



An Interview with Lester Aldridge's New Chair – Suki Samra

Real estate partner [Suki Samra](#) joined Lester Aldridge as a trainee solicitor 22 years ago and was [recently elected as the firm's new chair](#). We caught up with Suki to find out more about his career at Lester Aldridge.

What is your role at Lester Aldridge?

I currently head up the [Real Estate](#) Bournemouth team which incorporates our [Lender Services](#) team.

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

I joined the firm on 6 September 1999 as a trainee solicitor on the same day as our managing partner, Matthew Barrow. I qualified as a solicitor in June 2001, became an associate in 2005 and was promoted to partner in 2007.

How have you seen Lester Aldridge change since you joined?

LA was a one-office firm with about 180ish people when I started and since then it has almost doubled in size and we now have 3 offices.

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

When I joined LA, we were already using email, although not all clients and law firms were and so fax and post was still the primary way to communicate. Since then, email was used more and more and one of the big advances was the use of BlackBerrys which allowed us to read and reply to emails on the go. The main impact on my role has been the ability to communicate with people in a more efficient way and becoming less reliant on paper.

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

There have been many highlights over the years, some of which are:

- being promoted to partner
- seeing, and hopefully assisting in some way, the development of people at LA
- successfully completing deals for clients
- becoming chair

What's your favourite part of the job?

I enjoy sharing knowledge, training and developing people.

Describe what LA means to you, on a personal level.

It is the people and culture that makes LA a great place to work.

What made you choose to do a training contract at Lester Aldridge?

I had offers for training contracts from firms in London and LA; having studied for my law degree at Kings College in London, I was already ready to move out of London. LA was a reasonable size firm with a good reputation. Also, my partner was a teacher and she didn't want to teach in London!

What seats did you train in?

Litigation, Trusts, Tax and Wills, Planning and Property

Did you always know you wanted to specialise in the area of law you work in now?

I was quite keen on TTW, particularly as I had a really good associate as a supervisor/tutor at the time. However, I always had an interest in property law and worked as a paralegal in residential property at another local firm for

a year before I started my training contract here and ended up doing my third and final seats in real estate, so it was a natural choice to qualify into that team.

If you could go back to when you were a trainee and give yourself one piece of advice, what would it be?

I was very keen to qualify as early as possible and used my experience as a paralegal as time to count to qualify 3 months early; in some respects, I wished I had used that time to experience another area and completed another trainee seat in banking or corporate. Those areas would definitely have helped give me a more rounded trainee experience and benefitted me with the property work I have done since.

What advice do you have for current trainees?

My advice to trainees would be to make the most of all the opportunities available both in and outside of LA. As well as experiencing as many seats as possible, I would also suggest trainees should start to build their business network, including colleagues across the teams within LA and clients and work referrers outside LA. Some of the people you meet during your trainee journey will be the people who turn to you for advice in the future. Just this week I bumped into a local surveyor I met whilst I was a trainee who has consistently referred work to me for the last 22 years; I have referred one or two clients to him too!

Most of all, work hard, play hard and enjoy the experience!

Thank you Suki! Find out more about [working at Lester Aldridge](#).