

The Diary of a Trainee Solicitor

I am now over halfway through my training contract at the firm, so this is the perfect time for me to share my experience as a trainee solicitor so far.

There are various pathways to become a solicitor, but all journeys to qualification require extensive study and examinations followed by a two year training contract. This contract involves gaining practical experience in various areas of law.

My route into law was unorthodox. I completed a politics degree before undertaking a law conversion course, known as the Graduate Diploma in Law. This qualification gave me the equivalent of an undergraduate law degree which is a prerequisite to complete the mandatory post-graduate Legal Practice Course. The route to qualification has recently changed so this may be slightly different now.

The firm offers a comprehensive legal service which has allowed me to learn from and work with experienced solicitors across a wide variety of practice areas. I have experienced three departments so far which have all been extremely rewarding.

Residential Conveyancing

Not only did I start my training contract in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Stamp Duty Land Tax holiday also meant the property market was at its busiest for years. The department was therefore extremely busy, and, although challenging at times, allowed me to improve my time management skills and ability to work under pressure.

I took an active role in the sale and purchase process for a number of clients and gained valuable insight into the role of a conveyancing solicitor. Activities of particular note included registering new purchases with the Land Registry, ordering searches, drafting documents, and keeping clients updated with the progress of their matter.

Family Law

I gained insight into the sensitive and often emotive work of a family law solicitor. No family law matter is the same and requires not only a detailed understanding of the facts, but also an awareness of the client's emotional state in what can often be a stressful time.

I completed a wide variety of tasks in this department including attending Court for the first time to witness a final hearing involving a child arrangements application. Further to this, I attended client interviews, drafted divorce applications, and helped to analyse financial information in readiness to advise clients in settlement negotiations concerning financial remedy proceedings on divorce.

Private Client

This department was the busiest so far and provided me with the opportunity to observe numerous client meetings. I gained experience in many areas including drafting Wills, drafting Lasting Powers of Attorney and providing tax advice. I also gained insight into the initial stages of administering a deceased's estate.

My biggest highlight, however, was being given the opportunity to lead a client interview and subsequently draft their Wills. This has certainly given me a confidence boost and added determination to develop my skills further before qualifying later on this year.

Litigation

I have recently started work in this department and look forward to gaining experience in helping to resolve a wide variety of disputes between individual and commercial clients.

Unlike my experiences so far, litigation will offer an insight into contentious areas of law, and I am looking forward to the new challenges that this will bring.

I would like to thank the firm for their mentoring and guidance provided so far and I look forward to continuing to broaden my knowledge and experience during the remainder of my training contract.

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