

**RTPI
Advice**



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (PDP)

How to Create a Successful PDP

Registered charity number: 262865
Scottish registered charity number: SC 037841



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

Professional Development Plans

This document offers advice for members and planners to produce a PDP which meets the RTPI's requirements.

This note is a supplement and should be used in conjunction with the PDP guidance which includes advice on how to write and structure a PDP.

Some members and planners may in some situations may feel that they cannot put together a PDP which meets the RTPI's requirements. CPD is a key part of maintaining the high standard of competency and professionalism in the planning profession, whether for those in a senior position, or a young planner getting started. We understand that for some, pressures of leadership roles, financial constraints, location etc, may pose a challenge to completing CPD requirements. However, members in all manner of roles have found it possible to complete their CPD requirements using the PDP strategies outlined below.

There are a variety of opportunities to develop your knowledge, skills, and/or experience to head towards a stated goal in order to produce a successful PDP and to continue your development. Each year you need to write or update your Professional Development Plan (PDP) and carry out and record CPD activities to meet your professional development goals and objectives. At the end of each year, you should reflect on whether the CPD you have undertaken has helped you to meet the goals you set yourself and how well you have met them. CPD is a structured and planned process to help you maintain and improve your excellence, skills, knowledge, and capabilities and is a commitment that **sets you apart** from non-RTPI planners.

There are many sources of CPD available through the RTPI including events/workshops, conferences, webinars, masterclasses, Advice Notes and Research. In addition, you may wish to prepare and deliver training to your colleagues, students and other planners, or mentor other planners to help them in their careers. Volunteering can also be counted as CPD if it is included within your PDP. The RTPI is always seeking volunteers to assist with the [RTPI Nations and English Regions](#), on RTPI committees, as [Assessors](#) of candidates seeking membership of the RTPI or as part of the [Partnership and Accreditation Panel](#) involved in the accreditation of University Planning Schools.

This document covers a variety of scenarios that members, or potential members, may find themselves in and offers ways in which those people may approach the PDP.

- Looking for work
- Parental/Adoption leave
- Retired
- No training budget/other work pressures
- Career break
- Senior staff
- Academics

In all cases you should read the guidance for your application route, or other circumstance, and ensure you are aware of the extra support available on the RTPI website – www.rtpi.org.uk.

Looking for Work

Keeping your CPD up-to-date will make you a more attractive proposition to employers, and there is no reason you cannot do this, and produce a successful PDP, whilst looking for work.

Think about the job you want to be in. What knowledge, skills or experience is your prospective employer looking for? You could include online learning through free and cheap providers, volunteering, targeted reading on particular topics, low cost local RTPI events. Think outside the box – you could also attend consultation events or planning committees in your area.

Parental/Adoption Leave

Members on maternity, adoption, or extended parental leave are exempt from CPD monitoring for six months. This also means that you only need to record 37.5 hours of learning activity in each two-year calendar period (January 1st to December 31st) on your CPD record. Generally, this will be calculated as 18.75 hours per calendar year, but if you have any questions about how this relates to your situation, please contact us to discuss. You must still have a suitable PDP in place.

There are many ways in which you can continue to develop your planning skills – you will need to schedule and plan in order to fit these in around your new responsibilities. Online learning is a good place to start – RTPI Learn has free modules, there are free and paid RTPI CPD events online ([RTPI Events Calendar](#)), as well as free providers of softer skills (public speaking, time management etc.) You can use your keeping in touch days to undertake some CPD, to discuss legislative/procedural changes and, to discuss potential future opportunities. You can also get involved on social media or read the articles in The Planner and the technical press.

Your longer-term plans may not be quite as fully-formed – these would need a contingency plan in case you're not able to get approval or funding for these actions once you return to work.

Retired

Members who have transferred to Retired membership are not required to maintain their CPD or to prepare a PDP under the RTPI's Code of Professional Conduct. However, if a retired member wishes to reinstate their membership, they will need to demonstrate CPD, as well as produce a PDP.

Retired members cannot provide voluntary planning services, due to Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) regulations. However, there are lots of other opportunities available to you; through RTPI Learn, online courses, targeted reading of journals, low-cost events, getting involved with your RTPI Nation or Region, observing/attending planning consultations or committees. By considering your development and adding them to the PDP in a structured way, you'll be able to meet the reinstatement requirements.

No Training Budget/Other Work Pressures

The RTPI offers many free online webinars to members, as well as a subscription to The Planner magazine. While you may therefore work in an organisation where there is no, or limited training budget, this does not stop you from producing a suitable PDP; you simply need to move your focus away from expensive, or resource intensive, events and towards free or low-cost opportunities.

You could also look at work-based learning; could you get new varieties or areas of work in order to develop your knowledge, skills, and experience? Maybe you could spend time in another department, do some job shadowing, get involved in some new projects, lead some CPD events for colleagues on your area/s of expertise.

If your employer is unable or unwilling to support you in undertaking CPD, you will need to do so outside of work hours. This could be during your commute or over the weekend; it is this commitment that sets you apart as a member of the RTPI and the minimum CPD requirement works out at ½ hour per week.

Career Break

Members on a career break are required to maintain their CPD – 50 hours in any 2-year period (which should be undertaken as 25 hours each calendar year – January 1st – December 31st). Producing a PDP to take advantage of any options available to you will help to ensure that this is done.

You could complete some online learning, volunteering, targeted reading, get involved with your RTPI Nation or Regions – there are lots of ways for you to continue to develop your knowledge, skills, and experience, as well as ways to produce a successful PDP. If you are travelling this may require some planning ahead, but it is not insurmountable; you could learn about other planning systems, participate in local CPD events, take tours of facilities or planning schools.

Senior Staff

Those in senior roles may feel that they have come far enough, do not have enough time, or may not believe there are many developmental opportunities available to them. However, those members do need to maintain their development in order to remain up-to-date with their knowledge, maintain their reputation, and to lead from the top by example.

Your goal could include becoming knowledgeable on urgent, cutting-edge issues in planning (like climate change), developing a specialism, becoming even more well-rounded, becoming able to work on new area/s – note that these are all based around personal professional development rather than business development.

In addition, CPD opportunities could include coaching/mentoring ([RTPI Nurture](#)) of staff, spending time in other organisations, courses, [volunteering](#), delivering CPD events – anything where you plan, do, and learn something.

Academics

Members in academia could use their research as a basis for CPD where there is learning for the individual, get involved in professional institute activities such as committee roles or partnership and accreditation boards, internal training, course management responsibilities, teaching, conferences, course & seminars, engage in consultancy activities, become external examiners and more in order to identify and plan professional development.

Anyone can meet the PDP requirements and we encourage you to investigate all the options available to you. Plan, do, learn – focus on what relevant learning you can gain from any source.

**For more information please visit:
www.rtpi.org.uk**



RTPI - Royal Town Planning Institute
cpd@rtpi.org.uk
Tel: 0370 774 9494

Royal Town Planning Institute, 41 Botolph Lane, London EC3R 8DL.
Registered Charity in England (262865) & Scotland (SC037841)