

ashfords

**INVESTING
IN YOUR FUTURE**



YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE - WE'RE THINKING ABOUT YOUR CAREER.

At Ashfords, we understand the importance of making the right choice when it comes to your training contract. I hope that the pages to follow offer you an insight into our unique culture, our approach to working and how these elements shape the Ashfords Training Contract experience.

From our achievements and values to the support you will receive as a Trainee Solicitor, there are many reasons why we could be the right firm for you.

Read on to decide for yourself...



Kerry

Kerry Morgan-Gould
Partner & Training Principal



WHY 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 makes us feel like a very different law firm

We thrive on diversity. Welcoming differences makes us stronger, more forward thinking and able to adapt to our clients' needs, often before they know what they are.

We work hard to develop strong relationships with our clients by investing time in listening to them. Only by doing this can we truly deliver exceptional client service.

As an ambitious firm, we actively encourage innovation in our people and in the way we do things. Our values came from our people and reflect the firm's culture and how we like to do business.



REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS

We share each other's ambitions, treat each other honestly and fairly, and help each other grow.



OPEN MINDS

We are interested in people and the world. We value creativity and progressive ideas, embracing innovation and change.



TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

We give clear, succinct advice, provide tailored solutions and are responsive and proactive.



RESULTS FOCUSED

We are agile and adaptable, make pragmatic, commercial decisions and always deliver on time and on budget.

Our people relish the opportunity to work with high-profile clients across a diverse range of sectors and one of the reasons we are a great place to work is down to the quality of work we do.

We are focused on developing our lawyers into true business advisors. You can expect to be working alongside experienced lawyers and partners, who are leaders in their field, on a daily basis, to develop your technical skills and broaden your commercial awareness.

We offer a broad range of services including corporate, commercial, dispute resolution, real estate and construction. We also have a private client practice assisting high net worth individuals.

We have a far-reaching international presence and wide experience of working with overseas clients. As a leading member of the ADVOC network of independent law firms, Ashfords can coordinate the delivery of legal advice from over 100 jurisdictions worldwide.

To find out more about what we do, visit our website.

“ Trainees were huge fans of their supervisors, who have reportedly mastered that “perfect balance of being hands-on while giving you independence. ”

Chambers Student UK Guide 2020

ABOUT US

Preserving and enhancing our culture is of paramount importance. But you'll find that there's even more to the Ashfords difference...

Ranked in

41

practice areas, with 2 of our partners ranked in the "Legal 500's Hall of Fame".
Legal 500 2022 edition.

The Guardian

UK 300

Voted by students and graduates for the seventh year running.

Ranked lawyers

68

Chambers 2019 edition.



5

Offices in the UK with our biggest office in the vibrant city of Exeter.

TOP 100

Ashfords is a **top 100 law firm**.



+100

Jurisdictions worldwide covered by international legal advice.



Team of the year

The Lawyer Employment Team of the Year 2016.



Most Innovative

Law firm UK – Acquisition International Awards 2016.



511

People

73

Partners

150

Lawyers

204

Support

81

Non-qualified fee earners



We have a **thriving Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** programme, which is led by our people.



Ranked by Experian MarketIQ as one of the **most active, by volume, legal advisers** in the UK (& top in the South West).



Ranked as one of the **most active law firms** globally in venture capital deals by major industry league table, PitchBook.



Best employers

Legal Week 2016 & 2017.

MEET ALASTAIR



Alastair Turnbull

Final seat Trainee

How much client exposure does an Ashfords Trainee receive?

It depends on the team, but in my experience the answer is always plenty. I've been given lots of scope to correspond with clients under adequate supervision, and in some cases be their main port of call if they have any queries. I've also helped to handle incoming enquiries to the firm, handling the initial conversation and fact taking before reporting back to my supervisor on what the matter is and what my initial thoughts are.

Can you describe a recent matter that you've been heavily involved in?

One of the most interesting aspects of work I've been involved in recently is assisting on enquiries about potential data breaches – potential clients looking to see if they have a cause of action.

Under supervision I'm handling the initial response, fact finding and triaging. As someone with an interest in data protection, it's definitely interesting work!

What has been the highlight of your Training Contract so far?

It may sound clichéd, but the highlight so far has definitely been the team – everyone has been so welcoming, even from the very start. It really makes a difference knowing that everyone is happy to take a few minutes to chat, or talk over what they're doing, or provide a little guidance when you need it. Despite the pandemic and the increase in remote working, it never feels lonely, or like I'm working by myself (and a team quiz over Teams is always a nice way to break up the week!).

What's it really like to work at Ashfords?

The firm is a great place to work and train. At every step, my supervisors have made a point of asking what kind of work I want to get involved in, and have done their best to make it happen. It also feels like you bring direct value to the firm – you're not viewed as someone getting underfoot and needing supervision, you're a valuable member of the team. There's also a good work/life balance – late nights happen but they're not the norm, and you're encouraged to keep your supervisor aware of your workload to make sure you're not taking too much on.



Hannah Swales

Final seat Trainee

What kind of work are you given as a Trainee?

As a trainee, common tasks include writing letters and emails, drafting documents and attending client meetings. There is plenty of client contact and lots of responsibility early on. Trainees regularly get involved in high quality work for interesting matters. I have been lucky enough to go to Court and attend a mediation.

What kind of extra-curricular activities can you get involved in?

The team is very social and we have department days out and weekends away. Extra-curricular activities are certainly encouraged. In the Exeter office we have a gym, as well as regular yoga sessions. We also run lots of events you can take part in to raise money for charity such as quizzes, bake offs and sports events.

How is the work/life balance at Ashfords?

Ashfords definitely value the work/life balance. The hours depend on the workload – if there's a deadline to meet, it may occasionally mean staying late. Although you are expected to work hard, people are understanding and realise that everyone has interests and commitments outside of work too.

What seats are available and how many do you do?

Trainees complete four seats of six-months each. Ashfords offer services in both business and personal areas of law. Real estate is one of the firm's biggest departments and most trainees will do a seat there. It is also possible to do seats in: Property Litigation; Planning; Construction; Insolvency; Corporate; Commercial; Commercial Litigation; Personal Injury; Employment; Trusts & Estates and Family.

AND HANNAH

TRAINING WITH ASHFORDS

We offer training contracts based in our South West or Bristol offices and you can expect to spend six months in each seat. There is flexibility for our trainees to complete seats in different offices and it is likely that you will spend some time in Real Estate, our biggest department.

Our trainees experience real work and are very much part of the team – you go to meetings and 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.

You'll complete your PSC during your training contract as it helps to contextualise what you are learning on the job.

How do I apply?

There are two different ways to apply for an Ashfords training contract.

Our summer scheme route gives you the opportunity to spend a week at either our Exeter or Bristol office working in two departments. You will spend lots of time with our current trainees, understanding their work and what it is like to be a trainee with us. The Assessment Centre takes place on the final 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 written exercises, role plays and a partner interview.

KEY DATES

1 November 2021
Applications open
Applications for Summer Schemes and 2023 Training Contracts open.

30 April 2022
Application deadline
Applications for Summer Schemes and 2023 Training Contracts close.

6 – 24 June 2022
Summer Schemes
Summer schemes will be held in our Exeter and Bristol offices throughout June.

5 and 7 July 2022
Training Contract Assessment Centres
Individual Assessment Centres for 2023 Training Contracts.

August 2022
Offers made

HR SUPPORT

Whilst we encourage you to create an open channel of communication with your supervisors, we appreciate that it can be helpful to speak to a more objective third party regarding any issues that you may be experiencing.

You will be allocated a single point of contact who be available to support you with any issues you may be experiences. They will also keep track of your progress during your training contract and will be in regular contact with both you and your supervisor in order to monitor your performance, as well as ensuring that all mid and end of seat reviews are fully completed.

Our Training Principal will ensure that your training contract complies with SRA regulations and assist the HR team in making sure that you receive adequate supervision and feedback throughout your training contract and that your training record and performance reviews are completed to the expected standard.

Seat Moves

During your training contract you will undertake four seats, each lasting six months. Seat move preparations will begin around two months before you start your new seat. This process can be quite a jigsaw as we have to discuss requirements across the departments with HODs and Partners. We will then arrange a meeting or a phone call with you to discuss your seat preferences. Whilst we do our best to ensure that everyone is happy with their seat allocations, please bear in mind that this does have to be balanced with the commercial needs of the firm.

Be Proactive!

It is ultimately down to you to determine the success of your training contract and this is certainly relevant when it comes to seat moves. If you have an interest in a particular area and would like the opportunity to do a seat there, do not be afraid to network with and talk to the lawyers and Partners in that department. Whilst no guarantees can be made, having these conversations may be the difference between a seat featuring on the list or not!

Breadth of Experience

Your training contract provides an opportunity for you to gain a broad range of experience across several practice areas. As Real Estate is our largest department, we expect all trainees to complete a seat there during their training contract. Whilst this is the only mandatory seat, we encourage you to elect both contentious and non-contentious seats over the two year period so that you experience contrasting work.

Mid and End of Seat Reviews

Your supervisors will provide you with guidance and feedback during your time in each department. As part of this process, you will have both a mid-seat and end of seat review.

The mid-seat review will involve an informal meeting with your supervisor to discuss your progress and to offer development points for you to take forward.

The end of seat review will also involve a face-to-face meeting with your supervisor. Prior to the meeting, you will need to complete a formal performance review form through our online performance review system, where you will be required to assess your performance against the firm's four values. In the lead up to your first end of seat review, we will hold a drop-in session for any queries regarding the performance review system.

Following your end of seat review, your supervisor will provide final comments and a performance rating based on your time in the department.

The Professional Skills Course (PSC)

The Professional Skills Course (PSC) is a compulsory course which provides you with the practical skills you will need as you progress in your role as a Trainee Solicitor. The PSC is a skills-based course that the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) requires you to complete before your admission as a Solicitor. The PSC has 12 days of training in total and this will need to be completed during your two year training contract.

JOIN TEAM ASHFORDS

There is more to Ashfords than sitting at your desk. We encourage our people to take part in a range of activities. Getting involved in things like CSR and business development gives you exposure to different parts of the business and enables you to develop a broader skill set around leadership, negotiation and team work that you will need to become a high performing lawyer.

Your career

We place as much importance on your career development as you do and offer clear progression paths across the business. Our supportive teams will back you all the way and you will have access to regular training at a departmental and firm wide level.

You'll also have the opportunity to get involved in a number of social activities including the annual party, sports teams and business and networking groups



Rewarding you

Our salaries are competitive and reviewed annually.

Our reward package includes:

- 23 days' annual leave (increases with service)
- Additional day off for your birthday and at Christmas
- Holiday purchase scheme
- Annual bonus
- Firm pension contribution
- Membership of The Junior Lawyers Division
- Cycle to work scheme
- Healthcare cash-plan
- Employee discount site
- Free in-house gym at the Exeter Office

For our trainee solicitors, we also offer a full LPC bursary, for those who have not yet started their course and choose to study at the University of Law.