

THE COURT OF JUDICATURE OF NORTHERN IRELAND
TAXING OFFICE

NOTIFICATION REGARDING “THE HOURLY RATE”

1. I have determined that the Solicitors’ Hourly Rate (also referred to as the Broad Average Direct Cost Rate) which will apply in respect of Solicitors’ costs to be assessed on a standard basis, pursuant to an order of the Court directing taxation, will be £155.00 per hour.
2. This rate will apply to Solicitors’ professional time incurred from 1st June 2025. It will not apply retrospectively and for the avoidance of any doubt, the rate which will apply to taxation of costs for work up to and including 31st May 2025, will be the current hourly rate of £102.00.
3. In reaching this determination I have had regard to the guidance of the High Court in Donaldson v EHSSB. My assessment has also been informed by a comprehensive review of the Hourly Rate which was undertaken by a Working Group chaired by Mr Justice McAlinden who *inter alia* considered an independent, evidence-based analysis carried out by BDO NI. I am grateful to the Judge, the Working Group and all those who contributed to what I consider to be a robust, balanced and fair approach to this important issue.
4. The Hourly Rate will be reviewed periodically. Although I consider that an evidenced-based assessment is the most robust way to determine the Hourly Rate, there is a need to consider an appropriate methodology for adjusting the rate to allow for inflation. Further work will therefore be required as to the appropriate index to be used and whether the rate should be adjusted annually, or over an alternative period.
5. In order therefore to provide some certainty for the assessment of costs pursuant to an order for taxation, the rate of £155.00 will apply until 1st April 2027.
6. In line with established practice, the Legal Executive rate will be revised to £116.25, for work undertaken from 1st June 2025. The current rate of £76.50 will continue to apply until 31st May 2025.

7. A fixed sum of £15.50 will apply in respect of items claimed by Solicitors for untimed professional work such as outgoing letters, emails and telephone calls, provided that such items have been reasonably incurred and are properly documented. This fixed sum will be £11.62 where the untimed work is claimed for a Legal Executive.

Dated 29th day of April 2025

JJ MOORE

MASTER (TAXING OFFICE)