



Interview with a Trainee Solicitor at Lester Aldridge – Elliot Leadbeater

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Elliot Leadbeater is a second-year trainee solicitor who joined the law firm's training programme in September 2021.

Trainees at Lester Aldridge typically do four six-month seats in a variety of contentious and non-contentious teams. We caught up with Elliot to learn about his training contract experience so far as he begins his fourth and final seat at the firm.

Please share with us your journey into law.

At school, I did not plan to have a career in law. I studied Biology, Chemistry and Psychology at A Level before starting a degree in Biomedical Sciences at the University of Bath. It didn't take me long to realise that life in the lab was not for me, so I re-applied to study Law with Psychology at the University of Southampton the following academic year.

I graduated in June 2020, having spent the final three months of my degree at home thanks to the Covid pandemic. I was offered a training contract at LA at the end of the second year of my degree. I then studied the Legal Practice Course at Bournemouth University from September 2020 to June 2021 (although the course took place entirely online) before being offered a Paralegal role in the Lender Services team starting a week or so after the end of my studies.

Tell us about your career/seats so far at LA

During my training contract, I have completed seats in Lender Services, Real Estate Development and International Private Client. My final seat is in the Commercial Dispute Resolution team. I have already experienced a wide range of legal work during my training contract and learned something different from each seat.

How does the seat system work at LA?

All of the trainees receive an email from the firm's Training Principal outlining what seats are available for the next rotation. We then rank the seats in preference order and provide some brief commentary to explain our rankings. Once the allocation is complete, all of the trainees are notified of their next seat, and then we move teams in the first week of March/September.

What area of law do you enjoy the most / do you hope to qualify into? Has this changed?

I have enjoyed both the property and private client work I have undertaken throughout my training contract so far. I am also looking forward to getting stuck into a contentious area to understand the differences with non-contentious work.

I am due to qualify in September 2023. I am not yet sure what avenue I would like my career to go down – it is a big decision to make!

What attracted you to the Lester Aldridge trainee scheme?

The main thing that attracted me to LA was the wide variety of work that is carried out across the firm. For example, I have undertaken a seat in the firm's niche International Private Client team, a specialism that no other local firms offer to my knowledge.

LA also has a diverse and high-quality client base. As a trainee, I have had the opportunity to work for national house builders, international banks as well as high-net-worth individuals worldwide.

How did you prepare for your trainee solicitor interview?

I read as much as I could about LA on the firm's website. In particular, I focused on LA's core values and history, which gave me an insight into what the firm would expect from its employees.

What's the best thing about training at LA?

The support from your peers. The nature of being a trainee means that you are very unlikely to have all the answers, and you will often find yourself needing assistance. Everybody I have worked with so far has been more than willing to help and invest time in my development. The trainee cohort also provides a great support network outside your immediate team.

How would you describe the culture at LA?

Welcoming. Everyone is respected equally, no matter their role, qualifications and background.

What are the development opportunities like at LA?

LA focuses on promoting from within, and the number of partners trained here is a testament to this. Each year there is a wave of promotions following an application period in which staff can apply for promotion if they feel the time is right. The firm also has a Learning and Development team that provides structured training to staff at all levels.

Do you have tips for trainees just starting their training contracts?

Be patient with yourself. Changing seats can feel like starting a new job every six months, and trainees tend to put pressure on themselves to contribute right away. No matter who you are, learning how a team works and building specific, technical knowledge will take time. All that is expected from you is a willingness to give things a go and an enthusiasm to improve over time.

Learn more about training contracts at Lester Aldridge

More information about training contracts at Lester Aldridge can be found [here](#). The application period for training contracts starting in 2025 is open now, with a deadline of 28th May 2023. The firm also operates a work placement scheme for those interested in starting a career in law.