

2026

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Quick guide to continuous professional learning (CPL)

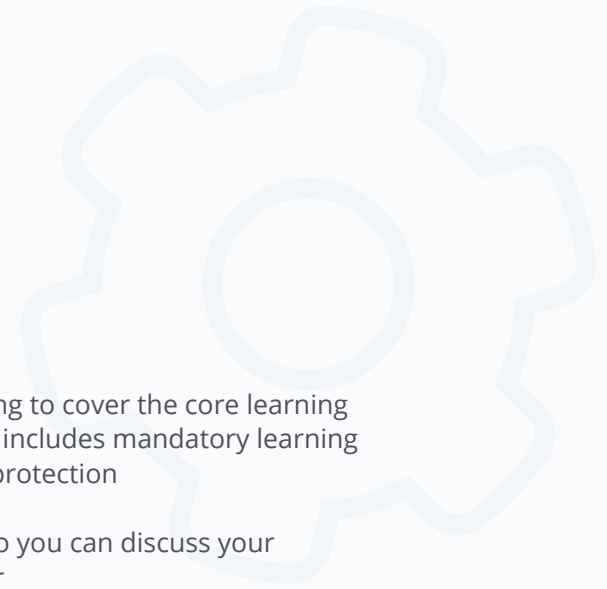


Quick guide to continuous professional learning

Everyone registered with the SSSC must do continuous professional learning (CPL) every year. This is part of our Codes of Practice. It is your responsibility whether you are employed on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

You must:

- undertake a range of learning to cover the core learning elements for your role. This includes mandatory learning on trauma, adult and child protection
- keep a record of your CPL so you can discuss your learning with your employer
- confirm your CPL is up to date when you complete your annual declaration.



Your Learning

What are core learning elements?

These are the main topics and skills that you must learn and keep up to date with.

Each year, you should do some learning to cover each of these topics as part of your registration.

Learning on trauma and adult and child protection is mandatory.

Workers in adult social care and children and young people services have seven core learning elements:



1 Rights based and ethical practice.



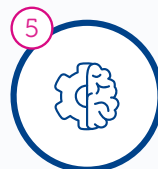
2 Communication and relationships (including mandatory trauma informed learning).



3 Wellbeing and support.



4 Protection (including mandatory child protection and adult support and protection).



5 Knowledge for your role.



6 Reflective practice.



7 Leadership and quality assurance.

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These are the main topics and skills that you must learn and keep up to date with.

Each year, you should do some learning to cover each of these topics as part of your registration.

Learning on trauma and adult and child protection is mandatory

Social workers and Care Inspectorate authorised officers have eight core learning elements:



1 Ethics, values and rights-based practice.



2 Communication, engagement, trauma informed and relationship based professional practice.



3 Critical thinking, professional judgement and decision making.



4 Promoting wellbeing, support and protection.



5 Working with complexity in unpredictable and ambiguous contexts.



6 Use of knowledge, research and evidence in practice.



7 Self-awareness and reflexivity.



8 Professional leadership.

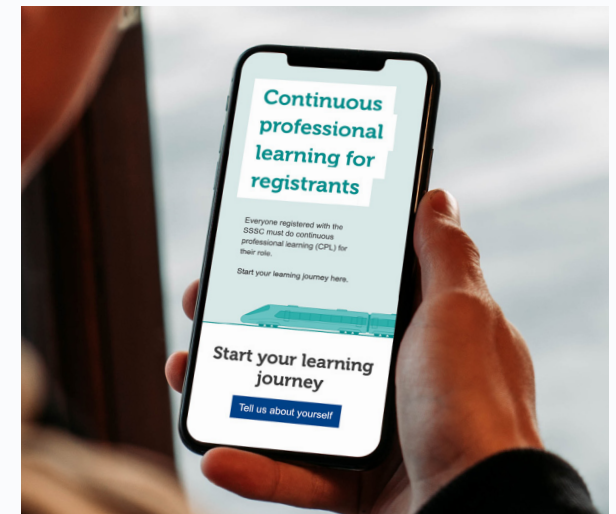
What counts as CPL?

CPL is not just about formal training courses. CPL can include learning from books, podcasts, professional discussions in supervision, learning from your work or projects, refreshing your knowledge of policies and procedures or other learning opportunities.

You can find a selection of learning resources on the CPL website that link to the core learning elements. These resources are optional.

You can choose a pathway on the [CPL website](#) to find links to learning that may be useful. The suggested resources are optional. You should choose the pathway that reflects your role and career stage.

You can always discuss what learning to consider with your supervisor or manager.

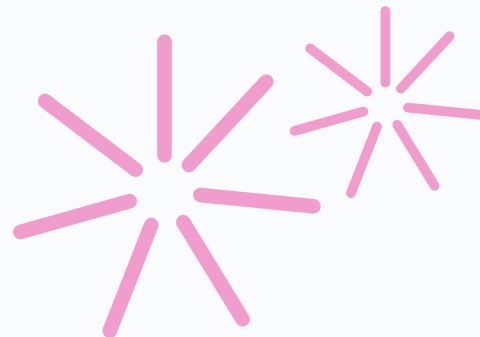


Mandatory learning

Why do I need to undertake mandatory learning on both child protection and adult support and protection?

It is a mandatory requirement to learn about protection of both adults and children. Protection concerns for an adult may be identified in the context of working with a child (eg working with a family), while concern for a child may be identified in the context of working with adults. You have responsibilities under legislation and national policies in relation to the protection of both groups.

It is vital that you know what you need to consider and do within your role should you have concerns or are made aware of concerns by others.



How do I undertake mandatory learning on child protection and adult support and protection?

We don't specify the number of hours or the nature of the learning to undertake. Depending on your role your employer may require you to complete formal training. You can also:

- find links to learning resources on the [CPL website](#) that may be useful
- find free introductory elearning available through Turas on the [National Induction Framework for Social Care Learning Zone](#)
- refresh your knowledge of your organisation's internal policies or engage in professional discussions (during supervision for example) about what you need to know.

You should discuss relevant learning with your supervisor or manager and agree what is required for your role.

Mandatory learning

Why do I need to undertake mandatory learning on trauma informed practice?

The Scottish Government and COSLA have a joint ambition for a trauma informed and responsive workforce and services across Scotland. We all have a role to play in this. Everyone in the workforce should be able to recognise how trauma and adversity affects the people and communities that they serve, and have the skills to respond in trauma informed ways. [See the National Trauma Transformation Programme](#) for more information.

How do I undertake mandatory learning on trauma informed practice?

We don't specify the number of hours or the nature of the learning to undertake in relation to trauma informed practice. You can:

- find links to learning resources on the [CPL website](#) that may be useful
- read the [National Trauma Transformation Programme](#) guide to support you to find an appropriate level of learning for your role
- refresh your knowledge of your organisation's internal policies or engage in professional discussions, for example during supervision, about what you need to know.

You should discuss relevant learning with your supervisor or manager and agree with them what is required in the context of your role.

Recording your learning

How do I record CPL?

You must keep a record of what you've learned and how your learning is making a difference to your practice. You can record your learning in a way that suits you. For example, you could use the SSSC myLearning app, keep a learning log in a notebook or use your employer's system.

Does the SSSC need to see my learning record?

No, you do not need to share your learning record with the SSSC. Your learning record is to support your learning.

As part of your annual declaration, we will ask you to confirm:

- you have completed mandatory learning on trauma and child protection and adult support and protection
- you have kept a record of your learning.

We will not ask to see your learning record as part of your annual declaration.

Does my employer need to see my learning record?

Your employer may need to see your learning record.

We choose a random sample of registrants for CPL endorsement when completing your annual declaration. If you are chosen, we will ask you to provide additional information about how you have demonstrated your learning against the core elements and the mandatory learning on trauma and protection.

After you discuss this with your supervisor or manager, they will need to verify that you have completed your learning.



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please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891

We promote equality by removing unlawful and unfair treatment on the
grounds of any protected characteristic wherever possible.

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