



HM Courts &  
Tribunals Service

# National Trainee Legal Adviser Scheme

Justice Matters

# Justice Matters

What the courts and tribunals do every day is supremely important. States without justice do not function; the rule of law is one of the things that makes us civilized and lets us live life knowing that there are fundamental underpinnings of fairness.

At HMCTS, we play a crucial role in running of a fair, accessible and efficient justice system. We are responsible for the administration of criminal, civil and family courts and tribunals in England and Wales.

We're always looking to recruit into our exceptional legal team to make a difference. Legal Advisers, across England and Wales have played, and will continue to play, a valuable and vital part in our justice system.

Legal Advisers, across England and Wales have played, and will continue to play, a valuable and vital part in our recovery efforts'.



# What does a Legal Adviser do?

The role of a Legal Adviser is pivotal to the smooth running of the court. Magistrates are unqualified judges drawn from the local community and sit on a voluntary basis.

Magistrates' Courts deal with approximately 95% of criminal cases, 70% of civil cases and 60% of family cases.

As Magistrates do not have a legal background, the legal adviser is required to sit in court with them to advise on legal points, practice and procedure and assist with the formulation and drafting of their reasons.

As a Legal Adviser to magistrates, you are responsible for ensuring that those attending court, whether as defendant, victim or witness are treated with humanity and respect.

Good legal knowledge and the ability to communicate that clearly to magistrates and court users is vital to the courts ability to deal with cases justly.



**Stuart Riley - Trainee Legal Adviser**

*"The role itself is the most challenging thing I have ever done. It has definitely pushed me beyond my limits, which is something I am very grateful for. I learn a new skill every day, I learn something new every day."*

# Fact File - Trainee Legal Adviser

Training: 24 months	Band: HEO	Contract Type: Permanent
Salary: £34,140 pa (National) and £38,661 pa (London)		

## Qualifications required:

Candidates can be currently studying for the appropriate qualifications at the point of application but must be able to evidence their final certification at the point of an offer being made to be able to proceed to appointment. Candidates who cannot evidence the correct certification at the point of offer will be removed from the process.

To be eligible to apply for this post, candidates must have passed the academic stage of qualification to become a barrister in England and Wales, or a solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, or a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX) or CILEX Lawyer by virtue of —

- (i) having passed the necessary examinations; (example of which are listed below)
- (ii) having been granted an exemption in relation to the necessary examinations (example of which are listed below) by the appropriate examining body; or
- (iii) any combination of the two.

By way of example, the following list reflects the currently approved academic qualification routes. If you remain unsure whether your qualifications make you eligible, please email:

HQLegal@justice.gov.uk for clarification:

- The Legal Practice Course (LPC) for Solicitors, or BOTH the SQE1 and SQE2 stages of the Solicitors Qualifying Exam; or
- The Bar Training Course; or equivalent for Barristers; or
- The CILEx Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law and Practice and the CILEx Level 6 Diploma in Law and Practice; or
- The CILEx Graduate Fast Track Diploma; or equivalent for Graduate Membership of CILEx.

(see pages 10 - 11 for more).

# Video Biographies

**Scan the QR codes below** to watch our video biographies.

Hear from **Karnveer**, who discusses his experience being a Trainee Legal Adviser and from **Chris** on his journey from Legal Adviser to his appointment as a District Judge.



**Karnveer Saberwal** - Trainee Legal Adviser



**Judge Chris Williams** - District Judge (Magistrates' Court)

# What's involved in the role?



*“The requirements to become a legal adviser are multi-dimensional, you will develop and increase your legal knowledge in criminal law and procedural law throughout the two year training period.”*

“Before your training is completed you will have observed courts, been supervised in courts before you sit alone with magistrates advising on cases involving offences from minor motoring and TV licensing to serious offences which are ultimately dealt with in the Crown Court.

Whilst supporting you in your training to become a legal adviser within two years, if you have completed the academic stages of your training and wish to progress in completing your professional qualifications such as a through a training contract or FILEX / CILEX Professional Stage of CPQ, we may be able to also support this during your training programme.”

**Peter Curran - Senior Legal Manager (Family)**



*“In becoming a family trainee legal adviser, you will mainly be involved in cases involving children and providing the best possible outcome for them.”*

“You will commence with private law proceedings, dealing with issues such as who the child is to live with, how much time should that child spend with the non-resident parent. You will start at the application stage, learning how to make decisions about which level or judiciary the matter is listed and preparing the necessary order for the first hearing.

You will also be involved in the court proceedings, starting with observations and giving guidance to parties at dispute resolution hearings, encouraging parties to agree the terms of an order in the best interest of their child, and advising the Justices on relevant issues of law and practice and assisting them in giving their reasons for the decision they make.

The next stage is to consider specific issue orders, prohibited steps orders and special guardianship orders, these involve a wider understanding of family law. After a 12 month you should be in a position to take all types of private law cases unsupervised.

During this time, you will have the benefit of a mentor who will guide you through each stage of the process.”

**Dawn Elsbury - Family Legal Manager**



*“The role of a legal adviser is interesting and varied.”*

“As a legal adviser, I am lawyer who gives advice about the law to Justices. I am not on any particular side, my role allows me to assume the role of a judge in applying the law to matters presented in court and ensuring that the law is being applied correctly. I facilitate the legal decision making process by applying a structured approach, identifying legal relevant issues that ought to be incorporated into justices’ sentencing reasons.

I am passionate about law and I feel this role is a perfect fit as it allows me to only focus on the law rather than acting for a particular client. There is a lot of room to learn as the law is constantly progressing. Working in the court room daily has sharpened my negotiating skills and my ability to lead and make tough legal decisions under pressure.

The recruitment process was straightforward and thoroughly explained at every stage. It was all conducted via Teams due covid restrictions at the time, nonetheless, it all went smoothly. Good luck with your applications as HMCTS is a great place to work and every day is surrounded by different learning opportunities. It is very rewarding to be part of an organisation that strives to transform the legal justice system”

**Samantha Sango - Trainee Legal Adviser**

# | How can I apply?

Success Profiles Framework which assesses the behaviours, strengths and potential of candidates. The Civil Service is a diverse and inclusive workplace, and we want to help you demonstrate your full potential throughout the assessment process. You can find more information at [gov.uk/government/publications/success-profiles](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/success-profiles) - We will be testing at Level 3 behaviours on the framework for HEO level.

## Behaviour questions

Behaviours will be assessed at both application and interview stage. When looking at behaviours, we want to get an understanding of the actions/activities you have undertaken in the past which could have resulted in a successful outcome. The qualities required for the role will be described in the job description and the best way to prepare is to have examples from both home or work life demonstrated in the following STAR approach manner outlined below.

## The STAR method

**Situation** - Describe the situation you found yourself in. You must describe a specific event or situation and not provide a general description of your job/skills.

**Task** - We want to understand what task you had to complete and why. Tell us what you tried to achieve from the situation you found yourself in.

**Actions** - What did you do? We will be looking for evidence of what you did, how you did it and why.

Keep the focus on you; what specific steps did you take and what was your contribution? Remember to include how you did it, and the behaviours you used. Try to use "I" rather than "we" to explain the actions you took that led to the result.

**Results** - Don't be shy about taking credit for your behaviour. It may help to provide specific facts and figures. What results did the actions produce? What did you achieve through your actions, and did you meet your goals? Was it a successful outcome? If not, what did you learn from the experience?

Keep the "situation" and "task" parts brief and concentrate on the action and the result. If the result was not entirely successful, describe what you learned and what you would do differently next time. Make sure you focus on your strengths.

## Strengths questions

When looking at your strengths and abilities, we want to find out whether you and the organisation/job role are a good fit. We will look at what you enjoy doing and what you do well and often.

During your interview you will be asked questions to understand whether you have strengths relevant to the job role. It is important to remember that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Do not rehearse your answers because we are looking for your initial response.

Your strengths will be assessed alongside the other elements of the Success Profile to get a more rounded picture of your suitability for the role. The job description will outline the elements required for the role.

## Reserve Lists

If HMCTS receives applications from more suitable candidates than we have vacancies for at this time, we may hold suitable applicants on a reserve list for 12 months for any future Trainee Legal Adviser roles which could be offered to candidates on a reserve list without having to re-apply.

**Please refer to the job advert for details of what behaviours will be tested at application and interview stages**



# Terms, conditions and benefits

## Personal Development

Whatever your role, we take your career and development seriously and want to enable you to build a really successful career with the Department and wider Civil Service. It is crucial that our employees have the right skills to develop their careers and meet the challenges ahead.

At HMCTS you'll benefit from regular performance and development reviews to ensure this development is ongoing. As a Civil Service employee, you'll be entitled to a large range of benefits.

## Equality Diversity and Inclusion

The Civil Service is committed to attract, retain and invest in talent wherever it is found.

To learn more please see the [Civil Service People Plan](#), [Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) at GOV.UK.

## Appointment Term

Permanent

## Location

Various - Nationwide. Travel will be expected across the region and base location could change within a region due to business needs.

## Working Arrangements

This role is available for full time however requests for part time or flexible working arrangements may be considered subject to business needs.

## Pension

Your pension is a valuable part of your total reward package.

We provide you with a competitive contributory pension scheme that you can enter as soon as you join, and where we will make a significant contribution to the cost of your pension. Also, your contributions will come out of your salary before any tax is taken

In extreme cases such as illness or death before retirement, your pension will continue to provide valuable benefits for you and your family. For more details, visit: [www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk](http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk)

## Generous Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Allowance

25 days annual leave on entry, to 30 days after 5 years' service. This is in addition to 8 public holidays.

This will be complimented by one further day paid privilege entitlement to what was previously known as the Monarch's birthday.

With competitive maternity, paternity and parental leave we also recognise the importance of a good work life balance and offer flexible working and a family friendly approach to work.

## Staff Wellbeing

Flexible working including part time or term time working and access to Flexible Working Schemes allowing you to vary your working day as long as you work your total hours

Generous paid maternity and paternity leave

Childcare benefits (policy for new employees as of 5 April 2018): The government has introduced the Tax Free Childcare (TFC) Scheme, so working parents can open an online childcare account and for every £8 they pay in, the government adds £2, up to a maximum of £2000 a year for each child or £4000 for a disabled child. Parents then use the funds to pay for registered childcare.

Existing employees may be able to continue to claim childcare vouchers, so please check how the policy would work for you here.

## **Contracted Hours**

Your contracted hours are 37 hours excluding lunch breaks.

You will be required to work those hours over five days, including Saturdays and Public Holidays and due to the nature of this post you may be required to work additional hours to enable the courts to perform their statutory tasks and duties.

This may be on a rota basis or could be as directed by your management team. You will normally be given a minimum of one weeks' notice if required to work on a Saturday or Bank Holiday but should a business need arise you may be directed without such notice.

## **Training and Development**

The Department offers engaging jobs in work that really matters. These jobs have a direct impact on the quality of public services.

Our roles can offer great job satisfaction. There are many opportunities to develop and progress both within the Department and across the wider Civil Service

To create a more skilled and unified organisation, the Civil Service is developing 10 specialist areas of expertise.

Cross government functions provide professional services and support to departments and supplement the 25 recognised professions within the Civil Service.

We are also committed to investing in our staff and we offer a range of work based training and qualifications, coaching and mentoring opportunities and a guaranteed five days of learning a year.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

If you require any reasonable adjustments to our recruitment process, please let the recruiting manager know. Examples of adjustments include providing documents in large print or braille or, allowing more time for an interview

## **Season Ticket and Bicycle Loan**

Interest free loans allowing you to spread the cost of an annual travel season ticket or a new bicycle

## **Modernised Terms and Conditions**

Civil Servants taking up appointment on promotion will adopt the modernised Civil Service terms and conditions which came in to effect from 1 July 2013.

Existing Civil Servants appointed on level transfer will retain their existing terms and conditions.

## **Place of work and Mobility**

You will be allocated to your work base location that has been agreed between yourself and line manager as part of the recruitment process. This will also be confirmed in the formal contract that you receive.

Your place of work as set out in your contract, relates to your base location for the duration and purposes of training. You will be expected to spend the duration of your training at your agreed base location to fulfil the demands of the training and the business needs in that location.

On completion of training, you will be allocated a base by the Head of Legal Operations and this decision will be based upon business demand and requirements.

# Frequently asked questions

## What qualifications do you need to work as a Trainee Legal Adviser?

To be eligible to apply for this post, candidates must have passed the academic stage of qualification to become a barrister in England and Wales, or a solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, or a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEX) or CILEX Lawyer. For clarification;

The Legal Practice Course (LPC) for Solicitors, or BOTH the SQE1 and SQE2 stages of the Solicitors Qualifying Exam; or

- The Bar Training Course; or equivalent for Barristers; or
- The CILEx Level 3 Professional Diploma in Law and Practice and the CILEx Level 6 Diploma in Law and Practice; or
- The CILEx Graduate Fast Track Diploma; or equivalent for Graduate Membership of CILEx.

## How many hours does a Trainee Legal Adviser work?

Your contracted hours are 37 hours excluding lunch breaks. You will be required to work those hours over five days, including Saturdays and Public Holidays and due to the nature of this post you may be required to work additional hours to enable the courts to perform their statutory tasks and duties.

## Is this role suitable for part time working?

This is a full-time role, 37 hours per week. Requests for part time or flexible working arrangements may be considered where they meet the demands of the role and business needs and are agreed prior to appointment. All applications for part-time, flexible and job-sharing working patterns will be considered in accordance with the MoJ's Flexible Working policy.

## What nationality do I need to hold to apply?

This job is broadly open to the following groups:

- UK nationals
- nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) [gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families](https://gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families)
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

- individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020
- Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service

Further information on nationality requirements (opens in a new window) [gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules](https://gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules).

## Do you offer visa sponsorship?

The MoJ has a skilled worker licence that allows us to sponsor an applicant who meets the qualifying criteria into a qualifying role. Information on details for eligibility for a skilled worker visa can be found here [gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa](https://gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa).

From April 2024, the minimum salary sponsors must pay for a skilled worker visa is a minimum of £38,700 per year. External candidates join MoJ on the Band minima which is currently National £32,827 and London £37,174. Existing Civil Servants are transferred in line with MoJ pay and reward policy.

## Does the role involve travel?

Travel will be expected across the region, and base location could change after completion of the training period dependant on business needs.

### **Can I apply if I am not a civil servant?**

Yes. This role is open to suitably qualified people in the external market and to existing civil servants.

### **Is security clearance required?**

Yes. If successful you must hold, or be willing to obtain, security clearance to DBS level. Certain areas may also require a higher level of SC or DV clearance. More information about the vetting process can be found at the following link: [gov.uk/government/publications/government-baseline-personnel-security-standard](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-baseline-personnel-security-standard)

### **I am having problems submitting my application who do I contact?**

If you have submitted an application or are having issues uploading any documents, and you require assistance please call 0345 241 5359 (Monday to Friday 8am - 6pm) or email [MoJ-recruitment-vetting-enquiries@gov.sscl.com](mailto:MoJ-recruitment-vetting-enquiries@gov.sscl.com) quoting the job reference ID.

### **There are currently Trainee Legal Adviser roles being advertised across a number of different regions. Can I submit applications for more than one region?**

No, only one application should be submitted for your preferred location. The first application will be considered. Any duplicate applications time stamped at a later date and time will be disregarded.

### **What reasonable adjustments can be made if I have a disability?**

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to provide support to all applicants wherever required, to ensure that no one is at a disadvantage during the recruitment and assessment process. Our application form asks if you require any reasonable adjustments and allows you to note these down at application stage, should you wish, alternatively you can notify the recruitment team of any requirements you may have. Reasonable adjustments could include using closed captions or typing questions in the chat in a video interview or ensuring that information is provided in an accessible format.

### **Can I receive feedback on my application?**

Due to the high volume of applications, we are only able to provide feedback to those candidates that make it through to the final interview stages.

### **If I am currently working as a Civil Servant, can I transfer across on the same salary?**

Existing Civil Servants will be transferred in line with the MoJ pay and reward policy.

# Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





# HM Courts & Tribunals Service

---

## HMCTS Careers website

Find out more about HMCTS, our values and the roles available on:

[HMCTSjobs.co.uk](https://hmctsjobs.co.uk)

---

## We are HMCTS

Scan the QR below to see what makes working at HMCTS so rewarding:



---

## HMCTS Careers on social media

Keep up to date on HMCTS careers follow us on Twitter at:

[@HMCTScareers](https://twitter.com/HMCTScareers)