ashfords

A career in law with a difference

Trainee recruitment brochure

Ashfords LLP
ashfords.co.uk

Welcome from our training principal



There are so many factors to consider when choosing the right firm, but above all it's about finding a place where you can learn, develop and build a successful career while being supported by people who genuinely want you to succeed.

At Ashfords, we are passionate about developing future talent. We offer high-quality training, early responsibility and a collaborative culture where trainees are encouraged to get involved, ask questions and make a real contribution from day one.

We are particularly proud of the number of colleagues who joined us as trainees and have gone on to build long and successful careers with the firm. Their journeys reflect our commitment to investing in people and creating opportunities for growth at every stage of a legal career.

I hope this brochure helps you understand more about our culture, our people and the opportunities available at Ashfords, and gives you a sense of what makes our firm such a rewarding place to begin your career.

Laura Reeve | Partner & Training Principal →

About Ashfords

At Ashfords, we believe that our difference lies in our people. The way we work together with our clients, share and support each other's ambitions and celebrate our successes.



An open and friendly culture, where people genuinely enjoy coming to work.



The opportunity to work with our international network of independent law firms, ADVOC, where we can access support in over 70 countries.



The diverse and interesting client base, from private clients to large businesses and PLCs.



Having the ability to work alongside experienced lawyers who are leaders in their field from day one.

Our values

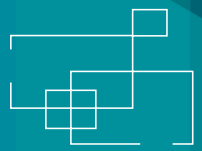
Think Team

Proactively collaborate, share knowledge, insights and opportunities with colleagues and clients.



Be Open

Communicate openly and consistently. Ask questions, share views and opinions. Listen to and respect the opinions of others.



Always Grow

Ensure that we grow ourselves and also support the growth of our colleagues, our clients and the wider community.



Make a Difference

Care about our impact inside and outside of the firm and our role delivering the right results for our clients.



At a glance

Lawyers you can count on to deliver because we care as much as you do about getting the right result. Valued legal partners to a wide range of corporate, public sector and private clients across the UK and internationally.

for calendar year 2025



4 offices in the UK

- Exeter
- London
- Bristol
- Plymouth

70+

countries worldwide

where we can support clients through our international network



Why choose Ashfords

500+

experts collaborating

to support your legal needs



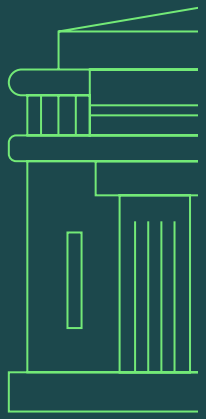
Our expertise

Independently ranked in Chambers based on client feedback

46

lawyers recognised for their expertise

9 practice areas top ranked



Recognised in Legal 500 for the strength and depth of our teams

38 practice areas ranked

25 'Leading Partners'



15% increase in top-tier ranking as we continue to build our expertise

5 consecutive years recognised by the World Trademark review as a leading UK trademark practice





National Law Firm of the Year at Bristol Legal Awards

Helping **150+** businesses to grow through securing finance, mergers or acquisition



ashfords

A responsible business

Securing our next generation of lawyers

24 students on our work experience programmes

£12K provided to support future trainees with SQE studies

25 students taking part in our workshops with specialist partners to widen access to law



Creating a positive work environment

5 active inclusion and wellbeing groups including:

- menopause
- fertility
- neurodiversity
- social mobility
- gender & sexuality

96% of our people would recommend us as a great place to work.

4 category shortlists at the Legal Cheek awards with a win for partner approachability

Supporting our communities

£6k to support the next generation of ocean guardians at Plymouth University's Marine Institution



£10K+ raised for our 'Power of three' charity programme

2 days of volunteering available for every Ashfords employee.

Our training contracts

We offer training contracts based in our South West or Bristol offices, comprising four different seats each of six months' duration. There is flexibility for our trainees to complete seats in different offices if desired and you will gain experience in a range of legal practice areas. We expect our trainees to spend time in both of our core divisions of real estate and business and wealth.

Real work, real responsibility

Our trainees experience real work and are very much part of the team. You will attend meetings and go to court, meet clients and understand the cases you are working on. We believe there's no better way to learn and it provides an excellent start to your legal career. Thanks to our collaborative approach to everything that we do, you will have the chance to learn from some of the best lawyers in the industry.

Investing in you

Your training contract is just the beginning of your journey with us. With a 93% retention rate in 2026, we're proud of the number of people who choose to build their careers at Ashfords. Through structured development, clear career pathways and transparent promotion criteria, we'll support you to achieve your professional ambitions.

Your route to qualification

At Ashfords, we are committed to opening opportunities for everyone. Through our SQE pathway, we will fully fund your preparation course and exam fees, and provide a maintenance grant to support you while you study. Working in partnership with the College of Legal Practice, we ask all future trainees to complete our preferred SQE preparation course through their remote learning programme, helping you develop the knowledge and skills needed for a successful legal career.

A day in the life of a marine trainee



Curious about what a day in the life of a marine trainee solicitor looks like? First seat trainee, Ellena Baker, shares an hour-by-hour insight into the variety, responsibility and unique opportunities that come with working in our marine team.

8:30am – 9:00am →

I arrived at the office and started my day by checking my inbox and preparing my 'to-do' list for the day. Every task I am set is written down in my trusty planner, which I then work through in order of priority, I cannot overstate how important organisation is as a trainee.

9:00am – 11:00am →

I spent the morning running checks on one of the Harbour Revision Orders we have drafted. As these orders will eventually be laid in parliament and made into law, it is important that we complete thorough reviews. I have found attention to detail to be a really important skill in this seat, which I hope will serve me well throughout the rest of my training contract.

11:00am – 11:30am →

I then spent some time reviewing the status of our Harbour Works Licence matters and updating the progress tracker we keep. Alongside the team's harbour legislation work, we also get to support our clients with the projects they or others are completing at their ports and harbours. Often, a Harbour Works Licence, which I would describe as similar to a planning permission, but within the marine environment in ports, is needed to authorise the work required at the site. As a trainee, I have also had the opportunity to have a go at drafting these licences.

A day in the life of a marine trainee

13:30pm – 15:00pm

My supervisor and I spent this time travelling to Cornwall and catching up on firm life. Having been in the firm for nearly six months now, I can completely see why we have won the Legal Cheek 'best law firm for partner approachability' award, no question is too silly and that shows in Ashfords' culture.

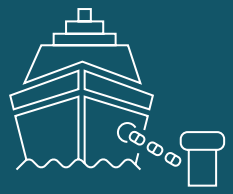
15:00pm – 17:30pm

I was very lucky to get the opportunity to take a boat trip around one of our client's harbours, learning about both their commercial and leisure operations. If you had told me before starting my training contract that I would be spending afternoons on boat trips around a harbour, I wouldn't have believed you! But I am very grateful to have had the opportunity and would say this was a highlight of my marine seat.



Fun fact:

Many harbour laws from the 1800s and 1900s are still in force today and still bind our clients. Reviewing this dated legislation is a typical marine trainee task, and it still surprises me how much the law has changed in the last few decades (both in terms of drafting and subject matter!).



Meet our newly qualified solicitors

Our newly qualified solicitors share their experiences completing their training contracts at Ashfords.



Sophia Jung:

"It's hard to believe that I've reached qualification already. My time as a trainee has been filled with opportunities to learn, grow and take on new challenges and I feel fortunate to have done this while working alongside such supportive colleagues. Looking back on how much I've grown over the past two years, I'm excited to begin this next chapter as a qualified solicitor!"



Connor Sibthorpe:

"I thoroughly enjoyed my training contract experience at Ashfords having been able to learn from some great lawyers and get involved in a varied mix of contentious and non-contentious work spanning corporate, dispute resolution, business risk and regulation, and employment. The experience has allowed me to collect invaluable skills and technical knowledge from different practice areas which have ended up complementing each other well; as a result, I am able to approach my employment work upon qualification through a more informed and holistic lens."



Julia Wojtaszak:

"Looking back on my training contract, I'm incredibly grateful for the experiences and opportunities it has given me. Working in both the Bristol and Exeter offices has shown me the strength of the firm's culture across its locations, and through fundraising challenges such as climbing the Cutty Sark, I've been able to get involved in much more than just legal work. I've learnt from fantastic colleagues, made friends for life and I'm excited to take the next step as a qualified solicitor!"



Abby Munday:

"I have absolutely loved my time as a trainee at Ashfords. Every department was so welcoming and allowed me to engage in such interesting work. It feels very surreal to finally be qualifying but I am so excited to begin my career as a solicitor at Ashfords."



Emily Barker:

"I have really enjoyed my training contract at Ashfords. I have learnt so much and had the opportunity to meet many amazing people. A massive thank you to the banking and finance, restructuring and insolvency, property litigation and commercial and IP departments for all their support and guidance over the past two years. I am now very much looking forward to the next chapter as a qualified solicitor in the Ashfords commercial and IP team."

Life outside the office

There are a lot of chances to maximise the opportunities the firm has to offer. As a trainee, you will:

Join our young business community networking groups.

Assist with key business development initiatives and social events throughout the year.

Play a key role in fundraising opportunities for our charity partners and join our diversity groups.

Get involved with employee led clubs, football, netball, cricket and running.







How to apply for a training contract

There are two different ways to apply for a training contract

Summer scheme:

Our summer scheme route gives you the opportunity to spend a week at either our Exeter or Bristol office, experiencing three different departments over the course of the week. You'll also complete an assessment centre as part of the scheme, giving both you and the firm the opportunity to explore whether Ashfords is the right fit for your future career.

Assessment centre day:

We also have an 'assessment centre only' option for those who want to apply directly for a training contract. Our assessment centre tests your skills across a range of areas and includes a written exercise, a presentation and a partner interview.



Key dates

1 November 2026
Applications open

31 March 2027
Application deadline

April/May 2027
Complete an online cognitive ability test followed by video screening questions

June 2027
Attend an Ashfords summer scheme or assessment centre day

August 2027
Offers made

More than just work experience

We have carefully designed our summer scheme to ensure that you will gain exposure to a variety of practice areas, whilst also having the opportunity to meet our people from across the business, experience our unique culture and develop your understanding of our approach to client service.

Networking opportunities



Workshops



Assessment centre



Real trainee work



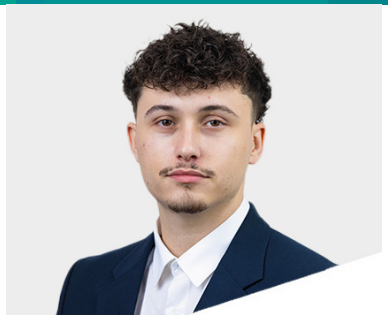
Q&A sessions



100% of attendees said they would recommend an Ashfords summer scheme to a peer.

> "The summer scheme was a genuinely enjoyable experience and I gained a completely different perspective into the culture and work that a legal career entails. The scheme also helped me become more aware of what different firms can offer and reaffirmed that exciting work can be done outside the city."
>
> **Summer scheme attendee**

An insider's view: hear from a summer scheme attendee



Billy, now a trainee at Ashfords and a former summer scheme participant, shares his experience.

What work did you get involved with on the vacation scheme?

Each department had pre-prepared task bundles for me to work through, providing detailed insights into the types of task and real-life work they handle.

Commercial litigation: I delved into cases and worked on tasks relating to dispute resolution. It was fascinating to see how the team navigates complex legal issues and finds innovative solutions for clients.

Wills, trusts and estate planning: Here, I built an understanding of the legal processes involved in managing and distributing assets.

Corporate department: I was given an insight into mergers and acquisitions, commercial transactions and marine law.

Was the vacation scheme what you expected?

The scheme completely surpassed my expectations. The quality of work provided was outstanding, it enabled me to gain a realistic and in-depth insight into the life of a trainee solicitor.

Trainees, partners and other members of the firm were always available to answer questions, provide feedback and offer their expertise. Their willingness to share knowledge and guide me made a significant impact on my experience. I felt welcomed, valued and encouraged to learn and grow in an inclusive environment.

What's the most important thing you learnt about the firm while on the scheme?

Definitely Ashfords' focus on its people, while I'd gathered this from the firm's website, experiencing it in person truly reinforced it. Ashfords stands out as the most welcoming firm I've ever visited. Team members were always ready to assist one another and share their knowledge.

LawCareers.net

Ready to apply?

Click the link to begin your journey with Ashfords

Careers →

Any questions?



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