

junior lawyers northants & bucks

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TRAINEE SOLICITOR

If you are thinking about training to be a solicitor then you may well be speculating about what your training contract will be like and how your life may change as a result of it. No doubt you will be apprehensive about beginning your training and will have many questions. What kind of work will I be given? Will I fit in? What kind of help and support will I receive? Unfortunately, there is no straightforward answer to these questions. Much will depend on what firm you are training with and what seats you are undertaking. For example, if you are in a crime seat you may well be out and about at court and the police station and not see the office for days on end. However, if you are in a commercial property seat you will probably not leave your office for work purposes at all.

I am undertaking my training in a medium sized regional firm. Having completed both contentious and non-contentious seats, I am currently working in the commercial department. The work involves both corporate and general commercial matters and a typical day for me is as follows:

7.15-7.30 AM – I leave for work. Having a bit of music on in the car or the Chris Moyles show really wakes me up!

8.30 ish – 9.00 AM – I arrive at work and log onto the computer. There are usually a number of e-mails to sort through from various clients. I consider them and where appropriate, send replies. Sometimes, there will be things that cannot be dealt with straight away but it is always good to send the client a reply to acknowledge their e-mail and give them an indication of time.

I work closely with my supervisor on his files and am copied in on all e-mails sent to and by him. When there is a business or share sale we work closely with the property and employment team and all e-mails are copied from them as well. This is great way of learning, as well as keeping up to date with everyone working on the deal.

9.00-9.30 AM – I usually have a meeting with my supervisor and much of what happens from here on will depend on how busy he is and the general amount of work we have in the department. My supervisor will update me on the work he will be doing and will ask me what I have on. He then tells me what he wants me to concentrate on for the morning.

Sometimes there will be client meetings in the morning. However, I will always have notice of them and a chance to prepare. I am lucky in that my supervisor involves me in the majority of his work and therefore, I will attend all his client meetings as well.

9.30-12.30 AM – We have two share sales and one business sale this month. I have been spending the majority of my time working on the disclosure elements of these deals whilst my supervisor negotiates the sale purchase agreements. I spend the morning working on a disclosure letter, checking some contracts of employment and beginning a report on the disclosure for the client. During the morning my supervisor receives a call from the other side regarding the sale purchase agreement and calls me in to his office so that I can listen in on the call and keep up to date on the negotiations.

12.30-13.00 – I have a meeting with my supervisor and we discuss the work I have been doing. He updates me on the work he has done on the sale purchase agreement and explains the amendments he has made to it along with the reasons as to why they were necessary. We discuss what needs to be done next and arrange a meeting in the afternoon so that he can check my work before it goes out.

13.00 – 14.00 – Now the very important question of what to have for lunch! Will there be a sneaky treat involved or will I be good and take the healthy option? The ability to make good decisions is a very important skill that all trainees should aspire to.

14.00 - 15.30 – I complete my amendments to the disclosure letter that I was working on this morning and finish the report for the client. I then begin to draft a completion agenda for another deal that is due to complete at the end of the week. I will need to draft the accompanying documents to go with it, such as board minutes, forms for filing at Companies House, director resignation letters and stock transfer forms.

15.30 –16.00 – I receive an e-mail from a client with his comments on the memorandum and articles of association which I drafted and sent to him earlier in the week. I review the file and draft a reply.

16.00 – 16.30 – I have a meeting with my supervisor and he checks my before it goes out in the post. He may suggest amendments that should be made before it is sent out. If amendments are made, it does not always mean that something is wrong or a mistake has been made. Sometimes, of course, trainees will make mistakes and that is part of our learning curve, but it may just be a question of style or adding something extra.

16.30-17.30 – The post goes at 17.00 so everything that needs to go out has to be ready by then. Once everything has gone out in the post I continue to work on the completion agenda and supporting documents for the deal that is due to complete at the end of the week.

17.30-17.45 – I have a quick review of my files and prepare myself a list of things to do and check in the morning. I leave work more or less on time today but this won't always be the case when there are completions taking place. There will be a late night at the end of the week when our first deal completes. The question now is whether I will go home and relax in front of the television, venture out to a public house with friends or endure some self inflicted pain at the gym!