PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 06 OF 2026

COURT OF JUDICATURE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

COUNTY COURTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

MAGISTRATES' COURTS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

PRACTICE DIRECTION FOR THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

Application and Scope

This Practice Direction applies to all civil proceedings in the Court of Judicature, County Courts and Magistrates' Courts.

This Practice Direction has effect from 6th January 2027.

Signed this 23rd day of November 2026.



The Right Honourable Dame Siobhan Keegan

Lady Chief Justice of Northern Ireland

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PRACTICE DIRECTION FOR THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

1. Purpose

1.1 This Practice Direction sets out the expectations of the courts of Northern Ireland concerning the responsible use of artificial intelligence ("AI"), including generative artificial intelligence ("GenAI"), in connection with civil proceedings.

1.2 The courts recognise that AI technologies may assist in the efficient conduct of litigation, reduce cost, promote access to justice and support the administration of justice when used appropriately.

1.3 This Practice Direction also recognises that AI systems may generate inaccurate, fabricated or misleading material and may create risks relating to confidentiality, privacy, legal professional privilege and procedural fairness.

1.4 The purpose of this Practice Direction is to:

(a) promote confidence in the administration of justice;

(b) preserve the integrity of court proceedings;

(c) ensure the accuracy of material presented to the courts;

(d) safeguard confidential and protected information;

(e) encourage the responsible use of emerging technologies.

1.5 This Practice Direction comes into operation on 6th January 2027.

2. Fundamental Principle

2.1 Responsibility lies with the person who signs, files, verifies, adopts or relies upon the material concerned. The use of artificial intelligence does not

diminish, alter or transfer responsibility for the verification, accuracy, propriety and/or content of any document, submission, evidence or material placed before the court.

3. Scope

3.1 This Practice Direction applies to civil proceedings in:

(a) the Court of Appeal;

(b) the High Court;

(c) the County Court;

(d) Magistrates' Courts;

(e) all proceedings commenced before or after the commencement of this Practice Direction.

3.2 This Practice Direction applies to:

(a) parties;

(b) legal representatives;

(c) litigants in person;

(d) witnesses;

(e) expert witnesses;

(f) any person preparing, producing or submitting material for use in proceedings.

4. Definitions

4.1 For the purposes of this Practice Direction:

"**Artificial Intelligence**" ("AI") means any machine-based system capable of generating, analysing, processing, transforming, predicting, recommending or otherwise producing information, content or outputs in response to data, instructions or prompts.

"**Public AI System**" means an AI system which is available to members of the public and in which information entered by users may be stored, processed or retained by the provider beyond the control of the user or the organisation using the system.

"**Court document**" includes pleadings, affidavits, witness statements, expert reports, skeleton arguments, written submissions, chronologies, schedules, correspondence intended for the court and any other document relied upon in proceedings, whether in hardcopy or electronic format.

"**Verification**" means taking reasonable steps to satisfy oneself that information, facts, authorities, citations, quotations or other material relied upon is accurate, authentic and appropriate for use in the proceedings.

"Material" means any document, evidence, information, content or other matter which is filed with, lodged before, produced to, disclosed in, presented to, or relied upon in connection with proceedings, whether in hard copy, electronic, visual, audio, audiovisual or any other form. The term includes, but is not limited to, photographs, images, recordings, social media content and other digital communications.

PART A: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

5. Responsibility

5.1 The use of AI does not diminish any duty owed to the court.

5.2 Every party, legal representative, witness and expert remains personally responsible for the accuracy and propriety of material submitted to the court.

5.3 Responsibility for court documents cannot be delegated to an AI system.

5.4 Persons using artificial intelligence in connection with proceedings should have regard to any applicable professional standards, codes of conduct, guidance or directions issued by their regulatory, professional or accrediting bodies. The use of artificial intelligence does not diminish or alter any obligations arising under such standards, codes, guidance or directions.

6. Accuracy and Verification

6.1 Any material generated wholly or partly with the assistance of AI must be independently reviewed and verified before being relied upon in proceedings.

6.2 Verification shall include checking the following, where relevant:

(a) factual assertions;

(b) dates and chronology;

(c) statutory references;

(d) citations and authorities;

(e) quotations;

(f) calculations and numerical information.

6.3 Verification using another AI system alone is not sufficient.

6.4 Verification should be undertaken by reference to authoritative primary or secondary sources.

6.5 Particular care shall be taken to ensure that AI-generated material does not contain:

(a) fictitious cases;

(b) fictitious statutory provisions;

(c) fabricated quotations;

(d) non-existent academic authorities;

(e) inaccurate summaries of genuine authorities;

(f) authorities, procedural rules or statutory provisions from another jurisdiction incorrectly presented as applicable in Northern Ireland.

6.6 AI generated translations should not be relied upon without appropriate qualified human review.

6.7 Verification should include consideration of whether electronic material contains hidden, embedded or machine-readable content capable of affecting the reliability of AI-generated analysis, summaries or conclusions.

7. Risks and Limitations

7.1 Users of AI systems should understand, so far as reasonably practicable, the risks associated with such technologies.

7.2 Such risks include:

(a) factual inaccuracies;

(b) hallucinated content;

(c) bias;

(d) incompleteness;

(e) data leakage;

(f) confidentiality breaches;

(g) loss of privilege;

(h) manipulation of images, audio or video.

7.3 Fabricated or manipulated evidence, including "deepfake" material, must never be tendered to the court.

PART B: COURT DOCUMENTS

8. Pleadings

8.1 Parties and legal representatives using AI in the preparation of pleadings remain responsible for ensuring that:

(a) pleaded facts are accurate;

(b) legal claims are properly arguable;

(c) authorities relied upon exist and support the propositions advanced.

9. Skeleton Arguments and Written Submissions

9.1 Any person using AI in the preparation of submissions must independently verify all:

(a) authorities;

(b) quotations;

(c) statutory references;

(d) procedural references.

9.2 The court may require disclosure of the nature and extent of AI use where concerns arise regarding accuracy.

PART C: EVIDENCE

10. Witness Statements and Affidavits

10.1 A witness statement or affidavit must reflect the witness's own knowledge, recollection and evidence.

10.2 AI must not be used to generate, embellish, strengthen, dilute or materially rephrase substantive evidence.

10.3 Unless the court otherwise directs, every witness statement and affidavit shall contain the following declaration:

> "I declare that any use of Artificial Intelligence in the preparation of this document has been consistent with my personal responsibility to verify the accuracy of its contents. I declare that this document is accurate and reflects my own knowledge, recollection and evidence."

10.4 The use of AI for administrative functions such as formatting, transcription, spell-checking or pagination does not require disclosure. Where AI has materially contributed to substantive drafting, legal analysis, legal research, generation of citations or summaries users should be prepared to disclose the nature and extent of such use if required by the court.

11. Expert Evidence

11.1 An expert report must reflect the expert's own opinion, expertise and reasoning.

11.2 Every expert report shall contain a declaration in the following terms:

"I declare that, except as expressly disclosed in this report, Generative Artificial Intelligence has not been used to generate the substantive opinions expressed herein, which reflect my own expertise, analysis and conclusions."

11.3 Where AI has materially assisted in the preparation of an expert report, the expert shall disclose:

(a) the nature of the AI used;

(b) the purpose for which it was used;

(c) the extent of its use;

(d) the steps taken to verify the output.

11.4 Such disclosure shall be sufficient to permit the court to assess the reliability, independence and evidential weight of the opinion.

PART D: CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE

12. Confidential Information

12.1 Persons using artificial intelligence in connection with proceedings must remain mindful of their obligations relating to confidentiality, legal professional privilege, data protection and the lawful processing of personal information, including, but not limited to, obligations arising under the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The use of artificial intelligence does not diminish or alter those obligations.

12.2 Unless satisfied that adequate safeguards exist, no person shall upload to a public AI system:

(a) documents obtained on discovery or disclosure;

(b) material subject to an implied undertaking;

(c) documents produced under court order;

(d) legally privileged communications;

(e) confidential personal information;

(f) material subject to anonymity or reporting restriction orders.

12.3 Particular caution should be exercised in proceedings involving:

(a) children;

(b) protected parties;

(c) vulnerable witnesses;

(d) family proceedings;

(e) protected information arising from criminal proceedings.

13. Predictive Coding and Technology-Assisted Review

13.1 This Practice Direction does not prohibit the use of predictive coding or technology-assisted review and recognises that, in appropriate cases, their responsible use may be beneficial.

13.2 Parties using such technology remain responsible for the identification, review and disclosure of relevant material.

13.3 The court may require parties to explain the methodology employed and the steps taken to ensure the reliability of the process.

PART E: LITIGANTS IN PERSON

14. Self-Represented Litigants

14.1 This Practice Direction applies equally to litigants in person.

14.2 Litigants in person owe the same duties of verification, accuracy, candour and honesty to the court as represented parties.

14.3 Reliance upon AI does not excuse non-compliance with procedural rules or court orders.

14.4 A litigant in person who files, submits or relies upon material generated wholly or partly by AI is responsible for that material as if it were their own. They should not rely upon material which they do not understand or are unable, if required, to explain to the court. The fact that material was generated by AI,

or prepared with the assistance of a third party, does not relieve the litigant of responsibility for its content, accuracy or relevance.

PART F: CASE MANAGEMENT AND SANCTIONS

15. Disclosure of AI Use

15.1 The court may, where it considers it necessary for the fair disposal of the proceedings or the proper administration of justice, direct a party, witness, expert or legal representative to disclose:

(a) whether AI was used;

(b) the nature and extent of such use;

(c) the verification undertaken.

15.2 Any person relying upon AI-generated material shall be expected to provide such information if directed by the court.

15.3 Where a party identifies a potential issue with the accuracy or reliability of material provided by another party, whether or not arising from the use of Generative AI, the issue should first be raised with that party and, if not satisfactorily addressed within a reasonable period, brought to the attention of the court. Where the court has reason to believe that a litigant in person may not understand material filed or relied upon in their name, the court may require that person to identify the source of the material and to explain its substance and relevance to the proceedings.

15.4 Where a party identifies, or is informed of, an issue with the accuracy or reliability of its own material, it should notify the other parties and the court without delay and take appropriate steps to correct the material.

15.5 Nothing in this Practice Direction affects the application of legal professional privilege or any other applicable protection from disclosure.

16. Non-Compliance

16.1 Failure to comply with this Practice Direction may result in:

(a) rejection of documents;

(b) exclusion of evidence;

(c) adverse costs orders;

(d) wasted costs orders;

(e) referral to a professional regulator;

(f) striking out of a claim or defence;

(g) such further order as the court considers appropriate.

16.2 Misuse of AI may be taken into account when exercising case management powers or determining costs.

16.3 Compliance with this Practice Direction does not relieve any person of obligations imposed by law. Misuse of artificial intelligence in connection with court proceedings may, in appropriate cases, give rise to criminal liability, contempt proceedings, professional disciplinary consequences or other sanctions available to the court.

17. Review

17.1 Given the rapidly developing nature of AI technologies, this Practice Direction shall be kept under regular review and may be amended from time to time.