

# THE ORGANISATION OF THE JUDICIARY AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN THE ENGLISH COMMON LAW

## THE PILLARS OF THE JUDICIARY

**Independence:** *the judiciary should be fair and transparent, free of any influence outside the rule of law.*

When carrying out their judicial function judges must be free of any improper influence, such as pressure by individual litigants, commercial interests, the media, politicians, and their own self-interest. They must not allow potential public or media responses to skew their decision-making. This does not, however, mean displaying no awareness of the profound consequences that judicial decisions inflict on the lives of people before them, and often upon issues of great interest to society at large.

In the last century, the responsibilities of judges in disputes between the citizen and the state have increased together with the growth in governmental functions. The responsibility of the judiciary to protect citizens against unlawful acts of government has increased, and with it the need for the judiciary to be independent of government<sup>1</sup>.

**Impartiality:** *the judiciary should treat all members of the public equally and fairly.*

Judges strive to ensure that their conduct, both in and out of court, maintains and enhances the confidence of the public, the legal profession and litigants, in their personal impartiality and that of the judiciary.

It follows that judges should, so far as is reasonable, avoid extra-judicial activities that could result in reasonable apprehension of bias or would result in a conflict of interest. This may involve refraining from sitting in a case where they have a close family relationship with a litigant or avoiding involvement with a political party, in such a way as to give the appearance of political bias. They should also avoid taking part in

---

<sup>1</sup> A practical example of the importance of judicial independence is where a high-profile matter, generating a great deal of media interest, comes before the court. This may be the criminal trial of a person accused of a shocking murder, the divorce of celebrities or challenges to the legality of government policy, such as the availability of a new and expensive drug to NHS patients. In the 24-hour media age in which we live, it stands to reason that the judge hearing the case will often be under intense scrutiny, with decisions open to intense debate. It is right that this is so, but it is equally important that decisions in court are made in accordance with the law and are not determined by external pressures.

public demonstrations which might diminish their authority as a judge or create a perception of bias in subsequent cases.

It is, however, important for members of the court to deliver lectures and speeches, partake in conferences and seminars and contribute to debate on matters of public interest in the law, the administration of justice, and the judiciary. In making such contributions, judges will take special care to avoid associating themselves with a particular organisation, group or cause in such a way as to give rise to a perception of partiality towards that organisation, group or cause in the conduct of their judicial duties.

***Integrity: judges' conduct must be bound by principles of honesty and respect, and may require putting the obligations of judicial office above their own personal interests.***

### **Guidance for JOHs**

The Equal Treatment Bench Book is an extensive document which functions as a key work of reference for the judiciary on the matter of equal treatment for all, covering in detail topics such as ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality, gender, and more. It is continuously updated to reflect changing social circumstances and to include areas of newer, growing research. More recent additions include sections on modern slavery and multicultural communication.

Training is provided to new judges in independence, integrity and impartiality, and the principles are often addressed in programmes for continuing training.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE COURTS & TRIBUNALS SYSTEM**

Rather than being designed from scratch, the English courts system has evolved and developed over 1,000 years. This has led to a complicated and, in places, confusing structure.

Different types of cases are dealt with in specific courts, and have different routes into the Court of Appeal:

- All **criminal** cases will start in the Magistrates' court, but more serious criminal matters are sent to the Crown Court. Appeals from the Crown Court will go to the High Court, and potentially to the Court of Appeal or even the UK Supreme Court.

- **Civil** cases will usually start in the County Court. Again, appeals will go to the High Court and then to the Court of Appeal – although to different divisions of those courts.
- The **tribunals** system has its own structure for dealing with cases and appeals, but decisions from different chambers of the Upper Tribunal, and the Employment Appeals Tribunal, may also go to the Court of Appeal.

The courts structure covers England and Wales; the tribunals system covers England, Wales and, in some cases, Northern Ireland and Scotland

## United Kingdom Supreme Court

### Court of Appeal Civil Division Criminal Division

<b>High court of England and Wales</b>	<b>The Upper Tribunal</b>	<b>Employment Appeal Tribunal</b>
<u>King's bench division</u> - Administrative/Divisional Court - Planning court - King's Bench Civil List - The Business and Property Courts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commercial Court</li> <li>Admiralty Court</li> <li>Technology and Construction Court</li> <li>Financial List</li> </ul> <u>Chancery division</u> - The Business and Property Courts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial List</li> <li>Business List</li> <li>Insolvency and Companies List</li> </ul>	<u>Administrative Appeals Chamber</u>  <u>Tax and Chancery Chamber</u>  <u>Immigration and Asylum Chamber</u>  <u>Lands Chamber</u>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual Property List</li> <li>• Revenue List</li> <li>• Property, Trusts and Probate List</li> </ul> <p><u>Family division</u></p>		
		<p><b>First Tier Tribunal</b></p> <p>War, Pension, and Armed Forces Chamber</p> <p>General Regulatory Chamber</p> <p>Social Entitlement Chamber</p> <p>Tax Chamber</p> <p>Health, Education and Social Care Chamber</p> <p>Immigration and Asylum Chamber</p> <p>Property Chamber</p>

The Crown Court	The County Court	The Court of Protection	The Family Court	Coroners' Courts
Magistrates' courts				

## MAIN JURISDICTIONS

**Civil**

Most Civil disputes do not end up in court, and those that do often don't go all the way to a full trial. Many issues are resolved using established complaints procedures, through negotiation or, mediation. This often happens outside a court.

Civil justice cases which do go to court in England and Wales is mainly dealt with in the County Court. Some, usually more substantial or complex cases begin in the High Court.

Almost all civil cases should be in open court which the public may attend.

Judges in the Civil jurisdiction do not normally send a losing party to prison. Ordinarily the court will make an award for financial 'damages' to the successful party, the size of this award will depend on the circumstances of the claim. Sometimes the court will make an order or an injunction requiring defined behaviour to take place or to stop.

The civil courts also have a process to ensure awards can be enforced.

### **A judge hearing a Civil case**

The vast majority of Civil cases tried in court do not have a jury (libel and slander trials are the main exceptions). Most often a judge hears them on their own, deciding them by finding facts and applying the relevant law. There may be argument presented about the facts, and about what that law actually is. When the argument has finished the judge will give a reasoned judgment.

### **Judgment**

Once the judge has heard the evidence from all parties involved and any submissions (representations) they wish to put forward, they deliver judgment. This may be immediately or, if the case is complicated, at a later date.

Civil judges do have the power to punish parties if, for example, they are in contempt of court but, generally, Civil cases do not involve the imposition of any punishment. If the judge decides that the claimant is entitled to damages, they will decide the amount.

Or the claimant may have asked for an injunction – for example, to forbid the defendant from making excessive noise by playing the drums in the flat upstairs in the early hours of the morning, or a declaration – an order specifying the precise boundary between two properties about which the parties had never been able to agree. The task of the judge is to decide on what is the appropriate remedy, if any, and on the precise terms of it.

### **Costs**

When the judgment in the case has been delivered, the judge must also deal with the cost of the case. This may include the fees of any lawyers, court fees paid out by the parties, fees of expert witnesses, allowances that may be allowed to litigants who have

acted in person (without lawyers), earnings lost and travelling and other expenses incurred by the parties and their witnesses.

The general rule is that the unsuccessful party will have to pay the successful party's costs but the judge has a wide discretion to depart from this rule.

## **Court of Appeal – Civil Division**

The Civil Division of the Court of Appeal hears appeals from all Divisions of the High Court and, in some instances from the County Courts and certain Tribunals.

Bringing an appeal is subject to obtaining 'permission', which may be granted by the court below or, more usually, by the Court of Appeal itself. Applications for permission to appeal are commonly determined by a single Lord or Lady Justice, full appeals by three judges. The Civil Division of the Court Appeal also deals with cases from the Upper Tribunal.

## **Criminal**

### **Criminal Justice**

Criminal cases come to court after a decision has been made by, usually the Crown Prosecution Service, to prosecute someone for an alleged crime.

The vast majority of cases (over 95 per cent), are heard in the [Magistrates' court](#), either by a panel of three Magistrates or by a [District Judge \(Magistrates' court\)](#). They hear the evidence, and make a decision on guilt or innocence. If the defendant is found guilty, the Magistrates or District Judge (Magistrates' court) will decide the sentence or send the case to the Crown Court for sentencing.

The more serious criminal cases are heard in the [Crown Court](#), usually by a Circuit Judge or Recorder sitting with a jury (in the most serious cases, the case may be heard by a High Court Judge sitting with a **jury**). In those cases, the judge is responsible for ensuring the trial is conducted fairly and explains the relevant law to the jury. The jury is responsible for deciding whether the defendant is guilty.

Both magistrates and judges have the power to imprison those convicted of a crime, if the offence is serious enough. But imprisonment is not the only sentence that may be imposed; a judge or magistrate can order a community punishment, or impose a fine.

Although punishment is a key consideration when sentencing, judges will also consider how a particular sentence may reduce the chances of an individual re-offending.

## **A judge hearing a criminal case**

Before a criminal trial starts, the judge will familiarise themselves with the details of the case by reading the relevant case papers. These include the indictment which sets out the charges on which the defendant is to be tried, witness statements, exhibits and documentation on applications to be made by any party concerning the admissibility of evidence in the trial.

For **jury trials** in the Crown Court, the judge supervises the selection and swearing in of the jury, giving the jurors a direction about their role in the trial of deciding the facts and warning them not to discuss the case with anyone else or do their own research.

## **During the trial**

Once the trial has commenced, the judge ensures that the case is conducted fairly and that all parties involved are given the opportunity for their case to be presented and considered. The judge plays an active role during the trial, controlling the way the case is conducted in accordance with relevant law and practice. As the case progresses, the judge makes notes of the evidence and decides on legal issues, for example, whether evidence is admissible.

Once all evidence in the case has been heard, the judge will sum up the case. The judge sets out for the jury the law on each of the charges made and what the prosecution must prove. At this stage the judge refers to notes made during the course of the trial and reminds the jury of the key points of the case, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each side's argument. The judge then gives directions about the duties of the jury before they retire to the jury deliberation room to consider the verdict.

## **Sentencing**

If the jury find the defendant guilty then the judge will decide on an appropriate sentence. The sentence will be influenced by a number of factors: principally seriousness of the offence, the impact that the crime has had on the victim, and relevant law especially guidance from the [Sentencing Council](#).

## **Court of Appeal (Criminal Division)**

Appeals from the Crown Court are heard by the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division). The Lord Chief Justice is President of the Court of Appeal Criminal Division. He is supported in this role by a Vice President.

Cases are usually heard by a Lord or Lady Justice and two High Court judges.

## **High Court Judge – Criminal Jurisdiction**

High Court judges can hear the most serious and sensitive cases in the Crown Court (for example murder) and some sit with Appeal Court judges in the Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal.

### **Circuit Judges – Criminal**

Circuit Judges may deal solely with Civil, Family or Criminal work, or divide their time between the three. Most Crown Court cases are heard by Circuit Judges, although less complex or serious matters may be dealt with by Recorders. Some cases from Magistrates' courts will come to the Crown Court to be heard by a Circuit Judge – for example, if the defendant has opted for trial by jury, or the magistrates decide they do not have sufficient sentencing powers to deal with a guilty party (magistrates can impose a maximum 6 month sentence for a single offence, with a total of 12 months for multiple offences).

### **District Judge (Magistrates' courts)**

A District Judge (Magistrates' courts) is a legally qualified, salaried judge and they usually deal with the longer and more complex matters that come before Magistrates' courts. District Judges (Magistrates' courts) also have jurisdiction to hear cases under the Extradition Acts and the Fugitive Offender Acts.

### **Magistrates**

Magistrates are local members of the community who are appointed to sit in the Magistrates' court. Three magistrates sit together to hear and decide cases. They are volunteers and are unpaid (except for expenses). Magistrates must sit for at least 13 days a year.

### **Recorders**

Recorders are part-time judges. For many it is the first step on the judicial ladder to appointment to the Circuit Bench. Recorders' jurisdiction is broadly similar to that of a Circuit Judge, but they generally handle less complex or serious matters coming before the court.

Recorders are fully qualified solicitors or barristers with at least ten years' experience. They are required to sit for at least 30 days every year.

## **UK Supreme Court**

The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 made provision for the creation of a Supreme Court for the United Kingdom.

Before the Supreme Court was created, the 12 most senior judges sat in the **House of Lords**.



The House of Lords was the highest court in the land. It acted as the final court on points of law for the whole of the United Kingdom in Civil cases and for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in Criminal cases. Its decisions bound all courts below.

As members of the House of Lords, the judges not only heard cases, but were also able to become involved in debating and the subsequent enactment of Government legislation (although, in practice, they rarely did so).

The creation of a Supreme Court means that the most senior judges are now entirely separate from the Parliamentary process.

It is important to be aware that the Supreme Court is a United Kingdom body, legally separate from the England and Wales courts, as it is also the Supreme Court of both Scotland and Northern Ireland.

## **Administrative**

### **Overview of the Administrative Court**

The work of the Administrative Court comprises the administrative law jurisdiction of England and Wales. Its varied work is directed at the lawfulness of the acts and omissions of central and local Government, regulatory and disciplinary bodies, inferior courts and tribunals, and other public bodies and officials exercising public functions.

The Administrative Court has both a Civil and Criminal jurisdiction.

This supervisory jurisdiction is exercised in the main through the procedure of **judicial review**. Judicial review proceedings have to be brought within strict time limits and require the permission of the court, obtained on paper or on oral application, on the basis that the case is reasonably arguable.

Judicial Review is used to challenge the lawfulness of the decision, including the procedures whereby it was reached, rather than the substantive merits.

The **grounds on which applications for judicial review** and most statutory appeals and applications are brought are that the decision was outside the powers of the relevant statute or body, that its discretion was unreasonably or unlawfully exercised and that the procedures adopted were unfair or that the outcome was a breach of human rights. Claims for Judicial Review are governed by the [Civil Procedure Rule 54 \(external link\)](#).

Some of the cases in the Administrative Court will be heard by a Divisional Court which is a court consisting of 2 or more judges. These will usually be in criminal

cases including a number of the more difficult extradition cases. All King's Bench Division Judges are eligible to sit in the Administrative Court, as well as High Court Judges from other Divisions of the High Court and some Deputy High Court Judges. When sitting as a Divisional Court, the Administrative Court often includes a judge from the Court of Appeal.

### **Out-of-hours applications**

A King's Bench Division judge is on duty 24 hours a day every day to hear applications for judicial review which cannot be delayed until normal hours of business.

The Administrative Court work is organised so that urgent applications can be dealt with during the day time by a judge of the Administrative Court. The out of hours work is an exceptional process only to be invoked if the application could not have been made during normal hours despite the best endeavours of the parties and lawyers.

They need to explain to the court why the application has to be heard before the next court day and could not be heard during normal court hours. The claimant must provide full disclosure to the court of everything relevant even though it may harm his or her case.

## **LEGAL PROFESSIONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

### **COURT JUDGES**

#### **Who appoints judges?**

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) is an independent commission that recommends candidates for judicial office in the courts and tribunals of England and Wales and for some tribunals whose jurisdiction extends to Scotland or Northern Ireland.

You must successfully complete several application stages to get through to shortlisting by the Commission. You'll then be invited to attend an [assessment and selection day](#), which will include interviews.

Salaried positions have traditionally been full-time, but are increasingly open to part-time and flexible working as well. A legal professional who has taken a salaried role will not be able to return to legal practice.

Fee-paid (part-time) positions are usually similar to the equivalent salaried appointment, but may deal with the less complex or serious cases. Fee-paid positions are paid according to the number of sittings or days worked. The number of sitting days varies depending on the type of appointment, and will generally be at least 15 days a year.

### **Basic requirements**

Judicial appointments are open only to citizens (including those holding dual nationality) of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland or a Commonwealth country.

There is no upper or lower age limit for candidates, apart from the statutory retirement age of 75 for all judges. However, applicants should be able to offer a ‘reasonable length of service’ – usually at least five years.

Applications from disabled people are welcomed, and reasonable adjustments will be made at every stage to ensure applicants are treated fairly.

### **Qualifications – legal positions**

Most judicial posts will require a relevant legal qualification that has been held for either five or seven years.

Government lawyers are eligible to apply for all judicial posts, but when sitting as a fee-paid judge they must not hear cases involving their own department.

For salaried judicial appointments, applicants must normally have served as a fee-paid judicial office-holder for at least two years or have completed 30 sitting days since appointment in a fee-paid capacity.

## **TRIBUNAL JUDGES**

### **Who appoints tribunal judges?**

Appointments to tribunals are mainly through the Judicial Appointments Commission, on the basis of the statutory and non-statutory requirements for that specific post, as well as the qualities and abilities required in any good judge.

The JAC run appointment competitions for a number of tribunals outside the new tribunals structure (for example the Residential Property Tribunal Service) as well as for the new First-tier and Upper Tribunals (which absorbed the jurisdictions of a number of tribunals in 2008) .

Tribunal office-holders are appointed to either the First-tier Tribunal or the Upper Tribunal, and then assigned to a particular Chamber (for example, Health, Education and Social Care). They may or may not sit in all of the jurisdictions within that Chamber.

Most tribunal appointments are fee-paid, with successful candidates usually expected to sit for at least 15 days each year. For salaried appointment, individuals must normally have served as a fee-paid judicial office-holder for at least two years, or have completed 30 sitting days in a fee-paid capacity.

### **Basic requirements**

As with the courts judiciary, tribunal appointments are open only to citizens of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland or a Commonwealth country. There is no upper or lower age limit, apart from the statutory retirement age of 70 for all judges. Applications from disabled people are welcomed.

### **Legally-qualified appointments**

As with the courts judiciary, most legally-qualified posts will require five or seven years of post qualification experience (the relevant legal qualifications for solicitors or barristers), and legal experience gained during that time.

However, tribunal judges need not always have been solicitors or barristers. The Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act (2007) widened the eligibility for many judicial posts, making them open to The Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILE), members of the Institute of Trade Mark Attorneys (ITMA) and the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys (CIPA).

Applications are also welcomed from non-traditional legal backgrounds, for example legal academics.

### **Non-legal appointments**

The varied nature of tribunal work means that there are a number of positions available for non-legal professionals who have expertise in different areas – for example, Employment Tribunals have panel members from employee or employers' representative backgrounds, and many tribunals include medical professionals. Requirements for these positions are based on the nature of the tribunal, and candidates must be able to demonstrate the relevant professional experience.

### **Average salary (a year)**

---

£91,217 **Starter**

to

£267,509 **Experienced**

**Typical hours (a week)**

---

37 to 42 **a week**

**You could work**

---

between 8am and 6pm **at short notice**

## **Career path and progression**

There are structured career development routes in the judiciary, which allow you to move from fee-paid sessional roles in the lower courts through to paid positions in the upper courts. For example, with experience, you might move from deputy district judge or recorder to become a permanent district judge, circuit judge or high court judge. Beyond that, you could be appointed to the court of appeal.

You can also specialise in particular divisions of the judiciary, like the family courts or employment tribunals.

## **Magistrate**

Alternative titles for this job include Justice of the peace (JP), bench magistrate

Magistrates are volunteers who hear cases in court. They pass judgements and hand down short sentences, fines and other penalties.

**Average salary (a year)**

---

**Variable**

**Typical hours (a week)**

---

Variable **variable**

**You could work**

---

9am to 5pm **flexibly**

## **How to become**

You can get into this role through:

- official appointment

## **Volunteering**

You can get insight into the work of a magistrate's court by arranging to visit one in your local area. This may help if you later apply for selection to be a magistrate. You should contact the court before you go, so that staff can direct you to the most appropriate court open to the public.

### **Other Routes**

Magistrates are selected for appointment by a [local advisory committee](#).

You do not need a legal background or law qualification to become a magistrate but you do need to be:

- of good character
- aware of local social issues
- an understanding person
- mature, with a sense of fairness
- committed to serving the community

If you're appointed, you'll be given training before you sit in court, which usually includes a prison visit and meeting with the probation service. You'll also be assigned a mentor, who will support you during your first 12 months.

You'll continue to receive professional development training and have regular in-court assessments of your work.

### **Restrictions and Requirements**

You must be over 18 and under 65 when appointed. You'll be expected to serve for at least 5 years. You must retire when you reach 70.

British nationality is not required but you should be willing to take the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown.

Your current job or business interests may lead to a conflict of interest and bar you from becoming a magistrate. For example if you're a police officer or prison officer you cannot become a magistrate in the criminal court.

### **Career path and progression**

With experience, you could act as the chairperson or presiding magistrate on a panel of 3 magistrates in court.

You could also specialise in particular courts like the family court, or the youth court. You could volunteer to mentor new magistrates or apply to sit with judges on panels hearing appeals.

You could also use your experience to join committees advising policy makers on judicial issues, for example prison standards or sentencing guidelines.

## BARRISTER

Barristers give advice to solicitors and represent people in disagreements, investigations and in court.

### Average salary (a year)

---

£17,152 **Starter**

to

£200,000 **Experienced**

### Typical hours (a week)

---

36 to 38 **a week**

### You could work

---

evenings / weekends

## How to become

You can get into this job through a university course or by working towards this role.

### University

You could do a degree in law to become a barrister. You also have the option to do a degree in any subject and complete a Graduate Diploma in Law afterwards.

Once you've graduated, you need to complete:

- the Bar Professional Training Course which takes one year
- a year of practical training called a pupillage

To get into some universities you'll need to pass the [Law National Aptitude Test](#) (LNAT).

### Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- 2 to 3 A levels, or equivalent, for a degree

## Work

You could start your career by working in a law firm or the law department of an organisation.

With support from your employer, you could complete a qualification like the Level 6 Professional Higher Diploma in Law through the [Chartered Institute of Legal Executives](#).

## *Solicitors*

If you're a solicitor, you can apply to become a barrister if you get approval from the Bar Standards Board and sit a [Bar Transfer Test](#).

## **Restrictions and Requirements**

You'll need to:

- pass [background checks](#)

## **Day-to-day tasks**

In your day-to-day duties you could:

- meet with clients and take on cases
- research the law and cases similar to the one you're working on
- read witness statements and reports
- offer legal advice and your opinion
- negotiate settlements out of court
- prepare legal arguments and court briefs
- question witnesses and present cases to the judge and jury

## **Career path and progression**

With experience you could:

- lead a team
- become a manager
- apply to become a [Queen's Counsel \(QC\)](#)
- [become a judge](#)
- become an ombudsman

## SOLLICITOR

Alternative titles for this job include Lawyer

Solicitors advise clients about the law and act on their behalf in legal matters.

## **Average salary (a year)**

£25,000

to

£100,000

## **Typical hours (a week)**

37 to 50

You could work

on call at short notice



## How to become

You can get into this job through:

- a university course
- an apprenticeship
- working towards this role
- the traditional solicitor qualifying route until 2032

## University

In order to qualify, you must:

- take an undergraduate degree or [equivalent qualification](#), in any subject
- pass part 1 and 2 of the [Solicitors Qualifying Exam](#) (SQE)
- complete 2 years (or equivalent if part-time) [qualifying work experience](#)
- meet the character and suitability requirements of the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#) (SRA)

Though your degree does not have to be in Law, you will need some legal knowledge to pass the SQE.

To study Law at some universities you'll need to pass the [Law National Aptitude Test](#) (LNAT).

### *Entry requirements*

You'll usually need:

- 3 A levels or equivalent

## Apprenticeship

You could do a solicitor degree apprenticeship to qualify as a solicitor.

This route usually takes around 5 to 6 years and you'll need your employer's support to do it.

You'll also need to take the SQE, demonstrate relevant work experience and meet character and suitability to practice requirements.

### *Entry requirements*

Employers will set their own entry requirements.

## Work

You could start with a legal firm and do on-the-job training like the [Chartered Institute of Legal Executives](#) (CILEx) Level 6 Professional Diploma in Higher Law and Practice

You would then need to:

- ☐ [pass part 1 and 2 of the Solicitors Qualifying Exam](#) (SQE)
- ☐ show you have 2 years (or equivalent if part-time) [qualifying work experience](#)
- ☐ meet the character and suitability requirements of the [Solicitors Regulation Authority](#) (SRA)

## Other Routes

If you started a [qualifying law degree](#), Graduate Diploma in Law (GDL) or Legal Practice Course (LPC) before 2021, you will be able to continue to qualify as a solicitor by the [traditional route](#) until 2032.

## **More Information**

### *Career tips*

Competition for solicitor roles is tough so you need to show that you have consistently good grades as you progress through your education.

Getting work experience in different types of legal settings can help you to stand out and show your commitment. There are diversity [work experience schemes](#) to encourage under represented groups into the legal profession.

### *Professional and industry bodies*

You could join [The Law Society](#) for professional development, training opportunities and to make industry contacts.

## **Skills and knowledge**

You'll need:

- legal knowledge including court procedures and government regulations
- excellent verbal communication skills to work with different people
- active listening skills
- analytical thinking skills for working on complex cases
- knowledge of English language for explaining legal matters to non-experts
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- excellent written communication skills
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently

## **Restrictions and Requirements**

You'll need to:

- pass [enhanced background checks](#)

## **Day-to-day tasks**

In this role you could:

- advise and represent clients in court
- instruct barristers or advocates to act for clients
- draft confidential letters, contracts and legal documents
- research legal records and case law
- attend meetings and negotiations
- manage finances and prepare papers for court
- use plain English to explain complex legal matters to clients
- keep up to date with changes in the law

## **Career path and progression**

Look at progression in this role and similar opportunities.

With experience, you could become a partner in a private practice firm of solicitors.

As a commercial solicitor, you could manage an in-house legal department.

You could use your legal training in the armed forces.

## CROWN PROSECUTOR

Alternative titles for this job include Reviewing lawyer

Crown prosecutors decide if there's enough evidence to take cases to court.

### The Crown Prosecution Service

---

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) prosecutes criminal cases that have been investigated by the police and other investigative organisations in England and Wales. The CPS is independent, and we make our decisions independently of the police and government.

Our duty is to make sure that the right person is prosecuted for the right offence, and to bring offenders to justice wherever possible.

The CPS:

- decides which cases should be prosecuted;
- determines the appropriate charges in more serious or complex cases, and advises the police during the early stages of investigations;
- prepares cases and presents them at court; and
- provides information, assistance and support to victims and prosecution witnesses.

Prosecutors must be fair, objective and independent. When deciding whether to prosecute a criminal case, our lawyers must follow the [Code for Crown Prosecutors](#). This means that to charge someone with a criminal offence, prosecutors must be satisfied that there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, and that prosecuting is in the public interest.

### Average salary (a year)

---

£38,000Starter

to

£42,630Experienced

### Typical hours (a week)

---

36 to 38a week

## You could work

---

evenings / weekends / bank holidayson a rota

### How to become

Explore the different ways to get into this role.

You can get into this job by working towards this role and applying directly.

### Direct Application

You can apply for this job if you've:

- got at least a lower second class (2:2) degree
- trained as a [solicitor](#) or [barrister](#)
- completed your Legal Practice Course or Bar Professional Training Course
- finished a 2 year training contract or a 12 month pupillage

*Vacancies*

### Career path and progression

Look at progression in this role and similar opportunities.

With experience and further training you could progress to senior crown prosecutor.

From there you could become crown advocate, senior crown advocate and principal crown advocate.