



From PA to HR – Interview with Emma Starmer

We have been talking to some of our colleagues who have been with the firm for over 20 years to celebrate their achievements and find out more about their journey with LA.

This month, we caught up with [Emma Starmer](#), Senior Employment Law and HR Advisor. Emma has had a diverse career with LA over the past 24 years, having worked in several roles in both fee-earning and business support teams.

When did you join the firm and in what role? How has your role changed over the years?

I joined LA back in August 1997! My role has changed a huge amount during that time, and I have been fortunate enough to work in a variety of different teams in both fee earning and support roles. I joined the firm as a Personal Assistant, supporting a team of partners and associates.

The role of PA was very traditional at that time, and I was often required to take lengthy shorthand minutes in meetings and type up dictation from the old-style tape system. Diary management was very paper-based – things have certainly moved on, and the role of PA is very different now.

After a couple of years as a busy PA, and having helped out the Personal Injury team on a few occasions, I was asked to join their team as a Trainee Legal Executive. This gave me a chance to work as a fee earner and gain legal qualifications at the same time – back then that meant a lot of face to face lectures at college in the evenings. LA was supportive of my studies (thank you to everyone who lent me their books and their knowledge at that time!).

I have always been interested in working with people and supporting colleagues, particularly those who are beginning their careers or moving to a new specialism, and after a few years in PI doing a mixture of interesting casework, I was given the chance to move into LA's own HR team. I really enjoyed generalist HR work and decided to continue studying in the evenings to combine legal and HR qualifications, going on to become a member of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives and a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

The HR team at LA are busy and the work is extremely varied. I progressed through the HR team, becoming LA's Head of HR for four years and more recently Senior HR Business Partner, involved in more project-based HR work.

My current role within the [Employment](#) team enables me to use my HR and legal knowledge in a client-facing role, which is, again, rewarding and gives a different perspective on issues.

How have you seen Lester Aldridge change since you joined?

LA has grown, changed and adapted so much over the years and we have opened new offices and created new specialist teams. However, I have never felt that LA changed merely for change's sake, and has always remained a supportive and friendly firm. Some really positive moves have been in our equality and diversity initiatives, and in our support of mental health and wellbeing.

How has technology changed over the years and how has this impacted your role?

Technology has moved on tremendously since I joined the firm, and has enabled tasks to be done far more efficiently, and from anywhere. Email has become much more widely used too.

The focus more recently has been on remote technology, and I am pleased to say that I am comfortably able to type this from my spare room!

What is the proudest moment from your career at Lester Aldridge?

I have many moments that I could comment on here, but I think it has to be my involvement in recruitment at all levels of the firm, and in my involvement in our graduate recruitment scheme. I have been so proud to see interviewees join the firm and progress their careers, and see trainees that I have brought into the firm become partners now successfully leading teams. There are many individuals confidently operating at various levels of the firm who I first met as nervous students at either school or university law fairs many years ago!

What's your favourite part of the job?

My favourite part of my current job is helping support clients with their queries, and as a team be able to reach solutions for them. I have enjoyed learning from experienced specialist lawyers and seeing how various different industries operate.

Describe what LA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or

less.

I have grown up with LA! They encouraged and supported me to further my career.