

Introduction:

The advice sector in Northern Ireland strives to ensure quality and professional standards for its advisers, managers and support staff and the services provided to clients. As part of this the NIASC maintain minimum training requirements for advisers which are outlined in the grid below. These minimum requirements ensure that advisers meet an agreed standard of expertise in the area of advice they are providing, enabling a consistent quality of advice across the sector. There are currently no agreed minimum training requirements for managers or support staff across the sector, although individual organisations will have their own requirements.

In addition to the minimum requirements for advisers, the NIASC expect all advisers to participate in ongoing CPD training to ensure that their knowledge and skills are continually maintained, updated and developed in their area of work. The NIASC is working towards an agreed Quality Standard for the Advice Sector in NI which will include a minimum requirement of 18 CPD hours (3 days) for a full-time paid adviser and 12 CPD hours (2 days) for a full-time volunteer adviser.

The grid below includes examples of CPD training courses that advisers, managers and support staff may undertake. Some CPD courses do not form part of the minimum training requirements but there is a requirement for advisers (working in particular areas) to work towards them, for example, debt and money advisers in NI are expected to work towards a full Wiseradviser training record during their time as a debt/money adviser. Some courses are not currently compulsory but are strongly recommended to ensure best practice, such as lone worker training for advisers carrying out home visits. Other courses are optional. The list of CPD training included in the grid does not cover all courses available to advisers, managers and support staff in the advice sector in NI, but rather presents a sample of potential options.

The grid only includes CPD training courses and does not list other aspects of CPD training available to those working in the advice sector in NI. In addition to the formal and non-formal courses included, there are many other forms of CPD that people can avail of to progress their knowledge and skills, including practitioner forums, workshops, conferences, seminars, induction training and so on.

Minimum Requirements:

The minimum training requirements grid for advisers sets out options which advisers must have achieved or be working towards. The adviser can choose their preferred pathway and are not required to complete ALL options in a set. A generalist adviser, for example, can complete the Adviser Training Programme, Welfare Rights Adviser Programme, Award in Providing Advice to Older People, or the Housing Rights Adviser Programme as a minimum requirement but would not be expected to complete all of these. It is important to note that specialist advisers will usually be required to complete one of the courses that represent minimum training for generalist advisers before progressing to minimum standards in their chosen area. As explained at present there are no agreed minimum training requirements for managers and support staff in the advice sector, but recommended CPD has been included.

Progression Routes:

The grid highlights progression routes for advisers, managers and support staff, for example from a generalist to specialist adviser, from non-formal to formal qualifications, and progression through levels of training. The accreditation and level of all courses are included in the grid. In the generalist advice section, for example, a list of national qualifications (qualifications of the Qualifications and Credit Framework) for advisers is included. Candidates can use the non-formal training courses (or other formal training) they have studied as well as other forms of CPD, such as seminar or conference attendance, as Recognition of Prior Learning/Current Competency towards these nationally accredited qualifications, enabling previous learning to be valued.

Minimum Training Requirements and CPD in the Advice Sector in Northern Ireland

Minimum Training Requirements and CPD in the Advice Sector			
Role/Training Type	Training Required/Available	Accreditation/Level	Training Provider (see key)
GENERALIST ADVISER			
Generalist Adviser – Minimum Training Requirement	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete one of these options as a minimum training requirement.	Welfare Rights Adviser Programme + 4 modules (Immigration, Employment, Consumer, Money) + Case Recording	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2	LCNI
	Adviser Training Programme	FHEQ (Staffordshire University) – Certificate Level 3 (16 QCF Credits)	NIACAB
	Award in Providing Advice to Older People (Advantage Programme) + Case Recordings	QCF – Level 5 Award (5 Credits)	ANI
	Housing Adviser Training Programme + Case Recording	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	HRS (HATP) ANI (Case Recording)
Case-Recording Training for Generalist Advisers	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
The following options are available for case-recording training to compliment the above Generalist Adviser courses.	Introduction to Advice Pro	Non-accredited	ANI
	Managing Information and Case Recording	OCNNI – Level 3 (1 Unit)	NIACAB
Generalist/Legal Adviser National Qualifications in Advice	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
The above generalist adviser courses can be used as Recognition of Prior Learning towards these qualifications.	NVQ in Advice and Guidance Level 3 Certificate (QCF)	QCF - Level 3 Certificate (21 Credits)	ANI
	NVQ in Advice and Guidance Level 4 Diploma (QCF)	QCF – Level 4 Diploma (37 Credits)	ANI
	Level 3 Award in Providing Initial Legal Advice	QCF – Level 3 Award (12 Credits)	ANI

<p>Note: QCF = Qualifications & Credit Framework (courses on the QCF are nationally recognised and regulated by Ofqual. They reflect National Occupational Standards) FHEQ = Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (courses on the FHEQ are non-regulated nationally recognised qualifications)</p>			
	Level 3 Certificate in Providing Initial Legal Information and Advice (QCF)	QCF – Level 3 Certificate (15 Credits)	ANI
	Level 4 Certificate in Providing Specialist Legal Advice (QCF)	QCF – Level 4 Certificate (20 Credits)	ANI
	Level 4 Diploma in Providing Specialist Legal Advice and Casework (QCF)	QCF – Level 4 Diploma (38 Credits)	ANI
	University of Staffordshire BA/BSc in Advice Studies (Note: NICAB Adviser Training Programme is 60 Credits, FHEQ)	FHEQ - Staffordshire University (BA/BSc)	University of Staffordshire
<p>Generalist Adviser - CPD Training</p>	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
	Telephone Advice and Triage	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Deaf Awareness	Non-accredited	ANI
	Safer Lone Working for Frontline Staff	Non-accredited	ANI
	Customer Service	Various accredited and non-accredited courses	ANI/NIACAB
	Introduction to Tendering and Commissioning	Non-accredited	ANI
	Procurement/Tendering Training	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Suicide Awareness	Non-accredited	Various organisations including PIPS
	Level 2 Award in Independent Advocacy	QCF – Level 2 Award (4 Credits)	ANI
	Wiseradviser - Enhancing Your Learning and Development	Non-accredited	ANI
<p>Please Note: Generalist Advisers can undertake a range of CPD training including any of the courses outlined above and below or other courses/qualifications available in the advice sector and related fields.</p>			

Role/Training Type	Training Required/Available	Accreditation/Level	Training Provider (see key)
SPECIALIST ADVISER:			
Specialist advisers would require generalist advice training or a generalist/legal adviser qualification in advice as well as specialist training in their chosen area. See below for specialism training.			
Benefits Adviser			
Benefits Adviser – Minimum Training Requirement	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete one or other of these options as a minimum training requirement.	Welfare Rights Adviser Programme	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2	LCNI
	Adviser Training Programme	FHEQ (Staffordshire University) – Certificate Level 3 (16 QCF Credits)	NIACAB
Benefits Adviser – CPD Training Available	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Advisers would be expected to complete welfare reform training as CPD as well as other selected courses.	Welfare Reform Training Programme	Non-accredited	ANI
	Pension Reform – An Overview	Non-accredited	ANI
	An Overview of Welfare Reform	Non-accredited	ANI
	An Introduction to Personal Independence Payments	Non-accredited	ANI
	An Introduction to Universal Credit	Non-accredited	ANI
	An Introduction to Older People’s Benefits	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Understanding State Retirement Pension	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Competent State and Directive 88304	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Challenging Tax Credit Decisions	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Welfare Reform an Update	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Personal Independence Payments	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Introduction to Universal Credit	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Habitual Residence Test and New Rules for Returning UK Nationals	Non-accredited	LCNI
Social Security Seeking Work, Other Requirements and	Non-accredited	LCNI	

	Sanctions		
	Overview of the Social Security Benefits System - Foundation	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Overview of the Social Security Benefits System - Advanced	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Welfare Reform – Foundation Level	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Welfare Reform – Advanced Level	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Universal Credit	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	PIP & Miscellaneous Welfare Reform	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Understanding Your Benefits (Mental Health)	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2 (1 Credit)	NIACAB

Tribunal Adviser

Tribunal Adviser– Minimum Training Requirement Required to complete one of these options as a minimum training requirement.	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
	Social Security Advocacy	FHEQ Diploma Level University of Staffordshire (15 Credits)	NIACAB
	Fast Track Advocacy Course (requires Law Degree 2:1 or above)	OCNNI – Level 4 (4 Credits)	NIACAB
	Tribunal Representation and Advocacy Skills	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Lay Advocacy (Wiseradviser)	Non-accredited	NIACAB
Tribunal Adviser– CPD Training Available	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
	Legal Research Skills for Advisers	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Debts & Courts in NI (Wiseradviser)	Non-accredited	ANI
	Court Action for Enforcement of Judgements Office (Wiseradviser)	Non-accredited	NIACAB

Money or Debt Adviser

Money or Debt Adviser Minimum Training Requirement Required to complete one or other of these options as a minimum training requirement. These courses are a pre-	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
	Wiseradviser – Introduction to Dealing with Debt	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2	ANI
	ATP Money Advice Module	Local OCNNI – Level 3 (1 Credit)	NIACAB

<p>requisite to other Wiseradviser training courses.</p>			
<p>Money or Debt Adviser CPD Training Advisers would be expected to complete wiseradviser courses on an on-going basis and to build towards a complete training record.</p> <p>Other CPD courses would also be recommended. See below.</p>	<p>Wiseradviser training from Generalist to Specialist level including:</p> <p>Generalist Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Practice Dealing with Debt Cases • Budgeting Skills • How to Deliver Money Advice by Email • Blended Approach to Money Advice • Common Financial Statement • Cashflow <p>Skilled Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking Law • Consumer Credit Act Practitioner Workshop • Dealing with Codes of Practice & Utilities • Debt Strategies • Debts & Courts in NI • Debt & Mental Health • Debt Relief Orders Distance Learning • Debt Relief Orders Workshop • Debt Relief Orders Refresher • Individual Voluntary Arrangements • Introduction to Bankruptcy • Negotiation Skills • Overview of the Consumer Credit Act • Overview to Charging Orders & Orders for Sale • Prevention of Homelessness as a Consequence of Debt • Relationships, Liabilities and Debt • Payday Loans • Introduction to Hire Purchase, Bills of Sale & Car Finance <p>Specialist Level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Debts • Limitation of Actions • Lay Advocacy 	<p>The following wiseradviser courses are locally accredited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with Codes of Practice & Utilities (accredited with OCNNI at Level 3) • Debts & Courts in NI (accredited with OCNNI at Level 3) • Prevention of Homelessness as a Consequence of Debt (accredited with OCNNI at Level 3) 	<p>ANI (Generalist and Skilled Level) NICAB (Specialist Level)</p> <p>Please Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Wiseradviser courses are delivered in partnership with the Money Advice Trust • Prevention of Homelessness as a Consequence of Debt is taught in partnership with HRS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Orders • Court Action for Enforcement of Judgements Office • Mortgage Possessions 		
Other CPD for Money and Debt Advisers	<p>Enhanced Foundation Money Advice (EFMA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction To Dealing With Debt • The Money Advice Process • Strategies And Options For Dealing With Creditors • Court Action To Recover Debt • Introduction to Enforcement • Introduction To The Consumer Credit Act • Introduction To Insolvency • Dealing With Mortgage Arrears • Dealing With Rent Arrears • Negotiation Skills 	Local Accreditation - OCNNI Level 4 (16 Credits)	NIACAB
	Certificate in Money Advice Practice	FHEQ through Staffordshire University	IMA
	<p>Please Note: There are a range of other CPD courses available for money and debt advisers in NI including those provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step Change • IMA (Other Courses) • Grant Thornton • Payplan • Trading Standards • Financial Ombudsman 		
DRO Intermediary			
DRO Intermediaries- Minimum Training Requirement	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete all training outlined in the options. In addition to this advisers must complete a DRO application, meet all application	<p>To become an approved intermediary advisers must complete the following DRO training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiseradviser Debt Relief Order Learning Pathway (6 modules) • Wiseradviser Debt Relief Orders Workshop 	Non-accredited	ANI/IS

requirements and achieve 75% or higher in the Learning Pathways exam.			
DRO Intermediaries- CPD Training	Wiseradviser DRO Refresher	Non-accredited	ANI

Money Guidance Adviser

Money Guidance Advisers	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
There are no minimum requirements for Money Guidance Advisers although one or more of the available options would be recommended	Money Advice Support Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better Budgeting Savvy Borrowing Coping with Money Problems Talking About Money at Home 	Non-accredited	ANI
	Wiseradviser Budgeting Skills	Non-accredited	ANI
	Money Guidance Training	Non-accredited	ANI & NIACAB
	My Money	Non-accredited	NIACAB

Housing Adviser

Housing Adviser - Minimum Training Requirement	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete the HATP course or other generalist level training.	Housing Adviser Training Programme	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2 or Level 3 (optional)	HRS
Housing Adviser – CPD Training Available	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
	Advantage - Housing and Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Advantage – Community Care and Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Wiseradviser - Prevention of Homelessness as a Consequence of Debt	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI & HRS
	Wiseradviser - Mortgage Possessions	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	EFMA Modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing With Mortgage Arrears Dealing With Rent Arrears 	Part of EFMA – OCNNI – Level 4	NIACAB
	Social Housing Options	Non-accredited	HRS

	Bedroom Tax and Northern Ireland	Non-accredited	HRS
	Master Class in Undertaking Homeless Reviews	Non-accredited	HRS
	<p>Note: There are a range of other CPD courses available for housing advisers in NI including those provided by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further Housing Rights Services courses • Shelter UK • Chartered Institute of Housing Northern Ireland 		

Immigration Adviser

Immigration Adviser- Minimum Training Requirement	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete one or other of these options as a minimum training requirement.	Level 1 ISOC training included in ATP Module	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3 (1 Credit QCF)	NIACAB
	Introduction to Immigration Law	Non-accredited	LCNI
Immigration Adviser- CPD Training	Dublin II Regulations	Non-accredited	LCNI
	European Law & Immigration	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Appendix FM & Article 8	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Immigration Law and Human Trafficking	Non-accredited	LCNI

Older Person Adviser

Older Person Adviser – Minimum Training Requirement	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete Level 5 Award or other generalist training.	Level 5 Award in Providing Advice to Older People	QCF – Level 5 Award	ANI
Older Person Adviser – CPD Training	Advantage - Age Awareness and Working with Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Advantage - Introduction to Older People’s Benefits	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Advantage - Understanding State Retirement Pension	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Advantage - Health Rights and Services for Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Advantage - Community Care and Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI & LCNI

	Advantage - Housing and Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Pension Reforms	Non-accredited	ANI
Employment Adviser			
Employment Adviser – Minimum Training Requirements	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete one or other of these options as a minimum training requirement.	Employment Law	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	NIACAB
	Introduction to Employment Law	Non -accredited	LCNI
Employment Adviser - CPD Training	Redundancy Law	Non -accredited	LCNI
	Rights of Agency Workers	Non -accredited	LCNI
Community Care Adviser			
Community Care Adviser– Minimum Training Requirements	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete one or other of these options as a minimum training requirement.	Protecting Human Rights in Community Care	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Community Care and Older People	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI & LCNI
Community Care Adviser– CPD Training	Carer’s and Their Rights	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Note: There are a range of other CPD courses available for community care advisers in NI including those provided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer’s Northern Ireland • Crossroads Care 		
Health/Mental Health Adviser			
Health/Mental Health Adviser - Minimum Training Requirements	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
Required to complete one or other of these options as a minimum training requirement.	Advantage – Health Rights and Services for Older People (Includes Older People and Mental Health)	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 3	ANI
	Introduction to Mental Health Law	Non-accredited	LCNI
Health/Mental Health	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		

Adviser – CPD Training			
	Representing Clients at Mental Health Review Tribunals	Non-accredited	LCNI
	Understanding Your Benefits (Mental Health)	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2	NIACAB
	Welfare Reform (Mental Health)	Local Accreditation OCNNI – Level 2	NIACAB
	<p>Note: Various other CPD courses are available from mental health organisations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Action • Mindwise • Alzheimer’s Society • PIPS • NIAMH • FASA 		

Lone Adviser

Generalist Advisers Working Alone/Doing Home Visits	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
There are no agreed minimum training requirements but as best practice advisers should complete training such as that listed.	Safer Lone Working for Frontline Staff	Non-Accredited	ANI

Role/Training Type	Training Required/Available	Accreditation/Level	Training Provider (see key)
MANAGERS & SENIOR ADVISERS:			
Managers/Senior Advisers There are no agreed minimum training requirements but individual organisations have their own requirements. Training options available include those listed.	OPTIONS AVAILABLE Introduction to Tendering and Commissioning Lone Working – Enhancing Your Organisational Practice Case Checking Independent File Review Quality of Advice Managing Staff Managing Volunteers	Non-Accredited Non-Accredited Non-Accredited Non-Accredited Non-Accredited Non-Accredited Non-Accredited	ANI ANI NIACAB NIACAB NIACAB NIACAB NIACAB
	Note: There are a range of management courses available through various organisations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NICVA • Training for Women Network • Business and Management Institutes • Various Universities 		

Role/Training Type	Training Required/Available	Accreditation/Level	Training Provider (see key)
ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT STAFF			
Administration/Support Staff	OPTIONS AVAILABLE		
There are no agreed minimum training requirements but the following courses are available.	Level 2 Certificate in Supporting Legal Advice Provision	QCF – Level 2 Certificate (17Credits)	ANI
	Introduction to Customer Service	Non-Accredited	ANI
	NVQ in Customer Service – Level 1 Certificate	QCF – Level 1 Certificate (22 Credits)	ANI
	NVQ in Customer Service – Level 2 Certificate	QCF – Level 2 Certificate (28 Credits)	ANI
	NVQ in Customer Service – Level 3 Diploma	QCF – Level 3 Diploma (42 Credits)	ANI
	NVQ in Business and Administration - Level 1 Certificate	QCF – Level 1 Certificate (15 Credits)	ANI
	NVQ in Business and Administration - Level 2 Certificate	QCF – Level 2 Certificate (21 Credits)	ANI
	NVQ in Business and Administration - Level 3 Diploma	QCF – Level 3 Diploma (40 Credits)	ANI
	Telephone Advice and Triage	Non-accredited	NIACAB
	Deaf Awareness	Non-accredited	ANI
	Suicide Awareness	Non-accredited	Various organisations including PIPS
	Wiseradviser – Enhancing Your Learning and Development	Non-accredited	ANI

Key:

Accreditation/Level:

QCF = Qualifications and Credit Framework

FHEQ = Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

OCNNI = Open College Network NI

Training Provider:

ANI = Advice Northern Ireland

NIACAB = Citizens Advice Bureau Northern Ireland

LCNI = Law Centre Northern Ireland

HRS = Housing Rights Service

IS = Insolvency Service