

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS 2024

Solicitors are required to undertake relevant education and study to maintain and develop their professional knowledge, skills and ethical awareness. This is a regulatory requirement.

Solicitors are required to submit an online CPD return before the end of the 2024 CPD year, **which runs from 8 January 2024 to 5 January 2025**. If a solicitor does not comply with the CPD Regulations, the Education Committee may direct they do so within a period of time and impose such other conditions as it may decide. Failure to comply may lead to a referral to the Professional Conduct Department.

Solicitors may be entitled to apply for an exemption from some or all of the CPD requirements. For details on Exemptions, please refer to *page 3*.

CHANGES IMPLEMENTED IN 2021 AND APPLICABLE TO THE 2024 CPD YEAR

- Webinars and online learning will be accepted as Group Study CPD.
- There is no longer a requirement to complete separate Client Care and Practice Management CPD. Client Care and Practice Management topics will still be provided by the Society as part of its CPD provision but will be included in Group Study. For Definitions of “Group Study” and “Private Study” please refer to *page 4*.
- CPD returns must be submitted using the online form on the Law Society website. The Society will not accept hard copy CPD records for 2024.
- Payment for all of the Society’s CPD events will continue to be made online. There is no facility for events to be paid for by cash or cheque.

SUMMARY OF CPD REQUIREMENTS FOR 2024

A full-time practising solicitor must complete the following minimum CPD hours (subject to any exemption):

- A total of 15 hours (of which a maximum of 5 hours can be **Private Study**). The remaining 10 hours **Group Study**, which includes webinars and online learning, must include:
- A minimum of 2 hours Compulsory Risk Management CPD (only if the solicitor is in Private Practice);
- A minimum of 3 hours Compulsory Conveyancing CPD (only if the solicitor undertakes or is involved in any conveyancing transactions).



The Law Society of Northern Ireland does not currently award accreditation to any course or course providers.

Solicitors practising outside Northern Ireland or who undertake CPD for another professional or regulatory body may satisfy the CPD Regulations through alternative CPD or training, but should contact the CPD Department at cpd@lawsoc-ni.org to discuss.

Solicitors who seek to reduce their period of restricted practice from 3 years to 2 years should contact the CPD Department (as above) to discuss.

Solicitors are required to maintain details and proof of any CPD completed in 2024, which the Society may inspect from time to time. The Society will take your CPD compliance into account if required to exercise its wider regulatory functions.

BOOKINGS

CPD Bookings are **non-transferrable** and **non-refundable**.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE 2-HOUR COMPULSORY RISK MANAGEMENT CPD REQUIREMENT FOR 2024

All Principals, Consultants and Assistant Solicitors in private practice (PPPs, PPCs, and PPAs) are required to complete 2 hours of Compulsory Risk Management CPD covering the following three topics:

1. Risk Management from an insurance perspective,
2. Consequences of operating outside the regulatory and AML/CTF framework,
3. The impact of AML and CTF on Risk Management.

A bespoke 2-hour Law Society module will cover the required topics on **Tuesday 23 January 2024**. A number of key speakers will deliver practical insights into steps firms might take to mitigate risk. For the 2024 CPD year, the module will be offered to members **free of charge** and will be delivered as a live webinar. To book, please [click here](#). For those unable to attend the live broadcast, a recording will be made available afterwards.

Members may fulfil this requirement by attending other risk management courses which cover the above three topics but must, if required, provide evidence of their attendance at and content of such other courses to the Society for assessment.

EXEMPTIONS

Solicitors who do not work full-time through the practice year may apply for an Exemption from the requirement to undertake 15 hours CPD per annum.

Please note – no exemptions apply to Compulsory Risk Management CPD or to Compulsory Conveyancing CPD.

Solicitors who wish to apply for an Exemption should contact the CPD Department at cpd@lawsoc-ni.org to discuss.

A solicitor may apply for an Exemption in circumstances as set out below:

1. Solicitors working 200 hours or less during the practice year will be totally exempt.
2. Solicitors, who work part-time, and who work more than 200 hours in the practice year must undertake a minimum of 7.5 hours CPD per annum.
3. Locums who only work part of the year but who work more than 200 hours in the practice year must undertake a minimum of 7.5 hours CPD per annum.
4. Solicitors who are unemployed for part of the year must, if they have worked over 200 hours in the practice year, undertake a minimum of 7.5 hours CPD per annum.
5. Solicitors suffering long term illness or otherwise absent from practice for 12 consecutive weeks or more, who work for 200 hours or more during the practice year, must complete a minimum of 7.5 hours CPD per annum.
6. A solicitor taking parental leave in a practice year and who worked more than 200 hours during the practice year must complete a minimum of 7.5 hours CPD per annum.
7. Solicitors who take sabbatical leave of 12 weeks or more but who work for 200 hours or more in the practice year must undertake 7.5 hours CPD per annum.
8. Solicitors admitted during the practice year i.e., 6th January to 5th January and who are not seeking to reduce their restricted practice period from 3 to 2 years, will be exempt from the CPD requirement in the course of that practice year but will be required to undertake full CPD in the following practice year.
9. Solicitors retiring during the practice year and not renewing their Practising Certificate will be exempt from the CPD requirement in the course of that practice year.

The requirements in respect of **Group Study and Private Study** will be reduced pro-rata.

DEFINITIONS

Private Study

Study undertaken by fewer than 3 people together.

Private Study includes reading relevant books and periodicals; writing relevant books or articles which are published, in which case the time claimed may be up to 7.5 hours of the total CPD requirement for the particular practice year; preparation for the delivery of training on any legal subject (up to a maximum of 4 hours in any CPD year).

Solicitors involved in the preparation for the delivery of training may count actual preparation time towards their annual **Private Study** CPD requirement provided that if the particular lecture, tutorial, etc., is repeated no time may be counted in respect of the repeat.

Group Study

Study in a group of 3 or more people which lasts for a minimum of 1 hour on each occasion on which it is undertaken.

Group Study may be provided by differing organisations including but not limited to the Law Society of Northern Ireland, Local Solicitor Associations, special interest groups, educational establishments or professional providers. It may include workshops, seminars, lectures, tutorials and webinars. It may be organised in-house by individual firms. Group Study may take place inside or outside of Northern Ireland and is not required to be in groups comprised solely of solicitors.

Solicitors involved in tutoring and lecturing or otherwise delivering training may count actual presentation time towards their annual **Group Study** CPD requirement provided that if the particular lecture, tutorial etc., is repeated no time may be counted in respect of the repeat.