



Emma Neale, Solicitor (newly qualified)

Emma is a Solicitor who qualified in September 2021 and did her training with David Gray. She currently works across our Family and Court of Protection (COP) teams.

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. Can you tell us a bit about your route to becoming a solicitor?

I went down the traditional route initially at the start of my journey in becoming a solicitor. I went straight to University after my A Levels, and studied Law. After my three year degree programme, I decided that I wanted to travel, and spend some time doing different job roles. I plan to be in this career for a long time, and so didn't want to rush into it! I did some travelling, and worked in a number of different roles, including at a University and primary school. I then decided it was time to go back to University, and studied my LPC, and Masters in Law. During my studies, I did some volunteering, and started applying for paralegal roles and training contracts. I successfully obtained a role as a paralegal in the Family Department at David Gray, and went on to my training contract from there.

2. What did your training contract at David Gray entail?

For me, my training contract involved 4 seats, as they are called, over 3 departments. I worked in the Family, COP/Mental Health, and Crime Department. The work was incredibly varied and all three departments are fast-paced. Each department has a checklist of things that you should hope to achieve as a trainee. Family involves making an application for a Non-Molestation Order and doing the hearing, Crime involves doing a bail application and hearing, and Mental Health/Cop involved doing a Hospital Managers Hearing.

3. What is the best part of your job?

When a client is happy with the service they have received. I can never guarantee the outcome of anyone's case, but I can guarantee that client(s) will be listened to, advised, and that I will work hard to achieve the best possible outcome for them.

It's always a really positive experience when we are able to come up with an arrangement that works for everyone, without needing to go to court.

4. And the worst?

Unfortunately, for most people, my involvement comes at a time when they are dealing with a particularly difficult situation. It's always tough to hear how much people are struggling, whether that be in a domestic abuse situation, living somewhere they don't want to be, or going through a difficult time during separation. I can't put myself in their shoes, but I absolutely empathise with what each person is going through.

5. What does a typical day entail?

My days are very varied, as they are for most solicitors, but I have the added variety that I work across the Family, and COP Department. I could be looking at financial disclosure in the morning, and visiting a care home in the afternoon, but ultimately, it's always interesting!

6. What is it like working at David Gray?

David Gray Solicitors is a supportive environment, where you feel able to approach senior colleagues for the benefit of their expertise, but also personal support if you ever need it. There is a great, social atmosphere at the firm, which involves regular social activities, giving you the opportunity to chat to colleagues outside of your own Department. We have a relatively new mentorship scheme, that has paired junior and senior colleagues together so that they can meet, and hopefully learn from each other.

I always wanted to practice in both Family and Court of Protection, and I felt fully supported by the firm to allow me to do this.

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

Court of Protection is an area of law that most people don't come across, and people are always surprised to find out that individuals who are deprived of their liberty, and subject to deprivation of liberty safeguards, have a right to issue a challenge in the Court of Protection.

8. What question(s) do you often get asked as a solicitor?

Whether we can keep things from the court, or a judge. People are often surprised to hear that unlike the TV, this really doesn't happen. Our job as a solicitor is underpinned by the principle of acting honestly, but we also have a duty not to mislead the court.

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

A common misconception is that a common law husband or wife exists, and people are always very surprised to find out that in short, it doesn't!

If you would like to speak with Emma or one of our team, give us a call on

0191 232 9547 or visit www.davidgray.co.uk