

Rainbows Ireland Professional Training and Continued Professional Development (CPD) Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the professional training and continued professional development (CPD) requirements for Rainbows Ireland Coordinators and Facilitators. It aims to ensure that all personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and support required to deliver high-quality, child-centred peer support programmes for children and young people experiencing grief, bereavement, parental separation, and other significant life changes.

Rainbows Ireland is committed to maintaining best practice standards through ongoing learning, reflection, collaboration, and programme development.

Continued Professional Development Requirement

All Rainbows Ireland Facilitators and Coordinators are required to engage in Continued Professional Development (CPD) every **24-36 months**.

Regular engagement in CPD ensures that personnel:

- Remain up to date with Rainbows programmes, resources, policies, and procedures.
- Strengthen facilitation and coordination skills.
- Gain confidence in responding to issues arising within groups.
- Learn from participant feedback, evaluations, and emerging best practice.
- Meet Rainbows Ireland quality, safeguarding, and programme standards.
- Ensure children and young people receive the highest quality peer support experience.

Failure to complete CPD within the required timeframe will affect a person's active status within the Rainbows Ireland system.

- **Facilitators** whose CPD has expired cannot be allocated to Rainbows Peer Support Groups until CPD requirements are completed.
- **Coordinators** whose CPD has expired may have their access removed from the Rainbows Coordinator Dashboard until CPD requirements are met.

Responsibility for maintaining CPD rests with each individual Facilitator and Coordinator.

Facilitator Training Requirements

Initial Training

All Facilitators must successfully complete the Rainbows Ireland **4-Day Facilitator Training Programme** before engaging in direct work with children and young people.

Ongoing Continued Professional Development

Facilitators are encouraged to select the CPD pathway that best reflects their level of recent involvement with Rainbows and their current development needs.

Refresher Training

The Refresher Training Programmes are designed for Facilitators/Coordinators who have remained active within Rainbows and wish to maintain their CPD requirements.

This interactive online training:

- Revisits key programme content and facilitation principles.
- Provides updates on programme developments and resources.
- Creates opportunities for discussion, reflection, and shared learning.
- Supports Facilitators/Coordinators in maintaining confidence and competence in their role.

Bridging Training

The Bridging Training Programme is designed for Facilitators who:

- Have not actively facilitated a Rainbows Group for an extended period.
- Have completed Facilitator Training previously but would benefit from additional support before returning to practice.
- Wish to refresh their skills, knowledge, and confidence prior to re-engaging with children and young people.

The programme focuses on reconnecting participants with the Rainbows model, updating knowledge, refreshing facilitation skills, and preparing Facilitators to return to active delivery.

Repeating the 4-Day Facilitator Training

Facilitators who have not been actively involved in Rainbows for a number of years may choose to repeat the full 4-Day Facilitator Training Programme.

This option may be particularly beneficial for individuals whose participation was interrupted during the COVID-19 period or who feel they would benefit from a comprehensive reintroduction to the Rainbows programme. **Anyone who has not**

taken the 4-Day Training since before 2017, must engage in the new 4 Day Training Programme implemented since 2017.

Coordinator Training Requirements

Initial Training

All Coordinators must complete the Rainbows Ireland Coordinator Training Programme before assuming responsibility for coordinating Rainbows services and groups.

Choosing the Most Suitable CPD Pathway

Rainbows Ireland recognises that individuals engage with the organisation in different ways and at different levels.

Facilitators and Coordinators are therefore encouraged to self-select the CPD option most appropriate to their recent involvement and learning needs.

As a guide:

- **Active Facilitators and Coordinators** should normally complete Refresher Training.
- **Facilitators returning after a period of inactivity** should consider Bridging Training.
- **Facilitators returning after several years away from practice** may choose to repeat the 4-Day Facilitator Training.

Where an individual is uncertain about the most appropriate pathway, guidance may be sought from the Rainbows Ireland Head Office team.

Peer Support and Practice Review

All Facilitators and Coordinators are invited to participate in quarterly Peer Support and Practice Review Sessions.

These sessions provide opportunities to:

- Share experiences and learning.
- Discuss challenges and explore solutions.
- Access support from colleagues across the Rainbows Ireland network.
- Reflect on practice and strengthen service delivery.
- Build connections and promote collaborative learning.

Participation is strongly encouraged as part of ongoing professional development.

Trainer Development

Rainbows Ireland Professional Trainers are required to attend the Annual Trainers Event each year.

In addition, Trainers will be informed of relevant CPD opportunities through:

- Bereavement Networks nationwide.
- The Separation Network.
- Other relevant professional development opportunities identified by Rainbows Ireland.

Rainbows Ireland actively participates in sector networks to ensure Trainers remain informed of emerging research, policy developments, and best practice.

Additional Support and Guidance

Rainbows Ireland encourages all Coordinators, Facilitators, and Trainers to seek support from the Head Office team whenever required.

Support may include:

- One-to-one consultation.
- Telephone and online support.
- In-person meetings.
- Guidance on practice issues and group delivery.
- Assistance with programme implementation.

These opportunities allow Rainbows Ireland to learn from the experiences of practitioners and continually strengthen the quality and responsiveness of services offered to children and young people.

Commitment to Quality and Child-Centred Practice

Rainbows Ireland is committed to ensuring that all Coordinators, Facilitators, and Trainers engage in ongoing professional development and reflective practice.

This commitment supports the organisation to:

- Maintain high standards of practice.
- Deliver safe, effective, and consistent services.

- Respond to the evolving needs of children, young people, and families.
- Foster a culture of learning, reflection, innovation, and collaboration.
- Ensure every child and young person participating in a Rainbows Peer Support Group receives the highest quality support possible.

Through this commitment to continued professional development, Rainbows Ireland seeks to uphold excellence in peer support practice and strengthen positive outcomes for the children and young people it serves.