

## LSC Training Contracts Grant Scheme Case Study

### 2008 Scheme

#### **TRAINEE: Selina Sturman Hereward and Fosters, London.**

Selina studied law at Leicester University. Before undertaking the Legal Practise Course at Nottingham Law School, she took a year out from studying to work at Norwich Citizens Advice Bureau.

“My time at the CAB really inspired me to pursue a career in legal aid. I realised that you can gain exposure to challenging legal work and help people along the way.”

As she is funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme, Selina received financial help towards her LPC fees. The scheme also helped her to find a training contract in a field of law that she is passionate about.

When asked about her future career aspirations in legal aid, Selina said: “To help shape the future of legal aid and to be successful in my chosen field of law, hopefully child protection.”



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#### **TRAINEE: Melissa Rollins** **Lewis Nedas and co, London.**

Melissa had an interest in law from the age of 16. Whilst studying at university, she worked part-time in a number of areas including Criminal law. Following her Legal Practise Course she was offered a full time position and training contract with Lewis Nedas and co. “I had worked in other areas of law and working in criminal law is what I found most rewarding. I feel on a daily basis I am making a difference to peoples lives.”

“I started my training contract in 2009 and I am finding it challenging and enjoyable. I have an excellent supervisor who gives me excellent support and guidance. She is positive about a career in legal aid and so am I”.

Melissa’s training is funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme. She said that the Training Contract Grant has helped her by providing “the opportunity to learn more about the LSC and meet other trainees”.

“After I have completed all my seats I hope to qualify into criminal law. I hope to become a trusted and respected lawyer who shows commitment and enthusiasm for criminal work for many years to come.”

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#### **TRAINEE: Katrina Ayetey Philcox Gray and co, London.**

After completing her law degree, Katrina did the Legal Practise Course at the College of Law. She chose to do the Public Legal Service Route, an LPC offered by the College of Law which has a focus on legal aid. She then worked as a paralegal for a year before securing a training contract under the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme.

“I was attracted to a career in legal aid as I had a strong commitment to access to justice for all. I want to help those who are society’s most deprived and I knew that I wanted a good deal of client contact and to be able to see clients through the entirety of the case from start to finish.”

“The training contract Grants Scheme has helped me to start a training contract with Philcox Gray and Co.”

“So far I have thoroughly enjoyed my training contract. I am in the Family department and have had a varied caseload of divorce and children matters, public and private. I have had a lot of cases and have had to learn quickly.”

“In the future I would like to be a family solicitor and children panel member focusing on public law children proceedings.”

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#### **TRAINEE: Bilkiss Bashir Switalskis Solicitors, West Yorkshire.**

Bilkiss followed the conventional route into law, completing the LLB (HONS) at the University of Leeds. She said: "I spent a year abroad in my second year, as part of the Erasmus Exchange Programme in Belgium. I completed the Legal Practise Course at BPP law school in Leeds."

"I have always been passionate about pursuing a career in the legal profession and more specifically about promoting and facilitating equal access to justice for all. I wanted to specialise into an area where I could make a real difference with the work I was doing."



Bilkiss is funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme. "I think it can be difficult to get into legal aid work, due to funding issues – the scheme has ensured that many more firms can afford to accommodate future legal aid solicitors and support them through their training stage."

She has not yet begun her training contract however, "I start in a week! I am very excited and very much looking forward to starting my first seat in the Mental Health Department." Her future career aspirations in legal aid are "To excel in this area and hopefully have a long-lasting career in legal aid!"

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#### **TRAINEE: Tariq Al Mallak Wainwright and Cummins, London.**

Tariq has a BA in Biology and History. He then decided to change career paths and he went on to complete the Graduate Diploma in Law and Legal Practise Course with the College of Law. After working for a civil rights organisation defending women in crime, Tariq spent some time working in corporate law, but he didn't enjoy this area and found it unrewarding. He realised that he wanted to pursue a career in legal aid

He was attracted to a career in legal aid by the “type of work, people and clients, and the commitment to community.” The 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme helped Tariq by providing funding towards his training contract.

When asked how he has found the experience of his training contract so far, Tariq said “Excellent, I enjoy being trained by a firm committed to legal aid and quality.”

His future legal aid career aspirations include becoming a duty solicitor with higher rights.

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#### **TRAINEE: Julia Wheeler Allan Rutherford Ltd, Norwich.**

Julia chose a career in law at the age of 15. She applied to Reading University after a gap year volunteering with street children in India. Julia said: "Sheer determination has kept me pushing through."

"Law is, contrary to popular opinion, about truth and justice and helping people. I realised very quickly I wanted nothing to do with corporate law, as I have long been involved in helping vulnerable people and wanted to work with them. A lawyer can be a hero to her clients, after all even Superman fought for Truth and Justice..."

Julia is funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grant Scheme. The grant has helped her by paying a contribution towards her LPC fees. Julia said it also helped her by providing her with a list of 150 law firms who were financially able and willing to recruit.

She has a number of legal aid career aspirations, "Firstly to raise more awareness about legal aid law at universities and to encourage more students to go for it. Secondly to see the reputation of lawyers changed, as clients are given better quality from friendly people who are approachable. Thirdly to be the best lawyer I can for those who come to me for help, and to see our country change it's attitude toward the vulnerable people who need legal aid."

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#### **TRAINEE: Bryony Dongray TV Edwards, London.**

Bryony completed a French BA at Kings College in London and a Graduate Diploma in Law with BPP Law School. She also completed the Legal Practise Course with BPP Law School studying electives in Family Law, Employment and Private Client.

She was attracted to a career in legal aid by the interesting subject areas. “I wanted to work for people who are really in need and wanted to work in a small high street firm with a more family feel.” Bryony was funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme which has helped towards her LPC Fees. The scheme also provided “excellent communication and introduction to the legal profession.”



Bryony has not yet commenced her training contract however she is currently clerking for the firm and thoroughly enjoys it. She has found that she loves to attend court!

Bryony has high aspirations for the future and hope one day to be named Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year! She also hopes to become a member of the Mental Health Tribunal Panel.

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#### **TRAINEE: Jana Turner Blacklaw Davies LLP, London**

Jana studied law at Middlesex University in Hendon, obtaining a first class LLB (HONS). She subsequently studied the Legal Practise Course at Inns of Court School of Law in London.

She was attracted to a career in legal aid to make a difference to peoples lives. "Working for a legal aid firm enables me to help people with a problematic background and to make a valuable difference to their lives."

The 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme under which Jana is funded enabled her to progress her career in law by obtaining a training contract at her current firm.

So far she has found the experience of her training contract to be very positive. In particular she values the opportunity to "run my own caseload, as well as assisting senior solicitors to enable me to gain experience under supervision."

Jana's future career aspirations in legal aid are "To train as a mediator and obtain child accreditation."

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#### **TRAINEE: Stephen Beard Peter Edwards Law, Merseyside**

Stephen completed a BA in sociology at the University of Liverpool, he then changed direction and did an LLB Conversion course at the University of Sheffield before completing the Legal Practise Course at the College of Law in Chester. As well as his formal training, he also worked for 6 months in the Criminal Records Bureau in Liverpool which gave him a valuable insight into criminal legal aid work.

Stephen was attracted to career in legal aid by “An interest in the areas of law often covered by legal aid such as criminal and immigration work.”

Stephen has very recently commenced his training contract. “So far I’ve been carrying out similar work to that carried out for my role as a paralegal, prior to commencing the training contract. I feel like my responsibilities are growing, however. “

Stephens future career aspirations in legal aid include continually improving performance at tribunal hearings.

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#### **TRAINEE: Martin Batire Holden and co, East Sussex**

Martins gained an LLB (HONS) at Westminster University before completing a Legal Practise Course and LLM, also at Westminster University. He was first attracted to a career in legal aid because it gives him the ability to help the less privileged.

Martins was funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme. When asked how the scheme has helped Martins, he said: “To further my career by crossing the ultimate hurdle of getting a training contract.”

Martins has not yet started his training contract but thinks it will be very interesting.

He hopes “to be a thriving legal aid lawyer and maybe go into advocacy in the future.”



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#### **TRAINEE: Hannah Louise Venn Munns Rosie Bracher Solicitors, Devon**

Hannah gained an LLB 2:1 (HONS) at UWE Bristol before completing the Legal Practise Course. Hannah was attracted to a career in legal aid after a work experience placement where she enjoyed the time spent with clients.

Hannah is funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme and values the additional support offered by the scheme. She receives funding for a percentage of her Legal Practise Course fees, Professional Skills Course fees and her training contract salary.

Hannah's future career aspirations in legal aid are to "gain expertise to the extent that I can become a specialist in an area of Legal Aid work and do as my principal has done with me, namely pass on knowledge to future generations of lawyers. "

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#### **TRAINEE: Philippa Wise Howells LLP, Sheffield**

After Philippa completed her law degree and Legal Practice Course at Sheffield University she gained valuable experience in legal work before getting a training contract. She worked for Howells solicitors, first clerking in the Crime department before working for Howells Direct as a Family Law Caseworker in the Community Legal Advice (CLA) Pilot, a free legal telephone advice service funded by the LSC. Philippa also volunteered for Aldine House Young Peoples Centre.

Philippa is funded by the 2008 Training Contract Grants Scheme. On being successful under the scheme, she said: "I have always believed in the ethos of legal aid and am excited to bring people access to justice. I have especially wanted to work in Family and Child law. It has enabled me to work at the firm I have always wanted to work for. They are now able to offer me a training contract in 2009."

Philippa plans to specialise in child law. "I would also like an opportunity to experience prison law and mental health law if my firm can provide it. "

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#### **TRAINEE: Miss Sapna Mukherjee Thaliwal Bridge Solicitors, Leicester**

Sapna gained an LLB (HONS) from the University of Wales in Aberystwyth before completing the Legal Practise Course at Nottingham Law School. She also worked with the Tribunal Service as a clerk in Social Security and Child Support.

She was attracted to legal aid by the opportunity to “help those who are vulnerable to have a stronger voice.” The Training Contract Grants Scheme has helped Sapna by “enabling me to get a training contract in an area of law I enjoy. Without the scheme I would have had to move firm or work in a different area”

Sapna is due to go into the first seat of her training contract in November. Her legal aid career aspirations include:

“To work with the Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG) to set up/encourage a legal aid voice in the East Midlands.

To help increase government budget in legal aid

To ensure people do not fall through legal loopholes in their access to legal service.”

