

SUPPORTING ROLE

The award-winning North East Solicitor Apprenticeship (NESA) programme – initiated by Muckle LLP law firm – provides an alternative route into a law career. Apprentices gain real-life legal experience working in one of five regional law firms or an in-house legal team while they study for their degree. Since launching in 2017, the scheme has won widespread praise. Here, apprentice Anna Douglas and her supervisor, associate solicitor Sarah Barratt, share their experiences



Anna Douglas
Apprentice

I first became interested in a law career when I visited the Newcastle Magistrates' Court on a school trip. I applied to university but decided to take the apprenticeship route because of the practical element – the fact that I would be working in a top law firm while studying.

The work experience and exposure to real cases every day are of real benefits and will help put my learning into context. I'm also working with experienced solicitors who support me.

I work four days a week at Muckle and have one study day, with a trip to London once a month for face-to-face tuition.

I'm currently working in the real estate dispute resolution team. Typically, the work I help with includes drafting section 21 and section 8 notices, assessing liability for disrepair cases and drafting letters and emails to clients. I have also attended court for hearings and recently went to Edinburgh for an employment tribunal.

I sit in the same team as Sarah so I see and speak to her every day. She supports me with any work that I have and my work life in general. Once a month we have a more formal review to see how

everything is going.

Sarah has shared her legal knowledge on different types of tenancies, notices, legislation and procedures. She has also taught me not to take things at face value and that it's important to understand why something is the case – a lesson I can apply to both work and studying for my degree.

Sarah Barratt
Associate solicitor

I joined Muckle in February 2018 as an associate solicitor in the real estate dispute resolution team. My specialism is in residential property disputes, including possession proceedings and matters concerning anti-social behaviour.

Our law apprentices get the benefits of hands-on, real life work experience, working alongside qualified solicitors, experienced paralegals and exceptionally knowledgeable PAs. By offering solicitor apprenticeships, Muckle is also helping to open our profession up to people who may have been turned off a career in law by high university fees. By opting for this route, our apprentices avoid the burden of university tuition fees and student debt, earning a competitive salary instead plus a host of benefits.

I met Anna on my first day working for Muckle as she had started her apprenticeship before I joined. My first impression was of a quiet and diligent member of the team, eager to be involved and assist the team.

As we were both relatively new to Muckle, we have helped each other settle into the team.

Anna's legal skills in all areas are developing fast, from considering clients' instructions, reading and interpreting legal documents, researching case law and drafting letters and legal documents. I make sure Anna has a good understanding of the legal principles underlying our work, ensuring great client care from the outset and considering practical legal solutions to assist our clients.

Anna is very capable and I am sure will be a success in whatever she chooses to do.



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