wrong, and how your work gets recognised.

Public Policy India grew from a single WhatsApp group in 2020 into **40+ city chapters across 25+ cities**. Nothing about that growth was automatic. It happened because in each city there was somebody who welcomed the new joiner, checked the internship link before posting it, introduced two strangers who turned out to be looking for each other, and quietly deleted the crypto advertisement at eleven at night. City Policy Chapter Leaders are the people who do that work.

The role is voluntary and the community is free, permanently, for every member. That combination is the whole point: it is why members trust the group, why partners want access to it, and why a chapter feels different from a job board. Everything in this handbook exists to protect that.

Public Policy India (PPI) is India's first and largest pan-India community of policy and impact professionals, 1,50,000+ members strong, advancing public policy through community engagement, capacity building, and consulting and research.

STRIDE is a new age policy think tank that inculcates and enacts the perspectives of India's youth into policymaking and the impact sector, working in cohesion with partners across the ecosystem. City chapters sit on the community side; much of what you will share with your members, from career databases to national research, is built by STRIDE.

COMMUNITY

150,000+

members, and growing

CHAPTERS

40+

across 25+ Indian cities

ON WHATSAPP

35,000+

members in city chapters

NEWSLETTER

22,000+

subscribers, every Friday

SOCIAL

80,000+

across LinkedIn and Instagram

PARTNERS

80+

institutional partners

WOMEN

55.6%

of the community

UNDER 30

80%

of the community

Five things that are never yours to decide alone.

- 1. You do not accept join requests.** The PPI team clears these weekly. You may share the invite link freely.
- 2. You do not remove a member.** Not for repeat violations, not for rudeness. Escalate instead.
- 3. You do not commit PPI's money, name, dates or team** to anyone, in writing or otherwise.
- 4. You do not handle a harassment report alone.** Collect, reassure, escalate the same day.
- 5. You do not delete a message sent by the PPI team.** Save the six numbers on page 14.

Read it once, end to end

Before your first post in any chapter. It takes about twenty minutes and prevents almost every avoidable mistake.

Keep sections 06 to 09 open

Content, moderation, safety and escalation are the pages you will actually return to in a live situation.

When unsure, ask first

Nothing in this handbook is more important than this. Asking before acting has never once caused a problem.

A NOTE ON THIS PAGE

Community, chapter and channel figures are Public Policy India internal analytics, August 2026, and are the approved figures for all use. Chapter and city counts move upward every few weeks; check the current [city chapter directory](#) before quoting a number to anyone outside the community.

01 · THE ROLE

What a chapter leader *actually* does

A City Policy Chapter Leader is the bridge between PPI's WhatsApp community and the PPI team. The purpose is narrow and it is the whole thing: **every member should have a name and a number they can reach**. Not a helpdesk, not a form, a person in their own city who will reply.

You have been made a full admin on one or two chapters, and everything in this handbook applies to those chapters specifically. Where a city has several, you co-lead it with the CPCLs running the other groups. Treat them as colleagues from day one rather than as people you occasionally forward things to.

Why your city has more than one chapter. WhatsApp caps a single group at 1,024 members, a hard platform limit rather than a PPI choice. When a chapter approaches it we open another in the same city, which is why Delhi runs ten under five CPCLs. Expect an additional chapter as your city fills up.

THE ROLE IN BRIEF	WHAT IT MEANS
Appointment	Voluntary, for a fixed term of two years, renewable at the end of the term.
Scope	One or two named chapters, plus co-leadership of your city with its other CPCLs.
Access	Full WhatsApp admin rights on your chapters, for moderation, not for reach.
Time	Roughly two to three hours a week, in short daily bursts rather than one long session. Months in which you host a live room run heavier.
Standing	An official designation for LinkedIn and your CV, and a letter of acknowledgment from PPI after a minimum of one year of active engagement.
Support	A monthly CPCL call, a direct line to the team, and the other CPCLs in your city and region.

WHAT THE ROLE ASKS OF YOU

Grow the chapter	Build an active local policy community, in person and on WhatsApp.
Spread the word	Help people understand what PPI is, what its chapters offer, and why membership is worth their time.
Popularise what is free	<i>The Policy Post</i> , the chapters, the website, the Navigator and the career databases cost nothing. Get them into more hands.
Co-run engagements	Partner with the PPI and STRIDE team on meetups, workshops and panels in your city through the year.
Connect us to your city	Bring partnership ideas and introductions from your workplace, university or any network you sit inside.
Share what is out there	Circulate opportunities and events from the wider policy and impact world, so the whole chapter benefits.
In four verbs	Answer every message a member sends. Curate what enters the group. Connect members to each other. Protect the standard of the room, and escalate the moment it is beyond you.

WHAT THE ROLE GIVES BACK

The role is unpaid, so it is worth being direct about what you get for it. The list below is real, but it is not the main thing. The main thing is that a CPCL is handed a platform, an audience, a title and a set of institutional relationships at a career stage when almost nobody has any of them.

A national network, not a local one Direct access to CPCLs across 25+ cities, and to the practitioners, think tanks, universities and government stakeholders PPI convenes.	First call on everything PPI runs Internships, fellowships, STRIDE consulting projects, Policy Circles, Founder Hours and partner scholarships reach you first. Access to the team is direct, not a queue.
A route into paid work with PPI The Community Fellowship is paid and awarded from within the CPCL cohort. Partnerships you facilitate that convert earn you a share of what they bring in.	Practice at the thing itself Convening people, moderating disagreement and holding a room together are the actual skills of policy work. Very few people get to practise them at this scale.

A platform to become a leader in the space in your own right
This is the part that compounds. You convene a city, host rooms under your own name, decide what a few thousand people see each week, and meet practitioners as a counterpart rather than an attendee. Over a two-year term that becomes a public track record, a network you built yourself and a reputation that travels with you long after the term ends. PPI gives you the room and the audience. What you do in it is what people remember you for.

SOURCE ON THIS PAGE

WhatsApp group capacity of 1,024 members, and the 2,000-member ceiling on Communities above it, verified August 2026 against WhatsApp's Help Centre via Inviter's platform-limit tracker.

02 · GETTING STARTED

Your first two weeks

Research on online communities is consistent on one point: the window that decides whether a new member stays open is the **first seven days**, and the single strongest predictor is whether their first contribution got a response. A member who posts and hears nothing back reads that silence as an answer. The same is true of you. Your first two weeks set what your chapter thinks the group is for.

WHEN	WHAT YOU DO	WHY IT MATTERS
Day 0	Read this handbook end to end. Read the community guidelines pinned in each of your chapters' group descriptions. Save the six PPI team numbers from page 14.	Almost every moderation error made in the last two years came from a CPCL who had not read the guidelines and guessed.
Day 1	Introduce yourself in every chapter you administer: your name, what you are currently doing, and the fact that you are the person to reach with any question, idea or opportunity.	Members cannot use a leader they do not know exists. This one message determines your DM volume for the next six months.
Days 1 to 3	Fill your profile in Tab 2 (Database) of the CPCL masterdoc, against your name, answering the questions in Row 1.	This is how the team finds you for paid projects, research work and partner engagements. An empty row means you are invisible.
Days 1 to 3	Read Tab 1 (Chapters) and note who else leads chapters in your city and your region. Message them directly and introduce yourself.	Cross-posting, cover during exams or travel, and co-hosted meetups all run on relationships you build now, not later.
Week 1	Work through Tab 3 (Resources) . Follow or subscribe to every PPI and STRIDE channel listed. Open the career databases and the Policy Career Navigator yourself.	You cannot recommend a resource you have never opened. Most member questions are answered by something in Tab 3.
Week 1	Start the daily habits on the next page: welcome the day's new joiners in the group, share one verified opportunity, watch the room.	The habits are small on purpose. Consistency beats intensity in every community that has lasted.
Week 2	Agree an explicit split with your co-lead if your chapter has one. Who takes welcome DMs, who takes opportunities, who watches the group on which days.	Unsplit work does not get shared evenly. It gets done entirely by whichever of you is more conscientious, until that person stops.
Week 2	Attend the monthly CPCL call, third Friday, 7:00 to 7:30 pm. Bring one thing that is not working in your chapter.	The call is thirty minutes and it is the only standing forum where chapter-level problems get fixed centrally.

The masterdoc is the spine of the programme. [Open it here.](#) Tab 1 (Chapters) maps every CPCL to their chapters. Tab 2 (Database) holds CPCL profiles, skills and interests, and is what makes collaboration between you possible. Tab 3 (Resources) is the live index of everything PPI and STRIDE publishes. All three are updated continuously, so treat the sheet as the current version and this handbook as the standing rules.

If you want to build something with another CPCL, reach out to them directly. Be mindful of their time and their commitments; everybody here is doing this alongside a degree or a job.

You will not be assessed on how quickly you started. You will be noticed for whether you were still doing this in month nine.

SOURCES ON THIS PAGE

First-week retention window and the effect of an unanswered first contribution: [Discord platform retention research summarised by Mava](#), and [Rokuse on community onboarding design](#), both 2026. Onboarding-action thresholds and their link to renewal: [Join It association benchmarks](#), 2026.

03 · CADENCE

The rhythm of the job

Chapter leadership is not a project with a deadline. It is a rhythm, and the rhythm is what produces the result. Below is the full cadence. In a chapter with two CPCLs, split it explicitly rather than assuming it will even out.

FREQUENCY	WHAT YOU DO	WHY	TIME
Daily	Post one welcome in the group tagging everyone who joined that day, and ask them to introduce themselves to the chapter. Follow up by DM with anyone who replies or asks something specific.	Turns silent numbers into names the whole chapter has met, and gives the room something to respond to.	5 to 10 min
Daily	Share one verified opportunity in the group. One good posting beats ten unchecked ones.	This is the single reason most members joined and the reason they stay subscribed.	10 min
Daily	Watch the room. Clear what breaks the guidelines, answer what you can, escalate what you cannot.	Standards decay quietly. A week of no moderation takes a month to undo.	5 min
Daily	DM anyone who leaves. Introduce yourself, ask why if they are willing to say, and point them to whatever might still help.	Exit feedback is the only honest feedback you will get, and some people come back.	2 min
Weekly	Send the PPI resources two-pager to everyone you spoke to that week.	Closes the loop on conversations and puts the full catalogue in front of warm members.	10 min
Weekly	Scan the other chapters in your region and pick up anything worth carrying to yours.	This is how non-metro members hear about opportunities early enough to act on them.	10 min
Monthly	Attend the CPCL call. Third Friday, 7:00 to 7:30 pm.	Where cross-chapter problems get solved and where your ideas reach the team.	30 min
Monthly	Share the Founder Hours form in your chapters on the third Monday and push members to send questions.	Direct access to the founder is a benefit most members do not know they have.	5 min
Monthly or every second month	Host one live virtual room open to your chapters. Formats on the next page.	The single highest-return thing a CPCL does. It turns a broadcast list into a set of faces.	60 to 90 min
Quarterly	Run something bigger: a talk, a competition, a challenge, online or in person. Review your chapter numbers with your co-leads.	Gives members a reason to re-engage and gives you something concrete to point at.	Varies
As it happens	Send any event you come across to the PPI team for the daily Bulletin, and refer any potential partner or collaborator.	Widens what the whole community sees, particularly outside the metros.	2 min

On burnout, honestly. The evidence from volunteer-led programmes is blunt: people rarely stop because they lost interest, they stop because the work quietly concentrated on one person. If you and your co-lead have not written down who does what, the more conscientious of you is doing all of it right now. Fix that this week, not next quarter.

If your term gets heavy, if exams land, if you are travelling, say so on the monthly call or message the team. Handing a chapter over for six weeks is completely normal. Going quiet without telling anyone is the one thing that damages a chapter.

SOURCE ON THIS PAGE
Volunteer attrition as a workload-distribution problem rather than a motivation problem, and the value of documenting workflows and pairing a second person onto every key task: [Zeffy, volunteer retention strategy](#), June 2026, and [VolunteerPro on new research into volunteer-leader burnout](#), 2026.

04 · ENGAGEMENT

What a healthy chapter *looks like*

Before anything else, a correction to the instinct almost every new CPCL arrives with. **A quiet chapter is not a failing chapter.** Across online communities generally, participation follows roughly a 90-9-1 pattern: about nine in ten members read without posting, around 9% contribute occasionally, and about 1% account for most of the visible activity. In specialised professional groups the split is kinder, closer to 70-20-10, but the shape never inverts. Judge your chapter by whether people are getting something, not by how noisy it is.

With that in mind, five habits do almost all the work.

01 Welcome the day’s new joiners in the group, and ask them to introduce themselves.

One post a day, tagging everyone who joined since your last one, inviting them to say what they are working on and what they want out of the chapter. Do this in the group rather than by DM: a private welcome reaches one person, a tagged welcome pulls them into the room, tells the chapter who has arrived, and gives everyone else something to reply to. Then follow up privately with anyone who answers or asks for something specific. That is where the DM earns its place.

02 Reply to every DM, even the ones you cannot solve.

There is no required format. Being human is the first step of being a community. Kind, respectful, plain language, and a genuine attempt at the question. If you do not know the answer, say so and find out. Most DMs are career questions and most career questions are answered by the newsletter or the Policy Career Navigator.

03 Share back to the group what people ask you privately.

If three members DM you the same question, thirty were wondering and did not ask. Post the answer in the chapter with a line like: *a few of you asked me about this, sharing it here for everyone*. This is the cheapest way to make a group feel alive and it directly grows your read rate.

04 Make introductions on purpose.

When you notice two members at the same career stage, in the same sub-field, or working on the same idea, connect them and tell each of them why. This is the thing members remember years later, it is what no newsletter can do, and it is the clearest evidence that a chapter has a leader rather than an administrator.

05 Put faces in a room once a month.

A virtual session, open to your chapters, is what converts a broadcast list into a community. Announce it in the chapters at least two days ahead with a reminder an hour before, collect registrations on a Google Form, and send the meeting link only to people who filled it.

FORMAT	HOW IT RUNS	BEST FOR
Expert session	Invite a local policy professional for a 15 to 20 minute talk on a topic of their choice, then 15 to 20 minutes of questions from the group.	Chapters with an active core. Also the easiest thing to turn into a lasting relationship for PPI in your city.
Trivia, debate or game night	A policy-themed quiz, a light structured debate, or a scenario game. Low preparation, high turnout.	New or quiet chapters where a formal session would draw four people.
Open introductions	No speaker. Everyone gets ninety seconds to say who they are and what they are looking for. You take notes and make introductions afterwards.	Chapters that have grown fast and where members do not yet know one another.

Three rules for any session you run. Anyone you invite is bound by the same community guidelines the chapter is, so brief them before they speak, including the rule against political commentary. The session is free, always: no registration fee, no paywalled recording, no upsell at the end. And co-host with the other CPCLs in your city, which halves the work and doubles the room.

Name it as a chapter initiative, not an official PPI event. Say the PPI [city] chapter is hosting, because that is true and it is your chapter. Do not present it as an official PPI or STRIDE production: no PPI or STRIDE logos or creatives, no announcement on PPI's own channels, nothing implying the team designed or approved it. The reason is not gatekeeping. PPI and STRIDE put their name on what they have designed, aligned and quality-checked end to end, and nobody from the team is in the room for yours. Section 11 sets out the same line for in-person meetups.

SOURCES ON THIS PAGE
Participation inequality and the 90-9-1 pattern: Jakob Nielsen, [Nielsen Norman Group](#). The 70-20-10 variant observed in specialised professional communities: [Hivebrite](#), June 2026. Recognition and access outrank tangible rewards as contribution motives for 67% of community programmes: [CMX Community Industry Report](#).

05 · TEMPLATES

Scripts you can *start from*

These are starting points, not scripts to paste. Rewrite each one in your own words, in whatever register you actually speak in, in English or in your language. A message that sounds like a form letter does the opposite of what it is for.

01 · WELCOMING THE DAY'S NEW JOINERS

One post in the group, once a day, tagging everyone who joined

Welcome to the PPI [city] chapter, @[name] @[name] @[name]. I am [your name], I lead this chapter and I am the person to reach for anything at all. Do introduce yourselves here when you get a minute: what you are working on right now, and what you are hoping to get out of the group. Everyone else, say hello. And if you are here for career resources, our weekly newsletter and the Policy Career Navigator cover most of it, links below.

One post a day, not one per joiner. Tagging pulls them into the room, tells the chapter who has arrived, and gives the rest of the group a reason to reply, none of which a DM does. Follow up privately with whoever answers.

02 · WHEN SOMEONE LEAVES THE CHAPTER

Same day, no pressure to reply

Hi [name], I am [your name] from the PPI [city] chapter. I noticed you left the group. No problem at all, but if you are willing to tell me what was not working, it genuinely helps us fix it. And if it was about career resources rather than the group, everything is free on our website and the newsletter goes out every Friday, so do use those regardless.

Never ask them to rejoin. Send the resources anyway. Log recurring reasons and raise them on the monthly call.

03 · POSTING AN OPPORTUNITY

One item, one post, with the detail people need

[Role or programme] at [organisation], [location or remote]. Open to [eligibility, in one line]. Applications close [date]. Apply here: [direct link to the listing]. Happy to answer questions about this one in the group or on DM.

Always link the listing itself, never a compilation. Always state the deadline. Adding the last line reliably lifts replies, because most members will not ask a question they think is too basic for the room.

04 · BRINGING A PRIVATE QUESTION BACK TO THE GROUP

Whenever three or more people ask the same thing

Hello everyone. A few of you have reached out to me about [topic], so sharing this here for the rest of the chapter as well: [answer or link]. Please do reach out to me any time with questions, ideas, or opportunities you want passed on to others.

This is the highest-return recurring post in the role. It shows the group that someone is listening and that questions get answered here.

05 · ANNOUNCING A VIRTUAL SESSION

Two days ahead, plus a reminder one hour before

The PPI [city] chapter is hosting an open session on [date] at [time]. [Speaker name and role] will speak for twenty minutes on [topic], followed by questions. Free and open to everyone in the chapter. Register here and the joining link will come to you: [Google Form link].

Registration by form, then the link. Posting a meeting link into a group of a thousand people is how sessions get disrupted by people who were never in the chapter. Note the wording: the chapter is hosting, not PPI. Do not add PPI or STRIDE logos to any creative for it.

06 · AFTER REMOVING A POST

Always by DM, never called out in the group

Hi [name], I have removed your message from the [city] chapter. It falls outside our community guidelines, which are in the group description and which cover [the specific rule]. Nothing further happens from this and you remain a member. If you would like to share something that does fit, or if you think I have got this wrong, please message me.

Name the specific rule. State clearly that they are not being removed. Public correction humiliates one person and silences twenty others who were watching. If they write back to argue, answer once and then hand it to the team rather than trading messages.

Every one of these takes under a minute. None of them can be automated. That is precisely why they work.

06 · CONTENT POLICY

What belongs in the chapter

The policy and impact space is wide and has no clean edges, so the test is not whether something is strictly public policy. It is whether the post helps somebody in this chapter build a career, learn something, or reach help they need.

STATUS	WHAT IT COVERS	HOW YOU HANDLE IT
Always allowed	Jobs, internships, fellowships, scholarships, events, seminars and courses across policy, governance, politics, international affairs, defence, security, economics, law, development and impact. Generic roles in research, communications, operations, community and content, where the organisation sits in this space. Members sharing their own CV and what they are looking for.	Post it, or let it stand. The chapters exist for exactly this.
Always allowed	Urgent or life-saving requests: blood donation, medical help, disaster and relief appeals.	Allow, even though it is not policy-related. PPI is a community before it is anything else.
Allowed with care	A role that reads adjacent rather than clearly in-sector. A post that is informative and promotional at the same time. An organisation you do not recognise.	Ask the team before you act. Never delete on suspicion. We would far rather review one borderline post than lose a real opportunity a member needed.
Allowed with care	Paid events and paid programmes.	Do not promote paid events. The exception is PPI and STRIDE programmes and anything the team has explicitly cleared; those are announced by the team or by you on the team's instruction.
Always allowed	Website and LinkedIn links that lead somewhere relevant to policy careers: a job listing, an internship, a programme, an application page.	Leave them up. The link has to lead to the opportunity itself, not to a profile or a page to follow.
Never	Links to other WhatsApp groups, or to Instagram pages, YouTube channels and third-party communities shared to be joined or followed, however policy-relevant.	Delete for everyone, then DM the sender using script 06. See section 08 for why this one is enforced strictly.
Never	Political commentary of any kind. Chapters stay on policymaking and careers in the space.	Delete for everyone and DM the sender. This holds regardless of who the commentary is about or how mild it seems.
Never	Tagging or mentioning a chapter group in a personal WhatsApp status update.	Delete the mention from the chapter immediately, then DM the member and ask them to remove the status itself. Do not wait for them to do it first. It exposes the group to people never admitted to it.
Never	Personal or organisational marketing: personal-branding posts, paid mentorship or service listings of the Topmate kind, product promotion, anything unrelated to policy and careers.	Delete for everyone and DM the sender. Do not remove them from the group.
Never	Compiled lists and databases of opportunities.	Verify a few entries yourself and post those individually with direct links. See the verification rule below.
Never	Voice notes from members.	Delete for everyone. In a group of a thousand people they are unsearchable and unskippable.
Never	Party-political campaigning, communal or discriminatory content, harassment, and unverified claims presented as fact.	Delete immediately and escalate. See sections 07 and 08.

The verification rule. Only post opportunities from an organisation's own page or from a senior professional there. If a post advertises "10+ openings", open all ten, check they are live, and share the ones that hold up as individual posts with direct links. An unchecked list transfers your credibility to somebody else's spreadsheet, and the member who applies to a dead listing blames the chapter.

The four-chapter rule. Any single item of outreach may run in a maximum of **four chapters**. That cap applies to two things: a member joining chapters, and an organisation promoting its own programme, event, survey or opening.

Members may belong to any four city chapters of their choice. **Organisations** may take their own outreach to any four chapters of their choice, free of charge. Beyond four, it is a partnership conversation and it goes to the team.

Two exceptions. Outreach from the PPI or STRIDE team, or from a cleared partner running across all chapters, is not a violation; if unsure, check before removing. And the cap does not restrain *you*: opportunities you have verified may travel across your region under section 09. What the cap stops is an outsider broadcasting to the whole network for free.

07 · MODERATION

How to moderate, *and how far to go*

You hold full admin rights, which means the whole ladder below is technically available to you. Most of it is not yours to use. The design is deliberate: **moderation of content sits with you, moderation of people sits with the team**. That separation is what keeps a chapter from turning on its leader.

STEP	SITUATION	WHAT YOU DO
1	A post is borderline. You are not certain it breaks the guidelines.	Do nothing yet. Message the team, quote the post, wait. Always better to ask before you act.
2	A post clearly breaks the guidelines, first time from this member.	Delete for everyone. DM the sender using script 06, naming the specific rule. Do not discuss it in the group.
3	The same member breaks the guidelines again after being told.	Delete, DM once more, and report it to the team with the number and screenshots. Do not issue a final warning of your own.
4	Repeated violations continue, or the behaviour is aggressive rather than careless.	Escalate to the team the same day and stop engaging with the member yourself. Removal is a team decision, taken centrally, and applies across every chapter.
3b	The member disputes your removal, in the group or by DM, and wants to argue about it.	Answer once, by DM, naming the rule. Do not debate it a second time and do not take it into the group. If they persist, send it to the team and stop replying.
5	Content that is unlawful: threats, sexual content involving minors, incitement, doxxing, financial fraud.	Delete for everyone immediately, screenshot before or as you delete, and escalate to the team within the hour. Do not warn the sender, do not debate it in the group.

Three things you never do, regardless of provocation.

Accept a join request. The team clears these weekly. You may share the invite link with anyone. · **Remove a member.** Ever, for any reason, including repeat violation. · **Delete a message from the PPI team.** The six numbers on page 14 post frequently and legitimately.

THE LEGAL POSITION, IN PLAIN TERMS

You are a group admin on a platform used by hundreds of millions of Indians, so it is worth knowing where you stand. Indian courts have consistently held that a WhatsApp group administrator is **not vicariously liable** for content posted by a member. The clearest statement is the Kerala High Court in *Manual v. State of Kerala* (23 February 2022), which held that in the absence of a statute creating vicarious liability, an admin cannot be held liable for a member's objectionable post, and that an admin is not an intermediary under the Information Technology Act. The Bombay, Delhi and Madras High Courts had reached the same conclusion in earlier matters.

The qualification matters as much as the rule. That protection rests on the admin being *only* an admin. Courts have carved out cases showing common intention or a pre-arranged plan, which in practice means participation, endorsement, or knowingly leaving unlawful content in place. So the protection and the good practice point the same way, and the practical instruction is short.

Enforce the same way for everyone, every time. The rules govern your members, and applying them evenly is the core of the role. A rule bent once for somebody senior, somebody you know, or somebody who argues hard is a rule you no longer have. If you find yourself deciding whether to enforce based on who posted it, that is the moment to hand the decision to the team instead.

What this means for you. Act promptly on anything unlawful, screenshot it, escalate it, and keep a record of what you did and when. Do not adjudicate, do not editorialise in the group, and do not sit on something because you are unsure. Prompt escalation is both the right thing for the member who reported it and the thing that keeps your own position clean.

None of this is legal advice, and PPI is not a law firm. If any member or authority ever contacts you about content in a PPI chapter, do not respond on your own. Send it to the team the same day.

SOURCES ON THIS PAGE

Manual v. State of Kerala, 2022 LiveLaw (Ker) 97, decided 23 February 2022, reported by LiveLaw and analysed by SCC Online. Earlier consistent holdings in the Bombay, Delhi and Madras High Courts, and the common-intention carve-out, summarised by [Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas](#), March 2022.

08 · SAFETY AND ESCALATION

When something goes wrong

PPI is gender-balanced by design, at 55.6% women, in a field where most professional and student spaces sit closer to 70% male. That balance is not an accident and it is not self-sustaining. It exists because members who are harassed are believed quickly and because action follows. Your handling of a single report does more to protect it than any policy document.

If a member reports harassment, unsolicited advances or abusive contact.

- 1. Believe them and say so.** Tell them plainly that the team will look into it and that they did the right thing by reporting it.
- 2. Ask for two things only:** the number the messages came from, and screenshots. Nothing else. Do not ask them to explain, justify or relive it.
- 3. Send both to the team the same day.** Not the next call, not the next week. Same day.
- 4. Do not confront the other member yourself,** and do not tell them who reported them.
- 5. Close the loop.** Once the team has acted, tell the person who reported it that it was dealt with.

The same steps apply exactly if *you* are the person receiving unprofessional or abusive contact. Send the number and the screenshots to the team. You are a volunteer, not a punching bag, and the response is the same.

SITUATION	WHO TO CONTACT	HOW FAST
Harassment, threats, abusive contact, anything unlawful	Snehaa, and Yash if unreachable	Same day, without exception
Unsure whether a post is allowed, or whether an organisation is cleared	Snehaa	Before you act, every time
Repeat guideline violations by the same member	Snehaa	Within 24 hours
A member wants to co-host with PPI, or an organisation approaches you	Snehaa, who will route it	Within the week
A potential partner, funder or institution for PPI or STRIDE	Yash, copying Snehaa	Within the week
Policy Circle logistics, programmes, fellowships, cohort questions	Manan	Within the week
Media queries, or anything quoting PPI publicly	Kashish, before you reply	Before responding at all
Ideas for engaging your chapter better	Snehaa, or raise it on the monthly call	Any time
You need to step back, hand over, or leave the role	Snehaa, and your co-lead	As soon as you know, not after
A member or an authority contacts you about content in a chapter	Yash, and do not reply yourself	Same day
Anything still unresolved after 72 hours	Yash, directly	Go straight there

Privacy discipline. You can see the phone number of every member in your chapters. That access is for moderation and for answering members. It is not a contact list.

Do not export or copy member numbers. Do not add members to any other group, including PPI groups they have not asked to join, and including your own city's other chapters. Do not pass a member's number to a third party, an employer, a recruiter or another member without that member's explicit permission first. Do not use chapter contacts for anything of your own: a survey, a startup, a campaign, a research project. If you want to reach members for a legitimate PPI-linked purpose, ask the team and post it in the group instead.

Why the rule on external group links is enforced strictly. It is not tidiness. PPI has had to step in before, after a member joined a third-party WhatsApp group that had been shared inside a city chapter and came to harm through it. Anything posted in your chapter carries the chapter's implied endorsement, whether or not you intended it to. That is why the rule holds the same way in every chapter, without exception, and why you should not make a judgement call on a link that looks harmless.

Ask before you act. It has never once caused a problem, and it has prevented a great many.

09 · REGIONS

Your region, and how sharing travels

Chapters are grouped into four regions. The reason is straightforward: opportunities cluster in a handful of cities, and a member in Dehradun or Bhopal should hear about a Delhi internship early enough to decide whether it is worth travelling for. Regional sharing is how PPI stops being a metro community with satellite groups.

REGION	CHAPTERS
North	Delhi · Lucknow · Bhopal and Indore · Chandigarh · Dehradun · Jaipur · Amritsar and Ludhiana
East	Kolkata · Patna · Bhubaneswar · Guwahati
West	Mumbai · Ahmedabad · Pune · Nagpur · Goa
South	Bengaluru · Chennai · Hyderabad · Coimbatore · Visakhapatnam and Amaravati · Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi

Several entries are clusters covering more than one city, which is why the counts of chapters, clusters and cities all differ. Larger cities run several chapters each: Delhi alone has ten, led by five CPCLs. The [city chapter directory](#) is the live list. Join the chapters in your region so you can see what is being shared there.

How the two rules fit together, since they look like they conflict. The four-chapter cap in section 06 governs **outreach into the network from outside it**: a member choosing which chapters to join, an organisation promoting its own programme. Regional sharing governs **curation inside the network**: a CPCL who has verified something carrying it to members who would otherwise never see it.

So an organisation may take its own internship posting to four chapters and no more. A CPCL who has independently verified a good opportunity may share it with the CPCLs across their region, and each of those CPCLs decides whether it fits their chapter. The difference is that in the second case a leader has taken responsibility for the item.

WHO	WHAT THEY MAY DO	LIMIT
A member	Join chapters and post relevant material in the ones they belong to.	Four chapters of their choice.
An organisation	Share its own event, survey, programme or opening, free of charge.	Four chapters of their choice. Beyond that, it becomes a partnership conversation with the team.
You, sharing outward	Send a verified opportunity to other CPCLs and ask them to post it.	Two or three CPCLs at a time is the working norm. Prioritise your own region.
You, receiving	Post something another CPCL has sent you.	Your judgement. If it does not fit your chapter, say so and do not post it.
Out-of-region finds	An opening in a city that is not yours.	DM it to the CPCLs of that city rather than posting it in your own chapter.
PPI and STRIDE	Announcements, launches, reports, Policy Circles, cleared partner campaigns.	All chapters. Never delete these.

Two practical notes. Clustered chapters, Bhopal and Indore for instance, serve two cities from one group, so check where a member actually is before assuming an opportunity is local. And anything remote or nationally open should go to every CPCL in your region, because remote roles are the ones non-metro members can take without moving.

One habit worth building. Set aside ten minutes a week to read the other chapters in your region rather than only your own. Most of what is worth posting in your chapter has already surfaced somewhere else in your region and simply needs checking and carrying across. Curation is a far cheaper habit than fresh searching, and it produces better postings.

10 · RECOGNITION

CPCL of the Month

Every CPCL is scored monthly across six components, out of 100. The scoring exists because good chapter work is invisible by nature and deserves to be seen, and because the Community Fellowship should be awarded on something other than who the team happens to know.

COMPONENT		HOW IT IS MEASURED	MAX
A	Chapter growth	Net new members added over the month, scored against the band your chapter started the month in (table below).	20
B	Read rate	Share of your chapter that opened PPI posts, taken from WhatsApp message info across a sample of four PPI posts in the month.	15
C	Poll participation	Responses to PPI polls in your chapter, as a share of chapter membership.	15
D	Policy Circle turnout	Registrations from your chapter for a Policy Circle in your city, as a share of chapter membership.	15
E	Opportunities shared	Individually verified, policy or impact relevant postings you shared. Compiled lists and unverified links do not count.	15
F	Partnerships facilitated	Introductions you made that converted into a signed PPI or STRIDE engagement. 20 points each.	20

Growth is banded by chapter size, because a percentage is not a level playing field

A chapter of 60 can add 20 % in a fortnight. A chapter of 900 cannot, and one at the 1,024 cap cannot grow at all. Raw percentages reward being small rather than being good, so growth is scored against the band your chapter opened the month in.

CHAPTER SIZE AT MONTH START	5 POINTS	10 POINTS	15 POINTS	20 POINTS
Under 250 members	+10 net	+25 net	+50 net	+80 net
250 to 599	+15 net	+35 net	+65 net	+100 net
600 to 999	+20 net	+45 net	+80 net	+120 net
1,000 or above	At or near the WhatsApp cap, so growth is not scored. The chapter is scored on B to F and the total is rebased to 100.			

The same rebasing applies to component D in any month when no Policy Circle runs in your city. Nobody is penalised for something outside their control.

The anti-gaming clause, because it needs saying out loud. Every one of these numbers can be inflated without helping a single member: adding people who never asked to join, posting fifteen unchecked links, nagging a chapter into answering a poll.

So: any month in which unverified or compiled postings appear scores **zero on component E**, not a reduced score, and members added without a request do not count toward growth. If a score and a chapter's actual condition disagree, the chapter wins and the team will say so.

RECOGNITION	WHAT IT IS
CPCL of the Month	The two highest scorers each month. Ties are broken on partnerships facilitated, then opportunities shared, then growth.
What they receive	PPI merchandise and books, a shoutout in their own city chapters, and a short profile in <i>The Policy Post</i> , which reaches 22,000+ subscribers.
Quarterly feature	The three highest cumulative scorers each quarter are featured on PPI's Instagram.
PPI Community Fellow	The highest cumulative scorer across the six-month cycle, ending in February, becomes PPI Community Fellow: a paid, remote, six-month fellowship you can carry on your CV and LinkedIn, with a certificate at the end.

NOTES ON THIS PAGE

Read rate is taken from WhatsApp's message info panel, which lists delivery and read status; members who have disabled read receipts do not appear, so the figure is a floor and is applied identically to every chapter. On the principle behind the anti-gaming clause, that a measure stops being a good measure once it becomes a target, see [Goodhart's Law applied to community metrics](#), 2026.

11 · ON THE GROUND

Meetups, partnerships *and referrals*

PPI has run 130+ in-person engagements across 20+ cities in six years, and every one of them started with somebody deciding to organise a room. Three different things can happen in your city, and they carry different levels of PPI involvement. Being clear about which one you are doing prevents almost every misunderstanding in this area.

TYPE	WHAT IT IS	WHO RUNS AND FUNDS IT	WHAT PPI PROVIDES
Policy Circle	PPI's own in-person meetup series, run with partner organisations, free to attend.	PPI, budgeted centrally, with a partner.	Everything: venue, speakers, promotion, logistics. Capacity limits how many run in a year.
CPCL-hosted meetup	You, alone or with the other CPCLs in your city, convening members in person.	You. PPI cannot fund or plan it.	Venue suggestions and promotion across your city's chapters. Runs under your chapter's name, not official PPI branding.
Member-hosted meetup	A member organising something for other members.	The member.	Space in the chapter to announce it and find people. Points toward PPI Pathfinders for the host.

If you want to host something yourself, the sequence is: talk to the other CPCLs in your city about co-hosting, plan the detail, announce it across all your city's chapters, and run it together. PPI keeps Policy Circles and every community resource free to access, which is exactly why we cannot finance meetups that were not budgeted for. That is a constraint we would rather state plainly than dress up.

Run it under the chapter's name, not PPI's. A chapter-led meetup is yours, and we want more of them. Say the PPI [city] chapter is hosting it. Do not put PPI or STRIDE logos on the creative, do not announce it as an official PPI event, and do not imply the team designed, approved or is running it, because on these the team is not involved in the design, the alignment or the delivery and cannot stand behind what happens in the room. If you want something to carry full PPI branding, that is a Policy Circle, and the route to it is a conversation with the team.

PARTNERSHIPS AND REFERRALS

Some of PPI's most useful relationships started with a CPCL making an introduction. A community member once connected PPI to the office of a sitting Member of Parliament, which opened a conversation about regular community meetups with the MP in that city. Members get access to people they would never otherwise meet, and PPI gets a stronger footing in the city. Everybody gains.

What is worth referring A university that might offer scholarships or fee waivers to PPI members. An employer with a hiring need. A think tank, foundation or company wanting to reach young India. A venue. A speaker. Your own workplace.	How to refer Send the contact and one line of context to the team. Do not begin negotiating yourself. If it converts into a signed engagement, you earn a share of what the partnership brings in, and it counts as 20 points that month.
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What you must never promise on PPI's behalf.

Reach numbers, posting volumes or campaign scope. · Prices, discounts, free outreach beyond the four-chapter allowance, or anything with money attached. · Dates, team time, speakers or a Policy Circle in a given month. · Access to member data, contact lists or survey respondents. · Any use of the PPI or STRIDE name, logo or endorsement.

The right sentence is always the same: **"Let me connect you with our team."** Nobody has ever been annoyed by that answer.

A REFERRAL IS WORTH SENDING WHEN	BECAUSE
You know the person, not just the organisation	A warm introduction from someone inside converts. A name pulled off a website does not, and it costs the team a week to find that out.
There is something specific they want	Hiring, reaching young India, filling a cohort, finding a venue, placing a scholarship. A vague interest in PPI is not yet a referral.
You can say it in three lines	Who they are, what they are trying to do, and why you think PPI or STRIDE fits. That is all the team needs to take it forward.
You are willing to make the introduction	An email or WhatsApp introduction from you, copying the team, is worth considerably more than a contact number.

Introduce people, do not represent PPI. The first is the most valuable thing you can do. The second is the fastest way to create a problem.

12 · QUESTIONS

The ones that come up *most often*

Everything below has been asked by a CPCL in the last year. Where the answer sits in a section above, the section is named rather than repeated.

QUESTION	ANSWER
People are sending requests to join. Can I accept them?	No. The team clears join requests weekly. You may share the invite link with anyone you like, as widely as you like.
Someone posted a blood donation appeal. It is not policy-related. Do I allow it?	Yes. Urgent and life-saving requests stay, always. PPI is a community first.
Someone is promoting their Instagram shop.	Delete for everyone, DM them using script 06, and do not remove them from the group.
The same person keeps violating the guidelines despite reminders. Do I remove them?	No. Removal is never a CPCL decision. Escalate to the team with the number and screenshots. See section 07.
Can members share their CVs in the chapter?	Yes, and encourage it. Sharing a CV, skills and what they are looking for is exactly what the chapters are for.
Can I share internship openings as well as jobs?	Yes. Internships, fellowships, jobs, events, seminars, webinars, courses. Anything that builds a career or an understanding of the ecosystem.
What about posts calling for content creators or development interns?	Allowed if the organisation sits in the policy, governance, development or impact space. Generic functional roles count too. If it looks entirely unrelated, ask before deleting.
I cannot tell whether a post is information or an advertisement.	Forward it to the team and wait. This applies to everything. Always better to ask before you act.
I found an opening in a city that is not mine.	DM it to the CPCLs of that city and ask them to share it. Do not post it in your own chapter.
I lead only one chapter but found something great for the whole city.	Find the CPCLs of your city's other chapters in Tab 1 and send it to them directly. They are your co-leaders, not a separate team.
Should I post an opportunity in the CPCL group and ask everyone to forward it?	No. Pick the chapters where it genuinely fits and message those CPCLs privately. Blanket forwarding requests are how a network turns into a spam engine.
Can I share a resource from the masterdoc in my chapter?	Yes, all of it. Everything PPI builds is free for the community and most of it has already been shared once. If it is relevant again, share it again.
Members keep DMing me asking about opportunities.	Send them the weekly newsletter and the Policy Career Navigator, then post the same answer in the chapter using script 04.
Is there a required format for replying to DMs?	No. Kind, respectful, easy to understand. Being human is the first step of being a community.
A member asked whether we will have meetups.	Yes, and you can say so with confidence. Details always go into the chapters before we host, and they are always free to attend.
Someone wants to collaborate with PPI on a meetup in my city.	Send their contact and one line of context to the team. Do not start negotiating. See section 11.
I have ideas for engaging the community better.	Message the team any time, or bring it to the monthly call on the third Friday. Ideas from CPCLs have changed how this programme runs more than once.
Can members post their views on a political party or a government decision?	No. Political commentary of any kind is out, however mild and whoever it concerns. Policy and careers stay in; politics stays out.
A member tagged the chapter in their WhatsApp status.	Delete the mention from the chapter straight away, then DM them to take the status down. Do not wait for them to act first. Status updates reach people who were never admitted to the group.
Can members share LinkedIn or website links?	Yes, if the link leads to an actual opportunity: a job listing, internship or programme. No, if it leads to a profile, a page to follow or a group to join.
My chapter has hit the WhatsApp limit.	Tell the team. A new chapter will be opened for your city and you may be asked to lead it.
I am going to be unavailable for a few weeks.	Say so, in advance, on the call or by message. Cover is arranged easily. Going quiet without warning is the only version of this that causes damage.

13 · RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Everything you can put in front of a member

All of it is free, permanently, and you need no permission to share any of it. Tab 3 of the masterdoc is the live index, updated more often than this handbook.

RESOURCE	WHAT IT IS, AND WHEN TO SEND IT	WHERE
The Policy Post	Weekly, every Friday: opportunities, resources and the week in policy. The default answer to almost every career DM.	newsletter.publicpolicyindia.com
Career databases	1,300+ hiring organisations, 250+ fellowships and 250+ scholarships. Send to anyone asking where to look.	publicpolicyindia.com/careers
Policy Career Navigator	100+ careers across 12 domains, with a short quiz matching roles to skills. Best for members who do not yet know what they want.	publicpolicyindia.com/tools
Polis	PPI's civic platform: file an RTI, raise a complaint, take civic action and get it verified.	publicpolicyindia.com/polis
Policy Panchayat	Conversations with practitioners on policy and careers, on YouTube. Good for members who prefer watching to reading.	youtube.com/@PublicPolicyIndia
Many Indias	A tool for comparing states across key development indicators. Useful for students and for anyone writing.	ppi-the-many-indias.netlify.app
STRIDE research	Applied research and national reports, including <i>The State of Policy in India, 2026</i> , built on 18,000+ responses from policy professionals nationwide.	publicpolicyindia.com/research
Capacity building	Fellowships, workshops, curricula and tools, from school students to mid-career practitioners.	publicpolicyindia.com/capacity
City chapter directory	Every chapter and its joining link. Share freely; you cannot accept requests but you can invite.	City chapters , PDF
CPCL masterdoc	Tab 1 Chapters, Tab 2 Database, Tab 3 Resources. For CPCLs only, not for sharing into chapters.	CPCL masterdoc
Social channels	PPI on LinkedIn and Instagram . STRIDE on LinkedIn and Instagram . Follow all four.	80,000+ combined

THE TEAM

Save all six numbers now. Messages from these numbers are legitimate and must never be deleted from a chapter.

NAME	COME TO THEM FOR	NUMBER
Snehaa	Everything day to day: moderation questions, member reports, safety, ideas, anything you are unsure about.	8111099944
Yash	Partnerships and referrals, and anything still unresolved after 72 hours. Also at yash@publicpolicyindia.com .	9883655520
Manan	Policy Circles, programmes, fellowships and cohort logistics.	9119800433
Kashish	Research, communications, media queries and anything quoting PPI publicly.	8859505011
Sireesha	Policy consulting and communications projects.	8660344739
Shreya	Policy consulting and communications projects.	9717133491

One last thing. Nobody joins a WhatsApp group of a thousand strangers expecting to be noticed. When somebody is noticed anyway, when their question gets answered, when an introduction turns into a first job, they remember which community did that. Six years of it is why PPI exists at the scale it does. It has never been the newsletter and it has never been the numbers. It has always been whoever replied.

Yash Agarwal

Founder, Public Policy India and STRIDE

You are one of the people building this network city by city, one chapter at a time. Welcome aboard.