

ELDRIDGES
SOLICITORS

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CAREERS IN LEGAL SERVICES

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ESTABLISHED 1832

WHY CHOOSE A CAREER IN LEGAL SERVICES?

Developing a career in the legal sector can provide an intellectual challenge. Lots of people are drawn to this field because of the opportunity to make a positive impact on society. Solicitors often play key roles in shaping policies, defending rights and promoting justice.

The legal sector offers a variety of career paths, from corporate law to criminal justice, and intellectual property to international law, as well as roles in administration and finance. This diversity allows people to find a role that suits their interests and skills. When choosing any job, it is important to prioritise your skills, passion, and goals to make your decision.

Choosing a career in legal services is as much about your own interests and goals as it is about what is in demand, and if becoming a solicitor is your goal, there are many ways to qualify. The most well-known route is to obtain a law degree and secure a training contract with a law firm, but it isn't the only route anymore. More modern ways to become a solicitor include degree conversion courses for those who have achieved a degree in another field, and on-the-job training opportunities, such as apprenticeships and CILEx.

While it's not the case for everyone, some areas of law are known for being particularly well paid if you are prepared to work long hours in a corporate environment.

YOUR SKILLS AND STRENGTHS

It's important to play to your skills and strengths when narrowing down your choices. If you have strong mathematics and administrative skills, then you may enjoy a role in administration, finance, risk and compliance or a legislation-heavy specialism such as tax law. If you possess strong foreign language and people skills, then a specialism like immigration law or mediation may be more for you.

YOUR GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

As with any career, it's important to consider what your goals and expectations are for the role. For example, is working in a big firm important to you, or are you looking for something smaller and more personal? Do you want to prioritise your work-life balance over a high-profile position? Is stability a priority for you over challenge and excitement?

Key attributes of someone developing their career in the legal sector include:

- **ANALYTICAL SKILLS**
- **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**
- **RESEARCH SKILLS**
- **PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS**
- **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**
- **ETHICS**
- **RESILIENCE AND STAMINA**
- **ATTENTION TO DETAIL**

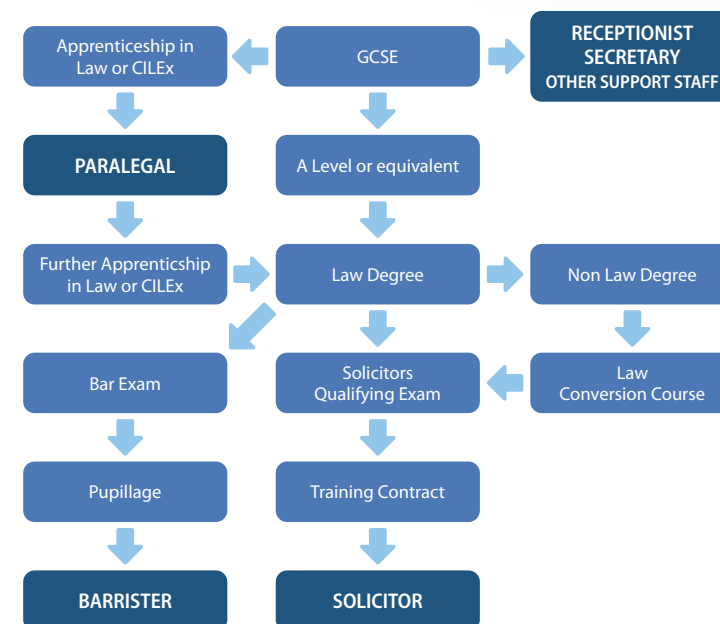
Does this describe you? If so, maybe you should consider a career in the legal sector. Whatever your career path and goal, understand how your education can help you get there.

See below

TEN CAREERS IN LAW FIRMS

1. Receptionist
2. Archivist
3. Administration Assistant
4. Secretary/Legal Assistant
5. Paralegal
6. Legal Cashier
7. Licensed Conveyancer/ Legal Executive
8. Solicitor
9. Accounts Manager
10. Practice Manager

More details overleaf



RECEPTIONISTS

Receptionists are the face of the business. They are the first stop for clients, whether that be face-to-face or answering phone calls and emails. Strong interpersonal skills are expected for this position along with the ability to organise and prioritise. Receptionists are often tasked with photocopying documents and identifying clients in line with the firm's GDPR and Anti Money Laundering Procedures, ensuring documents and post are handled securely, and delivered to the relevant members of staff swiftly.

ARCHIVISTS

Archivists are responsible for the storage of deeds, wills, securities and files to ensure compliance with GDPR and maintaining accurate recordings so that nothing is lost.

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANTS

Administration Assistants offer support across the firm. They may be allocated to support a particular fee earner or department, but in small firms these individuals often gain the most experience across the firm, giving them access to knowledge in all areas of law by covering reception where necessary, preparing court bundles, file opening procedures and generally assisting the secretaries to ensure smooth operation and compliance with our regulators. Administration roles within any firm are a great way to explore the legal sector to work out what interests you most.

All of these are entry level jobs where experience in the profession wouldn't be insisted upon, however GCSE maths and English would be necessary. Working any of these roles may lead to an opportunity to move into a secretarial, accounts or risk and compliance position.



BRIDIE GLEN

Bridie joined the firm as an administration assistant in 2023. Bridie was studying law with the Open University and showed vast potential to develop with the firm. After several months assisting with admin, we were able to offer Bridie a secretarial position supporting a director. Naturally this role actively enhanced her learning experience and she was promoted to paralegal. Bridie is now studying for the Solicitors Qualifying Exam (SQE) and when she passes she will be a qualified solicitor.

SECRETARIES/LEGAL ASSISTANTS

Secretaries/Legal Assistants are responsible for supporting fee earners in managing clients' expectations in person, by phone and by email, they prepare letters and other legal documents, manage diaries, and assist with compliance obligations. Firms look for individuals with strong interpersonal skills, and an aptitude for organisation, prioritisation, and attention to detail. Experience in a similar administration role is often beneficial when applying for a job. An opportunity to complete paralegal training may be offered to the right candidates.

PARALEGALS

Paralegals usually bear the responsible of all of the above and some may even manage a small caseload of their own. They are able to perform more difficult tasks such as drafting legal documents and meeting with clients to take instructions. Experience in a secretarial role, a law degree, or another degree coupled with a desire to complete further legal training is usually beneficial to obtaining a position in a law firm. Paralegals often continue remote learning to further their careers as Legal Executives or Solicitors.



LORA COOMBES

Lora joined the firm in 2020 with no legal experience. She worked as an administrator for the firm for a couple of years before stepping into a secretarial role. Lora completed her paralegal training last year and now supports Kyle Cooper in a very busy family and litigation department. Lora has a degree in psychology and hopes that she will be able to do a Law conversion course in the future and sit the SQE to become a solicitor.



LICENCED CONVEYANCER/LEGAL EXECUTIVES

Licensed Conveyancer/Legal Executives usually have their own case load supervised by a solicitor. They are not solicitors, but they hold qualifications that are recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority.



PAULA GRIFFITHS

Paula joined Eldridges in 2018 as a legal assistant. With several years of administration experience, it was clear she was capable of managing her own caseload, and she obtained a Diploma in Law with the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX) CPQ. She is now a higher level paralegal managing her own portfolio of residential conveyancing cases and expanding her knowledge by assisting with Private Client matters such as Wills and Probate.

SOLICITORS

Solicitors have completed a law degree, the LPC or SQE, and worked for a minimum of two years in legal practice on a training contract. They manage their own caseload and as their experience increases, they may start to be given additional responsibilities such as training others.



KYLE COOPER

Kyle completed his Law Degree at Oxford Brookes University, and his Masters at the University of Law (Reading). He approached Eldridges with the hope of obtaining a position as a paralegal and eventually to secure a training contract. Kyle qualified as a Solicitor with us in 2022 and he now works in the family and dispute resolution department specialising in family matters and contentious probate. Kyle's calm and practical approach to legal matters makes him an excellent candidate to deal with complex matters and also those that tend to be emotionally charged.

Administration roles can lead to positions in Accounts, Human Resources and Risk and Compliance or management.

LEGAL CASHIERS

Legal Cashiers are responsible for compliance with the Solicitors Accounts Rules which regulate the way firms deal with client money and office money. Legal cashiers process the financial transactions involved in property sales and purchases, estate accounts, petty cash, and invoices both in and out, to name a few. This role would suit someone with a relevant qualification in business management or finance and could lead to accounts manager or practice manager roles in the future. The Institute of Legal Cashiers and Administrators offer remote learning specific to the Solicitors Accounts Rules at diploma level.

ACCOUNTS MANAGERS

Accounts Managers are responsible for overseeing smooth operation in the accounts department, and ensuring compliance with the Solicitors Accounts Rules at all times. They usually manage budgets, cash flow and debt recovery for the firm.

HR MANAGERS

HR Managers look after staff wellbeing in the firm and oversee Health and Safety, payroll and the firm's obligations to comply with employment law.

PRACTICE MANAGERS

Practice Managers deal with general operations across the practice including arranging utility contracts, various insurance, software and IT contracts. They liaise with individuals across the firm to ensure each department and role is compliant with the relevant regulations and accreditations, and that certifications are kept up to date.



JONI ADE

Joni studied a business administration apprenticeship in Legal services at the IOW Council. She progressed into private practice where she completed a diploma course with the Institute of Legal Finance and Administration (ILFM) and became a legal cashier. With 20 years of experience in legal practice, Joni is now a director of Eldridges where she manages the finance, risk, compliance and HR.

COMPLIANCE OFFICERS

Compliance Officers are individuals tasked with roles for overseeing compliance in specific areas of regulation. These roles are compulsory for all law firms and they are often held by the most experienced managers in the firm as they have key responsibilities to regulators, and often have fines and even sentences attached if found to be non-compliant. The roles are:

- Money Laundering Regulation Officer (MLRO)
- Compliance Officer for Legal Practice (COLP)
- Compliance Officer for Legal Finance (COFA)

Experience in a legal practice can lead to opportunities to further your career and become a Judge, Lecturer of Law or Specialist Law Consultant.



IAN BRADSHAW

Ian went to Exeter University and obtained a degree in Politics before attending the College of Law in Guildford to obtain a degree in Law. Having completed the LPC (Legal Practice Course) and his training contract with another local firm he qualified as a solicitor in 2010 gained several years of knowledge and experience and finally joined Eldridges in January 2021 where he has established himself as a senior director.

AREAS OF LAW

- Company/Commercial
- Employment
- Family
- Human Rights/Constitutional Law
- Criminal Law
- Intellectual Property (IP)
- Sport
- Technology, Media and Telecommunications
- Environment

In addition to specialist areas within many fields, including International Law, Tax Law, Maritime Law, Immigration Law, Competition Law and Animal Law.

Opportunities to gain experience and knowledge of the profession.

WORK EXPERIENCE

A work experience placement allows you to develop practical skills and knowledge that are valuable in the workplace. They are short placements, usually a few days or up to a week, that are normally organised through your school and help you explore different career paths and industries, potentially leading to a better understanding of your interests and strengths. Employers often value work experience, as it demonstrates your ability to perform specific tasks and contribute to a team.

LEGAL INTERNSHIP

This is a great way to get some professional legal experience and develop the practical skills that will be needed to become a lawyer and compliment your studies. Legal internships last longer than most other forms of work experience and can range from a month to a year, so arranging one is a great idea for those who are taking a gap year or looking for a summer placement.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION APPRENTICESHIPS

This is a practical, work-based route for young people to gain administration experience if they are interested in a legal career. It combines paid employment at a law firm with studying for formal qualifications. It offers an alternative to studying at university and can put you in good stead for further courses and learning opportunities to achieve roles in any of the areas of legal practice.

ABOUT ELDRIDGES

Eldridges Solicitors has been a trusted name in legal services on the Isle of Wight for over 190 years. At Eldridges, we have continued to support the local community and beyond by providing our clients with highly specialised legal advice; tailored to each client in order to meet their specific needs. We understand that one size does not fit all, and neither should the legal advice that you receive.

At Eldridges, we have continued to invest in our people, as we recognise that our team is our most valuable asset. Our team's extensive range of legal knowledge and diverse expertise means that we are able to assist you or your business on a variety of matters.

We pride ourselves on not only our high standards of professional service but also in our personable approach to you and your matter. We understand that for many clients, requiring a solicitor can be a stressful time and our team will reassure you throughout the matter, ensuring all processes are explained in an uncomplicated and straightforward manner.

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USEFUL LINKS

Eldridges Solicitors	www.eldridges.co.uk
CILEX Chartered Institute of Legal Executives	www.cilex.org.uk
BPP	www.BPP.com
University of Law	www.law.ac.uk
ILFM Institute of Legal Finance and Management	www.ilfm.org.uk
HTP Apprenticeships	www.htp.ac.uk
Isle of Wight College	www.iwcollege.ac.uk
The Open University	www.open.ac.uk
National Association of Paralegals	www.nationalparalegals.co.uk

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