



Sophie Allinson, Associate Solicitor

Sophie is an Associate solicitor in our Criminal Defence team and represents clients at any stage from the police station to Magistrates and Crown Court.

Our 'cuppa with' series is an informal chat with one of our team to give a deeper understanding into their area of law and share some little-known legal facts!

1. What is the best part of your job?

The job satisfaction in this role is second to none. We are regularly instructed to help some of society's most vulnerable people, or simply those who are going through a very difficult time in life. Sometimes we may be the only person that the individual feels safe and comfortable speaking to, which is an enormous privilege. Whether you 'win' or 'lose' in court becomes irrelevant if you have made a positive impact on that person, and I feel very lucky to have supported my clients through what may be one of the lowest points in their life.

2. And the worst?

Equally, this job is a real eye-opener and you learn very quickly how privileged you are to have been brought up in a safe environment, with a caring family and people who support you. Sadly, it isn't the case for everyone, and I always find it difficult to learn about the hand that many of our clients have been dealt and the impact this has had on their behaviour.

3. What does a typical day entail?

One of my favourite things about my job is that there genuinely is no such thing as a 'typical' day. I am most often found in the local Magistrates Court, representing my clients in all manner of cases. Additionally, I am qualified as a Higher Court Advocate and appear in the Crown Court, where our more serious cases are dealt with. This is an area of my practice that I'm working hard to build up. If I'm not on my feet in court, I try and get out to police station interviews to represent people at the very beginning of their case. And if I really can't avoid it, I'll be at my desk doing my admin work!

4. What is it like working at David Gray?

I joined David Gray Solicitors after completing my training at another firm. I was immediately impressed with the formal induction programme in place, which was a great way of getting to know the many different faces in the firm. As a junior lawyer, it was so easy to make friends, as there were many people at a similar stage to me in

the firm (both in terms of their career and in life). There are always opportunities to socialise if you'd like to – wander into the Mile Castle pub on a Friday evening and you'll be sure to find a good group of workmates enjoying themselves! In terms of career progression, I have been enormously proud to obtain every qualification I've wanted to date, which has all been done with the full backing and support of the firm. This has been invaluable in terms of career progression. The introduction of the Associate and Senior Associate roles has also been warmly welcomed throughout the firm.

5. What would people be most surprised to find out about your job?

Unlike our portrayal on TV, defence solicitors typically get on well with police officers and the prosecution! We all understand that everyone has their part to play in the system, and this is always much more enjoyable if you can get along and enjoy a laugh along the way.

6. What questions do you often get asked a solicitor?

As a criminal defence solicitor, I'm fortunate in that my services are pretty useless to most people I meet! However, people are always interested to know how it feels to represent those who have committed serious offences. I always say that it is a privilege to play my part in the criminal justice system. Unfortunately in life, nothing is guaranteed and many of my clients would never have believed they would be needing my help. It's vital that those who need representation are given it, no matter what they are said to have done. My job isn't to judge anyone, my job is to help, support and look after a client's best interests.

7. Tell us some little-known facts about this area of law...

Representation at the police station is free to everyone, no matter how much money you might earn. If interviewed under caution by police, you should always request a solicitor – it's a legal right and there's no bill to pay at the end of it.

If you would like to speak with Sophie or one of our team, give us a call on 0191 232 9547 or visit www.davidgray.co.uk